

Identifying communication strategies employed by English language learners in private institutes in Sirjan

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Abstract

The goal of the study was to investigate the most dominant communicative strategies implemented by EFL learners in a private institute in Sirjan. To this purpose, four groups of adult EFL learners, ranging between 21 to 26, male and female, were asked to give their response to a pre-designed questionnaire originally used by Hua (2012) to investigate the attitudes of Chinese English language learners. After translating the questionnaire and estimating its reliability index, the data was analyzed by SPSS software and the results were achieved. It was concluded that the subjects showed their interest to use those strategies that would lead to more successful learning. On the other hand, they benefitted from a high degree of confidence as a necessary principle for language learning. Besides, some of the strategies they employed were a reflection of their L1 strategy which they have been using for a long time. It was proved that confidence led to establishing a relaxed and free learning situation in which both learners and teachers benefitted from the learning activities. Another factor of success among the learners is their close attention to the components of the language they had to study. They proved that they were sensitive to using grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation elements in a proper and accurate way.

Keywords: strategy, communication, learning, style, language

INTRODUCTION

Communication strategies (CSs) are plans for communicating information related to a specific issue, event, situation, or audience. Learning a foreign language includes the ability to communicate. Communication assists people to send and receive messages effectively and negotiate meaning (Rubin & Thompson, 1994). Nowadays, how to communicate effectively in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting has become an essential skill next to reading and writing. The term communication strategy was coined by Selinker (1972); it refers to the approach that a learner employs for communication with a native speaker.

According to 1. Somsai and Intaraprasert ^[1], the notion of communication strategies reflects the concept of communicative competence, proposed by 2. Clennell ^[2], which not only involves knowing a syntactic use of language, but also the appropriate use of language in a particular situation, for example, to apologize or make a request. Anyone who is investigating second language (SL) learning process should identify Interlanguage Communication Strategies which is mainly related to the theories of interlanguage (IL) variation. According to Clennell ^[2], communication strategies are helpful tools for both native speakers and foreign language learners to compensate for insufficient competence. According to Tarone ^[3], in order to achieve the real communicative goals, communication strategies should be regarded not only as problematic

mechanisms to solve individual communication difficulties or breakdowns but also as mutual attempts of two interlocutors which would bridge the gap caused by their limited linguistic knowledge to reach particular communicative goal, thus providing them opportunities to receive more input of the target language and produce new utterances. Therefore, to overcome their difficulties and generate the target language to achieve communicative goals in the actual interaction, interactional strategies are employed by speakers.

The first problem in this area is that language learner very frequently fail to play their effective role in a communicative situation. They come to a break down whenever they are to

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How to cite this article: Radmehr, A. Identifying communication strategies employed by English language learners in private institutes in Sirjan. Arch Pharma Pract 2020;11(S1):73-87.

function meaningfully and purposefully in a communicative situation ^[4]. The second problem lies in the fact that language teachers and other practitioners have little information about these problems. In other words, the reasons because of which the learners fail to communicate effectively have remained unknown.

Another deficiency in this regard is that for ease of communication, it is necessary for the learners to find efficient means through which they can convey their ideas. However, they are not successful to undertake their roles efficiently. This may be due to the absence of strategic, linguistic, or sociolinguistic competence in a language (Bialystok, 1990) ^[5]. The problem in the educational systems is that little effort has been spent on the identification of the problems with which the language learners struggle in order to communicate successfully.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the types of communication strategies employed by English language learners in private institutes.

The present study attempts to investigate the communicative CSs used by advanced institute students. More specifically, it seeks to determine the frequency of the common CSs used by the students and the extent to which the use of these strategies is affected by students' L2 proficiency. It aims at investigating the types of strategies the learners use in different situations in order to fulfill a communicative task. If the results can be identified and suitable answers can be found for the stated problems, it can bring enough indications for the teachers, material designers, test constructors, and other practitioners in the area of language teaching and learning. The results may facilitate that area of language teaching the goal of which is assisting the learners to acquire an L2 for communicative purposes.

The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the CSs used by EFL learners in Kish Air Language Institute in Sirjan?
2. What are the most frequently used CSs by EFL learners in Kish Air Language Institute in Sirjan?

Research hypotheses included

H1: EFL learners in Kish Air Language Institute use a common type of communicative strategy.

H2: EFL learners do not use certain types of communicative strategies in their communications.

Literature Review

After Selinker (1972) introduced the notion of second language communication strategies, various researchers have gone about classifying these strategies in various ways. Varadi (1973) and Tarone ^[6] introduced a classification of communication strategies having been used in subsequent research. Tarone ^[6] described her taxonomy as a system that provides the best tool to make sense of the behavior of the subjects in communicative situations. The author herself

pointed out the lack of generality of her taxonomy. However, other researchers have adapted Tarone's ^[6] typology and introduced other strategies ^[7]. This fact has promoted the existence of a rather confusing multitude of different strategies of ambiguous validity. Bialystok ^[5] believes that the variety of taxonomies proposed in the literature differ primarily in terminology and overall categorizing principles rather than in the substance of specific strategies. Here some important approaches in communication strategy are presented.

- The linguistic approach in Communication Strategies:

Within the linguistic approach, the most influential works have been those of Tarone ^[8] and Faerch and Kasper ^[9]. Linguistic researchers, including Faerch and Kasper ^[10, 11]; Bialystok ^[5]; Kellerman et al ^[11] were interested in the cognitive processes and described CSs as internal and individual mental plans, and tried to explain CSs use by drawing on cognitive models of speech production.

- Cognitive approach:

Within the cognitive approach, we should refer to Bialystok ^[5]. Bialystok states that CS responds to the cognitive mechanisms that operate on mental representations in linguistic processing.

- Psycholinguistic problem-solving approach:

Faerch and Kasper ^[10] state their psychological problem-solving view of communication strategies, and believe that planning can take place to overcome potential communicative problems and to bring about a higher degree of transitional smoothness and overall fluency in the speech.

- Bialystok Taxonomy:

Bialystok ^[5] provided a further interpretation of communication strategies based on her cognitive theory of language processing. This new taxonomy was divided into two main classes: 1. Analysis-based strategies, 2. Control-based strategies.

- Faerch and Kasper Taxonomy:

Faerch and Kasper ^[9] categorize strategies of communication in terms of reduction strategies and achievement strategies - the learner's attempt to avoid the problem being a reduction strategy and his attempt to achieve a solution being an achievement strategy. Reduction strategies can be divided further into two categories a) formal reduction (reduce system - parts of the linguistic system are avoided) and b) functional reduction (reduce intended meaning) Achievement strategies are divided into a) compensatory strategies and b) retrieval strategies.

- Chen Taxonomy:

Chen (1990) conducted a study of the communication strategies in interlanguage production by Chinese learners of

English. The communication strategies employed by the subjects in the Chen study were classified as follows:

1. Linguistic-based
2. Knowledge-based
3. Repetition
4. Paralinguistic
5. Avoidance

- Avoidance strategies:

Avoidance strategies refer to the tendency of the learner not to use certain linguistic elements due to phonological, syntactic, or lexical constraints. It can also be related to the topic of discussion. These strategies may be an effective way but not a beneficial way for FLL students to learn a foreign language. Among these, topic avoidance may be the most frequent means that students have ever employed.

- Communication strategies in Discourse approach:

The discourse perspective classifies strategies described by Faerch and Kasper^[9, 10] and Tarone^[3, 8] proposes three strategies that operate as facilitators or enhancers of the message – lexical repetitions plus tone to indicate topic prominence, appeal for assistance, request for clarification and discourse and topic maintenance; and topic plus comment syntactic structures to parcel up information; and tonicity^[2]. To compensate for the linguistic means that are not available or accessible, the productive strategies that language users may have recourse to are categorized as:

- A) reduction strategies (e.g. topic avoidance, message abandonment, meaning replacement)
- B) achievement strategies, which include cooperative strategies (e.g. appeals)
- C) uncooperative strategies (e.g. mime, restructuring, language switch, borrowing, literal translation, exemplification, word coinage).

- Communication strategies proposed by Poulisse:

Poulisse (1993)^[12] in an attempt presents a typology of communication strategies that include some new perspectives suggested and furthermore elaborated. The list below gives an account of his main ideas:

1. **Substitution:** substitution of one lexical item for another, whether it be an L1 for L2 item.
2. **Substitution plus type:** substitutions that require phonological and/or morphological adaptation before they are articulated e.g. foreignizing, morphological creativity.
3. **Reconceptualization:** a change in the preverbal message which involves more than a single chunk, e.g. paraphrase.
4. **Non-Verbal Communication strategies:** Non-verbal communication strategies include face-to-face communication, eye contact, silence, and sign language and gestures.

METHODOLOGY

The participants in the present study consisted of 94 EFL learners (40 males and 54 females) studying in four different groups in Kish Air Language Institute in Sirjan, with an age range of 19-26 years. These subjects were chosen randomly from upper-intermediate and advanced levels (40 and 53 individuals respectively in upper-intermediate and advanced levels, as well as one missing data). All of them had already studied English as a general course regularly for a period of minimum of 270 hours for 10 to 13 subsequent terms, each term normally lasts 6 weeks, three sessions a week.

To collect the required data, a predesigned questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, having already used by Hua (2012) was utilized. The original and the translated versions, each contained 32 items, 3 of which were given to demographic information about the participants and others sought the communicative strategies of the subjects. Since the questions originally addressed Malay learners of English and this is why the researcher preferred to change some of the ideas. For example, Malay students were changed to Iranian students or Malay language was changed to Farsi. The researcher tried to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire once more. To this purpose, using the test-retest method, a similar group of 12 subjects were asked to give their answers to the questions. Then the Spearman formula was used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire. It finally proved that the questionnaire was reliable at a high index of 0.87. The content of the questionnaire and its items fall within the following sub-categories:

-Paraphrasing: This refers to learners using different words or phrases to express their intended meaning.

-Substitution: Learners may avoid a problematic word by using a different one.

-Coining new words: This refers to learners creating new words or phrases for words that they do not know.

-Language switch: Learners may insert a word from their first language into a sentence, and hope that their interlocutor will understand.

-Asking for clarification: The strategy of asking an interlocutor for the correct word or other helps is a communication strategy.

-Non-verbal strategies: This can refer to strategies such as the use of gestures and mime to augment or replace verbal communication.

-Cooperation: This is when the subjects try to help communication goes on by giving their time to others to speak or waiting for their time to speak.

-Confidence: This strategy helps the subjects to participate courageously and willingly in various situations. This strategy opposes avoidance.

To collect the required data, the questionnaires were given to the subjects of the study during their class time. As an additional step, the researcher did not want them to put their names on them, assuming that this would put the reliability of their answers at risk. Besides, the reason for the study and the intended goals were described to the population.

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for Microsoft Windows version 18 was used for data analysis.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, standard deviations, and percentages, were implemented in order to investigate the demographic data, and the use of language learning strategies.

RESULTS

The present study was carried out to investigate the communicative strategies of the EFL learners currently studying at Kish Air Language Institute. Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of participants' responses to each question. The values given to each item of a scale were 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively for completely agree, agree, almost agree, disagree, and completely disagree.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics demonstrating mean and standard deviation of the subjects' response

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
4. Sometimes because of my limited knowledge, I don't continue the conversation.	39	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.2308	.15784	.98573
5. It is hard for me to converse about special topics.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.4250	.17130	1.08338
6. To use some of the expressions and words, I prefer to translate them into Farsi.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.8250	.18566	1.17424
7. When speaking in English, if I can find a suitable word, I fill it with an irrelevant item.	40	3.00	2.00	5.00	4.0750	.15354	.97106
8. To start and continue my conversation, I always design a pattern in my mind.	39	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.6923	.17291	1.07981
9. When speaking with others, I give my turn to others so as to help the conversation continue.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.1500	.15421	.97534
10. When being in a class situation, I help everyone to participate in the conversation.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.2750	.16008	1.01242
11. I think I have a special aptitude in speaking in English.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.4000	.11767	.74421
12. I think I have difficulty to speak in English.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.5750	.19575	1.23802
13. When necessary, I think I have no difficulty to speak in English.	39	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.0256	.15795	.98641
14. I always believe that I can speak English well.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.5500	.15170	.95943
15. I have enough confidence to speak English fluently.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.8250	.15144	.95776
16. I can establish the necessary motivation to speak in English.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.0000	.16013	1.01274
17. I can easily speak English with my instructors.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.5750	.13815	.87376
18. I am successful in talking to the foreigners on the phone, net, and even face to face.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.7250	.17167	1.08575
19. I can easily learn new words and use them in my conversations.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.8000	.15689	.99228

20. I am not worried about using English in different situations.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.8000	.18328	1.15913
21. Using English is easy for me even when my friends make fun of me.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.6250	.18147	1.14774
22. When I decide to say something in English, I certainly do it.	40	2.00	1.00	3.00	1.9000	.12300	.77790
23. When I speak in English, I can easily concentrate on different topics.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.6250	.13722	.86787
24. I know enough words to use when speaking in English.	40	3.00	2.00	5.00	3.1500	.13180	.83359
25. When I speak to others, I can understand all of the words they use in their speech.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.4000	.11767	.74421
26. Before I attend the language class, I could speak English with correct pronunciation and intonation.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.0500	.17153	1.08486
27. When I speak in English, I pay close attention to intonation and stress patterns.	40	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.7250	.16008	1.01242
28. I easily interact with others.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.0750	.13101	.82858
29. I easily participate in group and pair work.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	1.9750	.14091	.89120
30. I feel relaxed when I speak in English.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.2000	.15275	.96609
31. I can easily express my intentions in English.	40	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.4500	.15587	.98580
32. When I converse with others, I can understand them even if I don't understand some of the words.	39	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.1795	.13180	.82308

Table 2 displays the information about the communicative strategies as well as the total mean of responses given to each of them. Figures 1-29 show detailed information about the given response by the participants of the study to each question item.

Table 2: The mean of the responses by strategies

strategy	Item no.	Total Mean
Paraphrasing	8, 24	2.87
Substitution	7, 25	3.2
Coining new words	19	2.8
Language switch	6	2.8
Asking for clarification	31, 32	2.25
Non-verbal strategies	13	3.02
Avoidance	4, 5, 12	3.03
Cooperation	9, 10, 28, 29	2.151
Confidence	14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 30	2.45

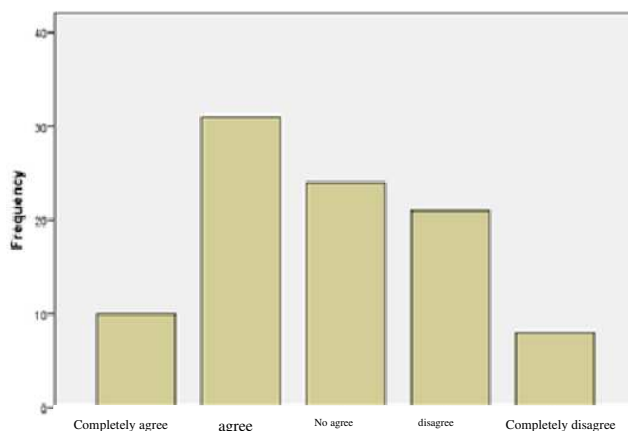


Figure 1: Sometimes because of my limited knowledge, I don't continue conversation

Based on the results, 38% had no idea. The question "Sometimes because of my limited knowledge, I won't continue the conversation", while around 25.5% have stated their agreement with the idea that sometimes because of the limited knowledge, they don't continue the conversation. Meanwhile, about 35% have believed that they didn't agree with the stated idea.

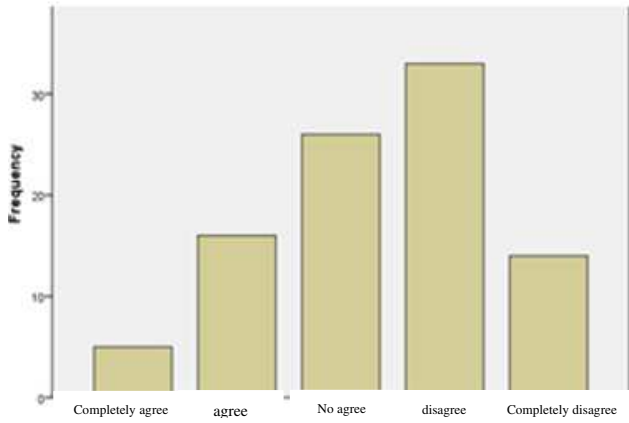


Figure 2: It is hard for me to converse about special topics

According to the information in Figure 2, a majority of 50% have shown their disagreement with the question. In other words, they think that it is not hard for them to speak about specific topics in conversation with others. However, a minority of 20% have agreed with the idea.

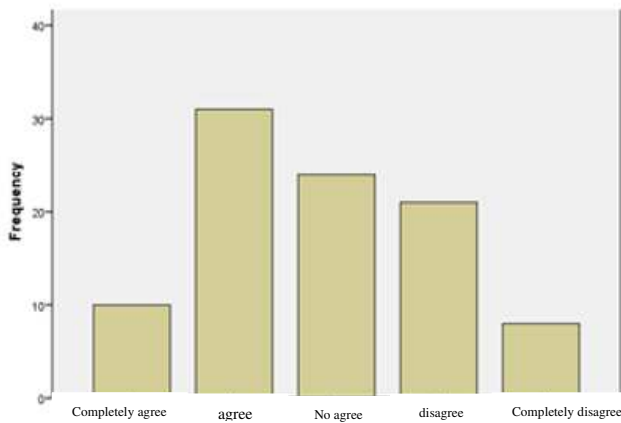


Figure 3: To use some of the expressions and words, I prefer to translate them into Farsi.

Figure 3 shows that a majority of 43% has agreed with the question “To use some of the expressions and words, I prefer to translate them into Farsi” and a small number of 29% have shown their disagreement with the idea that the subjects prefer to translate the expressions they are doubtful about.

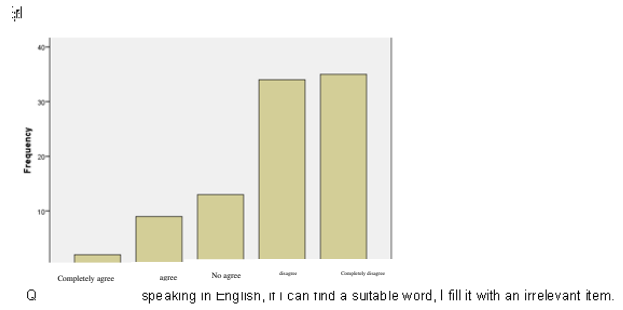
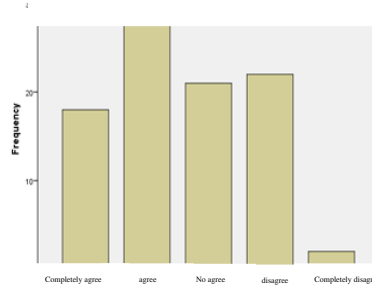


Figure 4

As we can understand from the information in Figure 4, a high majority of 74% has shown their disagreement with the idea when speaking in English, if they can find a suitable word, they fill it with an irrelevant item. A limited number of them, only 10% have agreed with it.



Question 8. To start and continue my conversation, I always design a pattern in my mind.

Figure 5

As we can observe in Figure 5, 50% of the participants in the study have believed that to start and continue conversations, they always design a pattern in their mind. On the other hand, a minor number of 25% have revealed their disagreement with the stated idea above. On the whole, it seems that the majority have agreed with the idea.

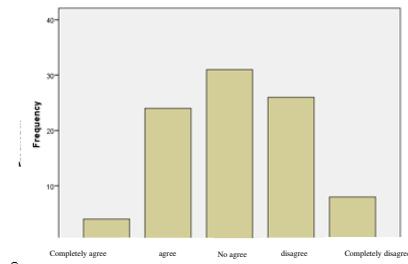


Figure 6

p the conversation continue.

According to the information in Figure 6, a majority of 36% have shown their disagreement with the item being asked. In other words, they think when speaking with others, they give their turn to others so as to help the conversation continue. However, around 30% have agreed with the idea.

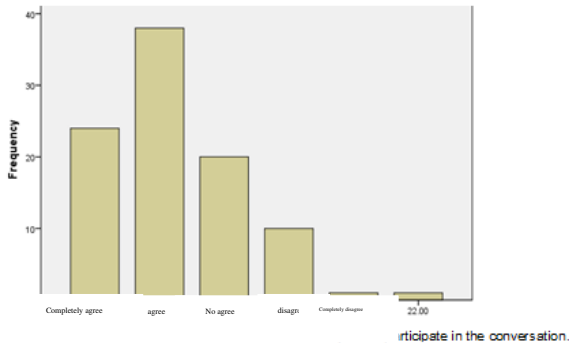


Figure 7

As we can understand from the information stated in Figure 7, a high majority of 66% has shown their agreement with the idea when being in a class situation, they help everyone to participate in the conversation. A minor number of them, only 11%, have disagreed with it.

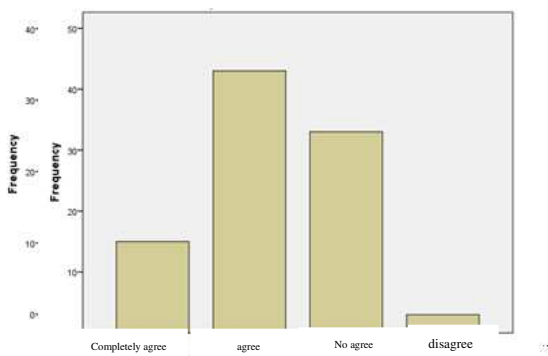


Figure 8

As we can observe in Figure 8, 61% of the participants in the study have believed that they think they have a special aptitude in speaking in English. On the other hand, only a minor number of 3% have revealed their disagreement with the stated idea above. On the whole, it seems that the majority have agreed with the idea they are talented enough to learn a foreign language and speak it successfully.

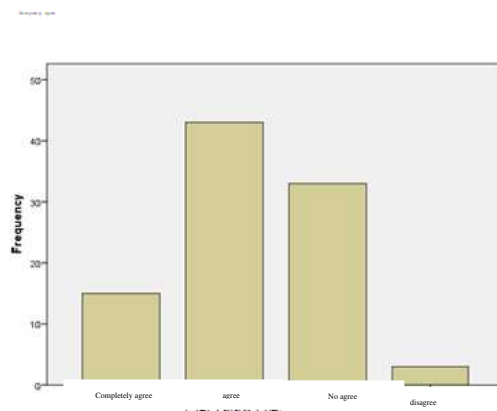


Figure 9

Figure 9 shows that a high majority of 50% have agreed with the idea that they think they have a special aptitude in speaking English. In the same way, only a minor number of 25% have disagreed with the idea.

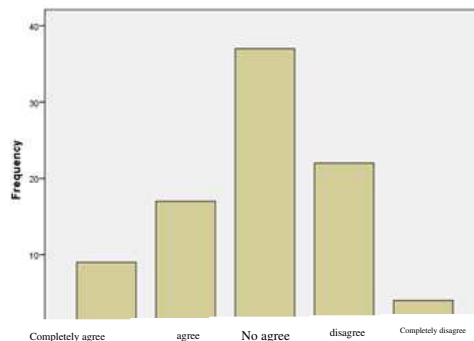


Figure 10

The response to “When necessary, I think I have no difficulty to speak in English” is almost equal among both the agreements and disagreements. In other words, around 29% have equally claimed that they think they have no difficulty in speaking in English. However, a major number of 41% have had no idea about it (Figure 10).

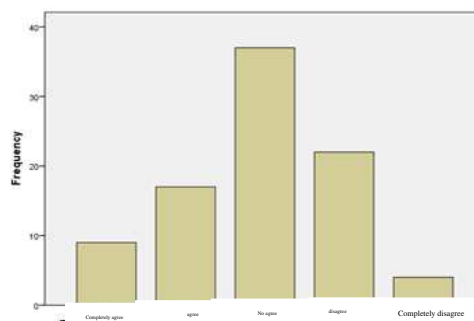


Figure 11

Based on Figure 11, a majority of 52% have shown their agreement with the idea that they always believe that they can speak English well. Only 10% have disagreed with it.

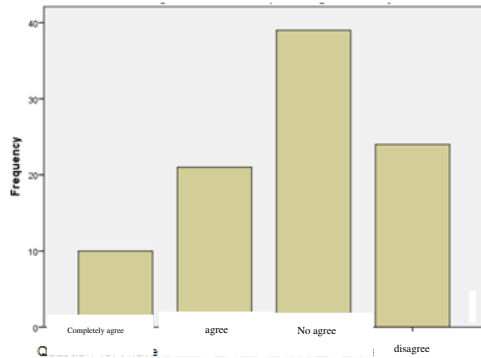


Figure 12

According to Figure 12, almost 34% have shown their agreement with the idea that they have enough confidence to speak English fluently. A number of them, only 25% have agreed with it. A great deal of them have expressed that they have no idea about it.

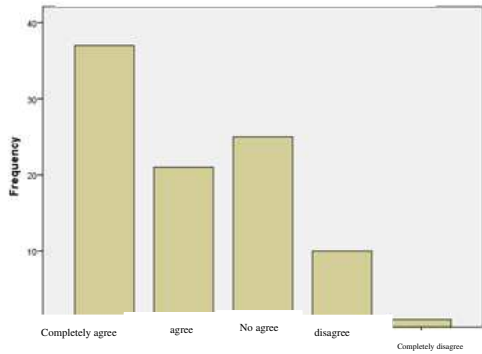


Figure 13

According to Figure 13, a majority of 62% have shown their agreement with the item being asked. In other words, they think they can establish the necessary motivation to speak in English with others. However, a minority of 12% have disagreed with the idea.

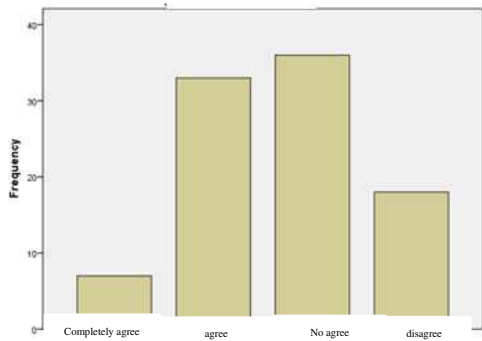


Figure 14

Based on Figure 14, a majority of 57% have shown their disagreement with the idea that they can easily speak English

with their instructors. A number of them, 43% have agreed with it.

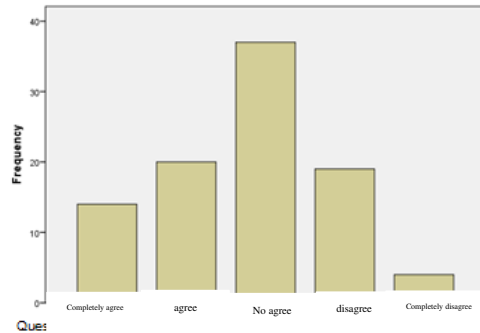


Figure 15

As we can observe in Figure 15, almost 36% of the participants in the study have believed that they are successful in talking to the foreigners on the phone, net, and even face to face. On the other hand, 23% have expressed their disagreement with the stated idea.

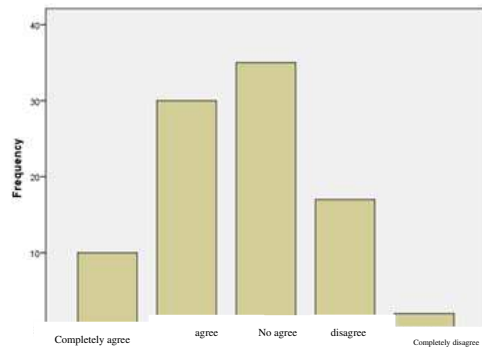


Figure 16

According to Figure 16, a majority of 42% have shown their agreement with the item being asked. In other words, they can easily learn new words and use them in their conversations with others. However, a minority of 20% have disagreed with the idea.

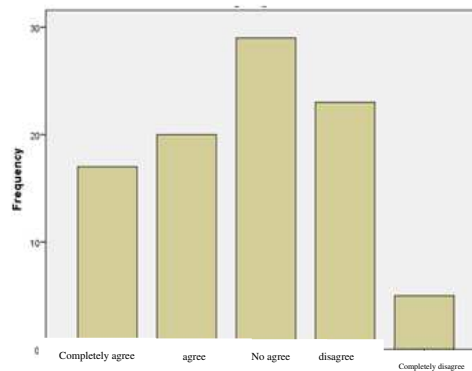


Figure 17

Based on the data in Figure 17, a majority of 39% have shown their agreement with the item “I am not worried about using English in different situations”. In other words, they are not worried about using English in different situations. However, a minority of only around 5% have disagreed with the idea. Around 30.9 % have been neutral to the question item here.

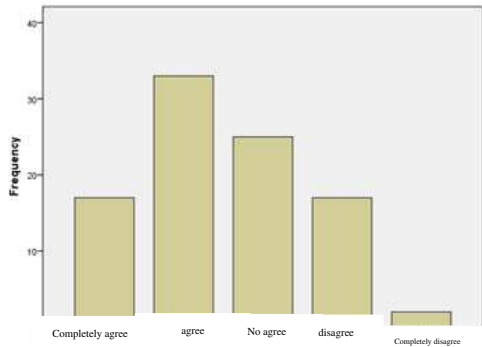


Figure 18

According to the information in Figure 18, a majority of 50% have shown their agreement with the item being asked. In other words, using English is easy for them even when their friends make fun of them. However, a minority of 21% have disagreed with the idea.

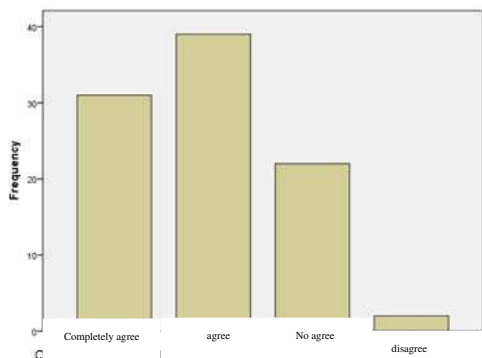


Figure 19

Based on the information in Figure 19, 74% have shown their agreement with the item being asked. In other words, when they decide to say something in English, they certainly do it. However, a minority of 25% have disagreed with the idea. Around 23% have been neutral to the question item.

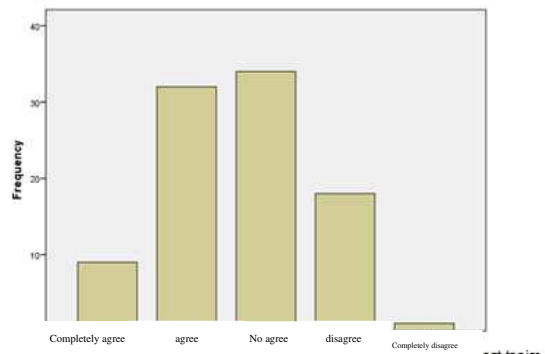


Figure 20

According to Figure 20, a majority of 44% have expressed their agreement with the item being asked. In other words, when they speak in English, they can easily concentrate on different topics. However, a minority of 21% has disagreed with the idea and 21% have had no idea here.

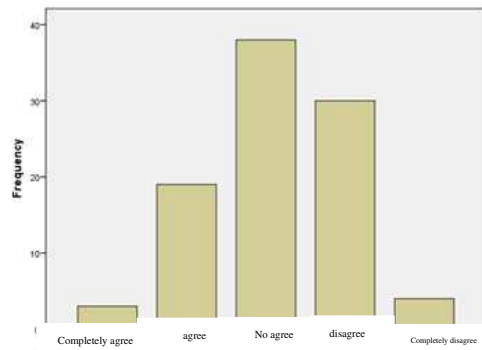


Figure 21

As Figure 21 demonstrated, 36% have shown their disagreement with the idea that they know enough words to use when speaking in English, and only 23% have agreed with it. Almost 40% have been neutral to the item. In other words, they think they don't have enough knowledge on English vocabulary to use in their conversations with others.

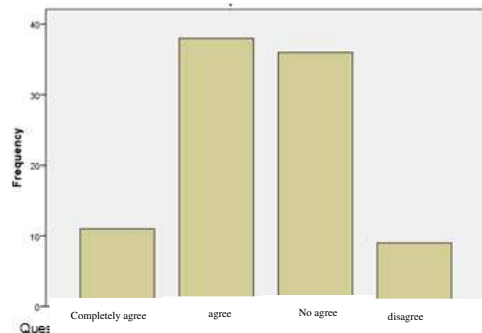


Figure 22

According to Figure 22, a majority of 52% have expressed their agreement with the item being asked. In other words, when they speak to others, they can understand all of the

words they use in their speech. However, a small minority of almost 10% has disagreed with the idea and 38% have had no idea in this regard.

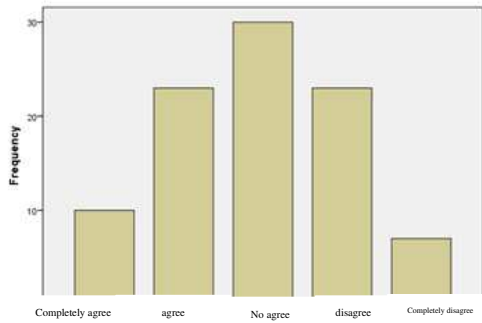


Figure 23

Figure 23 shows that 35% have agreed with the idea before they attend the language class, they could speak English with correct pronunciation and intonation and a small number of around 32% have shown their disagreement with the idea. A number of 33% have remained undecided about it.

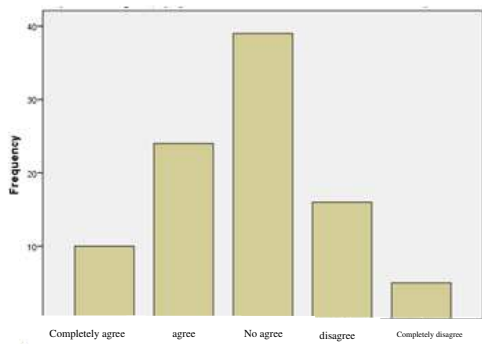


Figure 24

36% have shown their agreement with the idea when they speak in English, they pay close attention to intonation and stress patterns, and only 22% have disagreed with it. However, almost 41% have been neutral to the item.

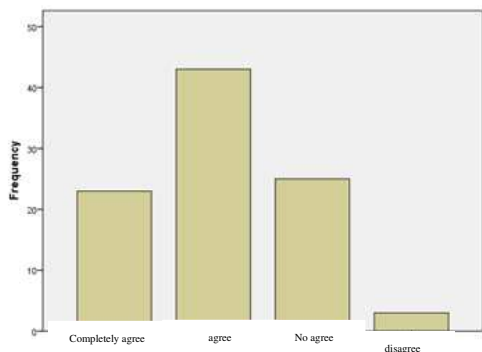


Figure 25

As we can see in Figure 25, a very high majority of the participants, more than 70%, have shown their agreement or

strong agreement with the idea that they easily interact with others. On the other hand, only 3% have disagreed with the idea.

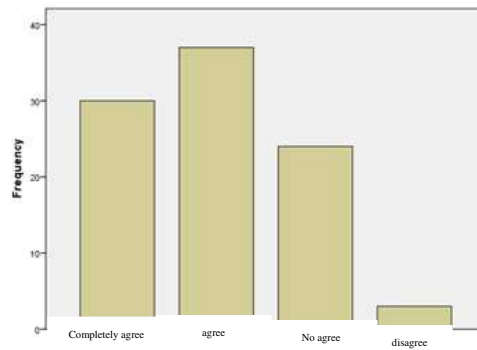


Figure 26

Figure 26 shows a great majority of 71% strongly agree with the idea that they easily participate in group and pair work and they have no certain difficulty in this regard. On the other hand, only 3% have disagreed with their notion.

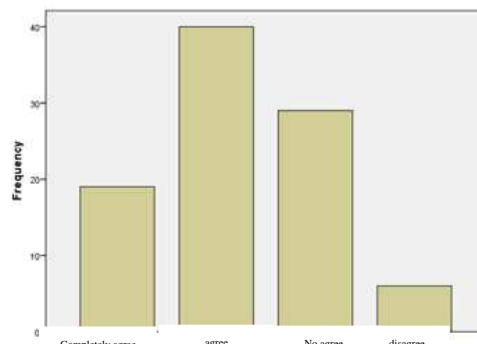


Figure 27

As we can learn from Figure 27, a high majority of the subjects of the study have agreed with the idea that they feel relaxed when they speak in English. In the same way, only 6% have disagreed with the idea. It seems a great majority have been sure of their communicative abilities.

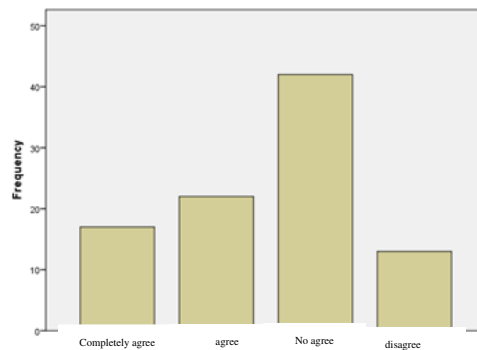


Figure 28

As we can understand from the information stated in Figure 28, a high majority of 42% have shown their agreement with the idea that they can easily express their intentions in English, and only 14% have disagreed with it. However, 44% have been neutral to the item.

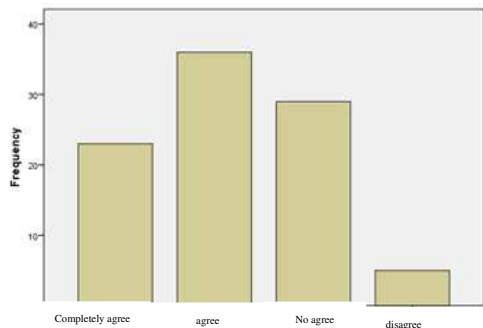


Figure 29

The data in Figure 29 shows that a high number of the subjects of the study, almost 63%, have agreed with the idea when they converse with others, they can understand them even if they didn't understand some of the words. On the other hand, only a minor number of only 5% disagreed with the idea stated above.

DISCUSSION

The goal of the present study was to investigate the communicative strategies of EFL learners. To achieve the required data in this regard, a predesigned questionnaire was used to probe the attitudes of around 94 language learners in a private language institute in Sirjan. The candidates in the study and based on their response reflected various types of communicative strategies including Substitution (average score of 3.2), non-verbal strategies (average score of 3.02), and avoidance (average score of 3.03). Non-verbal strategy refers to strategies such as the use of gestures and mime to replace verbal communication. Since gesture and miming can fulfill some part of the communicative needs of the subjects in a communicative context, it has been supported narrowly over other strategies. Besides, another strategy that is more dominant among the subjects of the study is avoidance. VanPatten et al.^[13] explain that learners of a second language may learn to avoid talking about topics for which they lack the necessary vocabulary or other language skills in the second language. Also, language learners sometimes start to try to talk about a topic but abandon the effort in mid-utterance after discovering that they lack the language resources needed to complete their message. This strategy with an average of 3.03 shows a narrow and small agreement over the others. In other words, the subjects of the study prefer not to use the language in any situation or any purpose when they feel they lack the required knowledge or linguistic ability.

However there are some other strategies, although being important, are not exercised so strongly by the subjects, including paraphrasing, coining new words, language switch, and asking for clarification (average scores of 2.87, 2.8, 2.8, and 2.25, respectively). Paraphrasing is the strategy by which learners use different words or phrases to express their intended meaning. For example, if learners do not know the word grandfather they may paraphrase it by saying "my father's father". The learners of the study are not in the proper level to coin new terms or ideas to replace for any idea. In the same way, coining new words with a mean average of 2.8 has not attracted many of the learners. Maybe the learners are not at the right level where they can instantly coin a new word for any unknown word or sentence.

When it is the time to ask about the effect of communicative strategies applied as they speak, they respond either negatively or prefer not to reveal their ideas about it. For instance, when asking about the subjects' response to the situation where they did not have the required knowledge for effective communication, most of them prefer not to give their prompt response to it or give a negative response.

It can clearly be observed that the learners' L1 has a significant role in the language class. The information that was sought shows that the majority agreed with using translation as a classroom technique to fulfill a part of their communicative needs. A majority of 43% agreed with the idea that they prefer to translate the expressions they were doubtful about. It indicates the idea that learners prefer to apply any possible technique in order to establish a fruitful communicative environment.

Although there is an attempt from the learners to fulfill a communicative activity in one or another way, they resort to those strategies that are meaningful and lead to a correct form. When asking the learners to respond to the item below "In case they cannot find a suitable word for express themselves when speaking, they may fill it with an irrelevant item", a majority of 74% showed their disagreement with the idea. In other words, we can conclude that the learners in any case they come to any problem, they choose any strategy to express themselves; however, the choice has to be meaningful, purposeful, and the learners feel certain about its accuracy and that it will not lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding.

In the same way, 50% of the participants in the study believed that to start and continue conversations, they always design a pattern in their mind. This shows the claim that the strategies selected by the subjects are often purposeful. It can go back to their personal experience or other factors. On the other hand, only a minor number of 25% have revealed their disagreement with the stated idea above. In other words, a great majority benefit usefully from the strategies that are present even in conversing in the L1.

The other item that can prove the subjects try to employ certain strategies to preserve communication is when they claimed in a conversation they submit their turns of speaking to others in a group in order to help the conversation continue. In other words, the cooperative strategy is dominant among the majority of the subjects (66%) in the language classes.

Besides, the subjects of the study show a positive attitude toward their personal abilities and aptitudes when they are in the teaching-learning situation. Almost 61% of the participants in the study believed that they had a special aptitude in speaking in English. On the whole, it seems that the majority have agreed with the idea they are talented enough to learn a foreign language and speak it successfully. This attitude proves the required background for more and useful communication for learners to communicate effectively. In the same manner, they are so confident in speaking English and they can communicate with others effectively.

In the same way, the subjects have no or little serious problem with using English in different situations. In the same way, the next question item again reflects the same ability of the learners when 52% claim that they can speak and communicate with others well with no problem.

As far as it is the matter of class participation, 34% believed that they are confident enough to have their share in any conversation activity. This is the place where they are encouraged to be active members of the group. As a consequence, the confidence that they bring to the language class is a helpful device that can assist the learners to employ effective strategies. Therefore, the learners are both motivated and confident to take part in all of the activities in a language class. However, when the learners speak to their instructors, a high majority of 57% believe that they can't perform well in these conditions. In other words, they act better when they speak to their classmates, but this is weaker when their partners are their instructors.

Besides, the confidence that the subjects feel when speaking English can assist them to communicate successfully when they are in the situation in order to interact with foreigners. 36% of the participants in the study believed that they were successful in talking to the foreigners on the phone, net, and even face to face. It means that the majority benefit from high confidence in using the language in conversation with others. Two question items in the study have challenged the very idea and both of which were responded positively by the subjects. As was discussed before, 35% have agreed with the idea before they attend the language class, they could speak English with correct pronunciation and intonation and around 32% have shown their disagreement with the idea. A number of 33% have remained undecided about it. In other words, it can be concluded that they did not feel satisfactory improvement in their pronunciation ability. 36% have shown their agreement with the idea when they speak in English, they pay close attention to intonation and stress patterns. A

minor number of them, only 22% have disagreed with it. However, a great number of them have been neutral to the item, almost 41%. It indicates the idea that language teachers either ignore presenting and teaching these ideas or learners do not know how important these skills are.

A very high majority of the participants have shown their agreement or strong agreement with the idea that they easily interact with others. On the other hand, only a small number of only 3% have disagreed with the idea. It means that achieving the ability to communicate with others is of great importance for these learners.

The high positive attitude toward the idea that they easily participate in group and pair work and they have no certain difficulty in this regard reveals the fact that most of the learners should have an outgoing character if they want to succeed in learning to speak the language. Besides, they have to be cooperative as an important strategy for language improvement.

A high majority of the subjects of the study have agreed with the idea that they feel relaxed when they speak in English. It seems a great majority have been sure of their communicative abilities as well as having self-control and self-confidence, all of which are achieved since they can use the language appropriately. Based on the results, being able to use the language for any given goal and purpose gives the participants the confidence to speak it properly.

Examining Research Questions

The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What types of CSs are employed by Iranian EFL learners?
2. What types of communicative strategies are more commonly used by subjects of the study?

As the next step, the questions were changed to the hypothesis below:

H1: EFL learners in Sirjan Kish Air Language Institute use certain and identifiable communicative strategies.

H2: EFL learners do not use certain types of communicative strategies in their communications.

To examine the first hypothesis, it was revealed that the subjects used the given strategies invariably without any uniform use level among them. In other words, the non-verbal strategy is employed more than the others. Other strategies use was not very prominent among these subjects.

Based on the given information, it was revealed that most of the given learners of the study employed the following strategies more commonly than others:

1. Non-verbal strategies
2. Avoidance
3. Substitution

Therefore, these strategies have been used more frequently than others and they are considered as the most dominant ones

among these learners. On the other hand, the strategies listed below show the strategies that are used less than others:

1. Paraphrasing
2. Coining new words
3. Language switch
4. Asking for clarification
5. Cooperation
6. Confidence

Therefore the answer to the first hypothesis is “yes”. On the other hand, since it was revealed that the strategies used by the learners share a lot in common, therefore the answer to the second hypothesis is also “yes”.

Suggestions for Further Study

The study could be more fruitful and demanding if it was undertaken other language learners in Sirjan as well as other cities in Iran. Besides, the main limitation of the present study goes to the use of a questionnaire for such broad purposes. If the researcher could have included interviews or direct observation as two additional sources of gathering information, it would lead to better results. Regarding the above-mentioned reason, there is enough space for more investigation in the area of code-switching and the practice of L1 by teachers in the language class.

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Appendix 1

A. English Questionnaire

Directions: You are going to specify your perceptions of the use and effectiveness of communication strategies. Please choose the appropriate answer to each question

1. You begin to talk about a concept but are unable to continue and leave a message unfinished because of language difficulties.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

2. You avoid talking about topic areas or concepts which pose language difficulties.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

3. You translate literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from a native language into a target language.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

4. You use a native language word or phrase with a native language pronunciation.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

5. You use a target language word that shares enough semantic features in common with the desired lexical item (e.g. ship for sailboat).

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

6. You make up a non-existing target language word on a basis of a supposed rule (e.g. vegetarianist for vegetarian).

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

7. You describe or exemplify the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language item or structure.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

8. You use a general or empty lexical item to fill gaps in vocabulary command (e.g. the overuse of thing, make, do).

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

9. You set up a new speech-plan when the original one fails.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

10. You turn to the interlocutor for help (e.g. What do you call ...?, Can you speak more slowly?, Do you understand?)

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

11. I do a good job of participating in a class discussion conducted fully in English.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

12. I am good at learning speaking skills.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

13. I have a problem learning speaking skills.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

14. I do not have any problem speaking in English when I should.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

15. I always think I am good at speaking in English.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

16. I feel confident about my ability to speak clearly.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

17. I can motivate myself to speak in English.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

18. I can speak fully in English well with my Malay lecturers.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

19. I am good at communicating with international students and lecturers.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

20. I can learn and use new English words in my conversation easily.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

b)

21. My speaking ability does not worry me.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

22. I am able to keep speaking in English even when my friends tease me.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

23. When I decide to say something in English, I go ahead and do it.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

24. It is not difficult for me to concentrate while speaking in English

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

25. I had vocabulary enough to express myself clearly

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

26. I understood all the vocabulary that I encountered

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

27. - I had good pronunciation when talking before starting conversation classes.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

28. - I always had good intonation when talking in conversation classes

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

29. I interacted in class easily with others.

a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never f) Not sure

b)

30. I participated in class easily with others.

- a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never
f) Not sure
31. I felt good and comfortable when speaking in English
a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never
f) Not sure
32. I communicated my ideas and opinions with ease to others
a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Seldom e) Never
f) Not su