Time-Gaining Communication Strategies Managing Processing Time Difficulties in L2 Oral Communication

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Despite the long-standing interest in communication strategies (CSs) for lexical problems, there has been a relative lack of attention to CSs that are used to cope with processing time difficulties. This qualitative study reports on how the problem with processing time can be managed by employing CSs in L2 communication. The participants were 12 Korean students studying in a university in the USA, whose language proficiency varied from limited to high advanced. The participants’ natural conversation data were recorded in various settings and stimulated recalls were conducted on the recorded conversations. From an inductive analysis of data, various time-gaining CSs (TGCSs), which refer to strategies managing processing time difficulties, were identified. Based on a taxonomic analysis, this study presents a taxonomy in which various TGCSs are organized into multiple levels. Examples illustrating how participants employed each TGCS are also provided. The participants’ actual use of TGCSs revealed that processing time problems could be managed by employing appropriate TGCSs. Drawing on the findings, this study suggests that L2 learners should be taught TGCSs and encouraged to use them.

I. INTRODUCTION

During second language (L2) oral communication, speakers often experience not only linguistic problems such as pronunciation, vocabulary (lexical), and structural (syntactic) problems, but also problems with processing time pressure. In delivering an intended message, for example, they may not be able to come up with a word within a time period that does not slow up or hinder the flow of conversation. In Dörnyei and Scott (1997), which most extensively discussed problem solving mechanisms in L2 communication, the processing time pressure, as well as resources deficit, perceived deficiency in one’s own language output, and perceived deficiency in the interlocutor’s performance, was listed as
a main source of L2 communication problems.

As speech processing in L2 is (at least partially) serial, it requires more attentional resources and processing time than in L1 (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). According to Dörnyei and Scott, L2 speakers frequently need more time to process and plan L2 speech than would be naturally available in fluent communication. Although L1 speakers may encounter processing time pressure, L2 speakers, especially L2 learners, experience it more frequently than L1 speakers. Furthermore, processing time pressure appears more serious for L2 speakers than for L1 speakers because L2 speakers are likely to experience it along with other types of linguistic problems, such as lexical and syntactic problems. L1 speakers are apt to need more time to process a word that they know, but are not able to retrieve. L2 speakers may need time to process for the same reason as L1 speakers. More often, however, L2 speakers tend to feel processing time difficulties because they have to produce a word or an expression that they do not know at all and have never produced. During the course of communication, therefore, L2 speakers have to cope with the processing time difficulties they encounter. How well they manage the difficulties is likely to play a significant role in successful communication. Given its importance, in the field of L2 communication and education, more attention should be given to how to manage problems with processing time.

How do L2 speakers manage to communicate when they have a limited command of a language and experience a problem? It is well known that L2 speakers can manage to overcome various linguistic problems by employing communication strategies (CSs), which researchers have defined in various ways. It is expected that L2 speakers employing CSs are less likely to have communication breakdowns at the time of processing time difficulties. The significance of these strategies is well reflected in the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) proficiency guideline. In this guideline, their use of pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech, as well as circumlocution caused by vocabulary and syntactic limitations, is listed as one of the criteria by which speakers can be classified into advanced level. According to the guideline, advanced speakers’ shortcomings can often be smoothed over by employing these strategies.

If this is the case, these strategies are something L2 speakers have to use to communicate effectively. Nonetheless, there has been a relative lack of research on CSs for processing time difficulties. Compared to many CSs for managing lexical problems, only several stalling devices or CSs are put forward by researchers. To help L2 speakers cope with processing time pressure, therefore, more kinds of CSs should be identified. In this article, based on natural conversation and stimulated recall data, I will present various time-gaining strategies, many of which are new to the literature.
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Defining Characteristics and Definitions of Communication Strategies

Defining characteristics of CSs are important especially because they are related to what are considered to be CSs and how to identify CSs. Given their significance, researchers have addressed defining characteristics of CSs. Despite some controversy among researchers, the main components generally discussed as defining characteristics of CSs are problematicity, consciousness, and intentionality (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997).

As a trial to provide the definition or the defining characteristics of CSs, researchers have tried to distinguish the construct of CSs from other related constructs. Corder (1983) clearly distinguished between learning strategies and CSs. According to Corder, while learning strategies contribute to the development of the Interlanguage (IL) system, CS is used by a speaker when he/she is faced with some difficulty due to his/her communicative ends outrunning his/her communicative means. Tarone (1983) also distinguishes CSs from production strategies, which refer to “an attempt to use one’s linguistic system efficiently and clearly, with a minimum of effort” (p. 73), and language learning strategies, which refer to “an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language” (p. 73).

Researchers have suggested definitions of CS reflecting their own theoretical perspectives. The main perspectives presented in the earlier stage of CS literature can be classified into two: (a) an intra-individual and psycholinguistic view (e.g., Færch & Kasper, 1983b) and (b) an inter-individual, interactional, and sociolinguistic view (e.g., Tarone, 1983). In Færch and Kasper’s (1983a) book, Strategies in Interlanguage Communication, which was the first extensive literature on CSs, both perspectives were presented. Færch and Kasper (1983b) presented the psycholinguistic definition of CSs: “Communication strategies are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communication goal” (p. 36). The sociolinguistic/interactional definition was put forth by Tarone (1983): “Communication strategy (CS)—a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared (Meaning structures included both linguistic and sociolinguistic structures)” (p. 72).

The problems of the interactional definition, which is based on cooperative behavior, have been pointed out in the literature. Bialystok (1990), for example, suggested that the interactional definition is not satisfactory for several reasons. First, native speakers do not always help the learner even when the learners’ problems are clearly identified. Second, the learner sometimes knows that he is experiencing the problem and wants to solve it himself. Third, most of all, it is not easy to identify the advanced learners’ problems and
CSs in the performance data. The advanced learners can predict a communicative problem within the following constituent and attempt to solve it beforehand (i.e., as a part of the normal planning process). Given their less clearly marked role as a foreigner, advanced learners' need to save face is greater than less advanced ones and thus they are more likely to use covert CSs. With the definition of interactional approach and identification, as mentioned in Bialystok (1990), these covert problems and CSs cannot be identified. Due to these limitations, most CS researchers favor the psycholinguistic definition rather than the sociolinguistic one.

On the other hand, there has recently been an attempt to extend the conception of CSs. Dörnyei (1995) presented an extended view on CSs to include stalling devices that are not strictly meaning-related. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) further extended the conceptualization of CS, equating the use of CS with communication problem-solving behavior in general. Within Dörnyei and Scott's definition, CSs are considered to be every potentially intentional attempt to cope with any language related problem of which the speaker is aware during the course of communication. In this article, I adopted Dörnyei and Scott's extended conceptualization of CSs.

2. Time-Gaining Strategies in the CS Literature

Given the importance of CSs in communication and the rise of communicative approaches to language teaching, there is a growing body of research on CSs. As Dörnyei and Kormos (1998) stated, however, CS researchers have mainly discussed CSs for lexical problems. In the CS literature, accordingly, there has been a lack of attention to CSs for problems with processing time. Furthermore, there has been disagreement as to whether or not fillers and hesitation devices, which are used to sustain communication in the face of difficulties, are considered to be CSs. Some researchers did not consider them CSs. These are not included in the well-known taxonomies presented by Tarone (1980), Færch and Kasper (1983b) or the Nijmegen groups. Færch and Kasper (1983b), for example, did not include them among CSs, but temporal variables of speech performance. In a similar line, Tarone (1980) considered stalling strategies to be production strategies, which she defined as referring to general attempts to use the linguistic system efficiently and clearly, rather than CSs, which she defined as referring to being used more specifically to negotiate meaning by offering alternative means to communicate one's message.

On the other hand, other researchers classified fillers and hesitation devices as CSs. In their taxonomy of CSs, Haastrup and Phillipson (1983) included strategies aimed at solving retrieval problems as a type of achievement strategies. Likewise, in the taxonomy of CSs, Canale (1983) included use of pause fillers and Rost (1994) mentioned conversation fillers in his list of CSs. The attempt to consider fillers and hesitation devices
as CSs has been highlighted by Dörnyei and his associates. Dörnyei (1995) pointed out that Færch and Kasper’s (1983b) definition, in which problem and consciousness are considered criteria of CSs, implies that stalling devices should be included among CSs. Dörnyei used the term stalling or time gaining strategies to refer to use of fillers/hesitation devices (e.g., well, now let me see, and as a matter of fact). As Dörnyei stated, these strategies differ from other types of CSs in that they are not actually used to compensate for any linguistic deficiencies while other types of CSs are used to gain time and keep the communication channel open at times of difficulty. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) also included processing time pressure strategies, which comprise use of fillers and repetitions.

Although these researchers have contributed to extending the conceptualization of CS and included time-gaining strategies among CSs, they only listed one or two kinds of strategies (i.e., fillers and repetition). CS research is also limited in that despite the vast amount of CS literature, there has been a lack of research exploring CSs, especially CSs for processing time difficulties, used by Korean English speakers. Drawing on these limitations, the purpose of this study was to identify various CSs that Korean ESL speakers employ to manage problems with processing time.

III. METHOD

1. Participants

The participants of this study were 12 Korean students who were studying at a university in the U.S. with a variety of student statuses: English Language Institute, undergraduate, MA, and Ph.D. students. They also varied in terms of gender (male (5), female (7)), age (23 ~ 43), the length of stay in the U.S. (2 months ~ 6 years), the level of English proficiency (limited ~ high advanced), and the field of study.

2. Research Sites

The conversation data for this study were collected at various sites where the participants had English conversations in authentic conversational contexts. The main research site from which I collected conversation data was a conversation partner program called Chat Room. Any nonnative students on campus could participate in this program to improve their spoken English skills. Native-English-speaking undergraduate students who participated in this program received a passing grade. In this program, they could converse on topics of their choice for 1 hour per session because there were no preset topics. The participants’ conversation data were also collected during a spoken English test
administered to measure the participants’ oral English fluency, in the course of classroom work, and in various other social situations, such as during their lunch hours, during teaching practice, during Bible study discussions, at parties, and in an afternoon class at an elementary school in which a participant taught Korean.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

This study used data from recorded conversations and stimulated recalls on them in identifying CSs, which was recommended by Kasper and Kellerman (1997). The participants’ conversations in various situations were observed and recorded on video and/or audiotapes, depending on the availability of videotaping. As suggested by Goetz and LeCompte (1984), the observer and recording equipment were positioned in a location that was as unobtrusive as possible to obtain more natural conversation data. In the various research sites, about 120 hour conversation data were recorded for this study. The number of conversation sessions recorded for each participant and the recording time for each session varied.

During the observation and preliminary coding, I identified moments in which the participants appeared to experience problems and to employ CSs. This coding was based on the performance features that researchers presented as evidence for strategic intervention: temporal variables (rate of articulation, pauses, drawls, or repeats), self-repair (false starts and new starts), speech slips (lapses or speech errors), and saying almost the same meaning twice.

Based on the coding, I conducted the stimulated recall, which is a hybrid of a metacognitive interview and a think-aloud session (Garner, 1987) and can be used to explore learners’ processes or strategies at the time of an activity or task (Gass & Mackey, 2000). During the stimulated recall, I let the participant watch or listen to (depending on the recording) a 1 or 2 minute clip of their previously recorded conversations that included a problematic moment identified in the coding. In each clip, some contextual conversations before and after the problematic moment were also included in order to help the participant situate the moment of employing CS in the context and remember it better.

While watching or listening to the clip, the participants were asked to stop the conversation clip at whichever moment they had experienced problems and used CSs and to report on them. Each clip was played back as many times as the participant wanted. After each clip was stopped, the participants were asked to comment on what had happened in their mind during the problem solving in relation to intended meaning, communication problems (e.g., word(s), structure, and/or processing time problems), and what was done to deal with the problem(s), and factors that they believed influenced their conversations. To obtain more reliable data, the stimulated recalls were conducted in
Korean, the native language of the researcher and the participants. The stimulated recall sessions were audio taped and transcribed.

From an inductive analysis of conversation and stimulated recall data, I inductively identified CSs that were used to manage processing time difficulties. These CSs were identified on the basis of the participants’ conversation data and their reports in the stimulated recall, during which they confirmed that they had experienced processing time difficulties and used CSs to manage the difficulties. After CSs were identified, a taxonomic analysis (Spradley, 1980) was conducted. In this analysis, CSs were classified into categories and subcategories, depending on the resources used in employing CSs.

IV. FINDINGS: TIME-GAINING CSs (TGCSs)

The findings revealed that when the participants experienced problems with processing time, they employed various CSs, which I call time-gaining CSs (TGCSs). TGCSs refer to CSs employed to increase time for formulating or retrieving an utterance before producing it when the intended one was not immediately available. TGCSs differ from other types of CSs in that they are used to gain more time to process utterances, while other types of CSs are used to solve a linguistic problem such as a phonetic, lexical, or syntactic problem and to process the utterance itself. Various subcategories of TGCSs are presented in Table 1. TGCSs are first classified into seven: (a) pausing, (b) repeating, (c) lengthening, (d) filling, (e) using nonverbal expressions such as laughter, sigh, clearing throat, and erasing blackboard, (f) eliciting interlocutor’s turn, and (g) combination TGCSs. These are further classified into subcategories.

In examples that show each type of TGCS, the utterance (e.g., word(s), pronunciation, or sentence) that was problematic to express and triggered a TGCS is presented in “[ ].” When the participant lacked an idea to produce, the problematic idea is presented in “[ (idea)].” The intended message that was originally planned, but was not produced due to the problem is presented in “{ }.” Natural pauses are presented as “,” and unnatural pauses that lasted longer than the allowed time are presented as “(pause).” Nonverbal actions are presented in “( )” in italic. Utterances, pauses, or nonverbal actions that were used to employ the corresponding TGCS are underlined. When a TGCS was used for selecting one from the possible options that were available to the participant, the selected utterance is presented in “< >” and the other available option(s) is presented right after the selected one in “{or /}.” A sentence that was unfinished because of a linguistic problem is marked by “#”. Phonetic scripts are presented in “/ /.” The lengthened words are presented in “| |” with “::” appended to the lengthened syllable.
TABLE 1
Time-Gaining CSs (TGCSs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pausing</th>
<th>Self-repetition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeating</td>
<td>Interlocutor-repetition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lengthening</td>
<td>Non-lexical fillers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., ah, eh, uh(h), um, and uh(u)m)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approximation fillers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., kind of (like) (a), and (just) like (a))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attention fillers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., you know and the thing is)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis fillers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., actually and especially)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Filling</td>
<td>Lexical fillers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination fillers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., and (then) and but)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraphrase fillers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., (what) I mean)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty fillers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., how can I say?, what can I say?, what’s that?, how to say that?, how can I explain this?, and how do I put this?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Nonverbal Expressions</td>
<td>Laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clearing Throat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Erasing Blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliciting Interlocutor’s Turn</td>
<td>Combination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Pausing

Pausing TGCSs were identified as the first type of TGCSs. The term pausing TGCS refers to being silent to gain time to process before producing a problematic utterance. Most pauses that occurred while employing a specific type of CS can be interpreted as TGCSs. In examples (1a-d), pausing TGCSs were used along with other types of CSs.

(1) a. [palace /pælɪs/]  
You can visit old (pause) /pælɪs/ /pális/ (pause) in Seoul.

b. [magnifying glass]  
Without any (pause) tool, you can see it.
c. [foliage]
   I hope until next Monday we have enough (pause) turned-out leaves.

d. [I feel comfortable to talk to American]
   Nowadays I felt American (pause) # When I talk to American, my feel is
   comfortable.

According to the participants’ reports, in examples (1a-d), they used pausing TGCSs
before employing other types of CS when the appropriate intended linguistic form (e.g.,
pronunciation, word, and structure) was not immediately available. Pausing TGCSs were
used along with a varied repetition CS for the problematic pronunciation of palace in
example (1a), a generalization substitution CS for the problematic word magnifying glass
in example (1b), a compound-word coinage substitution CS for the problematic word
foliage in example (1c), and a structure-splitting CS for the structure problem with the
subject complement in example (1d). As shown in examples (1a-d), when pausing TGCSs
were employed along with another type of CS, it was not clear whether pausing was used
to choose a type of CS and the utterance to use, or to retrieve the problematic linguistic
form.

In examples (2a-f), the participants were able to successfully retrieve the intended
linguistic form expressed in “[ ]” in each example by using pausing TGCSs.

   (2) a. I paid (pause) [bill].
       b. Financial (pause) [crisis].
       c. Fold the paper (pause) [symmetry/simetry/].
       d. If he didn’t do it, he could (pause) [could’ve been avoided.]
       e. I could review (pause) [all the words I taught (idea)].
       f. I usually sit (pause) < θ >{or in/at} the back side of the class.

According to the participants’ reports, pausing TGCS were used to gain time to retrieve
the word bill in example (2a), the word crisis in example (2b), the pronunciation of the
word symmetry in example (2c), the structure in example (2d), and the idea in example
(2e), and to choose the appropriate preposition among θ (no preposition), in, and at in
exemple (2f).

2. Repeating

Repeating TGCSs were identified as the second type of TGCSs. The term repeating
TGCSs refers to reiterating the utterances already produced to gain time before producing
a problematic utterance. Repeating TGCSs involves repeating syllable(s), word(s), or a
clause preceding the problematic utterance in order to gain time. Repeating TGCSs were further classified into two: (a) self-repetition and (b) interlocutor-repetition TGCSs, depending on whose utterance was repeated.

1) Self-repetition

The term self-repetition TGCSs refers to repeating one's own utterance to gain time to process the utterance before producing it. In example (3), the participants employed a self-repetition TGCS.

(3) [respected]
In my country, teacher is very very very very # Teacher is king.

The participant stated that he employed a self-repetition TGCS to retrieve the word respected by repeating the word very five times. Even after that, he failed to retrieve the word. Thus, he employed an association substitution CS and replaced the intended word respected with king.

Self-repetition TGCSs were also used to retrieve the appropriate linguistic form as in example (4). In this case, the participants were able to retrieve the intended linguistic form by employing self-repetition TGCSs.

(4) a. Meditation will will [remedy] that kind of problem.
   b. I I I I I I I I I I [grow] this hair this long too hard.
   c. Some people pay money for people who who who, not make, just [select]
      their children's name.
   d. We just just [are taught by text book edited by government.]
   e. I was ah I was < broadcast >{or broadcasting} member.

During the stimulated recall interviews, the participants explained that repetitions were a strategy used to gain time, which allowed them to produce the appropriate utterance. According to the participants' reports, they repeated the word will to retrieve the word remedy in example (4a), the subject I to retrieve the word grow in example (4b), the word who to retrieve the word select in example (4c), the word just to retrieve the passive construction expressed in "[ ]" in example (4d), and the words I was to choose between broadcast and broadcasting in example (4e). As shown in examples (4a-e), self-repetition TGCSs were used when the participant needed extra time to process the utterance.

2) Interlocutor-repetition
The term *interlocutor-repetition* TGCSs refers to repeating the interlocutor’s utterance to gain time to process the intended utterance. Interlocutor-repetition TGCSs are found in examples (5a-b).

(5) a. Spoken English Test Administrator (NS): Can you introduce your country?  
   Participant: Introduce my country?  
   b. Spoken English Test Administrator (NS): Tell me about your future goal?  
   Participant: Future goal?

Interlocutor-repetition TGCSs were mainly used when the participants experienced problems generating ideas in response to a question. According to the participants’ reports, they repeated the interlocutor’s utterance to have time to think about how to answer when they were asked questions during the spoken English test. This is well reflected in the participant’s statement, “I knew what the sentence means, but I repeated in order to have some time to think about what I was going to say about my country.”

3. Lengthening

TGCSs were identified as the third type of TGCSs. The term *lengthening* TGCSs refers to stretching syllable(s) or a word preceding a problem to gain time. The lengthened words are presented in “[ ]” with “::” appended to the lengthened syllable. Lengthening TGCSs were used along with other type of CS in example (6).

(6) {Because they had a lower level of [proficiency]}  
   Because they [ha::d] # It’s really easy and simple like this easy words actually they didn’t know.

The participant reported that she wanted to say *lower level of proficiency*, but the word *proficiency* was not immediately available to her. While lengthening the word *had*, she failed to come up with the word *proficiency* and thus chose to use a message-effect illustration CS and came up with an idea about how to employ it. Employing a message-effect illustration CS, she eventually uttered “It’s really easy and simple like this easy words actually they didn’t know” in order to attempt to deliver her original intended message: because they had a lower level of proficiency.

Lengthening TGCSs were also employed to retrieve a linguistic form not available immediately. In the following examples, after employing lengthening TGCSs, the participants were able to retrieve the intended linguistic forms and ideas.
(7) a. I was really [enjoy] that.
   b. They bilingual people [cognitively] function better.
   c. You are confused about, I mean, [who a reporter is.]
   d. You can go [in advance to the future (idea)].

According to the participants’ reports, lengthening TGCSs were used to retrieve the word enjoy in example (7a), the word cognitively in example (7b), the interrogative structure who a reporter is in example (7c), and the idea in advance to the future in example (7d).

4. Filling

Filling TGCSs were identified as the fourth type of TGCSs. The term filling TGCSs refers to producing extra fillers to fill the gap while formulating what to say. Filling TGCSs involve the use of two types of fillers: (a) non-lexical fillers, which have no lexical meaning and (b) lexical fillers, which are composed of lexical word(s).

1) Non-lexical fillers

Non-lexical fillers were used to gain time to process. Non-lexical fillers included ah, eh, uh(h), um, and uh(t)um. In examples (8a-b), non-lexical filler TGCSs were used along with other types of CS.

(8) a. [raise]
   I wanna wanna uh [grow] bird.
   b. {When is the [final] exam?}
   When is the (pause) exam of uh um # When is the last day of the school?
   We have to submit our papers by that time.

According to the participant’s reports, in example (8a), the non-lexical filler uh was used along with repetition to gain time when the participant experienced a lexical problem with the word raise and employed an approximation substitution CS. In example (8b), the non-lexical filler um was used to gain time when the participant experienced a problem with the word final and was not able to deliver the intended message: when is the final exam? After saying um twice, he employed a message-effect illustration CS and said “When is the last day of the school?”

Non-lexical fillers were also used when the participant need to select one among several available options as in examples (9a-b).
(9) a. There was a real um um funny <happening>\{or event/ incident/episode\}.
   b. It's really uhuh <annoying>\{or stressful/depressing\}.

According to the participant’s reports, in example (9a), the non-lexical filler um was used in order to gain time to select the appropriate one among several word options available to her: happening, event, incident, or episode. By employing this type of TGCS, the participant gain time to choose the word happening. In example (9b), uhuh was used in order to gain time to choose the appropriate word annoying among several options available to her: annoying, stressful, or depressing.

2) Lexical fillers

Lexical fillers, which are composed of lexical word(s), were also used to gain time to process utterances before producing them. I subdivided lexical fillers into six types and named each type (a) approximation fillers, (b) attention fillers, (c) emphasis fillers, (d) coordination fillers, (e) paraphrase fillers, and (f) difficulty fillers.

(1) Approximation fillers

Approximation fillers, such as kind of (like) (a) and (just) like (a), were identified as a type of lexical fillers. Based on the fact that these fillers imply that the produced utterance is not the exact one, but is similar, I call them approximation fillers. Approximation fillers are found in examples (10a-d).

(10) a. Taking care of parents is like a [morality].
   b. What kind of like a [topics] do you (pause) talk about?
   c. They felt kind of like a [accomplishment].
   d. If you make it like kind of [obligation].

According to the participants’ reports, a lexical filler, like a, was used to gain time to retrieve the word morality in example (10a), like a to retrieve the word topics in example (10b), kind of like a to retrieve the word accomplishment in example (10c), and like kind of to retrieve the word obligation in example (10d).

(2) Attention fillers

Attention fillers included the expressions you know and the thing is. As the participant using this type of filler appeared to attempt to elicit the interlocutor’s attention, I call them
attention fillers.

(11) a. They have good, you know, [salary]
    b. If your poem, you know, [means something, relate the words (idea).]
    c. The thing is [we student teachers need to follow what the classroom teachers asked us to do (idea).]

According to the participants, you know was used just to gain time to retrieve the word salary in example (11a), and the idea expressed in [ ] in example (11b). Likewise, in example (11c), the participant stated that she used the thing is just to gain time to retrieve the idea in [ ].

(3) Emphasis fillers

The words actually and especially were identified as emphasis fillers. As the participant employing this type of filler appeared to attempt to emphasize the importance of the utterance, I call them emphasis fillers. As shown in example (12), emphasis fillers were usually used before starting messages.

(12) Actually, [number four when we use the Chinese character, the pronunciation is same about death (idea).]

The participant stated that he said actually because he needed extra time to retrieve ideas about what to say. According to the participant's report, in example (12), he employed a TGCS to gain time rather than to convey the lexical meaning of the word actually.

(4) Coordination fillers

Coordination fillers, such as and (then) and but, were identified as a type of lexical fillers. As these words are used to coordinate words, clauses, or sentences, they are referred to as coordination fillers. Coordination fillers are found in examples (13a-b).

(13) a. Inside of it (Kyungbok palace), and, there is a [hidden] . . . garden for king and . . .
    b. Jung is older than me. So when I said to him in Korean, and I use [polite speech.]

The participants stated that they used a coordination filler and to gain time to retrieve the
word *hidden* in example (13a) and the words *polite speech* in example (13b).

(5) Paraphrase fillers

The expression, *(what) I mean*, was identified as a paraphrase filler. As the expression *I mean* is used when the previous utterance is rephrased, I call this paraphrase filler.

(14) She is the only person who, *I mean*, *(look up at the ceiling)* only person who *I mean*, [from the country where *(pause) (laugh)* English is not spoken.]

According to the participant's reports, in example (14), the participant used the paraphrase filler *I mean* to gain time to retrieve the utterance presented in [ ].

(6) Difficulty fillers

Difficulty fillers included *how can I say?*, *what can I say?*, *What's that?*, *How to say that?*, *How can I explain this?* and *How do I put this?* Because these expressions imply a problem with producing an utterance, I call these difficulty fillers.

(15) Rock is *how can I say?* *(rotate her hand several times)* Rock is [falling down].

The participant stated that he used a difficulty filler, *how can I say?*, to gain time to retrieve the words *falling down*, which were not immediately available to her.

5. Using Nonverbal Expressions

Using nonverbal expression was identified as the fifth type of TGCSs. The term *using nonverbal expression TGCS* refers to using non-verbal physical gestures for the purpose of gaining time to process an utterance. In the stimulated recalls, some participants stated that, in order to gain time to think about what to say, they used physical actions such as (a) laughter, (b) sighing, (c) clearing the throat, and (d) erasing the blackboard. A participant remarked that he tended to clear his throat to have more time to think about how to solve the problem. During her teaching, another participant was observed sighing and erasing the blackboard when she seemed to experience problems. When she was asked during the stimulated recall, she admitted that she used these nonverbal actions to gain time to think about what to say when she taught.
6. Eliciting Interlocutor’s Turn

Eliciting interlocutor’s turn was identified as the sixth type of TGCSs. The term *elicit ing interlocutor’s turn* TGCSs refers to attempting to make the interlocutor take a conversation turn in order to gain time to retrieve a problematic utterance or idea.

(16)

**ESL Teacher:** You know what? Actually, it clicked with me. When you are talking about values, it occurred to me HOW RESPECTABLE you are.... Is your father is more conservative, you think, a little more traditional, more conservative, (*pause*) than other Koreans? Or no?

**Participant:** I don’t know exactly, [but:]

**ESL Teacher:** What I mean?

**Participant:** Yah! What’s conservative?

**ESL Teacher:** Is your father more strict? It’s more like harder...

**Participant’s Reports in the Stimulated Recall**

“I thought that I should explain why my father is conservative, as well as offer a yes or no answer. But I couldn’t even conceive the idea of explaining why my father is conservative. So I said ‘I don’t know exactly’ to deliver the message: ‘I don’t know exactly how to explain why he is conservative.’ After saying but I was going to say ‘he is conservative.’ When she misinterpreted my utterance and asked if I knew what she meant, I thought it is a good chance to gain time to think about what to say. To make her explain more, I pretended not to understand the word conservative, even though I fully understood it. I often ask questions about what I know... While she tried to make me understand the meaning of the word conservative, I could come up with an idea to say. I explained why my father is conservative by providing an example that I cannot make a joke in front of my father.”

As shown in the participant’s comments, in example (16), he intentionally pretended not to understand what the teacher had said, specifically the meaning of conservative, in order to make the teacher take a conversation turn and to have time for himself to come up with what to say. He said “Yah! What’s conservative?” pretending not to understand her.
7. Combination

Combination TGCSs were identified as the seventh type of TGCSs. The term combination TGCS refers to combining several TGCSs to gain time. As shown in examples (17-21), various types of TGCSs were combined to gain processing time. In example (17), the participant needed to gain processing time to select between the expression crazy about and fall in love. Thus, he employed a combination TGCS by using multiple TGCSs: (a) self-repetition by repeating I, (b) an attention filler, you know, and (c) a difficulty filler, how to say that?

(17) If I if I saw, you know, some girl, and I I got, you know, how to say that? <crazy about>{or fall in love}

➤ Time for selecting between ‘crazy about’ and ‘fall in love’
  □ self-repetition: I I
  □ attention filler: you know
  □ difficulty filler: how to say that?

In example (18), in order to gain extra time to search for the word weird, the participant used a combination TGCS by using multiple TGCSs: (a) an approximation filler, kind of like and (b) a paraphrase filler, I mean.

(18) That’s kind of like very, I mean, [weird] like like.

➤ Time for searching for ‘weird’
  □ approximation filler: kind of like
  □ paraphrase filler: I mean

In example (19), in order to gain time to obtain the expression very hard on me, the participant employed combination TGCS by using multiple TGCSs: (a) self-repetition by repeating makes me, (b) non-lexical fillers, ah and um, and (c) an attention filler, you know, and (d) a difficulty filler, how to say that?

(19) That makes me # that thought make me # ah , you know, um how to say that?
   That thought make me [very hard on me]. Is that right to say?

➤ Time for searching ‘very hard on me’
  □ self-repetition: makes me makes me
non-lexical filler: *ah, um*
attention filler: *you know*
difficulty filler: *how to say that?*

In example (20), to gain time for choosing between *say* and *speak*, the participant used a combination TGCS using multiple TGCSs: (a) self-repetition by repeating *you don't* and (b) pausing.

(20) *You don't you don't (pause) <say>{or speak} colloquial thing .... You just used the normal. Formal...? Is it normal?*

- Time for selecting 'speak' and 'say'
- self-repetition: *you don't you don't*
- pausing

In example (21), when the participant needed to gain time to construct the sentence "That case is not always like that," she employed a combination TGCS employing multiple TGCSs: (a) self-repetition by repeating *it's not*, (b) a non-lexical filler *eh*, and (c) a nonverbal physical gesture, laughter, and (d) a difficulty filler, *Oh my gosh!*

(21) *They can be my best friend, but it's not the eh, it's not always, (laugh) it's not like the (laugh), Oh my gosh! [That case is not always like that.]*

- Time for searching 'That case is not always like that'
- self-repetition: *it's not... it's not... it's not*
- non-lexical filler: *eh*
- non-verbal gesture: *laughter*
- difficulty filler: *Oh my gosh!*

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, I attempted to present various TGCSs that can be used to manage processing time difficulties in L2 oral communication. From the natural conversation and stimulated recall data, I identified various types of TGCSs, including new types of TGCSs—using nonverbal expressions (i.e., laughing, sighing, throat clearing, and erasing the blackboard), eliciting the interlocutor's turn, and combining multiple TGCSs—which have not been mentioned in the previous literature. TGCSs have been mentioned in the
literature, but under different names, such as fillers in Dörnyei and Scott (1997) and problem-solving mechanisms related to processing time pressure in Dörnyei and Kormos (1998). Due to the new types of TGCSs, the TGCSs presented in this article are more extensive than those of other researchers. These presented TGCSs can contribute to extending the lists of TGCSs L2 speakers can use in instances of processing time difficulties. Unlike other researchers, I also subdivided lexical fillers into seven categories and named them.

This study revealed the moments at which the participants needed to employ TGCSs as well as the problems triggering the use of them. TGCSs involved increasing time for formulating or retrieving an utterance before producing it. TGCSs were employed when the participants attempted to gain time for (a) retrieving or formulating the appropriate linguistic form (e.g., pronunciation, word, and structure) or ideas unavailable to them immediately, (b) selecting one among several options available to them, and (c) identifying an alternative for the originally intended one (e.g., word(s), structure, and message).

This study also contributed to extending the conceptualization of CSs. In the CS literature, as Dörnyei and Kormos (1998) stated, CS discussions have been focused on CSs for lexical problems. However, it is important to recognize that TGCSs need to be classified as CSs because they also fit into the defining characteristics of CSs—problem, consciousness, and intentionality—on which researchers have generally agreed. By including TGCSs among CSs, this study supports Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) extended conceptualization of CSs, in which the use of CS equates with communication problem-solving behavior in general.

The findings of this study have implications for CS research. TGCSs should be identified from a qualitative study using stimulated recall and natural conversation data for several reasons. First, it is possible that L2 speakers use fillers or nonverbal expressions, which are classified as TGCSs in this article, for other purposes. For example, it is likely that L2 speakers say the word(s) actually or you know to express the lexical meanings of them and the expression how to say that? to elicit the interlocutor's help, rather than to gain time. From conversation data, it is hard to identify whether the participant uttered these word(s) and expressions to gain time or to express the lexical meaning. The best way to know whether or not a certain word(s) or expression was used to employ a TGCS is through the participant's reports. If this is the case, it is problematic to identify TGCSs without checking the participants' reports in the stimulated recall. Second, an experimental study is less likely to make researchers identify the new types of TGCSs presented in this article. From an experimental study, for example, it is hard to recognize that L2 speakers attempt to elicit the interlocutor's turn in order to gain time to think. The significance of the stimulated recall is also attributable to the fact that the participants' reports play an important role in revealing the problems that triggered the use of TGCSs. Therefore, it is
recommended that future research that attempt to identify TGCSs should use stimulated recall data as well as natural conversation data. Other possible directions of future research include examining the comparative effectiveness among the subcategories of TGCSs and comparing the type of TGCSs and the number of TGCSs among the participants.

The participants' actual use of TGCSs showed that processing time problems can be managed by employing TGCSs. It appears that the presented TGCSs can help L2 speakers manage the processing time difficulties in actual authentic conversations especially because they were identified from natural conversation data. It can be argued that L2 speakers using TGCSs are more likely to communicate effectively and successfully and less likely to have communication breakdown. Given their effectiveness in facilitating communication, L2 speakers should be encouraged to employ TGCSs at the time of processing time difficulties or pressure. This view is reflected in Hatch’s (1978) statement that learners should be told to use fillers to show native speakers that they are really trying.

It is believed that many L2 speakers and learners already know at least some types of TGCSs and employ them when experiencing processing time difficulties. Given this situation, do L2 teachers need to teach TGCSs to L2 learners, who are believed to know at least some types of TGCSs? I argue that it is still necessary to teach L2 learners TGCSs. It can be assumed that L2 speakers who use only one type of TGCSs all the time may be considered less fluent or boring while those employing various types of TGCSs may be perceived as a more fluent L2 speaker. It is also assumed that L2 speakers, especially L2 learners, are less likely to know and use all types of TGCSs. Drawing on the aforementioned assumptions as well as the effective role of TGCSs in managing processing time difficulties, I suggest that L2 learners should be taught various types of TGCSs and encouraged to employ them in actual communication.

REFERENCES


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