Communication Strategies in Seventh Grade English Textbooks

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This study aims to explore the aspects of communication strategies (CSs) integrated in the seventh grade textbooks according to the revision of the seventh national school curriculum. A selection of three student books for the seventh grade and their corresponding activity books were analyzed based on the taxonomy of achievement strategies (ASs) by Nakatani (2005). A total of 1,523 examples of ASs were found in the textbooks and 66 percent of them were maintenance strategies whereas other strategies took a relatively small portion. Some textbooks showed various ways of integrating CSs into contexts and practical spoken expressions while others showed lack of variety and authenticity in expressions. The results indicate that the textbooks proposed a substantial amount of diverse ASs but lacked in balanced reflection of the strategies and their authenticity. These findings imply that the reflection of CSs in seventh grade textbooks still seems to require a further development, yet has certainly improved in frequency and variety.

I. INTRODUCTION

The seventh national school curriculum focused on improving students’ communication skills in English. Communication skills are now the most important part of teaching English. As the world has become globalized and the need to speak English as a vehicle of communication has increased, the governmental policies on English education have been modified in favor of improving students’ communication skills. In 2009, the revision of the seventh national school curriculum was enacted and it focuses more on the authenticity of context in a textbook and development of students’ ability for real communication than the original curriculum. In this vein, CSs have been considered greatly. Dörnyei (1995) mentioned that interaction in a foreign language is certainly problematic and students need
to learn particular CSs to cope with the problems arising from real life communication. Students might benefit from the instructional programs that include the specific teaching of CSs. For these reasons, teaching certain CSs might help students in Korean secondary schools to improve their oral proficiency in general.

Foreign language curriculum (I) announced by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2008) also remarked on the necessity of cultivating CSs in students’ language use. On page 26 the book stated that an English teacher should have students employ various CSs appropriately for effective communication in secondary schools. On page 27 it is also stated that speaking tasks should be conducted in terms of developing fluency and accuracy through communicative practices and the instruction should focus on communicative competence that can be applied in a real circumstance. In addition to speaking, other skills such as listening, reading and writing should be learned through communicative tasks and using various strategies as well. In general, class instructions should focus on developing all four language skills and in order to fulfill this purpose, students need to learn the skills in authentic contexts that can facilitate CSs. In real conversation, people use various strategies to compensate for their miscarriage in speech and attempt to deliver their messages. Therefore, the more authentic the contexts of a textbook, the more students get to use CSs. In line with this assumption, it might be presumable that including more CSs in textbooks is relevant to having authentic context. For these reasons, the present study is intended to investigate whether the revised English textbooks are designed effectively for students to fulfill their needs to improve CSs. For the purpose of this study, a selection of three student books for the seventh grade and their supplementary activity books were analyzed according to the taxonomy of achievement strategies by Nakatani (2005).

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Definition of Communication Strategies

People go through situations when they cannot deliver their messages correctly due to various obstacles. It becomes even more difficult when the conversation is in a foreign language. However, there are certain students who can communicate successfully with only limited knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in the target language. That is, these students carry on a conversation fully depending on their “ability to communicate within restrictions” (Savignon, 1983, p. 43), which refers to communication strategy. Savignon considered this strategy critical and emphasized practicing this. She further argued that students can negotiate meaning better by using CSs such as asking for information,
seeking clarification, and using circumlocution (Savignon, 2001). Early studies on CSs were centered on defining the strategies. Tarone (1980) described CSs as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (p. 419), in which the role of interlocutor is emphasized. In this respect, communication is a reciprocal process between the listener and the speaker and the effort from both sides are to be taken account to.

Corder’s definition of CSs indicates different features of the strategies. Corder (1981) described CSs as “a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his [or her] meaning when faced with some difficulty” (p. 103). This description remarks on the systematic characteristics of CSs and more focused on the role of the speaker than the listener. The definitions of communication strategy have improved and become varied since communication strategy was introduced by Selinker (1972) as “an identifiable approach by the learner to communicate with native speakers” (p. 229).

In the present study, CSs are regarded as techniques that more than two interlocutors employ in order to maintain interactions when faced with difficulties, which is similar to Tarone’s definition of CSs mentioned above. The CSs analyzed in the present study are to be used in the context of classroom settings where the interlocutors mainly consist of second language (L2) speakers of English. People can use a variety of CSs at will in mother tongue whereas they are likely to have difficulty employing them in L2 and this leads to the necessity of instructing CSs in school classrooms in Korea.

2. Classification of Communication Strategies

Researchers have proposed various classification systems on CSs. This is not contingent upon the different nature of CSs but upon the different application methods of categorizing principle of CSs (Bialystok, 1990; Uhm, 2003).

Corder classified the strategies into two types: message adjustment strategies and resource expansion strategies. Message adjustment strategies refer to modifying or reducing one’s message to fit in the given situations within one’s resources. That is, message adjustment occurs in order to avoid any risks in getting across the meanings. On the other hand, using resource expansion strategies has students run the risk of failing and repeated delivery of their messages in the conversation. Students compensate for their lack of proficiency in the target language using these strategies (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991).

In addition, Dörnyei (1995) collected a list and descriptions of some critical CSs based on the traditional principles for CSs. The classification of CSs presented by Dörnyei has two categories: achievement or compensatory strategies and reduction or avoidance strategies (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Nakatani, 2005; Tarone, 1981). The first type, achievement or compensatory strategies correspond to resource expansion
strategies in Corder’s categorization. The second type, reduction or avoidance strategies agree with message adjustment strategies according to Corder. Achievement or compensatory strategies refer to the employment of alternate plans to fulfill speakers’ original intent by using any resources at their disposal. Competent students are assumed to have these strategies. Reduction or avoidance strategies refer to the avoidance of resolving communication problems and the abandonment of conveying one’s messages. These behaviors hinder interaction and are commonly found among incompetent students (Nakatani, 2006).

As seen from the previous studies on CSs, we can see that there are diverse opinions on CSs. As Clennel (1995) suggested that there seem to be different opinions on the constituents of CSs according to various competing taxonomies for them. Yet some of their descriptions of CSs are still analogous in many ways. In general, many scholars have agreed that use of CSs could be effective in developing students’ interaction skills and it seems profitable to teach CSs to students in order to improve their communicative skills. The relationship of strategy use to an EFL proficiency hasn’t gotten attention for many years (Nakatani, 2005). Recently, various research findings in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) suggest that use of particular strategies does help students learn the target language (McDonough, 1995; Oxford, 1996). Besides, it has been claimed that the development of CSs can lead to improving communicative skills (Cohen, Weaver & Li, 1998; Dörnyei, 1995). From the previous research findings and arguments of scholars, the conclusion can be drawn that developing learners’ CSs could improve their English proficiency.

Nakatani put together a few core strategies from the traditional principles and categorized them into achievement and reduction strategies. Researchers generally agree that the former is related to active skills in adjusting and sustaining communication, and the latter indicates students’ negative actions of attempting to avoid resolving difficulties in communication. Also, Nakatani classified these two types of strategies into several subgroups based on previous studies by Bialystok (1983), Dörnyei and Scott (1997), Færch and Kasper (1983). Nakatani’s (2005) list and descriptions of achievement strategies are clear and simple in presenting specific strategies so they have been used for analyzing English textbooks in this study. There are six types of ASs: help-seeking, modified interaction, modified output, time-gaining, maintenance, and self-solving strategies (pp. 81-82).

First, help-seeking strategies are categorized into two types: an appeal for help and asking for repetition. The former is used when inquiring into an interlocutor’s aid in order to deal with difficulties resulted by insufficient knowledge in the target language, for instance, ‘I’m sorry, I don’t understand.’ The latter is used when the participant did not hear or comprehend the interlocutor’s utterance such as ‘I beg your pardon?’
Second, modified interaction strategy refers to the technique of sending signals for negotiation to cope with communication problems. This strategy is categorized into three types: confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarification requests. The first is used to confirm that the speaker has understood something correctly, for example, ‘My reservation no? No bargain?’ The second, comprehension checks are used to check whether the listener understood what the speaker has said correctly, for instance, ‘I have a little money, so change to double room. Do you see?’ Clarification requests are concerned with asking for an explanation when the speaker does not entirely understand something, for example, ‘Why? What kinds of tour?’

Third, modified output strategies involve rephrasing a speech responding to the interlocutor’s signals for negotiation. With using these strategies, participants are inclined to employ particular grammar structures in their own way and that could help them with developing their interlanguage.

Fourth, time-gaining strategies refer to the skills for buying time to think while still maintaining the conversation when a speaker has problems in expressing his or her idea. These strategies are categorized into two types: fillers and filled pauses. An example of the former is ‘Well, let me see …’ and one of filled pauses is ‘Oh …’

Maintenance strategies are comprised of two types: providing active response and shadowing. The former refers to giving positive remarks or using other conversation maneuvers, for instance, ‘I know what you mean.’ and ‘Sounds good.’ Shadowing describes repeating the interlocutor’s utterance as the same, partially or as extended to show that the listener has understood the matters.

Self-solving strategies are used when a speaker is in trouble in managing an interaction and attempts to solve the difficulties without the assistance of their conversation partner. These strategies involve paraphrasing, approximation, and restructuring. Paraphrasing means describing a word using different expressions such as listing features of the target expression or explaining it using more words than is necessary rather than explicit. An example of paraphrasing is ‘having a short sleep during the day time’ for ‘nap’. Approximation involves employing an alternative expression that is similar to the target word in semantic characteristics such as the use of ‘available’ for ‘accept’ in a sentence ‘Do you available travelers’ check?’ Restructuring refers to altering to another expression for delivering the intended message when encountering difficulties in finishing a sentence, for instance, ‘May I see . . . sorry, can I use travelers’ check?’
III. METHOD

1. Research Questions

This paper aims to investigate the aspect of implementation of CSs in Korean secondary school contexts. As the revision of the seventh national school curriculum was enacted, the focus on the strategies might have been reflected in school textbooks for the seventh grade, the objects of the application according to the revision. Therefore, the application and reflection of CSs in the seventh grade student books and activity books were analyzed.

This study is intended to investigate the following questions.
1. What types of CSs, if any, are in focus in the textbooks?
2. Do the textbooks guide how to teach CSs and are they effectively integrated?

2. Materials

Three sets of a textbook and accompanying activity books for the seventh grade were selected. The textbooks that are used in a large number of schools were selected as research objects and the latest publications were taken into account in selection since the student books were revised and activity books were created in 2009 owing to the revision of the seventh national curriculum. The textbooks are marked as A, B, and C in alphabetical order of the initial of publications. The corresponding activity books are marked as Aa, Ba, and Ca in the same way. The analyzed textbooks are as in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Student book</td>
<td>Kumsung Publishing Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aa</td>
<td>Activity book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Student book</td>
<td>Didimdol Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba</td>
<td>Activity book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Student book</td>
<td>Doosan Dong-A Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ca</td>
<td>Activity book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the revision of the English section of the seventh national curriculum, the basic principles and system in the seventh curriculum were maintained. The direction of the revision is more focused on improving communicative competence. The noticeable change in the new curriculum is classification of communicative functions along with adjustments
in example sentences in terms of the characteristics of dialogs and communicative situations (The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2007).

3. Procedure

The textbooks were analyzed by counting the number of expressions that are examples of CSs according to Nakatani’s taxonomy of ASs. According to the taxonomy, research was conducted to find out whether the student books and activity books include contexts that integrate diverse CSs and if so, what types of CSs are there. Then, an attempt was made in order to identify which strategies each textbook focuses on, which ones are neglected and the method of suggesting CSs of the textbooks. Nakatani’s criteria are presented in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main category</th>
<th>Sub category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help-seeking strategies</td>
<td>Appeal for help</td>
<td>I’m sorry, I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking for repetition</td>
<td>I beg your pardon?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified interaction strategies</td>
<td>Confirmation checks</td>
<td>My reservation no? No bargain?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehension checks</td>
<td>I have a little money, so change to double room. Do you see?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarification requests</td>
<td>Why? What kinds of tour?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-gaining strategies</td>
<td>Fillers</td>
<td>Well, let me see…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filled pauses</td>
<td>Oh…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance strategies</td>
<td>Providing active response</td>
<td>I know what you mean. / Sounds good. / Really? / I see, OK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shadowing</td>
<td>A: We have a bargain tour for four days. B: Four days. Ah…OK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-solving strategies</td>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>harbor → The place for ships…like bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approximation</td>
<td>accept → Do you available travelers’ check?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>May I see… sorry, can I use travelers’ check?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. RESULTS

1. Analysis of the Textbooks

The types of ASs that three student books and the accompanying activity books focused
on are presented in terms of frequency as in Table 3. The data exhibits an uneven distribution of the overall ASs in the textbooks. A high frequency of a specific strategy was detected and other strategies took relatively small portion in the overall distribution.

### TABLE 3
Analysis of the Textbooks According to the Taxonomy of Achievement Strategies by Nakatani

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Category</th>
<th>Sub Category</th>
<th>Student book</th>
<th>Activity book</th>
<th>Frequency of sub strategies</th>
<th>Frequency of main strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help-seeking strategies</td>
<td>Appeal for help</td>
<td>A 18</td>
<td>B 7</td>
<td>C 2</td>
<td>55(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking for repetition</td>
<td>13 13</td>
<td>34 34</td>
<td>17 17</td>
<td>109(7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified interaction strategies</td>
<td>Confirmation checks</td>
<td>0 9</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>13 13</td>
<td>22(1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehension checks</td>
<td>8 8</td>
<td>14 9</td>
<td>16 7</td>
<td>62(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarification requests</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td>0 1</td>
<td>3(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified output strategies</td>
<td>Rephrasing</td>
<td>18 29</td>
<td>39 4</td>
<td>19 7</td>
<td>116(8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-gaining strategies</td>
<td>Fillers</td>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>2 0</td>
<td>10(1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filled pauses</td>
<td>7 7</td>
<td>9 3</td>
<td>2 24</td>
<td>7 52(3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance strategies</td>
<td>Providing active</td>
<td>10 10</td>
<td>13 13</td>
<td>18 18</td>
<td>971 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>response</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>7 9</td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shadowing</td>
<td>9 7</td>
<td>7 2</td>
<td>5 17</td>
<td>43(3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-solving strategies</td>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td>35 1</td>
<td>1 11</td>
<td>80(5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approximation</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restructuring</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td>17 8</td>
<td>24 3</td>
<td>30 5</td>
<td>1523 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: The percentage is calculated through the rounding off of decimal points.)

Maintenance strategies were shown the most and help-seeking strategies, modified output strategies, modified interaction strategies, self-solving strategies and time-gaining strategies were followed in order of frequency. Approximation and restructuring under
self-solving strategies didn’t appear in the analysis. Yet, there were quite a number of ASs in the textbooks. One of the main principles of the seventh curriculum revision is teaching CSs for effective communication in the target language. The high frequency of strategies appearing in the textbooks might support that the development of new textbooks reflects this principle adequately and the goal of the revision is achieved to some extent.

1) Six Achievement Strategies of the Main Category

The six types of ASs appeared in the seventh grade textbooks show uneven distribution among them as in Figure 1.

![Distribution of Six Main Achievement Strategies](image)

(Note: The number on the top of each bar represents the percentage of each type of main strategy.)

Maintenance strategies took the largest portion, 66%. They appeared in the textbooks 1014 times out of 1523, the total frequency of all strategies. The second most frequent type, help-seeking strategies, appeared 164 times and representing 11% of the instances of the six strategies. Then other strategies are followed in order of frequency as follows: modified output strategies, 8%; modified interaction strategies, 8%; self-solving strategies, 5%; and time-gaining strategies, 4%. Maintenance strategies displayed the largest portion at 66% of the six types, which implies the emphasis on this specific type of strategy or the pure reflection of real communication aspects. The ratios of the remaining strategy types vary within 10%, which is very low. However, their frequency is not quite so low in actual numbers varying between 62 and 164. The comparison between the percentage and frequency of expressions of strategies presents that the other five strategy types are dealt with in the textbooks for a reasonable amount but seem little compared to the percentage
of maintenance strategies. The reason why maintenance strategies took such an abundant portion might be attributed to the reflection of real life in textbooks. Communication is utterances between more than two people. It is not unidirectional but bidirectional way of delivering, understanding and negotiating meaning. Therefore, responding actively is the crucial part of continuing an interaction between interlocutors. Also, shadowing what the other participant said shows one’s comprehension of the other’s speech and willingness to carry on the conversation. For these reasons, maintenance strategies are the key elements of constructing an interaction and the highest frequency of maintenance strategies in the textbooks might mirror real communication conditions as well.

2) Thirteen Achievement Strategies of the Subcategory

Thirteen subcategories are subsumed under six main categories of the ASs as seen in Table 2. Distribution of 13 subcategorized ASs is described in Figure 2.

Each major category includes one to three minor categories and the ratio of each subcategory partially agreed with the ratio of its higher category. It is often the case that while the major category shows a high proportion of frequency, its subcategories do not. For instance, maintenance strategies were the most frequent major type while its subcategory, shadowing was ranked the eighth most frequent one. Yet, the other
subcategory, providing active response, was the most frequent strategy among the subcategories. Inconsistency between the main and subcategories might suggest that particular strategies were preferred even among the ones under the same main category.

3) Highest and Lowest Frequency of Achievement Strategies

Frequency of each main strategy varies across the textbooks. The highest and lowest frequency of strategies appeared in the textbooks are presented in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main category</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Aa</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Ba</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Ca</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help-seeking strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified output</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-gaining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-solving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: In this table are only the highest and the lowest frequencies marked: √ = described as the highest frequency; * = described as the lowest frequency)

Book Ba showed the highest frequency in three strategies out of six strategies and book C showed the highest frequency in two strategies. Book B represented the highest incidence in only one strategy. On the other hand, book Aa and Ca showed the lowest frequency in two strategies respectively. Book A and B each had one strategy of the lowest occurrence. Overall, the book B set exhibits the highest frequency in four strategies (Help-seeking strategies, modified interaction strategies, time-gaining strategies, maintenance strategies) and seems to have focused on strategy use in the activity book (Ba) more frequently than the student book (B). On the contrary, the book C set exhibited the highest frequency in two strategies in the student book (C) but the lowest frequency of two strategies in the activity book (Ca). This might indicate that the C set focused on introducing and using the strategies in the student book more than in the activity book. The book A set showed the lowest incidence in all the strategies in both the student book and the activity book, which implies less reflection of achievement strategies than the book B and C sets.

To summarize, the book B set showed the highest reflection of achievement strategies
and followed by the book C and A sets in order. In effect, the book A set showed the lowest frequency of strategies among the three sets analyzed. However, the number of frequent strategies included in the textbooks might not be sufficient to explain the efficacious inclusion of the strategies in the textbooks.

V. DISCUSSION

1. Maintenance Strategies

Communication is a process of negotiating meaning that involves both the listener and the speaker. In order to maintain a communication, the interlocutors should develop the mutual belief that the listener has understood what the speaker meant correctly. Thus, the listener’s offering affirmative comments or confirmation provides speakers with positive evidence of understanding. The listener’s active reaction is as important as the speaker’s spontaneous initiation. Therefore, maintenance strategies are an essential part of real communication in English and acquiring it would make students better interactants by establishing mutual comprehension (Wagner, 1983; Clark, 1994). Furthermore, maintenance strategies are easy for students to learn as they can be operated even with short answers such as ‘Yes.’ or ‘No.’, ‘That’s right.’, and with simple repetition of what has been said by the conversation partner.

Maintenance strategies are subcategorized into providing active responses and shadowing. Providing active responses refers to giving the speaker positive feedback and the sign of agreement that encourage the speaker to keep maintaining his or her speech. It is the most frequent strategy analyzed in the six textbooks. They appeared 971 times out of 1523 and were 64%. The strategy of providing active response was shown across all six books. The figure suggests that sufficient input and practices of this strategy are presented in the activity books. Use of this strategy was stated as lesson objectives in some units. In book A, five units provided active responses, for example, “I’d love to.”, “I’m sorry, but I can’t.”, “Sure.”, “That’s too bad.” and “I’m surprised to hear that.” Exclamatory sentences such as “How simple it is!” were regarded as active responses in this study because they also offer dynamic feedback in an interaction. Book B presented active responses, for instance, “It’s surprising!”, “Why not?” and “No problem.” as lesson objectives in four units. “Good job!” was included in this category as a complementary statement. Book C stated active responses such as “Cheer up!””, “I’m so glad to hear that.”, and “What a great idea!” in three units. Exclamatory statements like the last one were included in book C as in book A. Book C showed the smallest number of units having active responses as lesson objectives but showed the largest inclusion of the strategies among the three student books.
In fact, book C had diverse communicative contexts involving numerous CSs. In brief, active responses stated as study goals diversified across different communication functions from exclamation to compliment, and others in the six textbooks. The textbooks included typical active responses such as “That’s interesting.”, “Great.” and “That’s okay.” In addition, expressions, for instance, “Really?”, “Why not?” and “Sounds cool.” were found across the textbooks and they are common responses that can be found in authentic context in real conversation. This implies that the textbooks were planned with an eye towards bringing more authenticity into the learning context. Book C had only three units out of 12 that involve responding actively as study goals, however, it showed the largest variety of them. For example, an expression of consolidating or encouraging. “Cheer up!” was introduced along with alternative expressions such as “Don’t worry.”, “Don’t worry about it.”, “Don’t take it so hard.” and “It can happen to anyone”. It is presumable that maintenance strategies were not considered much in book C because the authors of the textbook considered that type of strategies too casual and basic for students to acquire in class. Certainly, giving positive reply such as short answers or repeating what the other speaker said do not demand much effort. Learning this type of strategy would not require complicated contexts as well. Despite that maintenance strategies are still important one to learn for students to maintain an interaction, the authors of book C might have not concerned these strategies critical.

Whereas providing active response was focused highly in the textbooks, the other type under the same category, shadowing, did not show much in comparison. Shadowing is repeating the interlocutor’s speech in order to show the listener’s understanding of the topic discussed. It appeared 43 times and accounted for only 3%. It was not proposed as lesson objectives in any of the selected textbooks but was found in all six books. In book A, shadowing was presented as input in the listening section, Figure It Out. An example is as follows.

M: OK. Clara, what time do you want to meet?
W: How about 7 in the morning?
M: 7 in the morning? I’m afraid that’s impossible. How about 10:30?
W: OK. See you then.

(Book A, p.131)

In the dialog above, M repeats what W suggested doing and the appointment time to show he understood what W said. The related section in book Aa showed a similar pattern of shadowing yet differed in the name of sports the participants will do. The aspect of this strategy shown in book A and Aa was only given as input through listening practice. In book B, examples of shadowing were presented like in book A, asking someone to join an
activity and shadowing the name of the activity. There were 17 examples of shadowing in book Ba and many of them had functions of ordering food or giving directions to do something. Book C also showed examples of confirming an order by shadowing.

2. Help-seeking Strategies

Kim (2006) suggested that help-seeking strategies play an important role in classes as they assist teachers to detect the information or knowledge students are deprived of. Her research shows that students express their non-understanding by using help-seeking strategies, for instance, saying “I don’t know” or shaking their heads and the teacher, in turn, provides explanation with examples on the information students need. The outcome of the observation showed that the students were able to interact efficiently with using help-seeking strategies (p.78). As the example indicates, it is apparent that help-seeking strategies are indispensable skills for students to communicate in a foreign language. L2 learners can come across countless problems as they try to cope with their lack of knowledge in the target language. It should be of great help to use help-seeking strategies to compensate for their insufficient data during an interaction.

These strategies were detected 164 times and took 11% of the total ASs. It was the second most frequent type after maintenance strategies. Help-seeking strategies consist of two subcategories: Appeal for help and asking for repetition.

The former appeared 55 times and represented 4% of the total. This skill was not reflected much in the textbooks compared to asking for repetition, its counterpart. This strategy was stated as lesson objectives in certain units of the textbooks. Books A and B each have one unit that aims at practicing an appeal for help. Book A and Aa suggest example sentences such as “Can you tell me about it?”, “What does ~ mean?” and “I don’t understand ~”. Book B suggests “What does ~ mean?” Book Ba suggests “Can you help me?” in addition to “What does ~ mean?” Book C presents “I don’t understand.” and “Tell me more.” The expression “What does ~ mean?” was found in all textbooks except book Ca making it the most common expression for asking for help in the textbooks. “I don’t understand.” is used in two textbooks.

Uhm (1998) researched CSs in communication between Korean EFL students. The results exhibited that appeal for assistance was the second most favored strategy out of the five categories detected. The reason for the disagreement between the results of Uhm’s study and the present one might be due to the lack of knowledge on the actual usage of CSs in classrooms. Or it might be caused by the textbook writers’ diverse opinions on effective CSs to be taught. Appealing for help is a comparatively simple method for students to learn and apply in communication easily that the authors might have not concerned involving this type of strategy in textbooks. Students might acquire this strategy
with a few class hours and sustaining the use of this strategy is expected to depend on students and teachers’ efforts.

Asking for a repetition was the third most frequent strategy among the 13 subcategorized strategies. It appeared 109 times and represented 7% of the total. Use of this skill was proposed as study goals in three student books. “What did you say?” was presented in four books except B set. “Excuse me?” appeared in other books except A set. “I’m sorry.” was presented in books B, Ba and Ca. Book A gives the expression “Why don’t you say it again?” which is grammatically correct and sounds polite but doesn’t seem very authentic. I searched the expression in two corpuses, British National Corpus and Corpus Concordance English\(^1\), and did not find any concordance. This implies that book A overlooked more common expressions such as “Excuse me?” or “I’m sorry?” and focused on rather unauthentic locution. This is likely to lead students to use unauthentic expression for communication and confuse them with odd reactions from interlocutors. On the other hand, book C and Ca presented several different alternatives for asking for repetition, for instance, “Can you tell me one more time?”,”Can you say that again?”, “Pardon?”, “What was that?”, and “Excuse me?” Two other student books did not offer various alternative expressions for the target structure in speaking activity and this is the strongest point of book C.

3. Modified Output Strategies

Modified output strategies were found 116 times and represented 8% of the total, making it the third most frequent strategy type. Rephrasing is subsumed under modified output strategies. This strategy is related to a speaker’s modifying his or her utterances in order to deliver messages clearly. Using rephrasing, students can improve the ways of saying things differently and develop various grammar structures. Rephrasing is the second most frequent strategy after providing active response. None of the object materials proposed this strategy as lesson objectives. However, a considerable amount of use of this skill was detected. In fact, expressions of rephrasing were introduced in response to appeal for help or asking for repetition. While other textbooks focused on this strategy in listening tasks, C set gave a lot of practice on rephrasing in speaking tasks. One representative example of rephrasing in book Ca is as follows.

B: Excuse me. How can I get to the City Library?
G: I’m sorry. What did you say?

\(^1\) British National Corpus, http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/
Corpus Concordance English. http://www.lextutor.ca/concordancers/concord_e.html
B: Where is the City Library?
G: Go straight to York Street. Then turn left. Are you with me?
B: Not really. Can you say that again?
G: Go straight to York Street and turn left.

(Book Ca, p. 88)

The above dialog is from the listening script. In this exercise, students listen to a dialog and number the places where the speaker is going to. Asking for direction is difficult even in the first language since the questioner does not have much knowledge about the place. For interactive communication, an interlocutor might benefit from using help-seeking strategies and modified output strategies like in this context.

First, B asks for direction saying, “How can I get to the City Library?” Because G didn’t understand what B said, she asks for repetition. B rephrases his previous utterance by saying, “Where is the City Library?” G gives direction and checks B’s comprehension by asking, “Are you with me?” When B asks for repetition, G rephrases her previous utterance to give the meaning more clearly. In this dialog, both participants use rephrasing. Moreover, there appear other strategies, asking for repetition and comprehension checks.

Other textbooks also include dialogs that present expressions of different ASs followed by one another. This infers that communication strategies may occur together rather than individually and they collaborate for negotiating meaning.

4. Modified Interaction Strategies

Modified interaction strategies refer to giving a sign for negotiation to cope with communication problems (Nakatani, 2005). These strategies are comprised of three subcategories: confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarification requests. Modified interaction strategies appeared 87 times and represent 6% of the total.

Confirmation checks were shown only in book B and Ba. In addition, there weren’t any textbooks that proposed confirmation checks as their lesson objectives. Confirmation checks appeared only nine times in book B and 13 times in book Ba. Besides, B set presented only two locations for this strategy: “Like this?” and “Is this [that] right?” One example is as follows.

M: Go straight up and turn right at the corner. Then, turn left again. Is that clear?
W: Go up, turn right and turn left. Is that right?
M: That’s right.

(Book B, p. 24)
In the dialog, M gives directions and checks comprehension of W by asking, “Is that clear?” W partially repeats the directions and asks “Is that right?” to confirm whether W understood M’s directions correctly. In addition to giving directions to certain places, there are other examples of giving directions to cook or to make something. Interestingly M uses comprehension check strategy and W uses confirmation check strategy to ascertain mutual understanding of the given information. It implies that collaboration of certain communication strategies might result in more continuous interaction.

Comprehension checks appeared 62 times and accounted for 4% in the textbooks. All the student books stated this strategy in a unit as lesson objectives, respectively. However, the books showed little variations on the expressions. Book A and B sets showed only one utterance “Is that clear?” On the other hand, the book C set presented a selection of diverse alternates, for instance, “Are you with me?”, “Do you get it?”, “Do you follow me?”, and “Are you following me?” The interesting part about this result is that a typical expression such as “Do you understand?” was not found. Instead of ‘understand’, ‘get’ was used in a phrase. In fact, ‘get’ is the verb that replaces ‘understand’ a great deal in spoken English.

Clarification requests appeared only three times in all textbooks and accounted for 0% in this study. Books A, C and Ca reflected only one strategy respectively and they were not stated as lesson objectives either. Clarification request strategies in the textbooks are exemplified as follows.

A mother walks into a room. She asks, “What are you watching? The daughter answers, “TV.” The mother says, “I know it’s TV.” She asks again, “What kind of show are you watching?” The daughter answers, “A TV show.” The mother asks, “Which TV show?” The daughter answers, “This one.”

(Book C, p. 50)

The daughter is busy watching a TV show and her mother asks questions initiating a conversation. However, the daughter is not paying attention to what her mother says and answers rather shortly. This passage shows a funny example of unsuccessful interaction in spite of consistent attempts to require clarification. In summary, books A and C proposed the strategy in reading excerpts but book Ca did so in a listening activity. It is concluded that clarification requests were not described in communicative contexts in the textbooks. The results show that a very small amount of this strategy was reflected in the textbooks and the reflected contents lacked communicative contexts overall.

On the contrary, Kim’s (2006) research on types of CSs used by students presents a communicative application of asking for clarification. In her study, students used this strategy to ask the teacher to explain the meanings of unfamiliar expressions. Kim described that the students were inclined to ask for repetition the first time they
encountered an unfamiliar vocabulary in the teachers’ speech. Then, they asked for clarification after checking that the word in the teacher’s speech was not in their mental dictionary (Kim, 2006, p. 80). This aspect proves that employing clarification requests helps maintain communication in class. The disparity between the results of the present study and Kim’s suggests that the seventh grade textbooks do not exhibit asking for clarification skills sufficiently with communicative contexts.

5. Self-solving Strategies

Self-solving strategies were shown 80 times, representing 5% of the total. The types of strategies involved are three sub-strategies: Paraphrasing, approximation and restructuring. The propositional rates of three sub-strategies are remarkably inconsistent. Paraphrasing showed a frequency of 80 and there wasn’t any approximation or restructuring found.

Paraphrasing is describing things in different ways using words that are similar in meaning or giving examples of representative features of the target expression. This strategy was found 80 times and represented 5% of the total. A majority of this strategy was seen in books C and Ca. Books A and Aa had only one expression for the strategy respectively. Book B showed none, and 11 frequencies of paraphrasing were detected in book Ba. This skill was not stated as a study goal in any of the analyzed textbooks. Representative expressions for rephrasing in the textbooks are exemplified as follows.

M: What does “take out only” mean?
W: It means “We can’t drink our juice here, We have to take it with us.”

(Book Ba, p. 88)

Book Ba exemplified modifying a verb phrase. W uses “It means …” to explain the target expression in the dialog.

Mark: There are so many interesting things here. What’s this?
Jimin: This is a gegi. It’s a kind of Korean toy.

(Book C, p. 61)

Whereas book Ba showed examples of modifying a verb phrase, book C exemplified paraphrasing nouns. This example is presented in the reading, which is about shopping at Insa-dong with foreign friends. Mark asks about geogi and Jimin paraphrases it into an easier word, “a kind of Korean toy”. This part has a corresponding activity in book Ca. As students have seen how to paraphrase Korean traditional items in the textbook, it is assumed that they might feel comfortable using the skills. Then, students get to practice
paraphrasing in more tasks in the corresponding activity in book Ca.

According to Hong’s (2009) analysis of seventh grade textbooks, there wasn’t much reflection of circumlocution in the textbooks. Out of five books, only three books reflected this strategy and the total frequency was six. The present analysis of six textbooks showed 80 frequencies of paraphrasing that is around 13 times higher than Hong’s figure. This might prove that the number of frequency of paraphrasing has increased through the revision of the seventh national curriculum. However, the variation of the skill is still limited. The results of this analysis also reflect that only limited topics are used for paraphrasing; introducing international culture in accordance with Hong’s result. While fulfilling the purpose of the international context, the textbooks focused on introducing different cultures including our own. As a result, all the target textbooks included at least one unit devoted to this theme. In general, paraphrasing appeared in these units whose contents are about explaining items from different cultures. In that sense, developing new topics to include paraphrasing would be of great help for students to learn the skill.

Approximation indicates “using words or structures which, though they are not quite right, are close enough to the desired meaning to be understood” (Uhm, 1998, p. 492). The results of the present analysis did not exhibit any examples of approximation. However, Uhm’s (1998) analysis of CSs in interaction of students showed approximation as frequently used strategies by Korean EFL learners. The comparison of the aforementioned studies suggests that the textbooks developed according to the seventh revision did not show much approximation strategy in their contents even though students use them commonly in real conversations.

Restructuring refers to “abandoning the execution of a verbal plan because of language difficulties, leaving the utterance unfinished, and communicating the intended message according to an alternative plan” (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997, p.189). Kim’s (2006) study showed that students use restructuring in interactions such as discussion activities in class. Students tended to use this strategy when they realized that they might not be able to finish their sentences. Then, they decided to restructure what they had wanted to say using different grammar. However, the analyzed textbooks in the present study did not exhibit any examples of restructuring as well as approximation.

6. Time-gaining Strategies

Students gain some time to think before they continue speaking by using fillers or filled pauses subsumed under time-gaining strategies. These types of strategies were found 62 times and reflected 4% of the total. Fillers appeared 10 times and accounted for 1% of the total CS incidents. “Let me see.” appeared in both the A and B sets in common. “Let me show you.” was in book C and “Maybe” was shown in both book C and Ca. Filled pauses
were detected 52 times representing 3% of the total. The amount of filled pauses reflected in the books is more than five times of its counterpart. “Well” was seen in all the textbooks analyzed. The A and C sets showed “hmm” and the C set showed the largest variety among the three sets of textbooks including the three expressions: “hmm”, “oh”, and “well”. It is concluded that filled pauses were used more often than fillers in the textbooks and time-gaining strategies were not focused much in them in general. Hong (2009) suggested that there were only 21 frequencies of time-gaining strategies in the seventh grade textbooks. Furthermore, “well” was used in all the books excluding two cases of “Let me see”. Compared to 21 frequencies of two expressions in Hong’s study, 62 frequencies of six expressions in the present study were shown about three times more frequently and types of time-gaining strategies were more diversified. Yet, this strategy was not emphasized much compared to other CSs. Hong (2009) suggested that this strategy is easy to learn and will be practical to use at the beginning level of learning basic communication.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study stems from a question whether CSs are being taught effectively in Korean middle school classrooms following the change derived from the seventh national curriculum revision. To find out about this, research has been conducted on six middle school textbooks for the seventh grade according to the taxonomy of ASs by Nakatani (2005). The findings of this study can be summarized as follows.

A total of 1523 ASs were found in the textbooks and most of them were maintenance strategies. Their subsumed categories, providing active response and shadowing are probably the majority of usual CSs in English, however, other useful strategies should be emphasized with an appropriate amount to improve students’ English proficiency. The results of the present thesis do not show the existence of approximation and restructuring in the textbooks that are actually used by students in interaction a great deal and are found as important in other studies. In other words, the textbooks seem to have failed to balance the usages of strategies as they focused mainly on particular strategies.

The effectiveness of teaching these strategies not only depends on the quantity but also the quality of the inputs. Although the textbooks appear to have succeeded in providing a large quantity and a variety of strategies, they show weakness in presenting authentic context. While highly spoken expressions such as “That’s cool!” were included in all textbooks, rather misleading locution such as “Why don’t you say it again?” was shown in book A. Even if some might regard this as just a small mistake, the side effect of learning these kinds of expressions could lead students to fail in interaction and feel discouraged by
embarrassment.

Notwithstanding the imbalanced reflection of the CSs and the lack of authenticity, the ways of incorporating the strategies seem diversified in the textbooks. A majority of input of and instructions on the strategies were contained in listening and speaking sections. In addition, activity books developed for the first time in 2009 in accordance with the revision of the seventh curriculum reflected using different techniques of practicing communication skills. The general types of communicative activities in the textbooks were role-play, information gap activity, individual presentation, group project, and group discussion and presentation. These were included in all six textbooks and designed to practice CSs in them. Information gap activity is an exemplary type of practicing achievement strategies. In order to deliver the information that the other interlocutor does not know, a speaker needs to check the listener’s comprehension and he or she may rephrase or paraphrase his or her utterance in order to send the meaning clearly. On the other hand, a listener might use strategies such as appealing for help, asking for repetition, and clarification requests to make sure he or she understand what the speaker says. These types of tasks involving a lot of conversations between interlocutors are relevant to foster CSs.

The integration of the strategies in each textbook showed different aspects. The fact that the individual textbooks focused on different strategies implies that the books might have had different goals to proposing CSs. It is contingent on the originality of each book and also should be considered in terms of effectiveness. The differences between six textbooks were considerably high in quantity and quality or ways of suggesting achievement strategies. Diversity of textbooks allows teachers and students to have more chances to find more appropriate learning materials for them. However, it is assumed that textbooks might fail to be employed in teaching CSs effectively without clear developing criteria for teaching the strategies in them. In fact, the textbooks didn’t include specific statements of directions for writing the textbook but only brief reference to the instructional goals of the current school curriculum. In this vein, setting systematic criteria and balancing on originality and creativity for a textbook should be taken into account in developing further English textbooks.

Hong (2009) argued that five textbooks for seventh grade developed by the criteria of the seventh curriculum, in general, are insufficient for authenticity. Moreover, suggested strategies in the textbooks were limited within prefabricated patterns that might lead the classroom learning to be restricted within the boundary of memorizing the set patterns. Compared to Hong’s research, the results of analyzing textbooks changed after the revision present partial improvement. The textbooks proposed a substantial amount of strategies with diversity. Yet, some of them were more emphasized than the others so that the rate of focus on individual strategies should be reconsidered. Some textbooks showed
various ways of integrating skills into contexts, which is expected to attract students’ interests during the lesson. Some showed practical spoken expressions while others showed lack of diversity and authenticity. The revision of the seventh national curriculum shows improvement in incorporating CSs in the seventh grade textbooks to some extent.

In short, 2009 is the first year of employing the new textbooks in middle and high schools. Only seventh and tenth graders are using them this year. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology plans to extend the use of new textbooks to other grades step by step. It appears that their initial attempt to develop CSs has been achieved in part; however, it will be necessary that a further study on the development of CSs should be conducted in order to fulfill the educational goals of including various CSs in the textbooks declared in the revision of the seventh national curriculum.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Analyzed Textbooks


Applicable levels: middle/high school
Key words: communication strategies, achievement strategies, English textbook

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