
DEFINING THE THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES

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The original meaning of the word strategy, which comes from the ancient Greek term *strategia*, was related to military and made reference to the methods carried out to implement a plan of a military operation. However, through years, this term has generalized its meaning and nowadays it denotes the set of procedures developed in order to achieve something. Furthermore, the term has also acquired a new meaning in education, denoting the use of different stratagems in order to acquire knowledge easily and faster, under the name of learning strategies [5].

Learning strategies are defined by several authors, each one expressing the main sense and adding different nuances concerning with the choice, the automatism of execution, the role of the learner and so on. For instance, the active role of the learner by choosing the strategy in order to “make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self – directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations”[4].

The term “communication strategies” was first coined by Selinker when referring to these mechanisms as one of the five central processes that occur in the learning of a second language. Later, researchers such as Váradi and Tarone would propose the first definitions. These initial studies focused mainly on defining and classifying these strategies through the creation of taxonomies which would later serve for their analysis and. From different prospects, linguists define communicative strategy in different ways. Tarone defines communicative strategies as mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning strategies do not seem to be shared [6]. We know that both the speaker and the hearer are involved; successful communication is the responsibility of both speaker and hearer. When the participants are aware of that they do not understand each other, they will resort to a number of strategies: paraphrase, transfer, avoidance, and others.

Faerch and Kasper define communication strategies as “potentially conscious plans for solving what an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” [1]. In the same way that learning strategies help students to acquire knowledge, communicative strategies deal with communication problems, they aid students to create effective conversations in the foreign language. These strategies concentrate on message production, allowing the learner to formulate accurate messages according to the given situation; especially they pay attention to meaning negotiation. In fact, O'Malley and Chamot state that “communication strategies are particularly important in negotiating meaning where either linguistic structures or sociolinguistic rules are not shared between a second language learner and a speaker of the target language” [3].

Communicative strategies may involve mime, message abandonments, approximations, or circumlocution, for instance. Using these techniques students will be more fluent in the foreign language as they aid to master a proficiency level; what is more, native speakers also use them. A communication strategy attempts to deliberately and consciously use what is known about the various key elements of the communication process, as a system, in order to achieve communication objectives. It is this comprehensive, systemic, purpose driven framework that is often missing in how ministries and other national institutions communicate with their internal audiences and with those outside their structures.

When we speak a foreign language, we do not always know the word that names a specific item or it may be the case that we do not remember it. The level of proficiency the learner has does not matter, we all have faced this type of situation more than once, for sure; in fact, even native speakers experience this [2]. In this context we find the other type of strategies,

communicative strategies, which will help learners to convey a message overcoming the possible problems that may appear during the conversation. As occurs with learning strategies, there are several ways to classify communicative strategies.

Communicative strategies share most of the characteristics of learning strategies; they are conscious procedures chosen by learners that can be taught, which give independence and autonomy to them and expand the role of the teacher. Moreover, they are also problem oriented considering communication as their main goal. Apart from these features, it may be said that communicative strategies are rather short-term solutions as they are aimed at solving communicative problems. While techniques related to planning, memorization, evaluation, self-esteem, anxiety, and so on, require a longer process; communicative strategies are applied to produce a message just at the same moment the problem has appeared, which avoids successful communication. Finally, they may involve communication, that is, they are used in communicative activities or real-life situations.

List of used literature:

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