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# Learner Variations in Communication Strategies: A Study of Japanese, Chinese and American Paraphrasing Techniques in English and Their Application to Task-Based Grammar Instruction

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated how speakers with different L1 backgrounds (Japanese, Chinese and English) would cope with the situation where they had a lexical difficulty in oral English discourse. A total of fifteen subjects participated in the study, consisting of a taped interview. They were asked to pretend to be tourists who did not recall the word for ‘aquarium,’ while the interviewer assumed to be a police officer. Each interviewee had to manage to have the officer understand the destination by utilizing such communication strategies (CSs) as “paraphrasing,” or “word coinage” in order to express the meaning of ‘aquarium.’ These conversations were all transcribed to see national variations as well as personal varieties with comparisons made between individual subjects in terms of word choice, length of speech, frequency of particular interjections or phrases, and clarity of speech. In this paper, the author proposes the application of the results to task-based grammar instruction in ESL/EFL classrooms.

**Keywords:** *CSs, paraphrasing, task-based grammar instruction*

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to formulate the teaching of what is known as “Communication Strategies (hereinafter referred to as CSs)” in daily ESL/EFL classroom instruction. To provide authentic data to support the formulation, a data-based experiment and discourse analysis were made.

The terminological framework of CSs was first given by Tarone (1977). A more general definition was provided by Richards et al (1992: 64-65) as follows:

a way to express a meaning in a second or foreign language, by a learner who has a limited command of the language. In trying to communicate, a learner may have to make up for a lack of knowledge of grammar or vocabulary

Besides a limited command of the target language (TL), any speakers should have difficulty getting their intended meaning across even in their native language (NL). This occurs when native speakers forget a certain lexical item in L1, of which semantical description is possible but not phonological one. In other words, they can tell what it is like with even a vivid image in mind but are unable to come up with its appropriate name for such reasons as a lapse of memory or simply limited vocabulary.

One of the most frequent experiences you have is that you fail to recall someone's name even though you have the image of the person and/or knowledge of his/her social status, taste in clothing and food, and your relationship with him/her. Suppose you have forgotten the name of Toshiaki Kaifu, Japanese Former Prime Minister. How would you make yourself understood by others? You should know exactly what he is. You may describe him as “a Diet member who used to be

Prime Minister of Japan a few years ago, who recently left the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) after he had failed to be nominated Prime Minister” or as “a Diet member who likes to wear a polka-dot tie.” Any native speakers will use this kind of strategy very often in daily interactions. Likewise any L2 speakers will or will be forced to use this technique in second or foreign language communication, where they should have greater difficulty expressing themselves not only because of their linguistic competence or communicative competence but also “cultural competence” (Neustupny 1987: 4-5).

When you attempt to categorize the technique which was used to describe Toshiki Kaifu, you call it “paraphrasing,” “description” or “circumlocution.” The terminological framework was given first by Tarone (1977), with five major categories of communication strategies identified: avoidance, paraphrasing, conscious transfer, appeal for assistance, and mime. Kobayashi (1993) attempted summarizing elaborations and refinements of his framework of communication strategies proposed by a number of applied linguists (Bialystok and Frohlich 1980; Corder 1983; Faerch and Kasper 1983; Bialystok 1983, 1984; Littlewood 1984; Paribakht 1985; Scholfield 1987) and even extending the framework by adding more up-to-date techniques: Using Bilingual Dictionary, Translation Machine, SOS cards, Using Antonyms, Spelling, Pointing to Objects, and Picture Drawing. The following are simplified definitions of each technique for communication strategies (Kobayashi 1993: 108-113):

### ***Interlingual Achievement***

*Literal translation:* The learners translate word for word from their L1. A

Japanese learner may say, “I have three insect teeth” (for decayed teeth).

*Language switch* (code switch): The learners use their L1 term without

bothering to translate it. This CS succeeds only when the interlocutor can understand the L1 of the speaker.

*Bilingual Dictionary*: The learners may consult a bilingual dictionary while communicating with their interlocutor(s) to retrieve from memory or simply to find a translation.

*Translation machine*: The use of pocket translation machines is on the increase, which may replace traditional bulky dictionaries and facilitate L2 communication.

*SOS cards*: Some tourists carry hand-made cards that show various target language expressions for various situational functions with L1 translations on the back.

### **Intralingual Achievement**

*Substitution* (or approximation, synonym, or semantic contiguity): The learners often use a word in L2 conveying not exactly the intended meaning but satisfying the communicative goal.

*Antonym*: The learners may use the antonym of the word they want to express with the combination of the negative “not.”

*Word creation* (word coinage, transliteration): The learners often create a word or phrase not available in the target language.

*Paraphrasing* (description, circumlocution): The learner may “describe the characteristics or elements of the objects or action instead of using the appropriate target language item or structure” (Tarone 1983: 63).

*Spelling*: When the learners have difficulty pronouncing a certain word, they may spell the whole word or a part of it.

### **Universal Achievement**

*Gesture* (mime): This is a universal feature of human communication. People use gestures either consciously or unconsciously.

*Pointing to objects*: This simply refers to the learners’ action of pointing or taking out from drawers or somewhere the objects which they intend to refer to.

*Picture drawing*: When paper and a pen are available, the learners may draw

the object which they cannot mimic because of its complexity.

*Appealing*: The learners may ask somebody else “to supply a form of lexical item or ask if a form or item is correct” (Tarone, Cohen, and Dumas 1983: 10).

### **Universal Reduction Strategies**

*Topic avoidance* (avoid communication): The learners may avoid discussing topics when they know that they cannot say it in L2 or they don't want to bother to use other CSs such as description or substitution.

*Semantic avoidance* (Message adjustment): If the learner cannot come up with a certain word, they may say something slightly different from what they intended but still broadly relevant to the topic of discourse (Corder 1983: 17).

*Message abandonment*: The learners may try to talk about a certain topic but give it up midway through conversation when they find it difficult to continue talking about the topic.

## **METHOD**

### **Subjects**

A total of fifteen university students were asked to participate in this study on the basis of their consent and availability at the time of data collection, whose personal data: L1, sex, age, and length of staying in U.S.A. are shown in the Table 1.

### **Procedures**

The interviewer, the author of this paper, first explained about the purpose of the study indivisually to each of the subjects and asked each to pretend to be a tourist walking around Waikiki, Hawaii, trying to get to Honolulu Aquarium, while the interviewer pretended to be a police officer standing in the street. Acting like a tourist in the real

TABLE1 Subjects' Personal Data

subject	L1	sex	age	length of staying in U.S.A.
# 1	Japanese	male	25	9 months
# 2	Japanese	male	26	2 years and 8 months
# 3	Japanese	male	26	9 months
# 4	Japanese	female	25	3 years
# 5	Japanese	female	30	8 months
# 6	Mandarin	male	19	5 years
# 7	Cantonese	male	17	14 years (immigrant)
# 8	Mandarin	female	39	8 months
# 9	Mandarin	female	36	1 year and 6 months
#10	Mandarin	female	25	8 months
#11	English	female	20	20 years (in Hawaii)
#12	English	male	15	15 years (3 years on the main land)
#13	English	male	18	18 years (of Japanese ancestry)
#14	English	female	21	21 years (of Japanese ancestry)
#15	English	female	28	25 years (3 years in Japan)

setting, each of the subjects (tourists) approached the interviewer (officer) to ask for help. The subjects were supposed not to be able to recall the term "aquarium" although all of them actually knew it.

Each interview was made on an individual basis and recorded on the tape. In order to elicit their spontaneous utterances, the interviewer actively gave unplanned feedback to their questions and statements, sometimes in a humorous manner. At the same time, all conversations were recorded.

### Analysis

After the data collection was completed, all the conversations were then transcribed (presented in Appendix 1) and compared in terms of word-choice, length of speech, frequency of particular interjections or phrases, and clarity of speech. Comparisons were made on the basis of

first language grouping as well as individual variance to explore into possible interlingual influences from L1 to L2 performance in the following criteria:

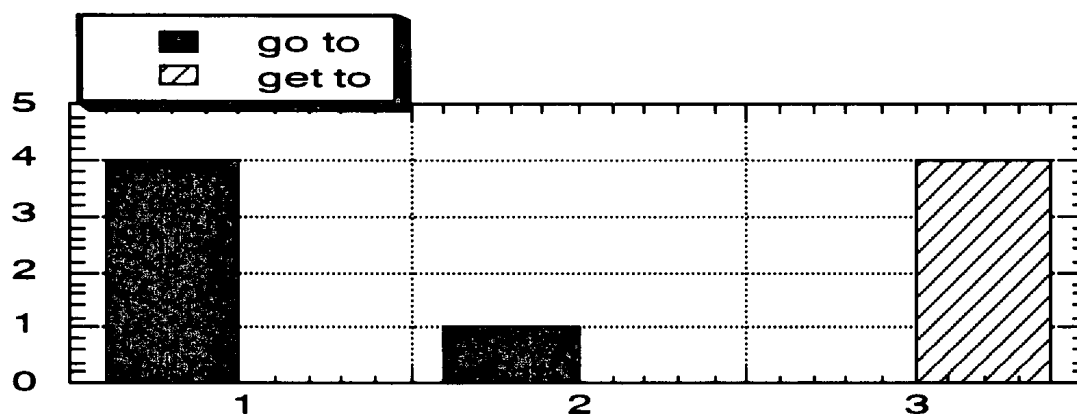
- 1) Verbs meaning how to get to the aquarium
- 2) Reference to the aquarium as a building
- 3) Reference to the container for fish
- 4) Specifying fish
- 5) The purpose of the aquarium
- 6) Overall description of the place
- 7) The total length of dialogue
- 8) The frequency of interjections used
- 9) The frequency of affirmation and negation

## Results

### 1) *Verbs meaning how to get to the aquarium*

Two different verbs were observed which express the action of reaching the destination, “go to” and “get to,” which clearly distinguished native and non-native groups. Figure 1 shows the number of the subjects who used either of the verbs in groups. Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3 respectively refer to the Japanese subjects (from #1

Figure1 The number of the subjects using either “go to” or “get to” in groups





through #5), the Chinese subjects (from #6 through #10), the American subjects (from #11 through #15).

As you can see from the graph, “get to” was used predominantly by native subjects, while “go to” was preferred only by non-native subjects. “Get to” may be a sort of native English, which non-native English speakers do not or can not use in oral communication. One possible explanation concerns the cross-linguistic transfer from their L1 to English. Neither “go to” nor “get to” are distinctively separated in Japanese and Chinese, both of which are expressed with a single word “iku” in Japanese and “qu”/“ch’u” in Chinese.

The other characteristic found among the three groups is the syntactic forms used to inquire about the place. As you can see in Appendix II-a., four of the ten non-native subjects used such a declarative sentence as “I want to,” while none of the native speakers gave a such a blunt utterance. The native speakers preferably used such an interrogative question as “Could you...?”, “How do you get to...?” or “How can I get to...?” On the other hand, only one non-native subject out of the ten used such a polite expression.

## *2) Reference to the aquarium as a building*

All the subjects used the noun “place” with various syntagmatic variations, many of which were followed by a relative clause or a relative adverbial clause such as “that...” or “where...” (for detail, see Appendix II-b). “A/the place where” is a useful expression and should be learned as a chunk for future needs. As for the nature of rephrasing words, using relative clauses should be actively utilized in using communication strategies. We will discuss the pedagogical aspect of communication strategies in some detail later.

### *3) Reference to the container for fish*

The distinctive lexical variation was observed in reference to the glass tank. Four out of the five native subjects came up with “tank” easily, while only one (for him, English is actually more dominant than Cantonese) out of the ten non-native subjects used the noun. Here we also can see the “native English,” which keeps away L2 learners.

Production of “tank” by Japanese speakers might be expected immediately since the same word has been borrowed and frequently used in Japanese (and is written in katakana). This English loan word, however, refers in general to containers covered by colored material, such as oil tanks, or water tanks, and they rarely call those covered by transparent plastic or glass “tanku.”

### *4) Specifying fish*

This task involves some knowledge of English vocabulary of fish. In order to invite the subjects to specify the term, the interviewer deliberately asked if they meant “fish market.” Some clarified it by saying “live fish,” or “not edible,” etc. (for detail, see Appendix II-d)

No clear difference between native and non-native speakers were observed, but there are two interesting findings here that reflect both personal and regional traits. That is, firstly, three subjects (one Japanese and two Americans) used the adjective “tropical” to modify fish, which pertains to the location of Hawaii. Secondly, the youngest (15 years old) and the second youngest (17 years old) subjects (the former is an English native speaker, the latter is a Cantonese speaker) both used “dolphin,” which might be their favorite aquatic animal at their age, in the list of fishes they named.

5) *The purpose of the aquarium*

Several verbs related to “vision” were elicited: “see” (9 subjects), watch (3 subjects), look/look at (3 subjects), view (1 subject). There were also idiosyncratic phrases such as “for a research,” “on display” and “amusement.” On this criterion, individual variance was more apparent than the first language group variation.

6) *Overall description of the place*

As mentioned earlier in the Introduction, many speakers in this study used “word-creation” strategies in addition to paraphrasing strategies. Three subjects (2 Japanese, 1 Chinese) used “a museum of fish/museum,” and five subjects (2 Japanese, 1 Chinese, 2 Americans) used “fish zoo.” This seems to be a very reasonable and effective means of getting the intended meanings across provided that the utterances are adequately coined and expressed in clarity.

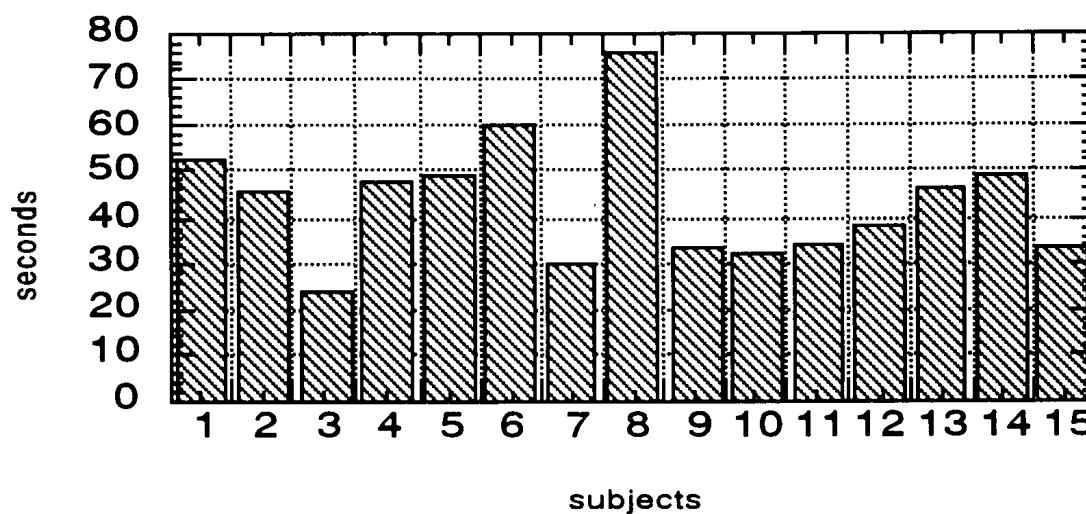
7) *The total length of dialogue*

The length of each interview, which started with addressing the officer and ended with the officer’s recognition of the aquarium, are shown in Figure 2. The exact figures are presented in Appendix II-g. The central tendency and the dispersion of the length based on L1 classification is shown in Table 2.

**TABLE2** L1-based central tendency and dispersion of the length

group	central tendency		dispersion			
	$\bar{X}$	mediam	low	high	range	SD
Japanese	43.69	47.72	23.73	52.01	29.28	10.18
Chinese	46.19	33.39	29.88	75.79	46.91	18.49
American	40.32	38.51	33.30	49.05	16.75	6.26

Figure2 The total length of dialogue



As you can learn from the table, American subjects' range and SD is conspicuously smaller than those of non-native groups. In addition, the native group's mean is lowest. Those three scores tell us that the native subjects accomplished their task, getting required information, more promptly than non-native speakers. In short, personal variance in the acquisition of communicative competence of a target language is smaller among native speakers of the target language than among L2 learners. That is not confined just to communication strategies, but fully extended to a whole range of language skills.

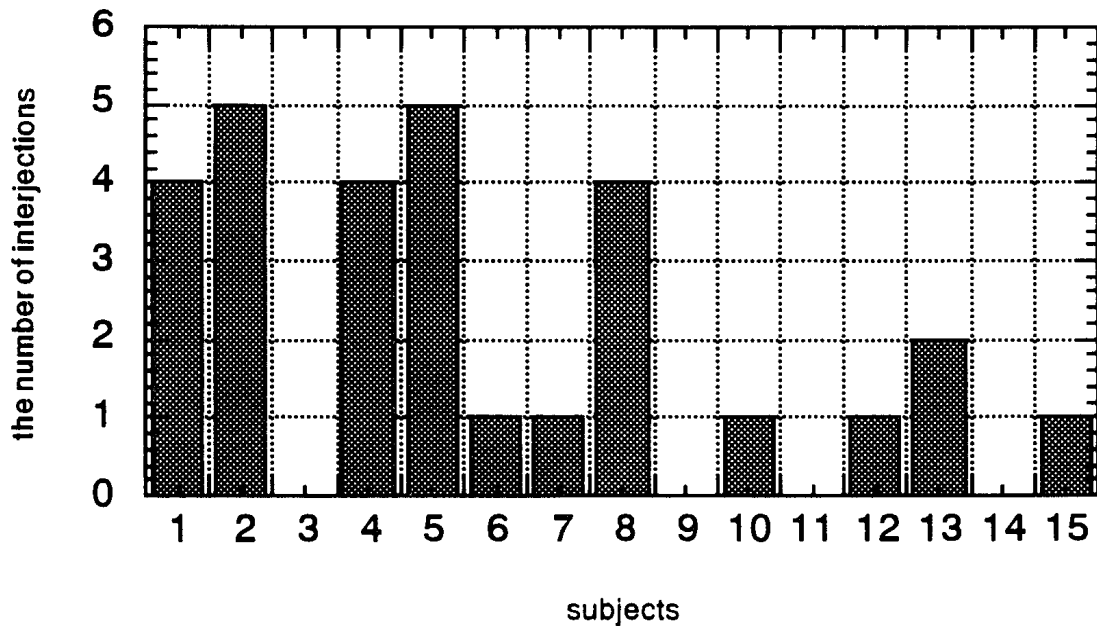
#### 8) *The frequency of interjections used*

The next criterion is the number of interjection "uh," used in speech. The graph in Figure 3 shows the frequency of the interjection. As can be seen clearly at a glance, the Japanese subjects used the interjections much more frequently than the Chinese and American subjects.

#### 9) *The frequency of affirmation and negation*

Next, we will compare the relation between the frequency of

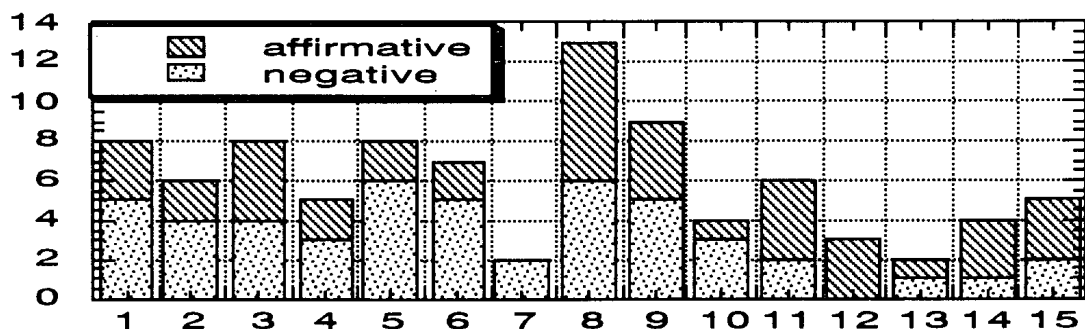
Figure3 Frequency of "uh"



affirmative words such as "yes," "yeah," "that's it," "that's right," "O.K.," "uh-huh," "right," and negative words, "no." Figure 4 indicates the number of affirmative and negative words combined.

The figure tells you that the native group has low frequency of both affirmative and negative expressions. In particular, there are very few from the American group. It can therefore be assumed that the conversations between the officer and the tourist were relatively smooth with fewer misunderstandings by the interlocutors.

Figure4 The number of affirmative and negative words



## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It follows from what has been found that there are some differences among the three language groups. Among them, the distinction between native English speakers and non-native English speakers is noteworthy. In general, all the data gathered pertaining to the NNS subjects, irrespective of their linguistic background, support this supposition.

Although the subjects had not been overtly instructed about CSs, they all used such communication strategies as paraphrasing “the place where,” word coinage “fish zoo” and “fish museum,” all of which led to achieving the speakers’ communicative needs in this experiment, and hopefully should lead to success in their real-life communication as well. This means communication strategies are not at all new but you often use them in the daily L1 and L2 communication with your friends, family, and teachers, and so on.

### ***Pedagogical Implications***

In pedagogical context, you should keep in mind Candlin’s recommendation (1982: 67)

Communication strategies not only serve to overcome problems learners face but are also used by learners to create conditions for intake. If this is so, then instruction should presumably take the form of offering problem-posing tasks to learners so that they may in concerted way co-exercise their communication and their learning strategies in accomplishment of the tasks.

What is immediately apparent in this extract is that you should teach CSs systematically by integrating them through tasks in your daily instruction. To that end, there are two important things to

consider.

First, how could you set up conditions which leads to the communicative needs for using communication strategies? Faerch and Kasper (1986: 188-189) have introduced a number of systematic attempts at developing communication strategies. Among them is role-playing activities, placing the learners in situations in which use of strategies is inevitable. Another possibility is using information-gap activities oriented towards communication activities.

Second, how would you deal with a grammar syllabus? As the data of this study have shown, there are some patterned expressions that should be of great use. For example, "the place where" is a very useful chunk, allowing learners to extend their active involvement in oral communication. The author of this paper would like to call such a chunk a "Prefabricated Functional Frame (PFF)." Table 3 shows

TABLE3 Useful Examples of PFF

---

(1)	It's like _____.
(2)	It looks like _____.
(3)	It's something like _____.
(4)	It's a kind of _____.
(5)	People use it when _____.
(6)	We need it when _____.
(7)	We use it when _____.
(8)	The purpose of it is to _____.
(9)	I'd like to get to a/the place where _____.
(10)	I'd like to see a/the person who _____.
(11)	I'd like to eat something like _____.
(12)	What do you call the person who _____?
(13)	What do you call the place where _____?
(14)	What do you call the thing which _____?
(15)	I don't know how to call it, but _____.
(16)	I forgot its name, but _____.

---

some of the examples of PFFs that were found in the subjects' data and that ESL/EFL learners should actively make part of their learned expressions so that they can automatically utilize them whenever necessary. Table 4 indicates a possible grammar task that the teachers can easily prepare to integrate into their daily instructions in task-based grammar instruction.

A task can be done either orally or in a written form. The teachers, native or non-native, can easily make such questions from a standard English language dictionary with some modification and simplification according to the level of their students. The task can be integrated into any part of their daily instructions. One possibility would be to give the task toward the end of lesson, picking up some or all of the vocabulary items taught during the lesson. Another would be to make some of the students orally describe or paraphrase a certain word or phrase that was taught or assigned in the previous lesson.

Obviously, English grammatical patterns should be much more finite than vocabulary. Most communication strategies are employed to compensate for lack of lexical knowledge. By making use of the knowledge of grammar and limited vocabulary, ESL/EFL learners will be able to achieve the intended communicative purpose. Learning a

**TABLE4 A Grammar Task Using PFFs**

Exercise: Fill in the blanks.	answers
(1) aquarium=a place _____ you can see a lot of fishes	<i>where</i>
(2) post office=a place _____ you can _____ letters	<i>where/mail</i>
(3) tax=a money _____ you have to pay to the government	<i>that</i>
(4) folk tale=a story _____ with "Long time ago"	<i>that/begins</i>
(5) saw=a tool _____ wood	<i>to/cut</i>
(6) Saturn=a _____ has _____ around it	<i>star/that/rings</i>
(7) ID card=a card _____ shows _____ you are	<i>that/who</i>



limited number of grammatical patterns designed for communication strategies is more economical than merely engaging in endless memorizing of phrases or sentences contained in commercially-available travelers' books.

As the name strategies suggests, ESL/EFL learners should be encouraged to actively use communication strategies. Naturally, pedagogical interest should be shifted from a traditional deductive orientation to a more inductive approach, which allows learners to survive in unsheltered "real world" contexts of intercultural communication.

Overt instruction in CS in an oral and/or written task-based form should be integrated into a part of daily classroom routines so that the instruction will surely direct the students from overdependency on rote-memorization to creative and versatile manipulation of their oral and written production. Such instruction will also help get rid of the misassumption that learning English is simply the task of memorizing finite morphosyntactical rules and unlimited volume of vocabulary and will lead learners to the full recognition that learning any language involves a finite number of communication strategies that will help the learners out of their future predicament where they may get lost in intercultural communication. Such a small step will instill confidence in the students, who will be set free from any anxiety resulting from their inability to name a certain lexical item, and will encourage them to take the initiative of exploring the challenges and excitement in meeting people with different cultural and linguistic background in the future.

The author of this paper genuinely wishes more ESL/EFL students will reap the benefit for their devotion and for the time they spend learning English. Surely the reward of mastering appropriate strategies will be greater success in intercultural communication.

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## **Appendix I**

### **The Transcriptions of fifteen Examples**

The following data were gained by interviewing five Japanese, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), and English (American) speakers.

#### **#1: A 25-year-old male Japanese speaker**

T: Tourist

O: Officer

T: Excuse me, sir. Uh, I'm looking for a place, sir. Honolulu something. But I forgot the, uh, the name of the building which is kind of, uh, you, there are many fish in it. You know the building.

O: Oh, fish market?

T: No, no, no. [LAUGH]. It's a alive fish, and you can see, uh, you know, fish swimming in the pool.

O: Swimming in the pool?

T: Yeah. Like a, and everybody go to the building and see.

O: And you also swim together?

T: No [LAUGH], no. I don't swim, but I just want to see the fishes and, uh, you know, you know natural animals swimming in the pool. So you can see that.

O: Oh, you're talking about Honolulu Aquarium?

T: That's right. That's right.

#### **#2: A 26-year-old male Japanese speaker**

T: Excuse me, sir. I'd like to go to, uh, a place where I can see lots of fish.

O: You're talking about fish market? You want, you miss the sashimi?

T: No, no, no, no. I don't eat fish. I want to see a fish, uh, swimming in the water.

O: Swimming in the water? Uh...

T: But, it's, it's an artificial place.

O: You're going to enjoy fishing near the beach or somewhere?

T: Uh, this is like a museum of fish.

O: Museum of fish? It's dead fish or live fish?

T: They are live fish.

O: Uh... You're talking about aquarium?

T: I think so.

**#3: A 26-year-old male Japanese speaker**

T: Excuse me, I want to...

O: O.K.

T: go to the place. I forgot the name.

O: Uh-huh.

T: But there is, you know the place, that, there's a lot of fish, an amount of fish.

O: Oh, I see. You mean the fish market? You want to eat, buy fish?

T: No, no, no, no! Just watch fish. Like a zoo, fish zoo.

O: Fish zoo? Oh, you're talking [LAUGH] about aquarium?

T: I think so.

**#4: A 25-year-old female Japanese speaker**

T: Uh... Could you tell me how to go to the palce tha, uh,[LAUGH] we have, there is, there are a lot of fishes.

O: I see. You're talking about fish market?

T: No, uh, uh...

O: You want to ear fish? Raw fish?

T: No [LAUGH], uh, like a zoo, but...

O: Zoo?

T: Yeah.

O: Zoo?

T: You see that...

O: You're talking about Honolulu Zoo?

T: Yeah, but, but, not for animal, but for a fish, for dolphin, or something like that [LAUGH].

O: Oh, you're talking about aquarium?

T: Yeah.

O: Honolulu Aquarium.

T: Yeah.

**#5: A 30-year-old female Japanese speaker**

T: Excuse me, uh, I want to go to...

O: Yeah.

T: Place where I can see a lot of fish. That's not a zoo, but a...

O: Oh, it's a fish market?

T: Oh, no. No, uh...

O: For sushi?

T: Just like a zoo but, uh, not animal, but uh...

O: Fish are animals, isn't it?

T: Oh, yeah. A tropical fish or whales, or not whales but, uh... Yeah.

O: Whales? O.K. Well, it's kind of museum?

T: Oh, yes, yes.

O: So, what is this for? Is this for...

T: Uh, just, uh, see fish for amusement.

O: Oh, exhibition or...?

T: Yes.

O: Oh, you're talking about aquarium?

T: Mm, wwell...

**#6: A 19-year-old male Mandarin speaker**

T: The place where there are, there is a lot of fishes.

O: Oh, you're talking about fish market?

T: No, no. Live fish.

O: Live fish?

T: Swimming around...people can watch.

O: It's like a pond?

T: No, it's inside.

O: Japanese garden?

T: Inside. No! Uh...

O: What are you talking about?

T: You know the place where tourists go ... to see fishes and other sea animals.

O: Where are they? Oh, I mean where is the fish? Is it on the pond?

T: No, it's inside the building.

O: Inside the building?

T: Uh-huh.

O: How can you see them?

T: Through the glasses. Just walking around. Through the glasses.

O: Are you talking about aquarium?

T: Yeah.

**#7: A 17-year-old male Cantonese speaker**

T: Hi, officer. Can I ask you a question?

O: Yeah.

T: Uh, do you know where the, the place where. It's like a zoo, but for sea animals, uh, fish, dolphins. Uh, it, it has tanks, small tanks, big tanks...fish inside and like a zoo. You go downstairs...you can see seals, and big lagoon, in a lagoon.

O: Oh, you're talking about aquarium?

T: Yeah. Yes.

**#8: A 39-year-old female Mandarin speaker**

T: Officer.

O: O.K.

T: May I ask you a question?

O: O.K. Sure.

T: I want to go to the, to the place where the gold fish are displayed, and , uh, the fish are put in the...uh...square, square, square glass box, and uh, in, in the square box. There're so many beautiful...

O: Oh, sushi bar.

T: Pardon me?

O: You're talking about sushi bar?

T: No! No! No! No! No! No! The fishes are all only for displaying.

O: Not for eat?

T: Not for eat. Not for eat. And this, they are not edible. Uh, so there are beautiful design. Beautiful trees and stones are, uh, placed in the box, in

the box. Can I ... Do you know the place?  
O: What kind of people go there?  
T: Uh, most of the people are tourists.  
O: Tourists? Yeah.  
T: And some are primary students, uh, who are taken there by their teachers for, for a research.  
O: Research? Oh, you're talking about aquarium?  
T: Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

**#9: A 36-year-old female Mandarin speaker**

T: Uh, I want to see fish, many, many fishes in a box in a house.  
O: In a house? Oh, the fish market?  
T: No! No! No! No! No! It's, its' a something like a museum of fish.  
O: Museum of fish? So it's not for eating? Not to eat?  
T: No, no. Just for seeing, watching.  
O: Who watch that?  
T: I watch that.  
O: And tourists?  
T: Yeah, it's a kind of tour. Touring around.  
O: Oh, you're talking about aquarium?  
T: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think so.

**#10: A 24-year-old female Mandarin speaker**

T: Uh, excuse me, sir. Do you know the place where we can see a lot of fish?  
O: Uh-huh.  
T: And, uh, and the fishes are in a box.  
O: You're talking about fish market? You're going to eat sushi or sashimi?  
T: Oh, no, no. Those fishes are for a looking, not for eating. I am going to the place. Can you show me where?  
O: You're talking about Honolulu Aquarium, right?  
T: Oh, yeah.  
O: O.K.



**#11: A 20-year-old female American English speaker**

T: Yes. I'm trying to get to the Honolulu...Uh, it's a place where there are fishes on display.

O: Uh, like a fish market? You want to buy fish to eat?

T: No, no. It's like a tropical fishes in tanks.

O: Uh-huh.

T: Showing their habitats...with descriptions of the groups of fishes.

O: Oh, for people.

T: Uh-huh.

O: Oh, it's a Honolulu Aquarium, right?

T: Yes, that's it.

**#12: A 15-year-old male American English speaker**

T: Excuse me. Uh, could you get to... I don't know the name of the place.

O: Uh-huh.

T: Uh, but they, it's it's like a fish. There're a lot of fish there. There are dolphins in a big tank. It's...uh.

O: Fish market? You want to...?

T: They are in exhibit like a zoo almost. Like a fish zoo. They have dolphins, seals, and all different kinds of seals in a, in a natural habitat.

O: What is this for?

T: Uh, it's just like a museum to see, to look at.

O: For people?

T: Yeah.

O: Or Tourists?

T: Yeah.

O: You're talking about aquarium?

T: Yes.

**#13: A 18-year-old male American English speaker**

T: Excuse me, sir. How do you get to the Honolulu... Uh, ..place with all the fish tanks and tropical fish and the staff.

O: Fish market? You want to go there to buy raw fish and to eat.

T: No, live fish. You can view the fish in there. Almost natural environ-

ment.

O: Natural environment? What is this for?

T: What's that?

O: What is this for?

T: Oh, just to go, look, just to see.

O: For whom?

T: For what?

O: For whom? It is open to the some particular people?

T: Oh, it's open to the public.

O: Oh, you're talking about aquarium?

T: Oh, yeah.

**#14: A 21-year-old female American English speaker**

T: Uh, I'd like to know where the place where they have fish.

O: O.K.

T: And marine animals.

O: Oh, you're talking about the fish market? You're going to buy fish?

T: No. It's not dead fish, live fish in tanks and, uh...

O: In tanks?

T: Yeah. It's rare types of fish, and they have some marine animals.

O: Uh-huh.

T: And you go there to..I guess..look at them.

O: O.K.

T: Learn more about them.

O: It's for people to watch it?

T: Right. You pay money and...

O: You're talking about aquarium?

T: Yeah.

**#15: A 28-year-old male American English speaker**

T: Uh, excuse me, officer. How can I get to the, the, uh, what's the word?  
Of the fish zoo.

O: Fish zoo?

T: O.K. Like a zoo for fish, you know.

O: Oh, fish market? Are you going to buy fish to eat? No?

T: No, no. The zoo, the place where you go to view fish. Different types of tropical fish, or whatever. The place where, you know, you can have cages, not cages but like the, the place with the glass of water behind it, you can look at the fish.

O: Oh, you're talking about aquarium?

T: Oh, yeah, yeah.

## Appendix II

### a) Verbs meaning how to get to the aquarium

subjects	L1	age	sex	expressions used in their speech
# 1	Japanese	25	M	I'm looking for...
# 2	Japanese	26	M	I'd like to go to...
# 3	Japanese	26	M	I want to go to...
# 4	Japanese	25	F	Could you tell me how to...
# 5	Japanese	30	F	I want to go to...
# 6	Mandarin	19	M	*
# 7	Cantonese	17	M	Do you know where...
# 8	Mandarin	39	F	I want to go to the...
# 9	Mandarin	36	F	I want to see fish...
#10	Mandarin	25	F	Do you know the place...
#11	English	20	F	I'm trying to get to...
#12	English	15	F	Could you get to...
#13	English	18	M	How do you get to...
#14	English	21	M	I'd like to know where...
#15	English	28	F	How can I get to...

### b) Reference to the aquarium as a building

subjects	L1	age	sex	expressions used in their speech
# 1	Japanese	25	M	a place.(followed by a separated sentence)
# 2	Japanese	26	M	a place where
# 3	Japanese	26	M	the place.(followed by a separated sentence)
# 4	Japanese	25	F	the place that...
# 5	Japanese	30	F	place where...
# 6	Mandarin	19	M	the place where...
# 7	Cantonese	17	M	the place where.(followed by a separated sentence)
# 8	Mandarin	39	F	the place where...
# 9	Mandarin	36	F	something like...
#10	Mandarin	25	F	the place where...
#11	English	20	F	a place where...
#12	English	15	F	the place.(followed by a separated sentence)
#13	English	18	M	place with...
#14	English	21	M	the place...
#15	English	28	F	*

c) Reference to the container for fish

subjects	L1	age	sex	expressions used in their speech
# 1	Japanese	25	M	in the pool
# 2	Japanese	26	M	in the water
# 3	Japanese	26	M	*
# 4	Japanese	25	F	*
# 5	Japanese	30	F	*
# 6	Mandarin	19	M	through the glasses
# 7	Cantonese	17	M	big tanks ... fish inside/in a lagoon
# 8	Mandarin	39	F	in the square glass box
# 9	Mandarin	36	F	in a box in house
#10	Mandarin	25	F	in a box
#11	English	20	F	in tanks
#12	English	15	F	in a big tank
#13	English	18	M	with all the fish tanks
#14	English	21	M	in tanks
#15	English	28	F	cages/with the glass of water

d) Specifying fish

subjects	L1	age	sex	expressions used in their speech
# 1	Japanese	25	M	fish/fishes/alive fish/natural animals
# 2	Japanese	26	M	fish/live fish
# 3	Japanese	26	M	fish
# 4	Japanese	25	F	fish/fishes/dolphin
# 5	Japanese	30	F	fish/tropical fish/whales
# 6	Mandarin	19	M	fish/fishes/other sea animals
# 7	Cantonese	17	M	sea animals/fish/dolphins/seals
# 8	Mandarin	39	F	fish/they are not edible
# 9	Mandarin	36	F	fish/fishes
#10	Mandarin	25	F	fish/fishes
#11	English	20	F	fish/tropical fishes
#12	English	15	F	fish/dolphins/seals/all different kinds of seals
#13	English	18	M	fish
#14	English	21	M	live fish/rare types of fish/some marine animals
#15	English	28	F	different types of tropical fish, or whatever

e) The purpose of the aquarium

subjects	L1	age	sex	expressions used in their speech
# 1	Japanese	25	M	see the fishes
# 2	Japanese	26	M	see a fish
# 3	Japanese	26	M	watch fish
# 4	Japanese	25	F	You see that...
# 5	Japanese	30	F	see fish for amusement
# 6	Mandarin	19	M	people can watch.(the object is deleted)
# 7	Cantonese	17	M	you can see...
# 8	Mandarin	39	F	for a research
# 9	Mandarin	36	F	just for seeing, watching
#10	Mandarin	25	F	we can see a lot of fish
#11	English	20	F	fishes on display
#12	English	15	F	to see, to look at
#13	English	18	M	just to go, look, just to see
#14	English	21	M	to look at them
#15	English	28	F	to view fish

f) Overall description of the place

subjects	L1	age	sex	expressions used in their speech
# 1	Japanese	25	M	(expressed in a sentence)
# 2	Japanese	26	M	like a museum of fish
# 3	Japanese	26	M	like a zoo, fish zoo
# 4	Japanese	25	F	like a zoo
# 5	Japanese	30	F	kind of museum
# 6	Mandarin	19	M	*
# 7	Cantonese	17	M	like a zoo but for sea animals
# 8	Mandarin	39	F	*
# 9	Mandarin	36	F	something like a museum of fish
#10	Mandarin	25	F	*
#11	English	20	F	*
#12	English	15	F	like a fish zoo
#13	English	18	M	*
#14	English	21	M	*
#15	English	28	F	fish zoo

g) The total length of dialogue

subjects	seconds	SD	z scores	T scores
# 1	52.01	10.18	+0.82	58.20
# 2	45.71	10.18	+0.19	51.97
# 3	23.73	10.18	-1.96	30.39
# 4	47.72	10.18	+0.40	54.00
# 5	49.22	10.18	+0.54	55.43
# 6	59.97	18.49	+0.75	57.49
# 7	29.88	18.49	-0.89	41.22
# 8	75.79	18.49	+1.60	66.04
# 9	33.39	18.49	-0.69	43.16
#10	31.56	18.49	-0.79	42.13
#11	34.58	6.26	-0.91	40.83
#12	38.51	6.26	-0.29	47.10
#13	46.16	6.26	+0.92	59.32
#14	49.05	6.26	+1.39	63.95
#15	33.30	6.26	-1.12	38.78

Total  $\bar{X}$  = 43.37 Range 53.06