The Use of Speaking Strategies by Pre-Service EFL Teachers

Filipović, Jelena

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SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU

UČITELJSKI FAKULTET

ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE

JELENA FILIPOVIĆ

DIPLOMSKI RAD

THE USE OF SPEAKING STRATEGIES BY PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS

Zagreb, rujan 2019.

SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU
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SUMMARY

Speaking in English as a foreign language is a complex skill which includes production of speech sounds in a meaningful way, as well as knowledge on different contexts in which speaking occurs since it dictates the nature of one's speech. Learners who want to improve their general speaking performance can benefit from the use of speaking strategies. In short, speaking strategies are actions which learners take to manage different aspects, such as cognitive, motivational, social and affective, which then affects their development of speaking skills.

This language skill is particularly important for young learners' EFL teachers, as they are frequently the only models of correct pronunciation whom the children can imitate. Thus, to determine the level of the perceived use of speaking strategies by pre-service EFL teachers and possible correlation between their perceived use of speaking strategies and their self-assessed knowledge of English and speaking skills in English, research involving fifty university students of Graduate programme of study of primary education in combination with the study of the English language was conducted. The results show significant use of speaking strategies, but the correlation was found to be weak, and it was recorded only between some of the categories of speaking strategies and the mentioned variables.

Key words: EFL knowledge, pre-service EFL teachers, speaking skills, speaking strategies

SAŽETAK

Govorenje na engleskom kao stranom jeziku složena je vještina koja uključuje produkciju glasova na smislen način, kao i znanje o različitim kontekstima u kojima se govorni čin može odvijati, budući da kontekst diktira prirodu govora. Svima koji uče engleski jezik i žele poboljšati svoju vještinu govorenja, uporaba strategija govorenja može biti korisna. Ukratko, strategije govorenja su radnje koje oni koji uče jezik poduzimaju kako bi regulirali različite aspekte, poput kognitivnog, motivacijskog, socijalnog i afektivnog aspekta, što posljedično utječe na razvoj jezične djelatnosti govorenja. Ova je jezična djelatnost posebno važna za učenike mlađe dobi jer su nastavnici engleskoga jezika često jedini model pravilnoga izgovora koji ovi učenici mogu oponašati.

Kako bi se, dakle, odredila percepcija korištenja strategija govorenja od strane budućih učitelja engleskoga kao stranoga jezika i moguća korelacija između percepcije uporabe strategija govorenja i samoprocjene znanja engleskoga jezika i samoprocjene razine jezične djelatnosti govorenja provedeno je istraživanje u kojemu je sudjelovalo pedeset studenata diplomskog studijskog programa Učiteljskog studija s engleskim jezikom.

Rezultati pokazuju značajnu uporabu strategija govorenja, međutim, korelacije su se pokazale slabima, te su utvrđene samo između određenih skupina strategija govorenja i ispitivanih varijabli.

Ključne riječi: budući učitelji engleskoga kao stranoga jezika, jezična djelatnost govorenja, strategije govorenja, vrsnoća u engleskom kao stranom jeziku.

1. INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that EFL teachers must possess knowledge about the grammar and vocabulary of the English language, as well as reading, writing, listening and speaking skills necessary to use the language. Even though all EFL teachers should be at the same or at least similar high level of proficiency, some of them still possess greater amount of knowledge, and use the language more accurately and fluently than others. Whatever their level of knowledge and skills, every EFL teacher needs to constantly learn and improve in both aspects of their job: knowledge about the language and language skills as well as the knowledge about teaching and teaching skills. One way to do so is to acquire and employ various language learning and teaching strategies, which, in general, help the learners to learn a language.

This also applies to pre-service EFL teachers, whose position is specific because they are students and teachers at the same time. They are students because they still have not graduated from their studies, and they are teachers because, as part of their teacher training, they experience teaching others.

One of the four language skills that is important for EFL instruction, and especially for pre-service EFL teachers, is speaking since this language skill contributes to the overall development of the communicative language competence, and it is also the basis of that competence (Martínez-Flor, Usó-Juan, & Alcón Soler, 2006).

This skill can be improved by employing speaking strategies as: "speakers need to become competent in using strategies in order to overcome limitations due to a lack of competence in any of the other components integrating the proposed communicative competence framework" (Martínez-Flor et al., 2006, p. 151), in which discourse, linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural and strategic competence are components of the proposed "communicative competence framework" (Martínez-Flor et al., 2006, p. 151).

2. LANGUAGE SKILLS IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

One of the main functions of language is communication. To communicate effectively, pre-service EFL teachers should work on improving their language skills. These primarily include the four basic skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Writing and speaking were typically considered to be active skills because it was commonly accepted that writers and speakers produce the messages which listeners and readers receive. On the other hand, reading and listening were regarded as passive skills because of the commonly accepted view that listeners and readers receive the messages which speakers and writers produce. Today, it is well known that reading and listening are not passive at all because they require distinct effort of the reader and the listener to not only receive, but to interpret the received message. Moreover, all four main skills can be further divided into a plethora of sub skills (Lynch & Mendelsohn, 2010). In addition to the four skills being labelled as passive and active, they have been referred to as processes of interpreting (reading and listening) and constructing (writing and speaking) meaning, and to do so successfully, language users engage in top-down or bottom-up types of meaning processing (Schmitt & Celce-Murcia, 2010). Top-down processing requires context and general knowledge, while bottom-up processing focuses on details (Schmitt & Celce-Murcia, 2010).

Furthermore, the four language skills can be grouped into L1 and L2/FL skills. This indicates that reading in L1 and in FL is not identical (Carrell & Grabe, 2010, p. 216). The same goes for writing in the two languages (Matsuda & Silva, 2010, p. 237), as well as for listening (Lynch & Mendelsohn, 2010, p. 187). Nevertheless, Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach (2009, p. 227) showed that L1 and L2 learning are based on certain processes that resemble each other, which suggests that L2 learning may reflect learners' L1 skills. There is another interesting notion proposed by the same authors:

> because both L2 aptitude and subsequent L2 proficiency appear to be strongly related to early L1 skills, it is important for all educators to know that early L1 language development prior to entering school is important for later L2 learning several years after students have mastered their L1. (Sparks et al., 2009, p. 228)

Therefore, in the light of this relation between L1 and L2 skills, a possibility of the transfer of knowledge and skills between the two languages is an issue certainly worth

mentioning. A study by Mihaljević Djigunović (2006) has shown that "at the A2 level of competence in EFL, Croatian learners' performances indicate evidence of both interlingual and intralingual interaction of skills" (p. 273). However, even though the transfer occurs, not all transfers are the same (some language skills will have stronger connections than others, thus the transfer will be easier and more significant).

2.1. FL speaking skills

Speaking is one of the four language skills that enables people to send their intended message to other people using speech sounds which they produce themselves with the help of their speech organs. How exactly these sounds are produced is a question which phonetics as a branch of linguistics is trying to answer. Phonology, on the other hand, explains how speakers of a particular language realize each sound, i.e. phoneme. However, speaking is more than just a production of sounds which are put together into meaningful units since "learning speaking, whether in a first or other language, involves developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate, and complex skills for producing and managing interaction, such as asking a question or obtaining a turn" (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2010, p. 197).

When people speak, they do it with a purpose, which can usually either be "an exchange of goods and services" or to "create and maintain social relationships" (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2010, p. 200). The first type of communication is called transactional communication, and an example for it would be calling a doctor to make an appointment, or asking the teacher to clarify something that we did not quite understand. On the other hand, having a small talk with a neighbour or a friendly chat with colleagues are examples of interactional communication. However, in reality, talk in everyday life is often a mixture of the two (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2010, p. 200).

3. LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In one of her most recent works on learning strategies, Oxford (2017) states that the concept of learning strategies is still in need of improvement. Some experts say that it is because the definition of learning strategies needs to be more accurate while others go even further saying that the concept of learning strategies should be completely abandoned. Since she provided a long-awaited definition of learning strategies, which is based on the research that she conducted, and since she explained the difference between strategic and non-strategic learning, it is safe to say that the concept of learning strategies has been improved and may be considered valid and useful, both to the foreign language researchers and practitioners.

After detailed research on the existing definitions of learning strategies, Oxford proposed the following definition:

> L2 learning strategies are complex, dynamic thoughts and actions, selected and used by learners with some degree of consciousness in specific contexts in order to regulate multiple aspects of themselves (such as cognitive, emotional, and social) for the purpose of (a) accomplishing language tasks; (b) improving language performance or use; and/or (c) enhancing long-term proficiency. Strategies are mentally guided but may also have physical and therefore observable manifestations. Learners often use strategies flexibly and creatively; combine them in various ways, such as strategy clusters or strategy chains; and orchestrate them to meet learning needs. Strategies are teachable. Learners in their contexts decide which strategies to use. Appropriateness of strategies depends on multiple personal and contextual factors. (Oxford, 2017, p. 48)

Oxford (2017) explains learning strategies as both mental and physical actions consciously chosen and taken by the learners in order to manage different domains of themselves (cognitive, social, motivational and affective domain). By managing these domains with the help of learning strategies, they learn more effectively and control their own learning. Furthermore, different learning strategies can be employed simultaneously, creating a strategy cluster, or one after the other forming a strategy chain. It is important for the learner to coordinate the use of learning strategies efficiently because they themselves are not inherently good or bad, but rather suitable or not suitable for a specific context.

When a learner uses learning strategies to enhance his or her learning, that type of learning is described as strategic. On the other hand, when a learner does not use them, his or her learning is non-strategic. An example to illustrate the point could be learner's

listening to a song in a foreign language. If a learner listens to it for the purpose of learning new vocabulary, and he or she does that consciously, then this learning is strategic. If the learner listens to it for the purpose that is not related to learning the new vocabulary, but learns some new vocabulary anyways, i.e., the learner learns some new vocabulary unconsciously, then his or her learning is non-strategic.

3.1. Types of language learning strategies

Oxford (2017) described four different types of learning strategies. These are cognitive, social, motivational and affective learning strategies. She also mentions learning metastrategies, a special type of learning strategies that guide the four previously mentioned learning strategies. Metastrategies can be further divided into metacognitive, metasocial, metamotivational and meta-affective learning strategies. Even though the division above might seem rather fixed, the reality of learning strategies is quite different. In fact, one learning strategy can be used through regulation of more than one aspect of an individual, such as cognitive, social, motivational and affective. This means that one learning strategy can belong to more than one category. One learning strategy is not simply metastrategy, cognitive, social, motivational or affective learning strategy, but it rather has an emphasis on one specific aspect, and is thus classified as metastrategy, cognitive, social, motivational or affective learning strategy.

To get a better understanding of this feature of learning strategies, Oxford (2017) proposes looking at different functions that one learning strategy can have:

> The *cognitive role* for strategies is aimed at the learner's self-regulation in processing and remembering language information. Notice that I am not talking flatly about *cognitive strategies*, but instead more subtly about the *cognitive role or function* of strategies. The *affective role* involves the learner's self-regulation of emotion for learning. I am not waxing eloquent about *affective strategies*, but about the *affective role* played by strategies. The *social* role involves the learner's self-regulation in learning with others and interacting with the social context. The *motivational role* entails the learner's self-regulation of motivation and volition for learning. In addition, the *meta (or overarching) role* encompasses the learner's self-regulation by means of planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating for learning. (Oxford, 2017, p. 142)

Oxford (2017) also explains that learning strategies, if at one point become employed automatically, are not learning strategies anymore, that is, they become habits. When something is used automatically, it means that it is used without the user thinking about

its use. Learning strategies, on the other hand, are used consciously, that is they are used in a way that includes thinking about their use.

3.1.1. Cognitive and metacognitive language learning strategies

Cognitive learning strategies can be further divided into six sub cognitive learning strategies: using the senses to understand and remember, activating knowledge, using reasoning, conceptualizing with details, conceptualizing broadly, and going beyond the immediate data (Oxford, 2017, p. 182).

Oxford (2017) also gives some examples of the abovementioned strategies. An example for using the senses to understand and remember could be looking at the pictures that illustrate the words which are being learned. When a learner looks back at what he or she had already learned, it means that he or she is activating his or her knowledge, and when the learner employs induction or deduction, he or she is using reasoning. Other examples are analysing a sentence in order to understand a specific grammar rule that is present in that sentence (conceptualizing with details), coming up with one's own sentence in which a specific grammar rule occurs in order to practice that rule (conceptualizing broadly), and making conclusions from the information that is already known (going beyond the immediate data).

As mentioned earlier, learning metastrategies guide cognitive, motivational, social and affective learning strategies by being employed prior to them. It means that they "help the learner know whether and how to deploy a given strategy and aid in determining whether the strategy is working or has worked as intended" (Oxford, 2017, p. 155). Also, if a metastrategy guides a cognitive strategy, then it will be called metacognitive strategy, and the same pattern then applies to the other three strategies as well. All learning metastrategies can be divided into four learning sub metastrategies: "(a) paying attention, (b) planning, (c) organizing learning and obtaining resources, and (d) monitoring and evaluating" (Oxford, 2017, p. 164). These are referred to as "metastrategy sets" that "are parallel across the four domains" (Oxford, 2017, p. 158), with the domains being cognitive, motivational, social and affective. This explains metacognitive learning strategies division discussed in the text that follows. Metacognitive learning strategies are: paying attention to cognition, planning for cognition, organizing learning and obtaining resources for cognition, and monitoring and evaluating for cognition (Oxford, 2017, p. 181). This means that if learners look out for what they need to learn, prepare a learning outline, collect their learning

essentials, and ultimately observe and assess their learning, they employ metacognitive learning strategies.

3.1.2. Motivational and metamotivational language learning strategies

Motivational learning strategies can be further divided into five sub motivational learning strategies. These are: self-consequating, using positive self-talk and positive self-image, using defensive pessimism, enhancing learning and controlling attributions (Oxford, 2017, pp. 194-195). Oxford (2017) also gives some examples of these motivational learning strategies. The first category, self-consequating, includes rewards and punishments that learners give to themselves as a result of accomplishing or not accomplishing learning goals. When someone says to himself or herself that they can do something, it is an example of using positive self-talk and positive self-image. On the contrary, when a person says to himself or herself that they cannot do something, it is an example of using defence pessimism. It must be noted that it does not work for everyone. In that case, a person can enhance his or her learning by making learning as fun as possible, for example, by turning it into a game. The last type of motivational learning strategy is controlling attributions, and an example for it could be when a learner tells oneself that if he or she works hard, he or she will succeed.

Metamotivational learning strategies are paying attention to motivation, planning for motivation, organizing learning and obtaining resources for motivation, and monitoring and evaluating for motivation (Oxford, 2017, pp. 193-194). This means that if learners take notice of what motivates them, plan for making themselves more motivated, collect learning essentials that will motivate them to learn and observe, and assess their motivation, they are using metamotivational learning strategies.

3.1.3. Social and metasocial language learning strategies

Social learning strategies can be further divided into three sub categories of social learning strategies. These are: interacting to learn and communicate, learning despite knowledge gaps in communication, and dealing with sociocultural knowledge and identities (Oxford, 2017, pp. 200-201). An example of a strategy that belongs to the group of "interacting to learn and communicate" strategies is asking the teacher or another student for help in understanding something that is not completely clear yet Oxford (2017). Describing a word that one cannot remember, instead of not saying anything, in order to keep the conversation going is an example of "learning despite

knowledge gaps" strategy, and an example of "dealing with sociocultural knowledge and identities" strategy is understanding the meaning behind the target culture and behaving accordingly.

Metasocial learning strategies are paying attention to contexts, communication, and culture; planning for contexts, communication, and culture; organizing learning and obtaining resources for contexts, communication, and culture; and monitoring and evaluating for contexts, communication, and culture (Oxford, 2017, pp. 199-200). This means that if learners take notice of the target culture and the way it impacts the manner in which its native speakers communicate, plan for gaining the knowledge of the target culture and the way it impacts how its native speakers communicate, collect all the learning essentials that will help them to gain that knowledge and observe and assess their progress, they are using metasocial learning strategies.

3.1.4. Affective and meta-affective language learning strategies

Affective learning strategies can be further divided into six sub affective learning strategies: selecting the situation to influence emotions, modifying external situations to avoid emotions, deploying one's attention to control emotions, changing cognitive appraisals of situations (internal or external) to shape emotions (reframing), modulating one's emotional responses, and making meaning as a means of handling emotions (Oxford, 2017, pp. 227-228).

Examples of the six affective learning strategies are also provided. To enhance learning, learners may choose a situation that they want to be in and be in that situation so that it can influence their emotions the way they want them to be influenced. An example of that learning strategy can be choosing to attend language classes regularly (if class attendance is not obligatory and if one finds it useful) so that one can feel less anxious about an upcoming exam. If learners cannot choose a situation that they want to be in and be in it, they can adapt a situation so that it can influence their emotions the way they want them to be influenced. An example of that learning strategy can be (if class attendance is obligatory and one does not find it useful) not paying attention to the useless lecture, seminar or something else, and studying for that class on one's own while in class so that one does not spend time in vain and consequently, does not feel frustrated. Sometimes, only controlling one's emotions by paying attention to something that makes one feel positive emotions without avoiding certain situations or adapting them will serve as a good learning strategy. An example can be listening

to one's favourite music to feel less anxious about the exam that will be taken in a few hours. Another thing that learners can do to control their emotions is looking at a situation that causes negative emotions in them from several points of view that are positive and productive instead of only looking at it from the points of view that are negative and unproductive. An example of that learning strategy can be thinking of all the possible outcomes of a situation in which a learner has prepared himself/herself well for an exam, but he/she still feels very insecure and anxious about taking that exam. Some of the possible outcomes may be failing the exam or passing it. The learner then tells himself/herself that the best outcome will happen to him/her instead of telling oneself that the worst one will happen. Another affective learning strategy includes regulating one's emotions by means of relaxation. For example, a learner can lay on his/her bed for a few minutes in order to relax and then continue with their learning. The last type of affective learning strategies includes regulating one's emotions by ascribing meaning to one's learning. An example of that learning strategy can be communicating to a native speaker on social media.

Meta-affective learning strategies are paying attention to affect, planning for affect, organizing learning and obtaining resources for affect, and monitoring and evaluating for affect (Oxford, 2017, pp. 226-227). This means that if learners take notice of the emotional aspect of themselves, think about the ways to regulate that aspect, arrange their learning in a way that will influence their emotions the way they want, find the information about regulation of emotions, and observe and assess their emotions, they are employing meta-affective learning strategies.

3.2. Speaking strategies in a foreign language

As previously stated, speaking is a complex skill that consists of many sub skills such as phonology and pronunciation. In order to be able to speak English well, speaking strategies for phonology and pronunciation should be employed. Moyer (2014, as cited in Oxford, 2017) conducted research which confirmed that learners who were exceptionally good at phonology reported using learning strategies:

> Nearly every exceptional learner mentioned self-monitoring, imitation of native speakers, attention to difficult phonological terms, and an explicit concern for pronunciation accuracy. In general terms, a cognitive approach is indicative of practice, reasoning, note-taking, analyzing, etc., and the metacognitive level involves planning, goal-setting, reflection, and evaluation. (Moyer, 2014, p. 426 as cited in Oxford, 2017)

Oxford (2017) differentiates between phonology and pronunciation learning strategies, and states that "pronunciation is the act or result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often with reference to some standard" (Oxford, 2017, p. 295), and that the phrase "pronunciation strategies" typically refers to strategies for developing appropriate pronunciation although this term can also be used to denote "strategies for performing pronunciation" (Oxford, 2017, p. 295).

Oxford (2017) reported on Kawai's (2008) research which showed how the use of speaking strategies by two very good Japanese EFL speakers contributed to their speaking proficiency. Here are the strategies they used:

> They built their confidence by practicing orally in advance of any English language encounters; gathering information on potential discussion topics through books, the Internet, and interviews; seeking help from native speakers if available; anticipating the comments of others; planning and preparing flexible conversational expressions to employ; reviewing discussion procedures; anticipating a communication breakdown and the strategies to use if it happened; and made and followed plans to talk every day in English. (Oxford, 2017, p. 296)

Moreover, Oxford states that

> Kawai's findings showed that learning strategies of a noncompensatory sort are helpful for improving speaking. These include metacognitive strategies like planning and monitoring; a range of cognitive strategies that can enhance the vocabulary and grammar necessary for effective speaking; affective strategies

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to reduce anxiety; and social strategies to encourage interaction. (Oxford, 2017, p. 297)

"Those who develop good oral skills appear to be frequent strategy users regardless of culture and learning context" (Kawai, 2008, p. 219 as cited in Oxford, 2017, p. 297). As mentioned before, speaking happens within a specific social and cultural context. This indicates that "L2 speakers must know what they intend to say and, in relation to existing norms, how to say it with the appropriate politeness, directness, and formality. They must also know what not to say and how to communicate nonverbally" (Oxford, 2017, p. 299). In that regard, it is important to mention the discipline of pragmatics since it "refers to how language is used in sociocultural contexts" (Oxford, 2017, p. 299). In other words, pragmatics "investigates the different aspects of the complex relation between the linguistic meaning and contextual interpretation" (Spencer-Oatey, & Žegarac, 2010, p. 82). So, according to the context or "the set of assumptions which participants use in producing and interpreting acts of communication" (Spencer-Oatey, & Žegarac, 2010, p. 75), people will interpret the meaning behind the language they have heard, read, seen, etc. This points out towards pragmatics strategies as an important part of speaking strategies.

In addition to the above-mentioned types of speaking strategies, Nakatani (2006) proposes the following eight categories of strategies for coping with speaking problems. The first of these are social affective strategies which refer to learners trying to control their own anxiety and enjoying the process of oral communication, their willingness to encourage themselves to use English and to risk making mistakes, and their attempt to give a good impression and avoid silence during interaction. The second category refers to fluency-oriented strategies. Learners use these to speak as clearly as possible so that their interlocutors could understand them. They also pay attention to the cultural context in which their conversation takes place to avoid conveying any message which could potentially be misunderstood. The third type of strategies are called negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies. Learners use these when checking whether their interlocutors have understood them or not. They also repeat what they have said or give examples in order to enhance listener's understanding of their intended message. The fourth category includes accuracy-oriented strategies which learners employ to self-assess the grammatical structures they use to determine whether these structures are correct or not. They also give their

best to sound like a native speaker. The fifth category, called message reduction and alteration strategies, refers to learners trying "to avoid a communication breakdown by reducing an original message, simplifying their utterances, or using similar expressions that they can use confidently" (Nakatani, 2006, p. 155). The sixth category, called nonverbal strategies while speaking, are employed by learners when the message is not communicated through speech, but also by using different gestures, eye-contact, etc. The seventh category of strategies includes message abandonment strategies which learners use to bring the interaction to the end by giving up on communicating their intended message to the interlocutor. Sometimes, by asking someone for help, learners do not give up on conveying their message completely. The last category, called attempt to think in English strategies, refers to learners trying to think in English while speaking in English (Nakatani, 2006). In addition to the strategy division above, Nakatani (2006, p. 152) states "the term oral communication strategy (OCS) is used instead of communication strategy. Oral communication strategies specifically focus on strategic behaviors that learners use when facing communication problems during interactional tasks".

3.2.1. Teaching speaking strategies

It can be said that speaking is viewed as the central feature of communicative competence, which leads to an assumption that, in order to be communicatively competent, one has to develop solid speaking skills (Martínez-Flor et al., 2006). The role of the future EFL teachers therefore includes helping their learners to develop that competence. This can be done through teaching learners specific speaking strategies that they will actively use throughout their language learning process. Teachers should raise an awareness among their students about different strategies and explain each strategy in terms of its role and function, i.e. instruct students on "how, when, and why to use the strategy" (Anderson, 2005, p. 758). In this way, students will be able to discover for themselves which strategies they find most beneficial (Anderson, 2005). Chamot (2005) explains that many factors such as a type of speaking assignment, students' cultural background or their level of proficiency can influence the choice of the speaking strategies they will use. The role of the teacher in this situation is to raise an awareness about the strategies the students are already using and those they could use so that it does not hold them back while deciding upon an appropriate and most effective strategy for their speaking task. In that way, the teacher directs students

towards new possibilities they have not been aware of before and motivates them to use more new strategies which they have not previously used or even taken into account (Chamot, 2005).

An approach that supports the idea of strategy-based instruction, called Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), originally presented by Chamot and O'Malley (1990), is also worth mentioning here. By emphasizing the importance of strategy instruction, in addition to the development of academic content and language, this approach has been proven to benefit the language learning process (Chamot, 2007).

Dadour and Robbins' study (1996 as cited in Oxford, 2017) showed that students who were taught speaking strategies used them more often, and therefore their speaking skills were better than those of the students who were not taught these strategies. Also, students reported that they wanted to continue learning strategies that would help them develop a satisfying level of oral proficiency. Other researchers have also come to a conclusion that by employing various learning strategies, learners' language performance improves (Anderson, 2005). Therefore, it is important for pre-service EFL teachers to be familiar with a range of speaking strategies in order to be able to teach them in their EFL classrooms.

3.2.1.1. Explicit and implicit speaking strategy instruction and the use of L1

After concluding that using speaking strategies helps learners to develop their speaking skills, the question of how to teach these strategies naturally occurs. Chamot (2005, p. 123) explains that "explicit instruction includes the development of students' awareness of their strategies, teacher modeling of strategic thinking, identifying the strategies by name, providing opportunities for practice and self-evaluation". She continues by stating that this type of teaching is quite beneficial, especially in comparison with only telling learners to employ some random strategies. However, opposing views have also been expressed, i.e. Eslinger's research (2000 as cited in Anderson, 2005) emphasized implicit strategy instruction as beneficial to students since "there may be a natural tendency to grow in strategy use without explicit instruction" (Anderson, 2005, p. 763).

Another issue concerning the instruction of speaking strategies is whether using L1 in an EFL classroom to teach speaking strategies should be a common practice or whether it should be avoided. Chamot (2005) suggests using L1 if learners are not proficient

enough to understand teacher's explanation of a specific strategy in English. Usually, younger learners are the ones who do not understand English well enough and may thus benefit from teachers' decision to explain these strategies in L1. Nevertheless, using L2 to explain speaking strategies should stay in teacher's focus so that a gradual introduction of English while explaining these strategies can take place. Also, naming the strategy in English while explaining it in a simple way is recommended as well as giving a lot of examples of the target strategy without the use of students' mother tongue (Chamot, 2005).

3.2.2. Recent studies on EFL speaking strategy use

Pawlak (2018) conducted a study to see what speaking strategies higher-proficiency English language learners use prior to a speaking task, as well as while doing the task, and after its completion. The study included 20 university students majoring in English. The participants were asked to complete two different speaking tasks 1) giving their opinions on various topics such as identifying good and bad sides of having a phone or being a part of a large family, and 2) engaging in pair work to find differences between the two given pictures. Each student had one picture, so to discover the differences, they had to communicate. Immediately upon the completion of the two tasks, the participants reported on the speaking strategies they employed. After each task, they were given the same survey that was formed as an open-ended questionnaire and the researcher performed a qualitative analysis to make conclusions about the employed strategies (Pawlak, 2018). The research showed that "the employment of speaking strategies is bound to be conditioned by the type of activity, the demands it places on interlocutors, and the communicative goals it sets" (Pawlak, 2018, p. 286). The report on specific speaking strategies which participants employed before, during and after performing the two speaking tasks showed that they mostly relied on metacognitive and social strategies. Some of the metacognitive strategies they used were preparing for their speech by choosing suitable vocabulary and deciding upon the arguments which would support their opinions. They also reflected upon their grammatical accuracy during the communication tasks. Students cooperating in order to complete the two speaking tasks by asking each other different questions is an example of a social strategy they employed (Pawlak, 2018).

The research conducted by Méndez López (2011) aimed to determine which speaking strategies were used by university students of English at five different Mexican

universities. Students who participated were grouped under three different categories: beginners, intermediates and advanced so that the researchers could carry out the analysis of the strategies used according to the students' proficiency level. In the first stage of the study, the students were asked to name strategies they use in general, and the second stage included a list of specific strategies for which the students had to report on a Likert scale how often they use each of them. The results showed that speaking strategy use was not the same at all three proficiency levels. Actually, all students reported using similar speaking strategies, but the frequency of strategy use was related to their proficiency level (Méndez López, 2011). The three strategies that were employed the most are: "asking for repetition, the use of paraphrasing or a synonym for unknown words, and asking for clarification of a message" (Méndez López, 2011, p. 14). Méndez López (2011) concludes her research paper with an interesting and helpful suggestion:

> It is important to emphasise that teachers should implement strategy training in language courses. My suggestion is to intersperse speaking strategies in communicative activities designed by teachers, with some time devoted to demonstrating and to explaining the rationale behind each strategy. Thus, strategies should be presented and demonstrated first, with teachers then allowing time for practice of the strategy. Once a strategy has been practised for some time, a new strategy should be introduced. Next, teachers should encourage the use of those strategies already introduced in class activities so that students use as many strategies as possible in their learning process. Providing strategy training for students will hopefully help them to take better advantage of their learning. (Méndez López, 2011, pp. 14-15)

Another similar research was conducted by Zhang and Goh (2006). They wanted to determine students' metacognitive knowledge about strategies for learning to speak and listen in ESL, and whether students' perceived knowledge on speaking strategies is correlated with their perceived use of these strategies. It included 278 Singaporean secondary school learners of English, who evaluated each of the 40 strategies listed in the questionnaire. Students marked their perceived usefulness of each strategy on a Likert-type scale as well as their perceived use of that strategy. Results of the research show that, even though most of the strategies were viewed as useful, not many of them were actually used. "The discrepancy indicates that the students, generally aware of the usefulness of these strategies for becoming better listeners and speakers of English, were not yet conscious and confident strategy users" (Zhang & Goh, 2006, p. 214). This discrepancy can be attributed to a number of factors, some of them being

inadequate strategy instruction and insufficiency of dedication to using speaking strategies (Zhang & Goh, 2006).

4. RESEARCH

This chapter of the thesis will provide insight into research aim and hypotheses, research participants, and the methods used to collect and process the data.

4.1. Research aim and hypotheses

The aim of the research was to gather information about pre-service EFL teachers' perception of their speaking strategies use and to identify factors which may be related to their use with the ultimate goal of proposing implications for teaching. Research hypotheses are as follows:

1. Significant use of speaking strategies will be reported by pre-service EFL teachers.

2. Greater use of speaking strategies will be reported by those pre-service EFL teachers who assess their knowledge of English with a higher grade.

3. Greater use of speaking strategies will be reported by those pre-service EFL teachers who assess their speaking skills in English with a higher grade, and those who claim that speaking is their favourite activity in EFL classes.

4.2. Participants

The first part of the questionnaire elicited information about the participants, such as their age, their language learning history, etc. Research participants were 50 students of the Teacher Education studies majoring in Primary English Language Teaching at the Faculty of Teacher Education University of Zagreb, of whom 48 (96%) were female and 2 (4%) were male.

There were 38% (N = 19) second year students, 10% (N = 5) were in their third year of studies, 8% (N = 4) in their fourth year, and 44% (N = 22) in their final, fifth year. The age span of the participants ranges from 19 to 27, with most of the participants being 23 (N = 15 or 30%) and 20 (N = 13 or 23%) years old, i.e. mean age for this group was M = 22.06 (SD = 1.81).

All of the participants reported that they had been learning English prior to their enrolment at the Faculty of Teacher Education. They started learning it while in

kindergarten or in primary school, and continued learning it in their secondary school and at the university.

Most (N = 44 or 88%) reported that their final grade in English in primary school was 5 (i.e. A, excellent), and the rest of them (N = 6 or 12%) were graded with a 4 (i.e. B, very good). Their final grades slightly deteriorated while in secondary school with 70% (N = 35) of them being graded with 5, 28% (N = 14) with 4, and 2% (N = 1) with 3 (i.e. C, good).

Only 20 participants (40%) reported having studied English outside school (in foreign language schools or private lessons). More than half of them (N = 27 or 54%) reported that they are exposed to English in their free time more than 10 hours per week, 22% (N = 11) stated that their exposure to English is up to 10 hours per week, while 24% (N = 12) said that their exposure does not go beyond 5 hours per week. Exposure to English includes listening to music, watching films, reading, surfing the Internet, communication in English, etc. Finally, majority of the participants (N = 42 or 84%) reported communicating with a native speaker of English at least at some point in their lives while the rest (N = 8 or 16%) said they have never been in contact with a native speaker.

4.3. Questionnaire

The research in which the participants were asked to fill in an online questionnaire was conducted throughout March, April and May 2018. The two-part online questionnaire that the participants had completed (Appendix 1) contained a consent form that each participant had to fill in before taking the questionnaire. After agreeing to participate, they were asked some general questions such as their age, gender, current year of studies, and questions related to their English language learning history (whether they have been learning English in primary and secondary school, for how long, etc.).

The second part of the questionnaire contained an Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) developed by Nakatani (2006). The Inventory originally contained two sets of items: strategies for coping with speaking problems and strategies for coping with listening problems. The questionnaire that the participants took was adapted to suit the purpose of the present research, i.e. the set of items on strategies for coping with listening problems was excluded from the questionnaire. All of the items from the set of strategies for coping with speaking problems were included with their wording being slightly adapted to contribute to students' better understanding of the

items (Appendix 1). These items in the original survey (Nakatani, 2006, pp. 163-164) were:

"1. I think first of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence."

"2. I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation."

"4. I reduce the message and use simple expressions."

"5. I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent."

"6. I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I don't know what to say."

"16. I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't communicate how to express myself."

"25. I try to give a good impression to the listener."

In addition, although the instructions for the original OCSI state that it is to be completed after a specific speaking activity, for the purpose of the present research, the questions were posed and analysed so as to refer to general speaking behaviour of the participants.

4.3.1. Oral Communication Strategy Inventory by Nakatani (2006)

Nakatani (2006, p. 152), expressing the need for "a reliable and valid strategy inventory for communication tasks" aimed to developed OCSI by conducting a three-stage research. "During the first stage of the pilot study, an open-ended questionnaire was administered to a total of 80 students in first-semester EFL lessons (…) to elicit a variety of strategies for oral communication" (Nakatani, 2006, p. 153). The summary of the responses was used in the second phase of the pilot study, which was conducted with 400 university students. After the second stage of the pilot study by performing "an initial exploratory factor analysis for strategies for coping with speaking and listening problems (…) 32 items for coping with speaking problems and 26 items for coping with listening problems during communicative tasks" (Nakatani, 2006, p. 154) were created. The third and the last stage of the study including 400 university students was based on the "final factor analysis to obtain a stable self-reported instrument" (Nakatani, 2006, p. 151).

The final version of the inventory consists of 32 items indicating strategies for coping with speaking problems. Each strategy is assessed on a 5-point Likert type scale, whereby 1 indicates *Never or almost never true of me,* 2 *Generally not true of me,* 3 *Somewhat true of me,* 4 *Generally true of me* and 5 *Always or almost always true of me*. Strategies were divided into 8 categories, based on the factor analysis results.

Factor 1, labelled as social affective strategies, includes items number 28, 27, 29, 26, 25 and 23, Factor 2 comprises items number 13, 11, 14, 12, 9 and 10, and they are called fluency-oriented strategies. Factor 3 items indicate learners' negotiation of meaning while speaking and includes items 22, 21, 19 and 20. Items 7, 18, 17, 8 and 30 are categorized under the Factor 4 and are concerned with learners' desire to speak like a native speaker. Factor 5 includes items 4, 3 and 5, i.e. message reduction and alteration strategies. Factor 6 represents nonverbal strategies that help learners to execute intended message (items 15 and 16). Items in Factor 7 (24, 31, 32 and 6) are called message abandonment strategies. Items 1 and 2 belong to Factor 8 which is named attempt to think in English strategies.

In the end, "the applicability of the survey instrument was subsequently examined in a simulated communicative test for EFL students (N = 62)" (Nakatani, 2006, p. 151), which showed that OCSI is an appropriate tool for measuring students' perception of their use of speaking strategies in an actual communication task.

4.4. Results and Discussion

4.4.1. Knowledge of English, language skills and strategies

All participants confirmed that it was important to be good at English. Two reasons were constantly occurring in the participants' responses, even though they were worded by each participant differently: 1) English can help a person to communicate internationally, 2) knowing English is important because one cannot be an English teacher if he or she does not know English. Some examples of their wording are as follows: 1) "English is the language that is used all over the world", "it is the only language used among [sic] the world for international communication"; 2) "so that I can teach children proper English", "our job is to teach children English, and we cannot to [sic] that if we are not good at it."

When the participants were asked to choose their favourite activity or activities in the English classes, most chose speaking (N = 33 or 66%) and listening (N = 23 or 46%).

Reading silently (N = 19 or 38%), writing (N = 17 or 34%) and reading out loud (N = 11 or 22%) were chosen by fewer participants.

When asked to choose one or more skills in English at which they consider themselves to be very good, the most frequently chosen answers were listening (N = 30 or 60%) and speaking (N = 28 or 56%). Reading silently and writing were chosen the same number of times (N = 26 or 52%) while reading out loud was chosen 23 times (46%). Participants were also asked to self-reflect and assess their EFL knowledge on a scale from 5 to 1, where 5 means excellent, 4 very good, 3 good, 2 satisfactory and 1 means fail. Most of them assessed their EFL proficiency with 4 (N = 33 or 66%), followed by 5 (N = 13 or 26%) and 3 (N = 4 or 8%). The mean grade for participants' self-assessed general knowledge of English was M = 4.18 (SD = 0.56).

When asked to self-assess their speaking skills, slightly more 3s (N = 8 or 16%), but also 5s (N = 15 or 30%) were recorded. Still, the prevalent grade was 4 (N = 27 or 54%). The mean grade for the participants' self-assessed speaking skills in English was M = 4.14 (SD = 0.67).

It was interesting to compare their self-assessment of the speaking skills in the foreign language (English) with the self-assessment of the speaking skills in their mother tongue (Croatian). The results were as follows: equal number of students (N = 24 or 48%) graded their speaking skills in the mother tongue with 5 and 4. Only 4% (N = 2) graded it with 3. The mean grade for the self-assessed speaking skills in Croatian was M = 4.44 (SD = 0.58). This shows that, even though the participants assessed their speaking skills in Croatian with slightly higher grades than their speaking skills in English, the difference actually is not that big. Some of the possible reasons might be that they feel rather confident while speaking in both their mother tongue and in English, or that their standards for assessing these two skills were not the same (maybe they had higher standards for Croatian than English).

Participants also had to explain what they thought speaking and learning strategies were. Firstly, they provided some suggestions about what they thought speaking strategies were, and the answers showed that some of them did not know how to explain speaking strategies, while others did try to provide an explanation, some with more and some with less success. These are some of their answers: "I have no idea.", "The way we say things" and "Mechanism to help you speak more easily and fluently". Secondly, they had to say what they thought learning strategies are. Some of their answers were: "To find the best way to learn something", "Good organisation,

repetiton [sic], learning outloud, understanding, giving examples", "Strategies that help you develop the most effective way of learning something new" and "Alone, in a group, online...", "Watching movies, communicating, repeating the words you've studied, writing them down, connecting them with Croatian words...", "The ways we learn" and "visual, auditory, kinesthetic and multimodal strategies". These answers show that some confused learning strategies with learning styles, some did not differentiate between strategic and non-strategic learning, some equalized learning strategies in general with only one type of learning strategies called social learning strategies, while some gave good examples of learning strategies.

4.4.2. OCSI

The results obtained for the OCSI inventory indicated that the average use of strategies by the participants was M =3.77 (SD = .34)[1].

In the text below, the results of the OCSI inventory will be presented according to the eight Factors, i.e. types of strategies, which were extracted during the inventory construction.

Variables in Factor 1 are social affective strategies and include 6 strategy items for which the following mean results were obtained: a) I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say (M = 3.76, SD = .92), b) I try to leave a good impression on the listener (M = 4.44, SD = .61), c) I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes (M = 3.80, SD = 1.09), d) I try to enjoy the conversation (M = 4.52, SD = .74), e) I try to relax when I feel anxious (M = 4.24, SD = .82), and f) I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say (M = 4.28, SD = .83). The chart below (Figure 1) shows how the participants assessed their social affective strategy use.

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[1] For a more accurate presentation of results, three items (1, 24, 32) were excluded from all further calculations invoving overall mean results.
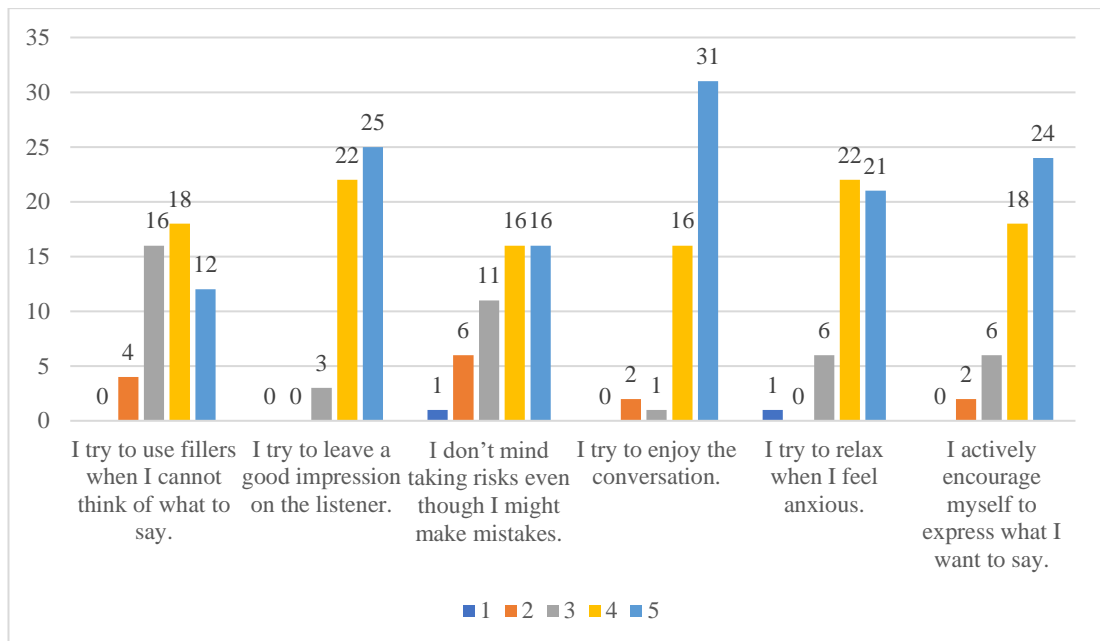
Figure 1. OCSI results indicating participants' social affective strategy use

It may therefore be observed that the highest mean for the perceived use of a speaking strategy is for strategy number 27 (I try to enjoy the conversation), while the lowest mean was recorded for strategy number 23 (I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say).

Factor 2 items (Figure 2), which indicate fluency of communication are called fluency-oriented strategies, and the following results were obtained in the present research for this strategy category: a) I change my way of saying things according to the context (M = 4.16, SD = .77), b) I take my time to express what I want to say (M = 3.64, SD = .92), c) I pay attention to my pronunciation (M = 4.52, SD = .68), d) I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard (M = 4.34, SD = .75), e) I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation (M = 4.06, SD = .94), and f) I pay attention to the conversation flow (M = 4.22, SD = .96) (Nakatani, 2006).
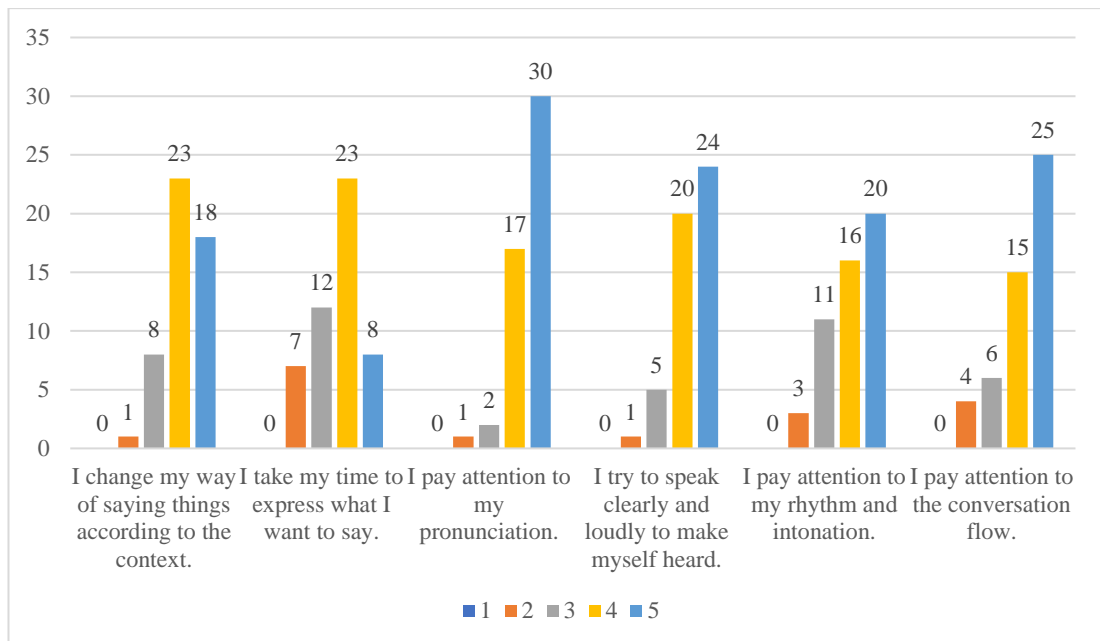
Figure 2. OCSI results indicating participants' fluency-oriented strategies

The highest perceived mean use was recorded for strategy number 12 (I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard), while for strategy number 10 (I take my time to express what I want to say) the lowest mean result was obtained.

As presented in Figure 3, the next Factor comprised negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies (Nakatani, 2006), with the following mean results: a) While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .85$), b) I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I'm saying ($M = 4.64$, $SD = .53$), c) I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .91$), and d) I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.10$).
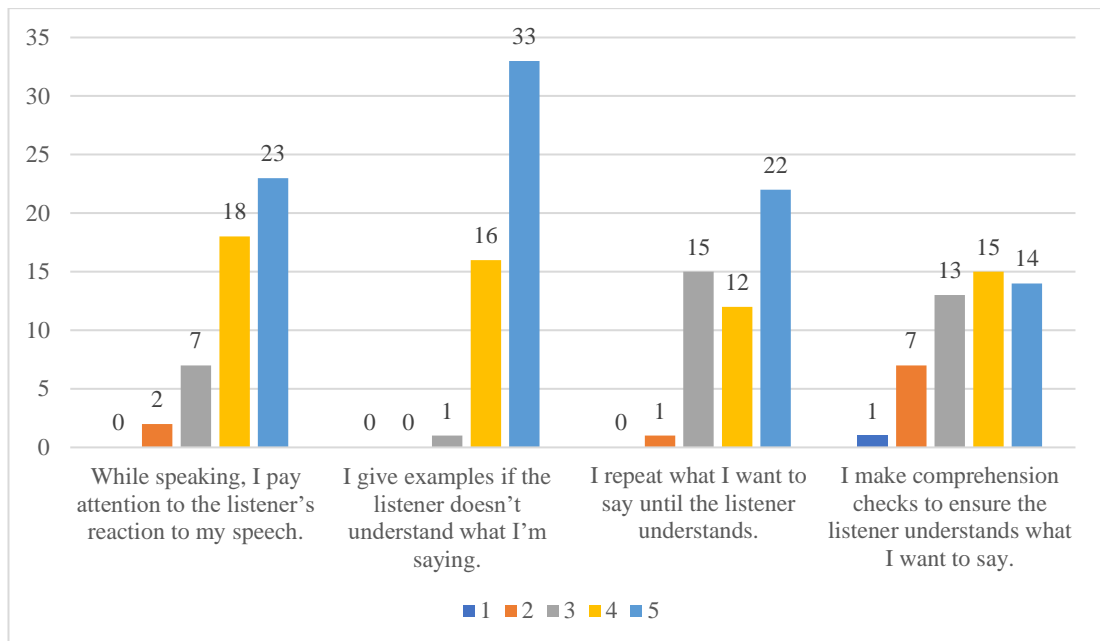
Figure 3. OCSI results indicating participants' negotiation for meaning while using speaking strategies

Strategy number 20 (I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I'm saying) was perceived to be used the most, while strategy 22 (I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say) was perceived to be used the least.

Factor 4 includes the accuracy-oriented strategies (Nakatani, 2006), for which the following mean results were recorded: a) I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation (M = 4.30, SD = .86), b) I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence (M = 3.04, SD = .95), c) I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake (M = 4.62, SD = .57), d) I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned (M = 4.08, SD = .80) and f) I try to talk like a native speaker (M = 4.12, SD = .98) (Figure 4).
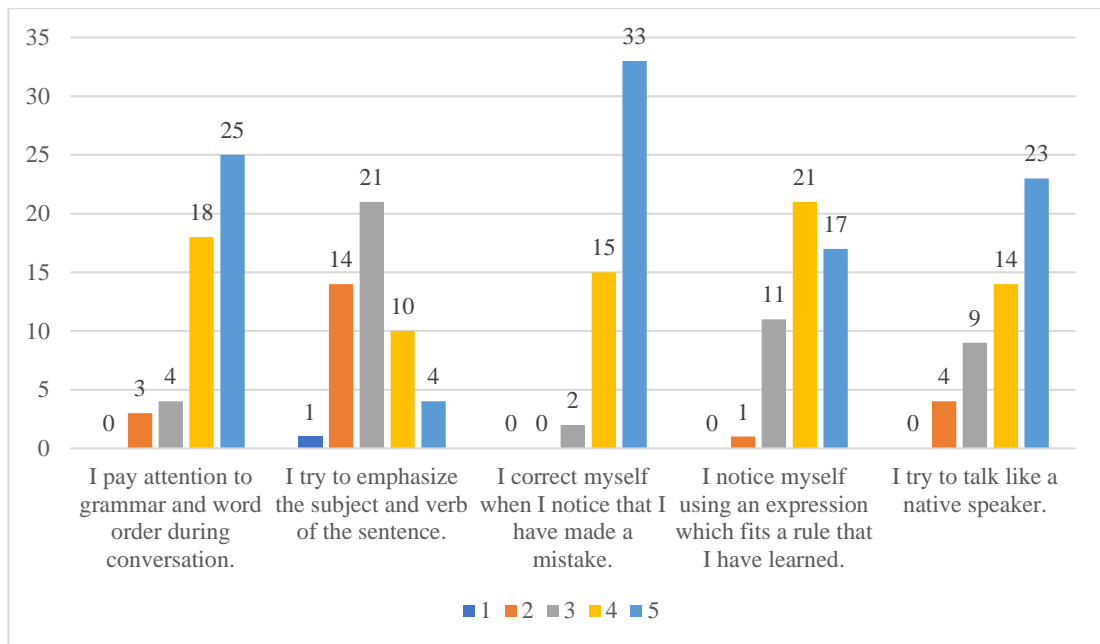
29

Figure 4. OCSI results indicating participants' accuracy-oriented strategy use

The highest perceived mean use was calculated for strategy number 17 (I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake), while the lowest mean was obtained for strategy 8 (I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence).

Message reduction and alteration strategies (Nakatani, 2006) are grouped under Factor 5 with the following results obtained for the five strategies in this category: a) I use words which are familiar to me (M = 4.56, SD = .50), b) I reduce the message (what I want to say) and use simple expressions (M = 3.04, SD = 1.01) and c) I replace the original message with another one when I feel I cannot execute my original intent (M = 3.70, SD = 1.00). Figure 5 shows how the participants assessed their message reduction and alteration strategy use.
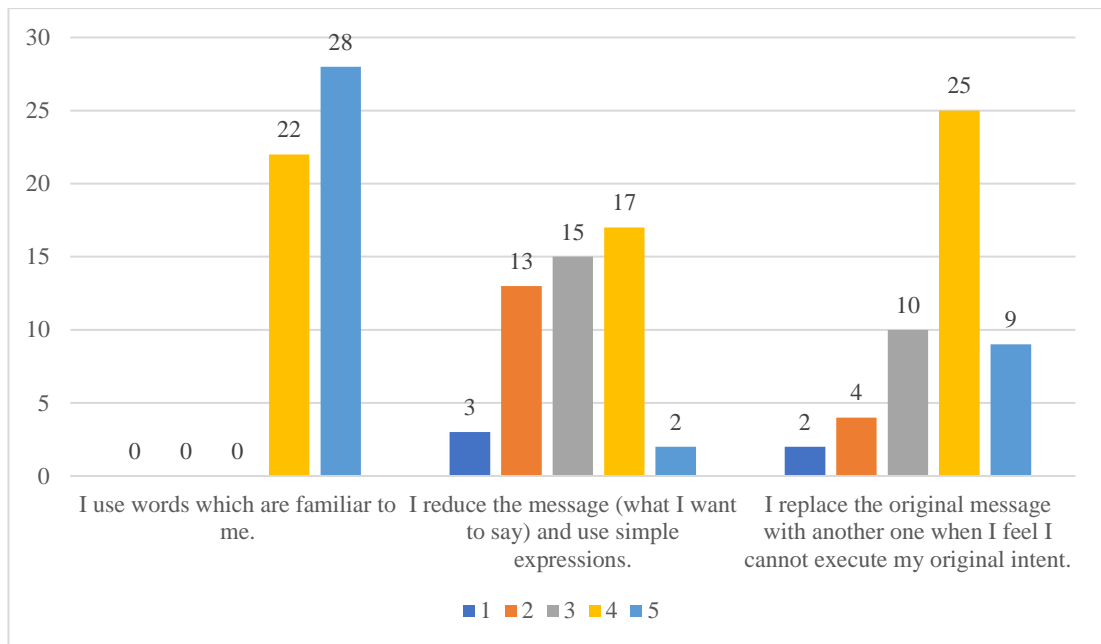
Figure 5. OCSI results indicating participants' message reduction and alteration strategy use

The highest perceived use was found for strategy number 3 (I use words which are familiar to me), while the lowest mean was recorded for strategy 4 (I reduce the message (what I want to say) and use simple expressions).

Nonverbal strategies while speaking (Nakatani, 2006) belong to Factor 6 with these mean values: a) I try to make eye-contact when I am talking (M = 4.46, SD = .86) and b) I use gestures and facial expressions if I do not know how to say something (M = 4.28, SD = .83). Figure 6 shows how the participants assessed their nonverbal strategies while speaking strategy use.
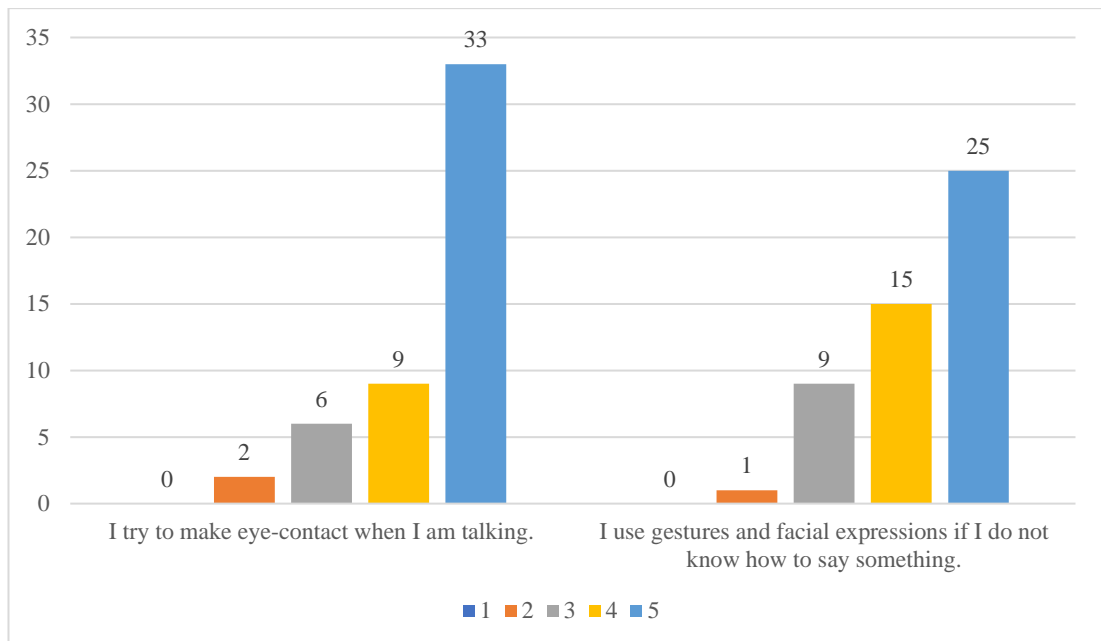
Figure 6. OCSI results indicating participants' use of nonverbal speaking strategies

Between the two strategies, strategy 16 (I use gestures and facial expressions if I do not know how to say something) had a higher perceived mean use, while strategy 15 had a lower mean (I try to make eye-contact when I'm talking).

Message abandonment strategies (Nakatani, 2006), categorized under Factor 7, contain four strategy items with the following mean results: a) I abandon the execution of the original message and just say some words when I don't know what to say ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.12$), b) I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty ($M = 1.98$, $SD = .74$), c) I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.14$) and d) I give up when I can't make myself understood ($M = 2.04$, $SD = .99$). Figure 7 shows how the participants assessed their message abandonment strategy use.
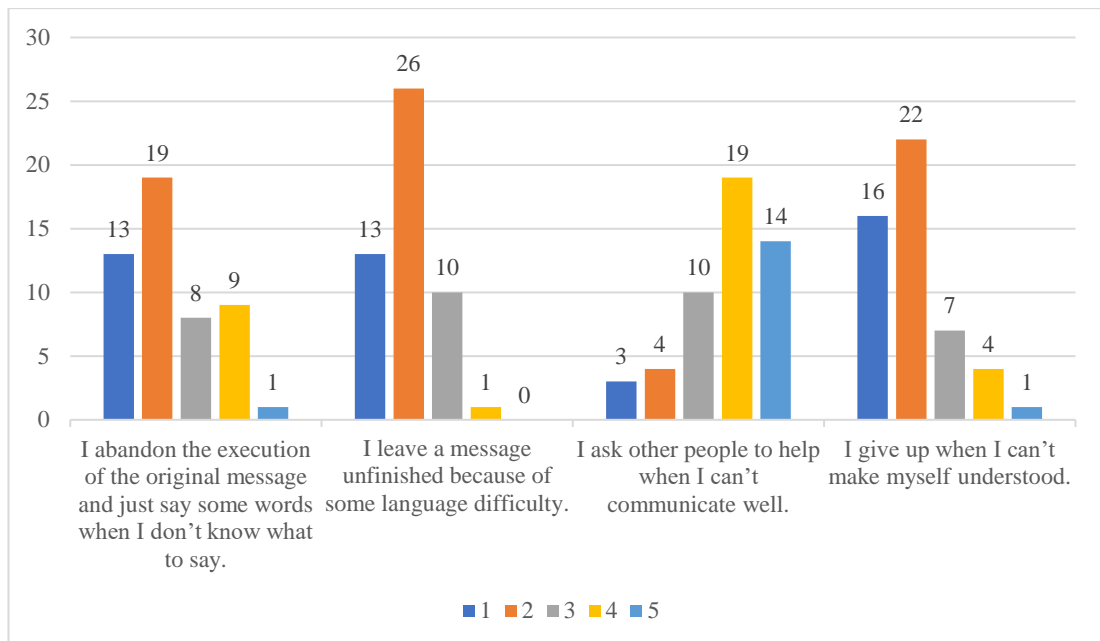
Figure 7. OCSI results indicating participants' message abandonment strategy use

The highest perceived mean use was obtained for strategy I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well, while the lowest mean was determined for the strategy 24 (I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty).

Factor 8 includes the following attempt to think in English strategies (Nakatani, 2006) with the following mean results: a) I first think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence (M = 2.34, SD = 1.00) and b) I first think of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation (M = 2.62, SD = 1.18). Figure 8 shows how the participants assessed their attempt to think in English strategy use.
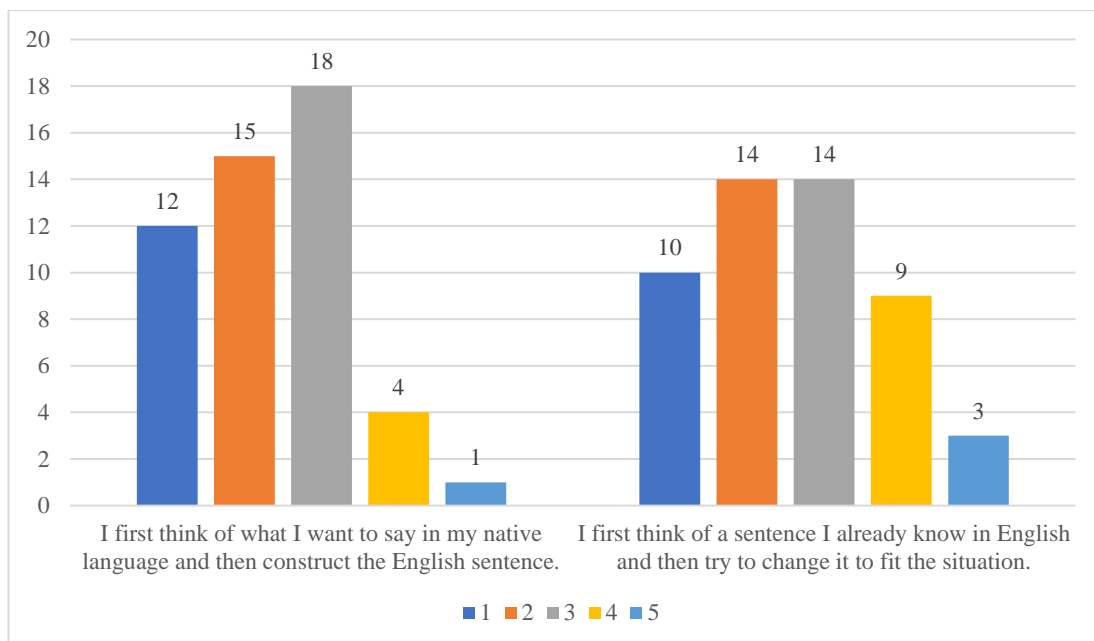
Figure 8. OCSI results indicating participants' attempt to think in English strategy use

Between the two strategies, higher perceived mean use was found for strategy number 2 (I first think of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation), while strategy 1 (I first think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence) had somewhat lower mean values. Such a low result obtained for this strategy is actually positive since EFL learners are generally encouraged to think in the language of communication as much as possible rather than to think in their mother tongue.

Based on the presented results, it may be concluded that, apart from message abandonment and attempt to think in English strategies, most of the obtained mean values were generally rather high as well as the overall result. Therefore, it may be concluded that the first hypothesis, H1. *The results will show significant use of speaking strategies by pre-service EFL teachers,* was confirmed.

Spearman rank-order correlation analyses were calculated to test the second hypothesis: *H2. Pre-service EFL teachers who assess their knowledge of English with a higher grade will report using speaking strategies more*. Statistically significant weak positive correlation was confirmed between the participants' self-assessed knowledge of English and their perceived use of the following four speaking strategy

categories: social affective (r_s (50)=.34, p< .05), fluency-oriented (r_s (50)=.32, p< .05), negotiation for meaning while speaking (r_s (50)=.39, p< .01), and accuracy-oriented category (r_s (50)=.38, p< .01). This means that the participants who self-assessed their EFL proficiency to be higher, perceived that they use the above-mentioned speaking strategy categories more. Therefore, it may be proposed that the second hypothesis was confirmed partially, as the correlations were weak, and they were confirmed for only four out of eight speaking strategy categories.

A correlation analysis and two one-way ANOVA tests were applied to test the third hypothesis (*H3. Pre-service EFL teachers who assess their speaking skills in English with a higher grade, and those who claim that speaking is their favourite activity in the English classes will report using speaking strategies more*). A series of Spearman rank-order correlations confirmed statistically significant weak positive correlation between the participants' self-assessed speaking skills in English and their perceived use of only one speaking strategy category - social affective (r_s(50)=.38, p< .01). A statistically significant weak correlation was confirmed for one more strategy category - message reduction and alteration (r_s(50)= - .29, p< .05), but this one was negative, i.e. the participants who assessed their speaking skills with a higher grade perceive to be using this speaking strategy category less.

The first one-way ANOVA test confirmed a statistically significant difference in favour of the participants who mentioned speaking as their favourite activity in EFL classes for two strategy categories: social affective: $F(1,49)$=22.958, p=.000, and accuracy-oriented category: $F(1,49)$=6.817, p=.012. In other words, for those who referred to speaking as their favourite activity, the use of these speaking strategies was perceived to be greater. A statistically significant difference was also found for message reduction and alteration strategies ($F(1,49)$=5.757, p=.020), but it was in favour of the participants who did not identify speaking as their favourite activity in EFL classes.

The second one-way ANOVA test confirmed a statistically significant difference in favour of the participants who see themselves as being good at speaking for three strategy categories: social affective: $F(1,49)$=20.308, p=.000; fluency-oriented: $F(1,49)$=4.032, p=.050; and accuracy-oriented: $F(1,49)$=4.712, p=.035). For two categories the difference was statistically significant, but it was in favour of those who did not perceive themselves as being good at speaking (message reduction and

alteration: F(1,49)=5.645, p=.022, and attempt to think in English: F(1,49)=4.131, p=.048).

Therefore, it may be proposed that the third hypothesis was only partially confirmed as the relation between the perceived use of speaking strategies and the three tested variables was confirmed only for some of the strategy categories.

5. CONCLUSION

To be considered a good language user, one must have well-developed speaking skills. This applies both to the students and teachers of English as a foreign language. Each of these groups of language speakers work on developing and subsequently sustaining an appropriate level of speaking proficiency. Somewhat specific group of both learners and teachers includes pre-service EFL teachers whose perceived use of speaking strategies was in the focus of the presented research.

The results of the research showed that a relatively significant use of speaking strategies was reported by this group. This end-result is regarded as positive since pre-service EFL teachers are expected to teach these same speaking strategies to their future young learners, so the fact that they are using them means that they will be able to successfully exemplify and transfer these strategies to their students.

Nevertheless, the use of some speaking strategies was reported to be lower than that of others. Examples of these strategies are: a) I first think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence (M = 2.34, SD = 1.00), b) I first think of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation (M = 2.62, SD = 1.18), c) I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence (M = 3.04, SD = .95), and d) I reduce the message (what I want to say) and use simple expressions (M = 3.04, SD = 1.01). Even though they reported using these strategies less than others, some actually indicate good strategic behaviour, or are simply not relevant for this group of students because of their high EFL proficiency.

In addition, a positive correlation between perceived speaking strategy use and higher self-assessed knowledge of English, and correlation between perceived speaking strategy use and higher self-assessed speaking skills in English were shown to be confirmed only for some of the strategy categories defined by Nakatani (2006). This could imply that some other factors, rather than knowledge of English and speaking skills in English, could influence the choice of speaking strategies that learners

employ. Additional testing of knowledge of English and the speaking skills instead of only obtaining the data through students' self-assessment is also suggested.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The use of speaking strategies by pre-service EFL teachers

You are invited to take part in a study conducted for the purpose of writing a graduation thesis titled *The use of speaking strategies by pre-service EFL teachers*. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey and provide some general information regarding your EFL experience and your speaking strategies.

Any information you share during this study and that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected, as the survey is completely anonymous.

You can choose whether you wish to participate in this study and you may also withdraw at any time without any consequences.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me, Jelena Filipović at jelenafilipovic1110@gmail.com.

If you agree to participate and allow me to use your answers for the purposes of writing the previously mentioned thesis, please click "yes", thus stating that you are informed about this research and its purposes and that you are willing to anonymously participate. If you do not agree to participate click "no" and you will not be asked any further questions.

      yes

      no

PART 1

Please read the following questions and give your responses. If you wish, you may write the answers to open-ended questions in Croatian.

1. How old are you?

2. What is your gender?

      female

      male

3. What is your current year of studies?

      1st

      2nd

      3rd

      4th

      5th

4. Have you been learning English while in primary and secondary school? For how long?

5. What was your average English grade in primary school?

      2

      3

      4

      5

6. What was your average English grade in secondary school?

      2

      3

      4

      5

7. Have you been learning English outside school (foreign language school, private lessons....)? For how long?

8. How many hours PER WEEK are you exposed to English outside college (music, films, reading, the Internet, communication....)?

      not at all

      up to 5 hours

      up to 10 hours

      more than 10 hours

9. Have you ever been in contact with a native speaker of English? What was the type of your communication (oral, written)? For how long and why?

10. Do you find it important to be good at English? Why?

11. What are your favourite activities in the English classes?

      reading out loud

      reading silently

      writing

      speaking

      listening

12. Which of the skills in English do you consider yourself to be very good at?

      reading out loud

      reading silently

      writing

      speaking

listening

13. Which grade would you use to assess your knowledge of English?

     1

     2

     3

     4

     5

14. Which grade would you use to assess your speaking skills in English?

     1

     2

     3

     4

     5

15. Which grade would you use to assess your speaking skills in Croatian?

     1

     2

     3

     4

     5

16. What do you think speaking strategies are?

17. What do you think learning strategies are?

PART 2

Please read the following statements and choose your responses to them which can be 1 (Never or almost never true of me), 2 (Generally not true of me), 3 (Somewhat true of me), 4 (Generally true of me) or 5 (Always or almost always true of me).

1. I first think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence.

     1 2 3 4 5

2. I first think of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation.

     1 2 3 4 5

3. I use words which are familiar to me.

     1 2 3 4 5

4. I reduce the message (what I want to say) and use simple expressions.

     1 2 3 4 5

5. I replace the original message with another one when I feel I cannot execute my original intent.

     1 2 3 4 5

6. I abandon the execution of the original message and just say some words when I don't know what to say.

     1 2 3 4 5

7. I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation.

     1 2 3 4 5

8. I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.

     1 2 3 4 5

9. I change my way of saying things according to the context.

     1 2 3 4 5

10. I take my time to express what I want to say.

     1 2 3 4 5

11. I pay attention to my pronunciation.

     1 2 3 4 5

12. I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.

     1 2 3 4 5

13. I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation.

     1 2 3 4 5

14. I pay attention to the conversation flow.

     1 2 3 4 5

15. I try to make eye-contact when I am talking.

     1 2 3 4 5

16. I use gestures and facial expressions if I do not know how to say something.

     1 2 3 4 5

17. I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.

     1 2 3 4 5

18. I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.

     1 2 3 4 5

19. While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech.

     1 2 3 4 5

20. I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I am saying.

   1 2 3 4 5

21. I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands.

   1 2 3 4 5

22. I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say.

   1 2 3 4 5

23. I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say.

   1 2 3 4 5

24. I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.

   1 2 3 4 5

25. I try to leave a good impression on the listener.

   1 2 3 4 5

26. I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes.

   1 2 3 4 5

27. I try to enjoy the conversation.

   1 2 3 4 5

28. I try to relax when I feel anxious.

   1 2 3 4 5

29. I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.

   1 2 3 4 5

30. I try to talk like a native speaker.

   1 2 3 4 5

31. I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well.

   1 2 3 4 5

32. I give up when I can't make myself understood.

   1 2 3 4 5

IZJAVA O SAMOSTALNOJ IZRADI RADA (POTPISANA)

Ja, Jelena Filipović, izjavljujem da sam diplomski rad pod nazivom The Use of Speaking Strategies by Pre-Service EFL Teachers izradila samostalno uz mentorstvo doc. dr. sc. Alenke Mikulec.

Potpis:

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