

Impact of training on communication strategy use of less proficient English speakers in Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of training on communication strategy used by speakers with limited English proficiency. The 13-week training involved 23 limited English proficiency speakers in a culinary course, who were taught 13 lexical, negotiation, and discourse-based communication strategies. Their speech in presentations, role plays and group discussions were recorded, and the 29,492-word data set was analysed for the use of communication strategies. The results showed 1,307 instances of use of communication strategies. The most frequently used strategy was fillers (145.1 ptw), followed by lexical repetition (107.4 ptw) and response utterance (99.4 ptw). Discourse-based strategies were used more frequently than lexical and negotiation strategies, and the most often used was lexical repetition which is a versatile strategy for facilitating transfer of key information for conversational maintenance. Interactions (431.5 ptw) were more linguistically and cognitively challenging, calling more communication strategies into use than presentations (210.5 ptw). The findings suggest the necessity for communication strategies training to help speakers with limited English proficiency expand their repertoire of strategies and facilitate communication.