COMMUNICATION NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS WITH STUDENTS USING ONLINE RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT

The senior high school curriculum has only been implemented recently by the Department of Education in the Philippines; therefore studies delving into teaching and learning in these levels are very limited including the negotiations of teachers with students through online resources. Using Goldwich's (2009) framework as guide, the negotiations of the teachers were determined through interviews, where five English teachers express how they negotiated and how the use of the online resources help in the development of the linguistic competence of students in learning of the English language. The study also looked into the perspectives of the teachers towards the use of technology in their instruction following Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). After the narratives of the teachers, three themes referring to the negotiation strategies were articulated in this study: snug, simple, and systematic. Snug referred to the teachers' strategies in preparation for the tasks; simplicity referred to the clarity and brevity of the teachers' strategies; and systematic referred to strategies that are logical and procedural enabling students to follow the teachers' instructions. After evaluating the use of technology in their instruction, the teachers' statements show that the linguistic competence of the students are developed through the constant exposure they have with the activities they conduct online and the tasks they need to accomplish.

Keywords: K-12, Blended Learning, Negotiation Strategies, Technology Acceptance Model, Senior High School English Teachers, Online Resources, Linguistic Competence.

INTRODUCTION

Education policies can play a critical role in transforming the education landscape and outcomes of learning (Education Policy and Reform Unit UNESCO Bangkok, 2014). Stable and quality education for all is a significant factor in shaping a country's economy. The Philippines is no exception, as it is also a country seeking economic growth and progress through education (K to 12 Education in Southeast Asia: Regional Comparison of the Structure, Content, Organization, and Adequacy of Basic Education, 2012). The 21st century presents significant, multi-faceted, rapid, and interdependent challenges and opportunities for all countries of the world, including the Asia-Pacific (Education Policy and Reform Unit UNESCO Bangkok, 2014). According to the "Education Systems in ASEAN+6

Countries: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Educational Issues" (2014), these challenges range from increasing economic interdependency, technological development, growing pressure on natural resources and environmental degradation, rapidly changing labor markets, shifting geo-politics, older, highly mobile and more urbanized populations amid growing unemployment and widening inequalities.

In the Philippines, the education goal is closely linked to the Philippine EFA Plan of Action 2015 that includes Critical Task No. 5, mandating the expansion of basic education so that by 2015 the Philippines will have lengthened its cycle of basic education to 12 years (K to 12 Education in Southeast Asia: Regional Comparison of the Structure, Content, Organization, and Adequacy of Basic Education, 2012). By

benchmarking the Philippine education curriculum's content and structure with standards of other countries, it is an affirmation that basic education in the country must undergo reforms to meet the demands of the twenty-first century (K to 12 Education in Southeast Asia: Regional Comparison of the Structure, Content, Organization, and Adequacy of Basic Education, 2012).

"By default and by design, countries are more connected now than ever before technologically, environmentally, economically, and socially" (Education Policy and Reform Unit UNESCO Bangkok, 2014, p. 6). This connection is further observed in the countries' integration of technology. Incorporating the use of technology in learning has been one of the trends in education for the 21st century. According to the "Education Systems in ASEAN+6 Countries: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Educational Issues" (2014), the ubiquitous spread of information and communication technology has raised questions about the role technology should play within education systems. There is a great interest in particular on how education can both benefit from and contribute to the digital (and learning) society.

Truly, education has evolved fast due to the pacing brought about by technology. These technologies are directly and indirectly brought in the classroom, and approaches to how they are utilized in the classroom abound. Researches on how technology can be integrated in the classroom are continuously being conducted. One area of research is on the positive feedback of blended learning in students' learning. The results presented by the researches were conducted mostly from developed countries such as the United States where e-learning is more readily available. Most of the results too were focused on the students in the higher education level; there is scarcity in researches that focus on the senior high school level, especially in a developing country such as the Philippines. According to Bonifacio (n.d.) "Philippine DepEd has policies on the use of ICT. These are: (1) technology must be studied first as a separate subject, then applied in other learning areas as a tool for learning how to learn; (2) the application of computer skills to the other learning areas is a curriculum policy that stems from the principle that teaching-learning

must not be textbook-driven, and educational processes should take advantage of technological developments, including the application of ICT in teaching and learning, where appropriate; and (3) an education modernization program will equip schools with facilities, equipment, materials and skills, and introduce new learning and delivery systems necessary to capitalize on recent technological developments" (p. 4).

In this study, the negotiations that senior high school English teachers with regard to communicating clearly and engaging with their students in both the virtual setting (using the e-learning application called Blackboard Learn and other online resources), and the teachers' attitude on the use of technology in teaching through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989) were investigated. Negotiations, which is prevalent in business, is a term that can be applied to communication and education; from these lens, it would be taken as to how teachers manage their communication with students using the technology provided by the school. Since the advent of alternative learning tools such as online learning, use of technological gadgets, such as iPads or Tabs, and digital literacy the fusion of technology in education continue to grow.

Cavanaugh, Gillan, Kromrey, Hess, and Blomeyer (2004) proposed that while virtual schooling at the K-12 level has grown in popularity, research-based investigations into the teaching and learning process in this medium and at this level are still lacking (as cited in DiPietro, Ferdig, Black, & Preston, 2010, p. 10). The belief that technology can positively impact student learning has led many governments to create programs for the integration of technology in their schools (Hew & Brush, 2007).

Given this dearth in literature, this study determined which strategies English teachers utilize with online resources in order to develop the students' linguistic competence. The study looked into how instructional learning online may supplement and complement the Face-to-Face (FTF) or classroom setting and vice versa.

Even in the Philippine setting, the fusion of online learning or computer-mediated learning with the traditional or brick

and mortar learning is being utilized, especially in universities and also at the senior high school level. Since part of the senior high school curriculum involves pushing the students to adapt skills relating to information, media, and technology in order for them to become the so-called holistically developed Filipino with 21st century skills, most universities have introduced e-learning platforms, one of which is called Blackboard Learn and its vision states that:

> "We are education's partner in change, helping learners, educators, institutions, and companies thrive in a complex and changing environment. Our sights are set on the future. By innovating together, we help our clients see the possibilities to come" (Blackboard.com).

These online platforms are very important for the E-Learning programs of schools.

1. Teacher Preparation for the K-12 Curriculum

According to Sarvi, Munger, and Pillay (2015), the teaching approach in the Philippines has been largely rote-based, which leaves learners with a limited mastery of and ability to apply knowledge and skills in further education and the workplace. This observation is one reason that has prompted the reforms in the educational system. In order to prepare for the reforms, "DepEd promised to afford teachers with trainings to equip them on the K-12 program. In the same manner, it vows to work with the Commission on Higher Education or CHED to make sure the Teacher Education course meets the needed standards. Teachers must join the trainings to arm themselves with the right knowledge on the K-12 structure".

Teaching and learning in K-12 virtual schools has grown in popularity since their inception in 1996 (DiPietro et al., 2010). According to Agyei and Voogt (2011) and Drent and Meelissen (2008), research shows that a crucial factor influencing new teachers' adoption of technology is the quantity and quality of pre-service technology experiences included in their teacher education programmes (as cited in Tondeur et al., 2011). The social interaction accomplished across a medium is done so through communication, which necessitates an understanding of basic dimensions of communication in mediated form

(Thieman, 2016).

2. Technology in Classrooms

Researchers (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Roschelle, Pea, Hoadley, Gordin, & Means, 2000) posit that a number of features of new technologies are consistent with principles of the science of learning and hold promise for improving education (as cited in Kozma, 2003, p. 1), which is why integrating technology in classrooms is beneficiary. Research in the classroom (Means & Olson, 1995; Means, Penuel, & Padilla, 2001; Sandholtz, Ringstaff, & Dwyer, 1997; Davidson, Schofield, & Stocks, 2001) documents that some teachers are beginning to use technology to change pedagogy and curriculum (as cited in Kozma, 2003, p. 2).

According to Adria and Woudstra (2001), essential elements for teaching an online course are: to provide a comprehensive set of informational materials; to facilitate discussion in a way that keeps students on task, to manage student communication (as cited in Harms, Niederhauser, Davis, Roblyer, & Gilbert, 2006). "Teachers also have opportunities to develop co-presence in their VS (Virtual Schooling) classrooms. Conscientiously using activities that encourage students to get to know each other (especially early on in the course) is important in any course-but is essential in the VS environment. Teachers can also model back-channeling in videoconferencing and chat sessions. Creating a supportive and interactive environment with mutual support and respect can provide a welcoming environment that can enhance attentional allocation. Active teacher involvement in monitoring and engaging in student discussions, clarifying instructions, and providing multiple opportunities for interaction through various media can alleviate concerns about perceived message understanding" (Harms et al., 2006).

While there are numerous benefits in integrating technology in classrooms, there are some limitations that can be observed as well. One of which is "knowledge divide" (Firmin & Genesi, 2013, p. 1605) in which not all students may have the access to the necessary tools needed in order to develop 21st century skills. According to The CEO Forum conducted in 2011, "This presents a

challenge to both the state and federal governments to continue to monitor and eliminate inequities in regard to the accessibility to educational technologies" (as cited in Firmin & Genesi, 2013, p. 1605). In addition, "If educational technology is to be used effectively, school districts must also provide sufficient and continuous professional development for educators so that they are knowledgeable with any technology that they are being encouraged to integrate into their classrooms" (as cited in Firmin & Genesi, 2013, p. 1605).

"Research on the impact of technology in education is relatively new, yet there is sufficient evidence that educational technology helps to bring about changes in the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms. For example, technology has the potential to transform the learning environment from one that is teacher-centered to one that is student-centered" (Firmin & Genesi, p. 1605).

It was also mentioned that there is a fine balance between utilizing too much technology and engaging too little on educational technology. As educators seek to teach with technology in order to prepare students for the future, it is imperative that new assessments are implemented which reflect the changing pedagogical practices (Firmin & Genesi, 2013).

3. Negotiation Strategies

Negotiation strategies as defined in business, are interactions used by parties in conflict to achieve resolution (Ganesan, 1993). The term "negotiation strategies" appear mostly in relation to business and buyer-seller relationships, and in developmental psychology. It is most commonly defined as interaction patterns used by parties in conflict to achieve resolution (Ganesan, 1993). Some studies have made use of the term in business contexts. For example, a study by Matos, Sierra, and Jennings (1998) encoded negotiation parameters as genes in a Genetic Algorithm in order to present an empirical evaluation of a range of negotiation strategies and tactics in a number of different types of environment for buyers and sellers. Perdue and Summers (1991) also reported findings from a field study of purchasing agents negotiating rebuy purchases of component parts, noting the negotiating stance adopted by industrial buyers is characterized by their reliance on three basic negotiation strategies: problem solving, manipulating perceptions about competition, and tough tactics. Another study, Fatima, Woolridge, and Jennings' (2001) paper determined what the optimal negotiation strategies are for agents that find themselves in environments with different states.

In developmental psychology, Selman and Demorest (1983) and Selman, Beardslee, Schultz, Krupa, and Podorefsky (1986) investigated the use of negotiation strategies in interpersonal dyadic relationship dilemmas of troubled adolescence.

Some literature on negotiation strategies also presented negotiation in the area of education, such as Musa, Mansor, Mufti, Abdullah, and Kasim's "Negotiation skills: teachers' feedback as input strategy" (2012) and Lyster's "Negotiation in immersion: teacher–student interaction" (2002). Both looked into negotiation strategies of teacher-student relations in the classrooms. Only a few literatures such as Gibson's (2009) "Negotiating Textual Talk: Conversation Analysis, Pedagogy and the Organisation of Online Asynchronous Discourse", pertained to the use of negotiation strategies in online learning. However, the said paper used Conversation Analysis to investigate the ways in which participants in an online asynchronous postgraduate reading group managed and negotiated their contributions within the discussion.

Since there is a limitation in studies about negotiation strategies of teachers using online resources, this study will attempt to bridge that gap in research. Especially with the wide-spread use of technology in teaching in the senior high school level; since one of the 21st century goals that the Department of Education assays to achieve in line with the global standards of education is information technology and media skills.

In this investigation, the kind of negotiation that will be looked into will focus on the negotiation of teachers in their online consultation with their senior high school students. According to Pica et al. (1989), negotiation of meaning serves a conversational function, which aims "to work toward mutual comprehension" (as cited in Lyster, 2002, p.

238). Pica (1994) acknowledges that target language accuracy plays only a secondary role in negotiation, as it has been defined in Second Language Acquisition (SLA): "Negotiation, by definition, focuses on the comprehensibility of message meaning, and on the message's form only insofar as that can contribute to its comprehensibility. Learners and their interlocutors find ways to communicate messages through negotiation, but not necessarily with target-like forms" (as cited in Lyster, 2002, pp. 239-240).

4. Statement of the Problem

The research identifies the negotiation strategies of English teachers of the senior high school level in a blended learning instruction through the negotiation qualities outlined by Goldwich (2009). The study also looks into the attitudes of the teachers towards the use of online resources such as Blackboard Learn that is based on Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory. Specifically, it attempts to answer the following questions:

- What negotiation strategies do English teachers of the senior high school level employ in their online interaction with their students?

- Through the employed negotiation strategies, how do the English teachers engage the students in the development of their linguistic competence in English through the aid of a digital platform and other online resources?

5. Theoretical Framework

This study utilized Goldwich's (2009) outline of the qualities of negotiation strategies as basis. According to Goldwich (2009), there are certain qualities that can be used to improve negotiation, namely: a) engage in mutual problem-solving; b) share information; c) ask questions; d) listen empathetically; e) explain before disagreeing; f) think laterally (as cited in Musa et al., 2012, p. 224). The above qualities outlined by Goldwich (2009) clearly demonstrate ways how a negotiator will achieve a win-win situation, thus avoiding a win-lose outcome (Musa et al., 2012).

Communicative competence according to Hymes (1972) is defined not only as an inherent grammatical competence, but also as the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations, thus bringing the sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky's linguistic view of competence (as cited in Bagarić &
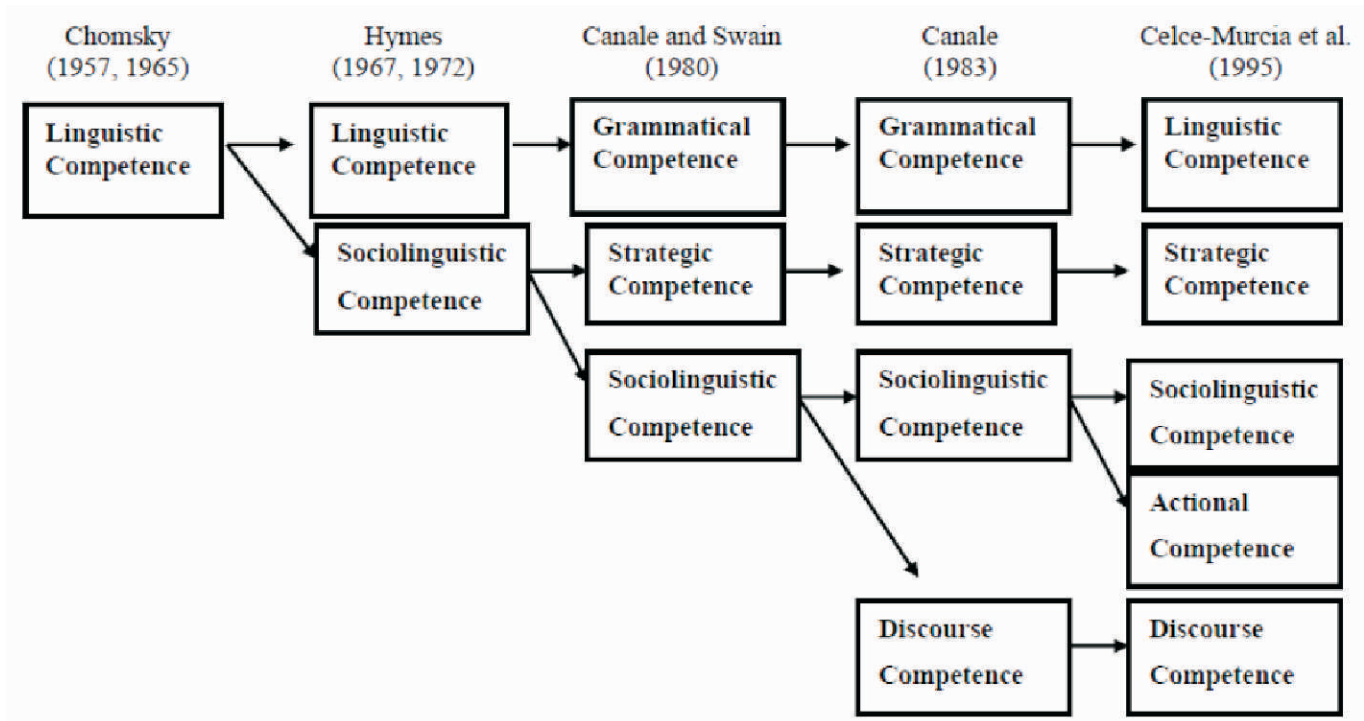

Figure 1. Chronological Evolution of Communicative Competence (Celce-Murcia, 2007)

Djigunović, 2007, p. 95). "It is competence of language use appropriate to the other participants of the communicative interaction and appropriate to the given social context and situation" (Kurcz, 2004, p. 6). Figure 1 is taken from Celce-Murcia's "Rethinking the Role of Communicative Competence in Language Teaching". It shows the summary of the historical development of the components included in the various models of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

In this study, the aspect of communicative competence will focus on developing the linguistic competence of students from the perspective of the teachers through online resources. According to Celce-Murcia (2007), there are four types of knowledge for linguistic competence, namely: phonological which include both segmentals (vowels, consonants, syllable types) and suprasegmentals (prominence/stress, intonation, and rhythm); lexical which include knowledge of both content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and function words (pronouns, determiners, prepositions, verbal auxiliaries, etc.); morphological which include parts of speech, grammatical inflections, productive derivational processes; syntactic which include constituent/phrase structure, word order (both canonical and marked), basic sentence types, modification, coordination, subordination, embedding. In other words, it is mostly associated with grammatical competence.

On the Technology Acceptance Model designed by Davis (1989), technology usage is determined by behavioral intentions to use a system that in turn is jointly determined by the user's attitude towards computer use and perceived usefulness (Luan & Teo, 2009). In this study, the definition of Perceived Usefulness (PU) will be the degree to which the English teachers believe that using Blackboard Learn enhances the linguistic competence of the students. According to Ma, Andersson, and Streith (2005), there is evidence to suggest that teachers tend to use technology when they believe that it can enhance their job performance such as facilitating students to achieve learning goals, conducting administrative duties, and managing students (as cited in Luan & Teo, 2009, p. 263).

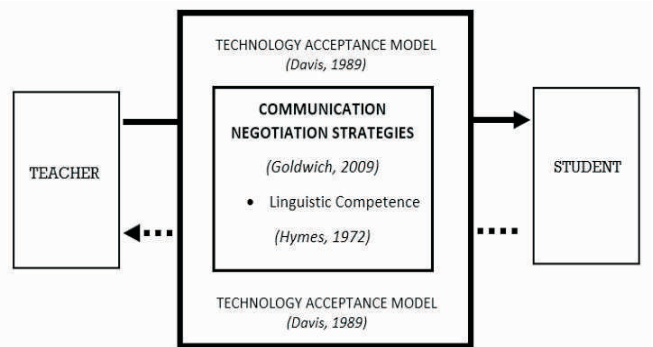Figure 2 indicates the theoretical framework used in the

Figure 2. Communication Negotiation Strategies Framework

study. The goal is that through the Communication Negotiation Strategies of the Teacher, underlined by Goldwich's outline, the linguistic competence of the student will be developed. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis indicated the perception of the teachers towards the use of technology in their instruction. Since the study aimed to determine the negotiation strategies of the teachers in communicating with their students using online resources, the teacher's perception on the use of technology in instruction will also be investigated. The arrows indicate the flow of communication and information of the Teacher and the Student. The arrow from the Teacher is more solid since the study looked into the perspective of the teachers, meanwhile the broken arrow from the student means that there is uncertainty towards their reciprocation since feedback from students is not part of the investigation.

6. Method

6.1 Research Design

Qualitative in design, the procedure for data collection made use of a one-on-one interview with the English teachers of the senior high school level.

The qualities outlined by Goldwich (2009) are used as bases for figuring out the negotiation strategies that the English teachers of the senior high school level employ to achieve the development of the students' linguistic competence for an engaging language learning instruction on the use of online resources. Using Davis' (1989) TAM Model, the attitudes of teachers toward the use of the e-learning platform such as Blackboard Learn were determined.

6.2 The Sample

English language teachers of the senior high school from a private university in Metro Manila were invited to participate in the study. They were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews. The transcripts of the interviews were analyzed to determine the negotiation strategies they employed in online interactions with their students; and their opinions and beliefs about the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of Blackboard Learn in their English language instruction. Their identities were hidden under the names Alex, Bailey, Charlie, Dane, and Ezra.

The following questions were asked in the interview:

1. How long have you been teaching in the senior high school level?

2. Which grade and strand do you handle?

3. What are the subjects that you teach?

4. What is the scope of the subjects?

5. How do you often conduct your classroom instruction?

6. What are the activities that you conduct that helps the students in acquiring the skills they need to utilize English?

7. How do you utilize an e-learning platform such as Blackboard to supplement in your instruction?

8. Do you conduct online instructions?
   a. If yes, how?
   b. If no, why?

9. Do you conduct online consultations?

10. How often do these consultations occur?

11. What occurs in these consultations?

12. How do you negotiate meaning in online interactions with your students in terms of:
    a. Materials/Resources provided?
    b. Tasks implemented?
    c. Advices – personal and/or subject-related?

13. Can you elaborate on the strategies that you employ to negotiate meaning and communication? And are they effective?

14. Is an e-learning/digital platform like Blackboard Learn useful in your English language instruction?

15. In your opinion, does the use of Blackboard in supplementing language learning engage the students in developing their linguistic competence in English?
    a. If yes, how?
    b. If no, why?

6.3 Research Procedures

Interviews with the senior high school English teachers were conducted. Consent forms were given to gain their permission in recording the interview. Questions about how they engage with their students FTF and on online consultations were raised.

The answers of the English teachers on the interview were transcribed and analyzed. Their answers were the bases for determining the negotiations using online platforms and the beliefs on the usefulness of Blackboard Learn in their instruction, in engaging the students in their language learning, and developing students' linguistic competence. Thematic analysis was used in evaluating the transcriptions.

6.4 Scope and Limitation

The number of teachers interviewed in this study was five. This was due to time constraints with regard to the accomplishment of the whole study. According to Baker and Edwards (2012), a small number of cases, or subjects, may be extremely valuable and represent adequate numbers for a research project. The teachers also came from the same private university.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 What negotiation strategies do English teachers of the senior high school level employ in their online interaction with their students?

7.1.1 Negotiation Strategies used

After careful analyses of the interviews, negotiation strategies of teachers were categorized into three identified themes: snug theme which refers to the ability of the teachers to foresee possible questions of the students regarding the tasks at hand; simple theme which refers to the teacher's ability to create clear and basic rules and tasks; and systematic theme which refers to the teacher's ability to create a task that is logical and reasonable.

According to Williams and Hellman (2004), teacher's influence is crucial for propitiating students' self-regulation in a virtual environment (as cited in Espasa & Meneses, 2010, p. 278).

In Goldwich's (2009) outline, he mentioned six qualities that would improve negotiation, namely: engaging in mutual problem solving; share information; ask questions; listen empathetically; explain before disagreeing; and thinking laterally. This outline supported the identified themes. Figure 3 shows the communication negotiation strategies following the identified themes.

7.1.2 Snug Theme

According to a study by Hull and Saxon (2009), the focus or direction of speech in online courses is more direct than a blank sheet of paper, there are faceless but known individuals to which one responds and receives a response. In this regard, some online communication such as in the case of Teacher Bailey is monologous, wherein they would place assumed question of the students and addressing them one-by-one. This type of communication regarding the snug theme in a way that it showcases the ability of a teacher to foresee the questions that the students will face so as to provide a direct comprehension of the task being implemented online. The term "snug" also means "to fit closely", which means that the snug theme also pertains to the ability of the teachers to set their instructions fittingly for the students. "Learning tasks set by teachers, marking regimes and other course requirements are not under students' control, even though students still have latitude to self-regulate within such constraints" (Nicol & Macfarlane-

Figure 3. 3S of Communication Negotiation Strategies

Dick, p. 205). In Teacher Bailey's case, she mentioned that,

> "I would already be listing down questions that they possibly ask and answering them…"

This only shows their ability to set the guidelines by thinking of the possible difficulties that the students might face. According to Dabbagh (2003), "the instructor has to design meaningful learning experiences and assume the supportive role of assisting students to engage in these experiences as a community of learners". Also according to Vygotsky (1986) good instruction always proceeds ahead of development (as cited in Hull & Saxon, 2009, p. 627).

If the students ask Teacher Alex questions regarding the tasks they have to accomplish, Teacher Alex would respond through the use of questions that may help the students draw the appropriate conclusion on their own. Also, according to Hull and Saxon (2009), the facilitator of the course uses information provided about participants' present conceptions or points of view in order to understand and subsequently formulate appropriate questions for consideration of ideas. If the students are still having a hard time grasping a concept teachers must specify, and Teacher Alex would simplify her answers more, or she would suggest some input.

> "When it comes to advices I don't get too much of the personal advices, but if I do I also answer them directly. Also with subject-related questions or advices for example, 'Ma'am is my topic already okay'. Most students ask very vague question, 'Is my topic okay?', ["okay" is very vague]. Of course, so I answer them back [the guidelines I explained before I let them do for example, I let them choose their topic]. 'So do you think this topic is specific enough?'. So, for example the topic is not specific I ask them (for example their topic would be what food preference of senior high school students), 'What specific food preference are you trying to get here from your audience/respondents?' So they will answer back 'Ahh', so that's what I mean by specifying – I tell them. So sometimes they realize after I ask that question that, 'Ahh oo nga pala [Ahh is that so], so ma'am is it right if I say food preference for lunch
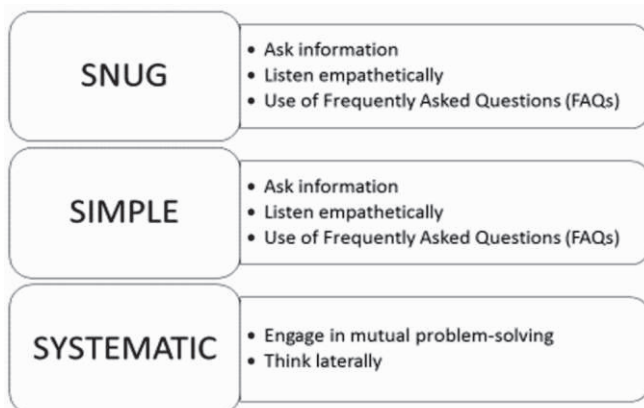
time?' 'Yes, that's fine', so they probe also and then I answer back".

This strategy supports the findings of McLoughlin and Oliver (1999), who mentioned that the goal is to create a learning culture, where collaboration, learning with self-awareness, multiple perspectives, and self-management are promoted, and where the role of the teacher is reciprocal, supportive, and communicative as it is responsive to learner needs (as cited on Dabbagh, 2003, p. 40). In this regard, negotiating through asking questions can promote the students' comprehension in a way that the teacher would look at the situation and sense the difficulty that the student is having and addressing the problem by thinking about the right question to ask in order to aid the students' problem with comprehending. This corresponds with a study by Clark and Kazinou (2001) that mentioned that "coaching students in problem-solving activities and prompting students to brainstorm different solutions to help them become aware of generative or metacognitive thinking processes" (as cited in Dabbagh, 2013, p. 40).

7.1.3 Simple Theme

This negotiation theme is about the teacher's ability in setting instructions that are comprehensible and understandable for the students. According to Musa et al. (2012) "at times teachers' feedback or redirection, such as eliciting, extending, rephrasing, and application is needed to initiate students to voice out their thoughts and ideas" (p. 224). This shows how negotiating meaning would help the students in having a clear grasp of the teachers' instruction. According to Teacher Alex, guidelines are set in order to aid the students in understanding the tasks that they must accomplish,

> "So very simple also and a little bit of enumeration I guess",

Therefore, a simple and structured form of communication is the strategy that Teacher Alex employs in order to negotiate meaning and to accommodate the student's comprehension. Teacher Alex would indicate:

> "…very short and very direct instructions…".

This coincides with what was mentioned earlier by Harms et al. (2006) that active teacher involvement in monitoring and engaging in student discussions, clarifying instructions, and providing multiple opportunities for interaction through various media can alleviate concerns about perceived message understanding.

Through a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) format, Teacher Bailey's instructions would be made more comprehensible. That would be how Teacher Bailey indicates the guidelines and mechanics of the tasked to be accomplished. In addressing advice that deals with personal matters, especially for Teacher Bailey's advisory class, the students would communicate through Facebook message or via Short Messaging System (SMS). On subject-related advice such as asking for extensions of deadlines, Teacher Bailey would reply immediately. She would say:

> "…there's a document with step-by-step procedure that they have to follow…".

This shows her ability to put comprehensible guidelines. According to Lyster (2002), many SLA studies have demonstrated that the negotiation of meaning provides learners and their interlocutors with a useful set of communication strategies that facilitate comprehension.

According to Teacher Charlie:

> "I make sure that I adjust my instructions on the simplest way possible since it's going to be online, and they wouldn't have the chance to ask me personally about clarifications that they have".

In addition, Teacher Charlie added that:

> "… the strategy is to keep the instructions simple, as much as possible make the instructions in the form of an outline or number and attach a sample…".

For Teacher Dane:

> "You make sure that you follow a certain sequence, or the guidelines are properly explained to the students, especially if you will give them a complex task."

This is almost the same strategy that Teacher Charlie employed, where an outline is utilized to relay information to the students. Teacher Ezra employed the same:

> "…would always put instruction and then number for every instruction…".

Enumerating instructions showcase a step-by-step procedure that help the students comprehend the given task they have to accomplish. According to Hull and Saxon (2009), real communication then occurs only when participants are able to form meaning and involves not only the individual, but the signs produced by the group. In a study by Zapalska and Brozik (2006), they mentioned that students learn at the speed comfortable to them, and this affords them with more opportunities to feel in control. In line with that thought, one of the techniques to promote successful online learning process that Zapalska and Brozik (2006) listed is for the online faculty to provide step-by-step instructions and directions whenever they are needed.

7.1.4 Systematic Theme

According to a study by Dabbagh (2003), in an online learning environment that is based on learning as a social process and seeing an increasingly diverse and dynamic online learner population, the transformation of a teacher's role from didactic to supportive and facilitative requires knowledge and comfort in the use of learning technologies and pedagogical models that enable such transformations (p. 43). In the tasks implemented by Teacher Alex, the feedback she provided help the comprehension of the task given. It becomes a mutual engagement in problem-solving as the teacher and the student come together to arrive at a suitable negotiation about comprehension of the instruction provided. In Teacher Alex's experience in which shows their engagement in mutual problem solving with their students, she mentioned that:

> "…there will be particular students who [for example if it's topic approval] are very confused on what they want to do. So if you ask them the question, they still cannot answer. So you have to simplify it more for example 'What type of food when you mean food preference (going back to my example a while ago) when you mean food preference, food preference when?' or 'food preference when eating merienda'. So I suggest if they really don't get it, I suggest 'is it eating merienda, eating lunch? Is it for breakfast? Is it their food preference for what kind of cuisine would you like

to know about? Their preference for Filipino cuisines? It's up to you'. If I know that the student is still a bit confused about what she wants to hear, what she wants to focus on, I suggest and then from there they'll have time to think about it and maybe come up with their own idea or examples on their own, and then come to me and have the specific topic".

According to Hull and Saxon (2009), instructional methods for online courses using CMC must address a different form of linguistics that is somewhere between the written word and face-to-face conversation if meaning is to be negotiated (p. 626). In a systematic theme, its about implementing appropriate tasks with logic and reason since tasks follow a certain plan of action.

In Teacher Ezra's case, who thinks out-of-the-box activities like the puzzle:

> "It's a heart-shaped puzzle where they had to figure out the concepts that were included in the lesson."

In these activities or tasks implemented, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2009) proposed that engagement with the task requires that the students draw on prior knowledge, motivational beliefs, and construct a personal interpretation of the meaning of the task and its requirements.

7.2 Through the employed negotiation strategies, how do the English teachers engage the students in the development of their linguistic competence in English through the aid of a digital platform and other online resources?

7.2.1 Utilization of Online Resources

The English teachers have a day dedicated to the use of an online platform called Blackboard. This platform was "founded in 1997 and is a leading provider of e-Education enterprise software applications and services. Its main characteristics are: courses Management, content creation, didactic units, textbook online, teaching and learning tools, administration of personal information, board discussion, group project, book of qualifications, and control panel" (Guenaneche & Radigales, 2007, p. 4). According to Teacher Alex:

> "…we have an alternative instruction day which is

called ALTO (Alternative Learning and Teaching Opportunities) day, which is one day in a week".

In this day of the week, the teachers would post online activities, quizzes, and conduct online consultations.

Some of the uses the teachers have for Blackboard are the following: Discussion Board, Announcements, and Assignments. So for Discussion Board, Teacher Alex would:

"…use it if for example our lesson last week was not finished and some enrichment activities are needed or are supposed to be discussed especially application to that lesson, then I post it as a discussion activity for them…".

The teachers conducted all sorts of activities online such as quizzes, and writing activities, such as essays, data commentary, and reviews like Teacher Dane who stated that:

"I post my lectures, Powerpoint presentations, online quizzes, activities and even discussions [online discussions]…".

According to Lu and Jeng (2006), "since the discussion forum is considered a major component of most online courses, one reasonable and reliable way of evaluating online learning effectiveness is through assessing participant collaborative knowledge construction in the online discourse" (p. 184). Most of the teachers are using discussion board activities in order to evaluate the students' knowledge is constructed. According to Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (1999), participants actively engage in discussion/inquiry-based activities when they produce learning outcomes based on constructing knowledge requiring critical-thinking skills (as cited in Lu & Jeng, 2006, p. 184).

Teachers also would post handouts to supplement their instructions. Although Blackboard is not the only online source that they use. Such in the case of Teacher Alex who would make use of other online resource such as Google where she allowed the students to upload using Google drive.

They would utilize a "team drive" where Teacher Alex mentioned that

"I let them upload so I can easily access them anywhere I go."

In online consultations, Google Hangouts would be used to communicate with students.

The only downside that the teachers commented about was the quality of Internet connection that the students experience; that the website would crash at times, and there would be data traffic because of the number of actions done at once. According to The CEO Forum (2001) this presents a challenge to both the state and federal governments to continue to monitor and eliminate inequities with regard to the accessibility to educational technologies (as cited in Firmin & Genesi, 2013, p. 1605). The Internet connectivity remained to be a challenge not only governments, but much more in schools where connectivity is very important as a tool for learning. Nonetheless, since the teachers mentioned more positive outcomes, it just shows that they also have a positive attitude towards the use of Blackboard in their English language instruction.

7.2.2 Developing Students' Linguistic Competence through Online Platforms

When asked about the benefits of using online resources in engaging their students in developing their linguistic competence, most of the teachers stated that according to their experience, this helped engage the students and students' linguistic competence are being developed. According to Teacher Alex:

"We get to see how the students write, because it's digital of course you can opt for them to record their voices et cetera; but it also gives us a glimpse of how they write digitally."

Teacher Alex also expressed that:

"…because of the multimodality feature of e-learning and Blackboard, they can be or they are engaged more…".

Teacher Bailey added:

"…if you give a deadline for it then the students are really forced to follow the deadline because the material or the activity will be gone so they really have

to do it within the given timeframe".

The teachers' statements showed that the linguistic competence of the students is developed through the constant exposure they have with the activities they conduct online and the tasks they need to accomplish. According to Firmin and Genesi (2013), "Educational technology increases students' abilities to apply and produce knowledge for the real world" (p. 1605). Online instruction that relies on synchronous and asynchronous learning networks fulfills the ideal of interactive distance learning (Larreamendy-Joems & Leinhardt, 2006). In these online interactions, the students are challenged to accomplish tasks that help them develop their linguistic competence.

The use of technology in instructing can help enhance positive attitudes and promote beliefs about the usefulness and perceived ease of use of such tools . The design of online environments usually is a team effort that brings together different although complementary competences. In the teachers' perspective towards the use of Blackboard, since they mentioned more positive outlooks than negative ones, it can be concluded that the online platform indeed provided a huge contribution to their instructions. Their acceptance of technology in their instruction showed how the use of technology provides generous benefits in English language instruction. Therefore, in addition to offering technical assistance and professional training, additional resources as such should also be provided to further encourage teachers to experiment with innovative pedagogy (Yu, Sun, & Chang, 2010).

Conclusion

In this study, three themes were developed in categorizing the negotiation strategies used by the English teachers of the senior high school level: snug, simple, and systematic. In the snug theme, it points toward the ability of the teachers to think ahead about the questions that will be asked by the students and the possible difficulty that the students may encounter. In the simple theme, the teachers' ability to provide clear and direct instruction to aid the students in comprehension of what they need to

accomplish was observed. The systematic theme identified the teachers' ability to implement tasks that are based on logical and reasonable circumstance lies in the teachers providing sensible tasks that are related to the lessons at hand.

It is true that online initiatives take on the unfulfilled promises of traditional distance education and open new instructional possibilities. Such was the case for the use of Blackboard and other online resources, where the teachers and students get to communicate on or off campus, and in and out of the classroom. In this study, the negotiation strategies employed by the teachers and their attitudes toward the use of online resources have been found to engage the students in developing their linguistic competence.

Since this study only looked into the perspective of the senior high school English teachers, for future researchers interested in conducting studies about negotiation strategies of teachers, further development of the themes that were formulated could be beneficial in order to set a more specific and structured negotiation strategies online. Further investigations into the experiences of the English teachers should be determined, which means views of senior high school English teachers from other universities or schools should be considered. Interviewing students' perspective will also help in achieving a more thorough assessment of the usefulness of these communication negotiation strategies. There is a need to look into the students' perspective towards the teachers' utilization of these negotiation strategies and various online resources. Future researchers could also investigate the effect of negotiation strategies on other communicative competence skills.

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