Turkish as a Foreign Language Learners' Tendency to Use Communication Strategies

Teymur Erol
Muş Alparslan University, Turkey
 https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1738-0858

Ramazan Şimşek
Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Turkey
 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8295-8903

Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to determine Turkish as a foreign language learners' tendency to use communication strategies. Quantitative and qualitative research models were used together in the study. The survey method was used in the qualitative part and the phenomenological method was used in the quantitative part of the study. The study group of the study is comprised of 77 participants from 13 different nationalities with Turkish language proficiency levels of A2, B2 and C1. Quantitative data were collected by using the "Oral Communication Strategies Inventory" and qualitative data were collected by using a semi-structured interview form. Descriptive analysis was performed on both the quantitative and qualitative data. The results of the study revealed a strong correlation between the level of competence and the tendency to use strategies. Participants with low language proficiency levels tend to use strategies including the behavior of moving away from the verbal boundaries of the target language. On the other hand, those with a high level of language proficiency tend to use strategies that include the effort to stay within the boundaries of the target language. In the qualitative dimension of the study, 10 different communication strategies were determined based on the episodic memories and experiences of the participants. These are strategies mostly used in compensatory functions.

Keywords: Communication Strategies, Pragmatic Strategies, Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language, International Students.

Introduction

This century witnesses an enormous increase in human mobility triggered by the techno-digital transformation, as compared to the last century. The end result is the proliferation of multinational, multicultural and multilingual life. Absolutely this would have some consequences. One common consequence was the need for people to express themselves in more than one language. So that multilingualism has become one of the important competencies of the digital world (Erol & Tunagür, 2021). Again, through globalization, this mobility has faced fierce competition from countries in different sectors, one of which is higher education. Higher education is particularly exposed to international competition as it has significant resources at its disposal. Many initiatives are therefore implemented to promote internationalization of higher education by developing countries, as do developed countries. Turkey as a developing country is also among the countries that invest on internationalization of higher education. The reason why it attaches great importance to higher education is that the number of international students enrolled in the Turkish higher education in the last few years has increased [Council of Higher Education (CHE), 2017]. According to the data released by the CHE the number of international students in Turkey has reached 224 thousand by the end of 2021, and therefore it has been named as one of the countries that has accommodated the most international students.

International students, especially participating in student exchange programs and receiving many government scholarships, learn Turkish at Turkish Teaching Application and Research Centers (TÖMER) belonging to various universities in Turkey in order to meet the Turkish language requirement for higher education. Here, it implements the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) within its language curricula, and adopts communicative approach. The study group of the present study consists of the students enrolled in the aforementioned language centers, e.g., TÖMER. The aim of the study is to reveal what kind of communication strategies international students utilize/use while engaging in everyday language use and/or during the communication-oriented language teaching of Turkish.

Literature Review

The term "communication strategies" was first coined by Selinger referring to the errors in learner's interlanguage system in the early 1970s (Jamshidnejad, 2011). Later, it has also been subject to some of debates around communicative competence. The concept of communicative competence was developed by Hymes in the late 1960s. Hymes began his justification of this concept by criticizing Chomsky's ideas. A few years later, different researchers elaborated the concept, adding communication strategies (Celce-Murcia, 2008). A well-known model of communicative competence was proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), defining the communication strategies as a component of communicative competence.

The strategic competence pillar of the Canale and Swain (1980) model serves to compensate for the gaps in communication with verbal and nonverbal means. Some of these strategies refer to the ways used to paraphrase the grammatical forms that the person cannot control or remember for a moment. In addition, the instruments that individuals use to meet social linguistic competence, especially when they communicate in a L2 and when they are not sure of themselves, are considered within the domain of strategic competence. Canale and Swain (1980) have suggested that these strategies used to solve communication problems are not achieved through

classroom practices that do not contain meaningful communication. These can help students, especially during the initial stages of L2 learning. The need for communication strategies derived from real-life communication situations may vary depending on age and the level of L2 proficiency.

After this model, which Canale and Swain formed the theoretical framework of, many researchers were interested in communication strategies and theoretical and practical research was conducted on this subject. It is generally accepted that practices that emphasize communication-oriented processes in L2 education and associate communication strategies with the pedagogical framework of language education have started with Canale and Swain (1980) presenting strategic competence as one of the complementary instruments of communicative competence (Tarone, 1980). The concept of communication strategies, which have been gradually enriched with conceptual and theoretical frameworks proposed by different researchers, have become one of the important components of L2 teaching today. In fact, the CEFR [Ministry of National Education (MoNE), 2021], which is considered as one of the main frameworks of proficiency in foreign language education, is based on communication-oriented language activities and strategies. In the text, it is emphasized that language use emerges in tasks and actions performed by people and that individuals develop communicative language competencies as social actors and use the most appropriate communication strategies to perform some tasks.

In pragmatic research, communication strategies, also called pragmatic strategies by many scholars (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2019; Mauranen, 2006), are among the components contributing to the provision of communicative competence while interacting or communicating with others. Naturally, they are not sufficient to ensure communicative competence on their own. Together with other components, they can ensure communicative competence. Especially during the use of L2, they help to maintain communication, improve confidence in speaking, increase linguistic fluency and develop a sense of autonomy; besides they help increasing individuals' willingness to communicate (Akdemir, 2016; Özyurt & Akdemir, 2021a; 2021b; Popescu & Cohen-Vida, 2014).

In natural communication situations in L2, the individuals need to use strategy to express themselves adequately (Sato et al., 2019). Especially in face-to-face communication, strategy use may be required for the correct or adequate coding of the message to be conveyed (Jamshidnejad, 2021). The person's effort to communicate is supported by these strategies. While they offer the opportunity to experience the possibilities and limits of the L2, they also help individuals to practice. Individuals find the opportunity to see what language allows in different areas of life and in different tasks and what language behaviors are acceptable mostly during communication. They can see what functions the communication strategies they use serve in such communicative situations. Thus, they can also experience what purposes are served by the communication strategies they have employed in order to maintain communication (Dörnyei, 1995).

Communication strategies refer to a number of linguistic behaviors such as giving up the intention to convey the message in cases of language deficiency, avoiding communication due to the feeling of inadequacy, circumlocution, approximation, making up words, performing literal translation, borrowing words from the L1, asking for help and saving time (Tarone, 1984). All of these are verbal and non-verbal linguistic instruments used to solve problems that arise when understanding does not occur during communication (Bagarić, 2007). Accordingly, communication strategies include the attempt of people to reciprocally attribute the same meaning to a verbal or non-verbal message in the event that a common mental plane cannot be formed in communication processes (Tarone, 1980; Liu & Kinginger, 2021). Communication strategies, which are the starting point of this study, are used to ensure communicative competence and increase communication efficiency (Vettorel, 2019). Their main function, in the case of interaction with others, is to eliminate the deficiency related to one of the competency areas and to carry out communication processes successfully (Bagarić, 2007). These instruments, which are used to eliminate speech gaps, have been classified by many researchers as communication strategies after a while.

Dörnyei (1995) examined taxonomies related to communication strategies and listed the most common and important ones under three main headings: avoidance strategies, compensatory strategies and time saving strategies. Under these main headings, there are 12 strategies, definitions and examples. Avoidance or reduction strategies are leaving the message incomplete and avoiding discourses and concepts that include language difficulties. Achievement or compensatory strategies arise in the form of changing the available one in case of language deficiencies and using alternative means of communication instead. If speakers have problems in expressing a plan they have designed in their mind, compensation strategies are activated. Circumlocution, approximation, using multipurpose words, word-coinage, nonlinguistic means, literal translation, foreignizing, code switching, appeal for help were listed among the compensation strategies to eliminate communication gaps. Stalling or time-gaining strategies are different from the previous strategies in terms of their function. These strategies are used to save time and maintain communication in difficult times, rather than eliminating language deficiencies faced during communication. It is the use of filler or pause words (actually, I think, to tell the truth, etc.) in order to eliminate the disconnections that occur during the flow of speech and to give an opportunity to think.

Studies including this core strategy group presented by Dörnyei based on the literature are among the important sources that feed the pedagogical frameworks designed for foreign language teaching. Studies that emphasize communication strategies in L2 teaching report that L2 users employ some communication strategies to achieve semantic consensus and to cope with ambiguities (Cogo & Dewey 2012; Dörnyei, 1995; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Mauranen 2012; Sato et al., 2019; Seidlhofer 2011; Tarone, 1980). In Turkey studies on this subject have generally been conducted in recent years. In a search conducted with different keywords in the thesis center of the CHE (2022), a maximum of 40 postgraduate studies related to communication strategies were found. Only three of them are from the period before the 2000s. The majority of these studies are grouped under three main headings: Communicative competencies of

teachers and learners (Değer, 1998; Timur, 2019), examination of course contents and materials in the context of intercultural communication (Başol, 2017; Çeltik, 2016; Demirel, 2016; Eken, 2018; Ergün, 2016; Gözgenç, 2016; Kaya, 2017; Serpil, 2007; Yavuz, 2017) and competencies for intercultural communication (Altundağ, 2012; Charity, 2021; Çetin Köroğlu, 2013; Çırpan, 2021; Eröz, 2020; Gökberk, 2021; Güven, 2015; Harputluoğlu, 2021; İnce, 2020; Sezer, 2019; Şen, 2020; Tütüncü, 2014; Zengin & Ataş Akdemir, 2020).

These studies are not directly related to communication strategies. The studies that can be determined to be conducted on using communication strategies in Turkey are mostly related to the English-speaking processes of Turks. In the reviews made in different databases, it has been observed that there are a very few studies on communication strategies used by foreigners learning Turkish (Sönmez, 2021; Yazıcı, 2018). Thus, in this paper, it was aimed to determine the communication strategies used by the students having different levels of Turkish proficiency based on their episodic memories, and in this regard, the following questions guided the study.

1. To what extent do Turkish as a foreign language learners use communication strategies in relation to their language levels?
2. What kind of strategies do Turkish as a foreign language learners state using during communication based on their episodic memories?

Method

Quantitative and qualitative research models were used together in the current study. The survey design was used in the quantitative dimension of the study. Survey is a research model that intends to determine a situation as it was in the past or as it is in the present. This model refers to the conduct of survey on the entire population or a sample to be selected from this population to have a general conclusion about a certain population (Karasar, 2019). The essence of the model is based on describing the tendencies, attitudes and views of a population quantitatively through a sample selected from this population (Creswell, 2009).

In the qualitative dimension of the study, the communication strategies used by the participants were elicited by using the interview technique. In this context, the phenomenological design was used. In phenomenological research, data are collected from individuals or groups that have experienced the phenomenon being studied and can express or reflect this phenomenon. In this design, individuals can reveal experiences or meanings that they are not even aware of or think about (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016).

Study Group

The study group is comprised of the students who continue to learn Turkish at A2, B2 and C1 levels at Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University TÖMER and 77 international students with C1 level Turkish certificate. The group was formed based on the criterion sampling method, which is among the purposive sampling methods. In this connection, basic, medium and advanced level Turkish knowledge was determined as a criterion. In criterion sampling, there are standards predetermined by the researcher. In the selection of the group, meeting these standards is taken into consideration (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). Information about the participants is given in Table 1:

Table 1 Study Group

		n	**%**
Gender	Female	36	46.75
	Male	41	53.25
Language Level	A2	29	37.66
	B2	25	32.47
	C1	23	29.87

Nationality	Indonesia	29	37.66
	Somalia	7	9.09
	Djibouti	6	7.79
	Ethiopia	5	6.49
	Syria	5	6.49
	Myanmar	5	6.49
	Equatorial Guinea	4	5.19
	Afghanistan	4	5.19
	South Korea	3	3.90
	Iraq	3	3.90
	Algeria	2	2.60
	Morocco	2	2.60
	Egypt	2	2.60

According to Table 1, the number of the male participants is higher than that of the female participants. The participants were selected from three Turkish language levels: basic user (A2), independent user (B2) and proficient user (C1). Although there is no significant difference between the numbers of the participants selected from the levels, the highest number of participants is from A2 level. There are participants from 13 different nationalities in the study group. The majority of the sample is students from Indonesia.

Data Collection

The quantitative data in the study were obtained with the version of the "Oral Communication Strategy Inventory", which was developed by Nakatani (2006) for L2 learners, adaptation of the inventory to Turkish was made by Yaman and Kavasoğlu (2013) and then the validity and reliability study of the inventory was carried out by Yazıcı (2018) for those who learn Turkish as a foreign language. Permission was obtained for the above mentioned inventory. In the original version of the inventory, items related to communication strategies are thematically grouped under eight factors.

As a result of the reliability and validity tests by Yazıcı, the factor structure of the original inventory was determined to include three factors; fluency and accuracy-oriented strategies, body language use and attention drawing strategies, message reduction and change strategies. Since it was considered to be more compatible with the literature, the strategy categories in the original inventory were taken into consideration in the study; however, measurements were made with the inventory items in Yazıcı's (2018) study. The reliability of the inventory was calculated to be 0.83 by Yaman and Kavasoğlu (2013) using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient. Yazıcı (2018) found that the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient is 0.84 in the tests performed for the overall reliability of the inventory.

In the process of collecting research data, the participants at A2, B2 and C1 levels were informed about communication strategies, language learning strategies and data collection tools. In order to ensure a better understanding by the participants, it was decided to deliver Nakatani's original English version together with the inventory items in Turkish. The same was done for the question in the interview form. Finally, a pilot application was made with a group of 15 students, five from each level, using the data collection tools. These students stated that they understood the expressions in the data collection tools.

Quantitative data were collected under the supervision of the researchers and by using Google form in the classroom environment. In the first part of this form, there are items to elicit information about the gender, nationality and Turkish language level of the participants. In the second part, the inventory items related to communication strategies are included. The interview technique was used to collect the qualitative data of the study. Although the language of communication used in the interviews

was Turkish; English was used when problems in communication were experienced. Participant opinions were collected with a semi-structured interview form. In this context, the participants were asked what kind of strategies they used while speaking/learning Turkish. The answers given by the students constituted the qualitative data of the study.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the study group were examined in two categories: quantitative and qualitative. The data collected through the inventory items were analyzed using Microsoft Office Excel. In the study, first, the participants' levels of tendency to use strategies were determined. The score intervals were used as the basis for determining the level. To determine the score intervals of the 5-point inventory, the distribution interval= (maximum value-minimum value)/number of points formula was used (Gülen, 2016; Kandemir, 2015; Sümbüloğlu & Sümbüloğlu, 1993). After applying the formula, the score interval coefficient was found to be 0.8 depending on the number of points in the inventory. This process, which was carried out to reveal the participants' levels of tendency to use communication strategies, is presented in Table 2:

Table 2 Levels of Tendency to Use Communication Strategies

Average Score Intervals	Likert Point	Classification Level
1.00-1.80	Never or almost never true for me	Very low level of tendency to use strategy
1.81-2.60	Generally not true for me.	Low level of tendency to use strategy
2.61-3.40	Somewhat true for me.	Medium level of tendency to use strategies
3.41-4.20	Generally true for me.	High level of tendency to use strategy
4.21-5.00	Always or almost always true for me.	Very high level of tendency to use strategy

In Table 2, the values in the column of average score intervals correspond to the Likert points of the inventory in the second column. It is seen that the five levels of classification, which are very low, low, medium, high and very high and which are the qualitative equivalents of the scores, are included in the third column.

Qualitative data were obtained from the participants with the highest, lowest and average scores taken from the inventory items by using the interview form and subjected to descriptive analysis. To do so, the opinions of the students were first classified under certain categories based on their thematic similarities and a table was prepared considering the frequency of repetition (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In addition, these tables were interpreted with the help of direct quotations from the participants. In the descriptive analysis process, the opinions of two academicians teaching Turkish to foreign students were consulted for the reliability of the opinion categories prepared by the researcher. Corrections were made taking the opinions of both experts into account.

Findings

In this section, there are findings regarding the communication strategies used by the students learning Turkish as a foreign language. The extent to which the strategies classified by Nakatani (2006) as "social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning while speaking, accuracy-oriented strategies, message reduction and alteration strategies, nonverbal strategies while speaking, message abandonment strategies, and attempt to think in (target language) strategies" were used by the participants constituted the quantitative findings in the study and the participant opinions constituted the qualitative findings of the study.

Findings and Comments on the First Sub-Problem of the Study

The first sub-problem of the study is about the level of communication strategies used by Turkish as a foreign language learner during communication in relation to their language levels. Findings about the tendency of students to use communication strategies are given in Table 3.

Table 3 Tendency to Use Communication Strategies in relation to Language Levels of Turkish as a Foreign Language Learners

Strategy type	Language Level	Mean Score by Levels	Tendency to Use Strategies
Social affective strategies	A2	3.39	Medium level
	B2	3.44	High Level
	C1	3.60	High Level
Fluency-oriented strategies	A2	3.25	Medium level
	B2	3.30	Medium level
	C1	3.58	High Level
Strategies to negotiate meaning	A2	3.95	High Level
	B2	3.45	High Level
	C1	3.00	Medium level
Accuracy-oriented strategies	A2	2.91	Medium level
	B2	3.26	Medium level
	C1	3.43	High Level
Message reduction and alteration strategies	A2	3.66	High Level
	B2	3.60	High Level
	C1	2.65	Medium level
Nonverbal strategies while speaking	A2	4.14	High Level
	B2	3.80	High Level
	C1	2.17	Low level
Message abandonment strategies	A2	4.08	High Level
	B2	3.41	High Level
	C1	2.33	Low level
Attempt to think in foreign language strategies	A2	2.91	Medium level
	B2	3.04	Medium level
	C1	4.17	High Level

The communication strategies in Table 3 consist of eight sub-groups in line with the thematic categories of the inventory used. These strategies, which Nakatani (2006) collects under the headings of avoidance and compensation strategies, mainly correspond to the core strategy taxonomy classified under three main headings by Dörnyei (1995) as avoidance, compensation and time saving.

According to the table, the tendency of the participants to use communication strategies differed depending on their language levels. The mean overall score of the participants ranged from 2.17 (low) to 4.17 (high). According to the mean score, the tendency of the participants to use communication strategies is low, medium and high. No participant had a very low or very high tendency to use compensation strategies.

The table above shows that there is an inverse proportion between the language level and the mean scores of the participants in the categories of "strategies to negotiate meaning, message reduction and alteration strategies, nonverbal strategies while speaking, message abandonment strategies." In this strategy set, the mean scores of the participants with high language levels are lower than the scores of those with lower language levels (A2, $\bar{x}$=3.96; B2, $\bar{x}$=3.57; C1, $\bar{x}$=2.53). As the level increased, the mean scores decreased. On the other hand, this is not the case for the categories of "social affective strategies, fluency and accuracy-oriented strategies and attempt to think in foreign language strategies". The language levels of the participants are directly proportional to their tendency to use strategies. As

language proficiency increased, the tendency to use strategies also increased (A2, x̄=3.12; B2, x̄=3.26; C1, x̄=3.70). In this strategy set, the participant group with the highest language level had a higher mean score.

Findings and Comments on the Second Sub-Problem of the Study

The second sub-problem of the study was discussed based on the opinions of the participants. In this context, the types of strategies used by learners during communication were elicited on the basis of their episodic memories. The communication strategies that emerged from the opinions of the participants were grouped under 10 thematic headings as "translating from the L1", "objectification", "simplification", "restructuring", "asking for direct help", " asking for indirect help", "having the interlocutor repeat", "correcting one's own expression", "stating that they do not understand" and "requesting explanatory information from the interlocutor". Afterwards, the participant opinions were processed into the determined thematic frameworks. The findings regarding the opinions of the participants are demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4 Thematic Framework of the Opinions of the Turkish as a Foreign Language Learners on Using Communication Strategies

Opinions	n	Participants
Translating from L1	2	P8, P10
Objectification	2	P1, P12
Simplification	1	P5
Restructuring	1	P3
Asking for direct help	1	P6
Asking for indirect help	1	P4
Having the interlocutor repeat	1	P2
Correcting one's own expression	1	P9
Stating that they cannot understand	1	P7
Requesting explanatory information from an interlocutor	1	P11

In the study, 6 participants (n=18) from each language level were interviewed. Participant selection was made based on the lowest, medium and highest score intervals in the inventory. This process was repeated for each language level. Although the number of participants whose opinions were taken was 18, the statements of 6 participants were not sufficiently understood and these were not included in the data analysis. In order to reach more data, high number of participants were included in the study.

As seen in Table 6, the opinions of 12 students were analyzed. Four of these used the translating from L1 (n=2) and objectification strategies to continue communication and prevent gaps. One person was distributed to each of the other communication strategies that the participants used, although they were probably not aware of it.

The first theme prepared according to the opinions of the participants is the strategy of translation from the L1. The participant coded as P8 expressed how lexical translation from L1 was performed with the following expressions:

"I constantly search for the basic sentences in Turkish and talk to people. My mind is very busy while talking to my friend here. I listen to him and translate his words into Korean. And I think in Korean to answer him. And I translate that into Turkish. Then I answer him in Turkish."

According to this view quoted, it is understood that the participant prioritized "basic expressions" in Turkish, but "experienced some problems" in the mental processing phases of communication, and continued communication by "translating the expressions of the foreign language into the native language" in order to eliminate these problems.

Another participant, who was considered as using the strategy of translating from the L1 to maintain communication and coded as P10, said

"... I think in my mother language first, then I speak Turkish. But sometimes it is wrong because the word order is not the same in my mother tongue." It is seen that the participant's attempt to translate the foreign language into the L1 in order to cope with communication problems and be successful with this strategy did not always yield the desired result, but "sometimes it went wrong" during communication due to the difference in language structures.

As it is known, a method from concrete to abstract is followed in foreign language teaching. This is also one of the general principles of education because things that are perceived concretely are learned more easily. How the participant coded as P12 interpreted a Turkish concept by establishing a similarity relationship in order to facilitate understanding is given below:

"When I learn the words, I usually write them down in a notebook, look at them and memorize them. Sometimes the shape of a word is associated with the meaning of that word. For example, the word "dog" is similar to a barking dog's tooth. That's how I remember it."

Similarly, it is understood from the statements of the participant P1, the strategy used involves objectification and thinking of certain situations while memorizing words:

"While studying Turkish, I mostly memorized the verbs. I was memorizing 30 words a day. I made a dictionary to memorize and I was looking at it all the time. I wrote down difficult words to memorize on both the notebook and the wall and read them out loud over and over again. I thought of a situation about the word and memorized it. I tried to use the words I memorized to make a sentence."

Especially, basic and intermediate language proficiency brings some linguistic difficulties during communication as it does not provide the opportunity to fully penetrate the foreign language. The solution to overcoming these difficulties is to prefer short, simple and brief expressions rather than forming a mixed and long sentence and to develop speech behavior accordingly. In the study, this language behavior is called simplification. This behavior was reflected in the opinions of the participant coded as P5 with the statement "…I make short sentences because I do not understand long sentences."

The restructuring strategy reflected in the participant opinions is to convey the message based on an alternative plan in cases where the intended communication does not take place due to language difficulties. One of the participants, P3, expressed this situation as follows; "... if the sentence is wrong, I say another sentence...".

The participant P6 stated that "... I don't remember words and ask my friends." and when he faced gaps during communication, he asked for direct help from his interlocutor. During the Turkish communication, P4 expressed that he received indirect help when his deficiencies were noticed by his interlocutor with the following sentences:

"…sometimes I forget words. Turks are helping me. They say the words I don't remember…"

During communication in Turkish, the behavior of having the interlocutor repeat the statements due to the inability to understand was described in the sentences of the participant P2 as follows; "... I say repeat when I do not understand...". In the event that the communication problem is caused by the speaker, the attempt of correcting the speaker's own statement in order to ensure the cohesion was included in the statement of the participant coded P9:"...I am saying wrong. Then I remember the correct form...".

The communication problem caused by native speakers' inability to adjust their speaking speed in a way that foreigners can understand due to their language usage habit is stated in P7's opinions as a strategy of stating that they do not understand. "I know Turkish. But the Turks are talking too fast. I don't understand. Then we laugh."

The final strategy, which can be determined in accordance with the opinions of the participants, has been conceptualized as requesting explanatory information from the interlocutor. P11 said "The teacher is teaching. Turkish grammar is very difficult. I don't understand and I'm asking the teacher. He helps me." and stated that he learned the Turkish structures that he thought he did not understand "by asking for explanatory information" from the relevant person.

It is understood that the thematic opinion frameworks formed with the help of the communication strategies in the literature and the interpretation of the participant statements above are

used by language learners and users in the processes of using the foreign language.

Discussion

In the current study, the tendency of students with different levels of Turkish proficiency to use communication strategies to ensure sufficient communication competence was analyzed. The quantitative data obtained from the participants revealed that language level was related to the tendency to use communication strategies in general. Students with low language competence tend to use strategies of negotiating the meaning, abandoning the message, using nonverbal tools, thinking in the L1 instead of the foreign language that are related to the behavior of moving away from the verbal boundaries of the foreign language. In contrast, those with a better language level tend to use thinking in the foreign language, fluency and accuracy oriented and social affective strategies that include an effort to stay within the boundaries of the foreign language. It is considered that high level of use of the strategies that tend to move away from the verbal boundaries of the foreign language by participants with low language level is due to the lack of sense of self-efficacy in maintaining communication and the need to use more strategies to ensure continuity in communication. Strategies that encourage the ones with high language competence to stay within the boundaries of the foreign language are interpreted as a reflection of the effort to succeed rather than the concern to fail in communication. Therefore, higher mean scores of the participant groups with a high language level taken for the strategies that refer to linguistic competence (fluency and accuracy-oriented strategies, thinking in the foreign language strategies) seem to be a consistent result. Because the fluent and correct use of language is determined by language competence. It is considered that the behavior of referring to "social affective strategies" is also affected by language competence. Social affective strategies that include components such as being willing to use the foreign language, taking the risk of making mistakes, controlling speech anxiety and managing emotions naturally require having sufficient language skills (Akdemir, 2019; Akdemir, 2021; Nakatani, 2006).

In the examination of the mean scores for the communication strategies, it was observed that the participants with A2 level language proficiency obtained 3.54 mean score in all the strategies, those at B2 level got 3.41 mean score and those at C1 level got 3.12 mean score. Based on these data, there is a tendency to use communication strategies at a "high "level at A2 and B2 levels and at a "medium" level at C1 level.

When all the strategies were evaluated together, the category C1, which was formed by the participants with the highest language competence, had the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$=4.17) in the strategy of thinking in the foreign language. This is followed by the mean score of the participants with A2 level language proficiency for using nonverbal strategies during communication ($\bar{x}$=4.14). The third one is the mean score ($\bar{x}$=4.08) of the participants in the A2 category for the strategy of abandoning the message due to the incompetence in the target language. According to these results, the participants with low language competence moved away from the boundaries of the verbal area of the target language while those with higher language competence reflected their tendency to stay within the target language domain to their strategy use. Foreign language learners go beyond the safe boundaries of the L1 when communicating in the target language. Therefore, it is likely that they have chosen strategies to move away from the verbal communication field of the target language to reduce the psychological pressure they are exposed to in the performance dimension of communication. The mean scores indicating the tendency to use strategy is seen to be an effort to avoid the target language and approach the safe boundaries of the L1 on the part of the participants with a low level of language competence.

Conclusion

In this study, the conclusion that there is a connection between the tendency to use strategy and linguistic competence is parallel to the results of different studies. In the study of Bialystok and Fröhlich (1980), it has been determined that language competence functions as the main limiter in strategy use and that the dependence on communication

strategies to cope with linguistic difficulties in target language use is higher. According to them, there is a relationship between inference, competence and strategy use. The determining variable in this relationship is the ability to make inferences. When language proficiency reaches the required level, the individual's ability to make inferences determines the choice and use of strategy. It has been observed that the studies conducted in the following years provided evidence supporting the conclusions of Bialystok and Fröhlich. Examples of these are the studies (Dobao, 2001; Safont Jordá, 2001) showing that the behavior of choosing communication strategies and the frequency of using them are determined by the level of competence in the target language, and that language competence and linguistic actions are affected by the communication strategies used by individuals. In addition, it is understood from studies with similar results that communication strategies support language interaction (Maleki, 2007), that the frequency of using communication strategies during speaking is related to students' competence levels (Maldonado, 2016), and that students with low language proficiency need to use strategies to be successful in communication (Almaktary, 2018).

In the qualitative dimension of the current study, 10 different communication strategies were determined by making inferences from the opinions of the participants. These were conceptualized by taking the literature data into account as "translating from the L1", "simplifying", "objectifying", "restructuring", ""asking for direct help", " asking for indirect help", "having the interlocutor repeat", "correcting one's own expression", "stating that he/she does not understand" and "requesting explanatory information from the interlocutor". Strategies reflected in student opinions correspond to communication strategies in the literature to a great extent (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). These strategies are mostly used in compensatory functions. That is, the language behaviors of the participants during communication include an effort to be successful rather than avoidance. It is understood that the participants develop a conscious attitude to cope with linguistic difficulties, although they are often not aware that their linguistic actions are a form of strategic behavior.

Eight of the communication strategies determined in line with the opinions of the participants in the qualitative aspect of the study are in compliance with the strategy types in the original inventory. Translating from the L1 (1st item of the inventory), simplification (4th item), objectification (20th item), restructuring (5th item), asking for help (31st item), having the interlocutor repeat (22nd item) and correcting one's own expression (item 17) are consistent with the inventory items. Accordingly, the experiences of using communication strategies take place in the episodic memories of the participants. These experiences are very similar to the literature data.

As a result, two main conclusions were reached in this study, which dealt with the communication strategies used by Turkish as a foreign language learners. First, it was concluded that the tendency to use strategy was affected by language proficiency. It was observed that the strategies that tended to move away from the target language were used as the language level decreased and the strategies that tended to stay within the target language were used as the language competence increased. In addition, the frequency of using strategies by the language learners with low language competence was found to be higher. Secondly, the types of strategies used by the participants learning Turkish during communication were investigated. Based on the opinions expressed by the participants, 10 communication strategies were determined. It was understood that the strategies determined based on the episodic memories of the participants corresponded to those in the results of similar studies. Thus, it can be recommended that students' awareness of communication strategies should be raised, that these strategies should be taught explicitly or implicitly and practices should be performed to demonstrate the actual use of these strategies in the processes of teaching Turkish.

References

Akdemir, A. S. (2016). Willingness to Communicate WTC in L2: An affective construct of language learning process. Atatürk University Journal of Social Science Institute, 20(3), 839-854.

Akdemir, A. S. (2019). Age, gender, attitudes and

motivation as predictors of Willingness to Listen in L2. Advances in Language and Literary Studies (ALLS), 10(4), 72-79.

Akdemir, A. S. (2021). Fixed and dynamic predictors of Willingness to Communicate in L2: A review on new paradigms of individual differences. Shanlax International Journal of Education, 9(S1), 154–161.

Almaktary, H. (2018). A cross-sectional study of oral communication strategies by successful EFL learners. International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching & Research, 6(24), 23-37.

Altundağ, P. (2012). Korean language teaching in Turkey in the context of common European framework and intercultural communicative competence. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Ankara University, Ankara.

Bagarić, V. (2007). Defining communicative competence. Metodika, 8(1), 94-103.

Başol, H. Ç. (2017). Developing and implementing an intercultural communicative competence framework through blended learning in foreign language education context. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Çukurova University, Adana.

Bialystok, E. & Fröhlich. M. (1980). Oral communication strategies for lexical difficulties. Interlanguage Studies Bulletin, 5, 3-30.

Björkman, B. (2011). Pragmatic strategies in English as an academic lingua franca: Ways of achieving communicative effectiveness. Journal of Pragmatics, 43(4), 950-964. DOI: 10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.033.

Büyüköztürk, Ş., Kılıç Çakmak, E., Akgün, O. E., Karadeniz, S. & Demirel, F. (2016). Scientific research methods. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. Applied Linguistics, 1, 1-47. DOI: 10.1093/applin/I.1.1

Celce-Murcia, M. (2008). Rethinking the role of communicative competence. In E. Alcón Soler & M. P. Safont Jordà (Eds.), Intercultural language use and language learning, (pp. 41-57), Springer.

Çeltik, H. (2016). The research of German textbooks being taught in secondary schools in context of communicative competence. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Gazi University, Ankara.

Çetin Köroğlu, Z. (2013). Language instructors' perspectives on textbook content in terms of intercultural communicative competence: Gazi university case. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Gazi University, Ankara.

Charity, E. M. (2021). EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions on intercultural communicative competence and their related classroom practices. (Unpublished master's thesis). Çukurova University, Adana.

Çırpan, M. (2021). Attitudes of EFL instructors towards intercultural communicative competence: a Turkish foundation university case. (Unpublished master's thesis). İstanbul Aydın University, Istanbul.

Cogo, A., & Martin D. (2012). Analysing English as a lingua franca: A corpus-driven investigation. London: Continuum.

Council of Higher Education (CHE) (2017). https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/AnaSayfa/Yuksekogretimde_Uluslararasilasma_Strateji_Belgesi_2018_2022.pdf

Council of Higher Education (CHE) (2022). https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. California: SAGE Publications.

Değer, M. (1998). Primary school director communicative competence and their behavior constituting obstacles to their communicating with primary teachers in primary- education schools. (Unpublished master's thesis). Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale.

Demirel, B. (2016). Perceptions of the language instructors towards course book content in terms of intercultural communicative competence; a sample case-new inside out elementary. (Unpublished master's thesis). Gazi University, Ankara.

Dobao, A. M. F. (2001). Communication strategies in the interlanguage of Galician students of English: the influence of learner- and task-related factors. AEDEAN 23(1), 41-62.

Dörnyei, Z. & Scott, M. L. (1997). Communication strategies in a second language: definitions and taxonomies. Language Learning 47(1), 173-209.

Dörnyei, Z. (1995). On the teachability of communication strategies. TESOL Quarterly,29(1), 55-85. DOI: 10.2307/3587805

Eken, D. T. (2018). Designing a training model for Erasmus candidates to improve their intercultural communicative competence. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale.

Ergün, S. G. (2016). Investigating the effects of intercultural communicative competence integrated instruction through the development of intercultural communicative competence scales. (Unpublished master's thesis). Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul.

Erol, T & Tunagür, M. (2021). Language assessment literacy in education. In E. Koçoğlu (Ed.), Literacy Skills in Education I, pp. 91-115. Ankara: PegemA Pub.

Eröz, E. (2020). Dispositions of EFL prep class students towards intercultural communicative competence. (Unpublished master's thesis). Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun.

Gökberk, S. (2021). Implementation of intercultural communicative competence (ICC): perceptions of learners and their teacher in an EFL classroom. (Unpublished master's thesis). Çağ University, İstanbul.

Gözgenç, G. S. (2016). Acquiring intercultural communicative competence from coursebooks: an analysis of reading activities in the coursebook "speakout". (Unpublished master's thesis). Çağ University, İstanbul.

Gülen, S. (2016). Argumentation science learning approach based on the science-technology-engineering and mathematics disciplines impacts of student learning products. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun.

Güven, S. (2015). EFL learners' attitudes towards learning intercultural communicative competence. (Unpublished master's thesis). Bilkent University, Ankara.

Harputluoğlu, B. (2021). EFL instructors' perceptions and practices towards intercultural communicative competence in a university context. (Unpublished master's thesis). Çağ University, İstanbul.

İnce, M. (2020). The effect of international teaching practicum on pre-service English teachers' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and teacher identity (TI). (Unpublished master's thesis). Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul.

Jamshidnejad, A. (2011). Functional approach to communication strategies: An analysis of language learners' performance in interactional discourse. Journal of Pragmatics,43(15), 3757-3769. DOI: 10.1016/j.pragma.2011.09.017.

Kandemir, M. A. (2015). İlköğretim matematik ve sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının yansıtıcı düşünme eğilim düzeylerinin bazı değişkenlere göre incelenmesi. Education Sciences, 10(4), 253-275.

Karasar. N. (2019). Scientific research method: concepts, principles, techniques. Ankara: Nobel Pub.

Kaur, J. (2019). Communication strategies in English as a lingua franca interaction. In M. A. Peters & R. Heraud (Eds.), Encyclopedia of educational innovations (pp. 1-5). Singapore: Springer

Kaya, A. (2017). Examining the integration of intercultural communicative competence in ESL/EFL textbooks. (Unpublished master's thesis). Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul.

Liu, S & Kinginger, C. (2021). The sociocultural ontogenesis of international students' use of pragmatic strategies in ELF academic communication: Two contrasting case studies. Journal of Pragmatics, 186, 364-381. DOI: 10.1016/j.pragma.2021.10.022.

Maldonado, M. R. (2016). Communication strategies used by different level L2 English learners in oral interaction. Revistasignos, 49(90), 71-93. DOI: 10.4067/S0718- 09342016000100004

Maleki, A. (2007). Teachability of communication strategies: an Iranian experience. System 35, 583-594. DOI: 10.1016/j.system.2007.04.001

Mauranen, A. (2006). Signaling and preventing

misunderstanding in English as lingua franca communication. International Journal of the Sociology of Language, (177), pp. 123-150. DOI: 10.1515/ijsl.2006.008

Mauranen, A. (2012). Exploring ELF: Academic English shaped by non-native speakers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ministry of National Education (MoNE) (2021). Common European framework of reference for languages. Ankara: MoNE Pub.

Nakatani, Y. (2006). Developing oral communication strategy inventory. The Modern Language Journal, 90, 151-168.

Özyurt, S., & Akdemir, A. S. (2021a). Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in L2: A review on the fundamental role of WTC as an affective construct and its interrelationship with diverse antecedents in L2 learning process. TOJELT Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching, 6(3), 86–112.

Özyurt, S., & Akdemir, A. S. (2021b). Willingness to Communicate in English: A comparative study of Turkish and Syrian EFL learners at Gaziantep University. Social Paradigm: An International Journal of Social Sciences, 5(2), 42–64.

Popescu, A-V. & Cohen-Vida, M-I (2014). Communication strategies for developing the learner's autonomy. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 116, 3489-3493. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.789

Safont Jordá, M. P. (2001). An analysis on the use and selection of communication strategies by Catalan/Castilian learners of English. RassegnaItaliana di Linguistica Applicata, 1(1), 57-72.

Sato, T., Yujobo, Y. J., Okada, T. & Ogane, E. (2019). Communication strategies employed by low-proficiency users: possibilities for ELF-informed pedagogy. Journal of English as a Lingua Franca, 8(1),9-35. DOI: 10.1515/ jelf-2019-2003

Seidlhofer, B. (2011). Understanding English as a lingua franca. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Şen, M. (2020). Pre-service English teachers' perceived levels of and perceptions on intercultural communicative competence. (Unpublished master's thesis). Hacettepe University, Ankara.

Serpil, S. G. (2007). Intercultural communicative competence: the assessment of a Turkish teaching set for foreign adult learners. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Hacettepe University, Ankara.

Sezer, S. (2019). The intercultural communicative competence of the English language teachers and the extent of their contact with different cultures. (Unpublished master's thesis). İnönü University, Malatya.

Sönmez, E. N. (2021). Effect levels use of communication strategies by learners of Turkish as a foreign language on speech anxiety. (Unpublished master's thesis). Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale.

Sümbüloğlu, K. & Sümbüloğlu, V. (1993). Biostatistics. Ankara: Özdemir Pub.

Tarone, E. (1980). Communication strategies, foreigner talk, and repair in interlanguage. Language Learning, 30(2) 417-431. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-1770.1980.tb00326.x

Tarone, E. (1984). Teaching strategic competence in the foreign language classroom. In S. Savignon & M. Berns (Eds.), Initiatives in communicative language teaching (pp. 127-136). Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

Timur, E. N. (2019). Use of drama techniques in CLT to promote communicative competence: the knowledge, perceptions and concerns of EFL instructors. (Unpublished master's thesis). Ufuk University, Ankara.

Tütüncü, N. (2014). An exploratory case study of English language teachers with study abroad experiences: intercultural communicative competence related perceptions and implications. (Unpublished master's thesis). Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

Vettorel, P. (2019). Communication strategies and co-construction of meaning in ELF: drawing on "multilingual resource pools" Journal of English as a Lingua Franca, 8(2), 179-210. DOI: 10.1515/jelf-2019-2019

Yaman, Ş. & Kavasoğlu, M. (2013). The adaptation

study of oral communication strategy inventory into Turkish. International Journal of Human Sciences, 10(2), 400-419.

Yavuz, A. (2017). Some suggested practices to develop speaking skills and communicative competence of b1 level EFL learners at tertiary level. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Hacettepe University.

Yazıcı, M. H. (2018). Oral communication strategies learning Turkish as a foreign language: speaking skills. (Unpublished master's thesis). Kırıkkale University, Kırıkkale.

Yıldırım, A. & Şimşek, H. (2016). Qualitative research methods in the social sciences. Ankara: Seçkin Pub.

Zengin, M., & Ataş Akdemir, Ö. (2020). Teachers' views on parent involvement for refugee children's education. Journal of Computer and Education Research, 8(15), 75–85.

Author Details

Teymur Erol, *Muş Alparslan University, Turkey,* **Email ID***: erolteymur@gmail.com*

Ramazan Şimşek, *Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Turkey,* **Email ID***: ramazansimsek@nevsehir.edu.tr*