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Transactional Communication Strategies to Influence Pre-service Teachers' Speaking Skill¹

Estrategias de comunicación transaccional para influenciar la habilidad del habla de los maestros en formación

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Abstract

This article is about an Action Research project carried out at a public Institution in Sincelejo, Colombia. The research purpose was to determine the effect of transactional communication strategies (TCS) on pre-service teachers' speaking skill. In a diagnostic stage, problems in the speaking skill were identified then an action stage was carried out consisting of six workshops including TCS; a researcher journal, a student self-assessment survey, and a non-participant observation were used for data collection; results suggested a positive impact of TCS on the participants' speaking skill represented in significant progress related to vocabulary, grammar, fluency, attitude, pronunciation, and interaction. Conclusions ratify the importance of TCS in the preparation of future Elementary School teachers in response to national bilingualism policies.

Key words: Attitude, fluency, grammar, interaction, speaking, transactional communication strategies, vocabulary,

Resumen

Este artículo explica un proyecto de investigación acción llevado a cabo en una institución pública en Sincelejo, Colombia. El propósito de la investigación fue determinar el efecto de las estrategias de comunicación transaccional (TCS) en la habilidad del habla de los maestros en formación. En una etapa de

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diagnóstico, se identificaron problemas en la habilidad del habla para los que una etapa de acción de seis talleres incluyendo (TCS) se implementó; un diario de investigación, una encuesta de autoevaluación del estudiante y observación de un externo fueron usadas para la colección de datos. Los resultados sugieren un impacto positivo de TCS en el habla de los participantes representado en progresos significativo relacionado con vocabulario, gramática, fluidez, actitud, pronunciación e interacción. Las conclusiones ratifican la importancia de (TCS) en la preparación de futuros profesores de primaria en repuesta a las políticas nacionales de bilingüismo.

Palabras clave: actitud, interacción, habla, estrategias de comunicación transaccional, vocabulario.

Resumo

Este artigo explica um projeto de pesquisa ação realizado em uma instituição pública em Sincelejo, Colômbia. O propósito da pesquisa foi determinar o efeito das estratégias de comunicação transaccional (TCS) na habilidade da fala dos mestres em formação. Em uma etapa de diagnóstico, foram identificados problemas na habilidade da fala para os que uma etapa de ação de seis oficinas incluindo (TCS) foi implementado; um diário de pesquisa, uma enquete de autoavaliação do estudante e observação de um externo foram usadas para a coleta de dados. Os resultados sugerem um impacto positivo de TCS na fala dos participantes, representado em progressos significativos relacionados com o vocabulário, gramática, fluidez, atitude, pronunciação e interação. As conclusões retificam a importância de (TCS) na preparação de futuros professores de primária em resposta às políticas nacionais de bilinguismo.

Palavras chave: atitude, interação, fala, estratégias de comunicação transaccional, vocabulário.

Introduction

Current trends in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Colombia promote the use of varied approaches and strategies to improve the proficiency of learners at all levels (MEN, 2016). This study searches to determine the effect of transactional communication strategies (TCS) in pre-service teachers' speaking skill in the first semester of the complementary cycle of a public Normal³ school in Sincelejo, Sucre. The information collected and analyzed according to (Powell & Renner, 2003) in a diagnostic stage displayed some difficulties in the speaking skill mainly related to fluency, vocabulary and interaction. Participants spoke with long pauses, lacked of vocabulary to express ideas and with unclear pronunciation and some constraints to understand ideas in English that led to the research question. To what extent can transactional communication strategies influence the speaking skill of pre-service teachers at a public school in Sincelejo?

This research was based on the use of transactional communication strategies under the paradigm of a qualitative research and founded on the Action Research method; regarding the learners' language development and the speaking skill the literature review included the teaching-learning principles by Richards (2015), Munro (2011), Louma (2009) and Burns and Joice (1997). Varied data collection instruments were used in the implementation stage that included a student self-assessment form, a journal, and an external observer form; data were submitted to analysis following (Powell & Renner, 2003). Convenience sampling (Cosby, 2008) was the technique to choose the participants who belonged to first semester in the complementary cycle at a public Normal school.

The findings showed that transactional communication strategies positively influenced the speaking skill of the pre-service teachers since vocabulary and grammar were improved. Students learned new words and became better speakers in different contexts, they increased their speaking fluency and reduced their pauses when communicating orally, displayed more positive attitudes, improved their pronunciation and intonation, increased their oral interaction, and most importantly, they fostered their confidence and motivation when performing oral tasks.

Transactional communication strategies also proved to be useful in the pedagogical preparation of future teacher-researchers because

³ Normal schools in Colombia offer a teaching preparation program for future Elementary School teachers; the program corresponds to grades 12 and 13 in High School which are known as *Ciclo Complementario* (Complementary Cycle).

they can implement the strategies carried out in class on their own teaching settings in order to improve the speaking subskills, specifically concerning grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, attitude, motivation, and interaction, to help students be more dynamic and self-confident.

Pedagogical implications are discussed to provide the educational system in general, curriculum designers, and policy-makers with ideas to promote transactional communication strategies in the teaching of EFL to Normal students in order to impact the pre-school and elementary school levels.

Literature Review

The Speaking Skill

When people interact, they use spoken language to express ideas feelings, thoughts, and intentions; this is what we call speaking. In this sense, Louma, (2009) affirms “people may use their speech to create an image of themselves to others by using speed and pausing, and variation of pitch, volume and intonation” (p.10). In addition, the concept of speaking is also stated like “combining sounds in a recognized and systematic way, according to language-specific principles to form meaningful utterances are also named speaking” (Complet & All, 2001, p. 18).

Components of the Speaking Skill

Pronunciation. It refers to “the way for students to produce the utterance of words clearly when they are speaking” (Kline, 1998, p. 69). In the same manner, “English pronunciation does not amount to mastery of a list of sounds or isolated words. Instead, it amounts to learning and practicing the specifically English way of making a speaker’s thoughts easy to follow” (Gilbert, 2008, p. 1). That is, pronunciation embodies a set of aspects, namely, stress, intonation, volume, and speech-pace that allow communication when two or more speakers interact.

Grammar. It is required for the learners to arrange sentences in an appropriate way when they exchange ideas both in written and oral forms. Williams (2008) states that “grammar is the formal study of the structure of a language and describes how words fit together in meaningful constructions” (p.2). In other words, it is to fulfill with correct patterns of a language to have a clear delivery of the message.

Vocabulary. It is said that, “Vocabulary can be defined as the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do” (Lessard, 2013, p. 2). Likewise, vocabulary deals with words we communicate in oral and written form. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words we recognize through reading and listening. Productive vocabulary is related to the words we use to transfer information through writing and speaking (Lehr, Osborn, & Hiebert, 2004). In brief, vocabulary is the lexicon that learners have to transmit and understand communicative intentions.

Fluency. It usually has to do with expressing oral language in a good pace without interruption. In teaching and learning process, if the teacher needs to check students’ fluency, “the teacher allows students to express freely without interruption. The aim is to help students speak fluently and easily. The teacher does not correct immediately whereas the idea being that too much correction interferes with the flow of conversation” (Pollard, 2008, p. 16). This means that there should be a reasonable way to provide learners feedback or correction when speaking not to break the flow of the speech. Equally, in order to communicate fluently, some students pause to avoid grammatical errors, make some false starts, reformulate sentences, construct phrases, and handle exchanges to keep in a reciprocal communication (CEFW, 2016).

Interaction. It plays an important role in communication because students explore various forms to exchange ideas. They analyze, create, dispatch, and interpret verbal and nonverbal messages. Thence, Brown (2007) declares that “interaction is a collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other” (p.212). In like manner, Rivas (as cited in Brown, 2007): “Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow student in discussion, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals” (p.213). Thus, interaction helps learners swap thoughts, feelings, emotions, and learn new information.

Motivation and Attitudes in the EFL Class

It is said that motivation is a balance between the value accomplished with an activity and one’s expectation of success in doing it. Richards and Schmidt (2010) define motivation as “a combination of the learner’s attitudes, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second language” (p. 314). Additionally, attitude is a settled

way to think about something. In line with this, Smith (cited in Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011) states that “attitude is a relatively organization of belief around an object or a situation, predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner” (p, 997).

Micro and Macro Skills of Speaking

Speaking is an activity that takes place in any community. Speakers use language in a variety of events such as at work, in the restaurant, in bus stations, in a shop, in the airport, at the office, on the street, and so on. The aforementioned situations have to do with a transactional language that is to get something done depending on the context of each activity; related to this, micro and macro skills (Brown, 2004) play an important role in oral communication because, on the one hand, “micro-skills of speaking refer to creating the smaller pieces of language such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations, and phrasal units” (p. 142). And macro-skills, on the other hand, help the “speaker’s focus on the larger elements; fluency, discourse, function, style, cohesion, nonverbal communication, and strategic options” (p.142). Additionally, Brown (2007) highlights micro and macro skills stating that “one implication is the importance of focusing on both the forms of language and the functions of the language” (p. 327).

Speaking as Transactional and Interactional Purposes

Talk as interaction. Richards (2008) states that “talk as interaction refers to what we normally mean by ‘conversation’ and describes interaction that serves a primarily social function. When people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in small talk, recount recent experiences, and so on” (p. 22). That means that with interaction individuals wish to be part of social situations and feel comfortable in that interaction with each other by means of exchanges that may be either casual or more formal, depending on the circumstances; Richards summarizes the main features of interaction as follows:

Table 1. Features and skills of talk as interaction according to Richards (2008)

Interaction features	Interaction skills
Social function	
Role relationship	Opening and closing conversation
Speaker’s identity	Choosing topics -Making small-talk
Formal of casual	Recounting personal incidents and Experiences
Use of conversational conventions	Turn-taking
Politeness	Using adjacency-pair
Use of generic word	Interrupting
Use of conversational register	Reacting to others.
Speaker-constructed	

Table 1 displays features and skills of talk as interaction that fulfill social situations to interchange knowledge, culture, thoughts, feelings, emotions bearing in mind that the context in the action is taken with a purpose of social communication.

Talk as transaction. The message is the most important aspect when a person talks in these kind of circumstances. Richards (2008) confirms this statement when he argues that “Talk as transaction refers to situations where the focus is on what is said or done. The message and making oneself understood clearly and accurately is the central focus, rather than the participants” (p.24). Also, Burns (as cited in Richards, 2015) distinguishes between two different types of talk as transaction:

The first type involves situations where the focus is on giving and receiving information and where the participants focus primarily on what it is said or achieved (e.g., asking someone for directions). Accuracy may not be a priority, as long as information is successfully communicated or understood. The second type focuses on obtaining goods or services, such as checking into a hotel or ordering food in a restaurant (p.3).

It is relevant to say that talk as transaction is easier to plan and more comfortable to the students. These kind of transactions have their particularities as described by Richards (2015):

Table 2. Features and skills of talk as transaction according to Richards (2015)

Transaction features	Transaction skills
	Explaining a need or intention
Primarily information focus	Describing something
Main focus is the message not the participants	Asking questioning
Participants employ communication strategies	Confirming information
Questions, repetitions, and comprehension checks frequently used.	Justifying an opinion
Negotiation and digression	Clarifying understanding
Linguistic accuracy is not always important	Making comparison, Agreeing and disagreeing

The prior table represents talk as a transaction whose main function is to transmit the message in order to obtain something, for instance go to the doctor, register in hotel, order a food in a restaurant etc. Also, when students are implementing this kind of communication, they use fixed sentences to have a clear intention to communicate the message. Moreover, when teachers teach speaking as transaction, they have to take into account that there is a rich source of group activities such as information-gap activities, role-play, simulation, group discussion, and guided dialogue (Richards, 2008). According to the author, it is important that teachers have knowledge about the “what” and “how” of this teaching process to be successful and practice real-world transactions. Table 3 represents the steps typically involved in this model:

Table 3. Model to develop transactional communication strategies (Richards, 2015)

Stages	Concept
Preparing	Reviewing vocabulary, real-word knowledge related to the content, and context of role play (e.g., returning a faulty item to the store)
Modeling and eliciting	Demonstrating the stages that are typically involve in the transaction eliciting suggestions for how each stage can be carried out, and teaching the functional language needed for each stage
Practicing and reviewing	Assigning student’s roles and practice role play and provide languages and other support.

The principles that orient the process of transactional communication presented in Table 3 start with a preparation stage in which students receive vocabulary, expressions, and grammar, using drawings or realia to learn content to proceed to the second section that is modeling the previous information, practicing communication drills, exchanging ideas, doing conversations, watching videos, among other activities. The last section is devoted to the practice and review of the learned strategy which includes presentation and feedback on the performance of the students.

Transactional Communication Strategy

When individuals interact with each other, breakdowns might happen, as a result, they use communication strategies to overcome this problem; Richards and Schmidt (2010) state that a “Communication strategy is a way used to express a meaning in a second or foreign language, by a learner who has a limited command of the language” (p. 98). In this sense, when learners try to speak, they may have to make up for a lack of knowledge of vocabulary and phrases, so they use transactional communication strategies to help them express better during the communication act. When language is used with a transactional focus the priority is to convey the message and make oneself understood; it is predictable, includes a lot of fixed sentences, functional expressions and communication strategies to make up for limitations presented in oral skill (Richards, 2015).

Assessing Speaking

Speaking is a complex skill demanding the simultaneous use of a different ability which often develops different components. One well known assessment tool is the READI Oral Proficiency Criteria (Finch & Sampson , 2004) adapted from IATEFL criteria and the Canadian Language Benchmarks; this rubric includes the following criteria:

Table 4. Speaking assessment rubric adapted from the READI (Finch & Sampson, 2004)

Aspect of speaking	READI Descriptors	Score	Earned score
Range (vocabulary, grammar)	The student's low range make communication difficult.	1	
	The student's range almost supports communication.	2	
	The student's range supports communication.	3	
	The student's range enhances communication.	4	
Comments			
Ease of speech (fluency)	The student's low fluency makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's ease of speech almost support communication.	2	
	The student's ease of speech support communication.	3	
	The student's ease of speech enhance communication.	4	
Comments			
Attitude (motivation)	The student's poor attitude makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's attitude almost supports communication.	2	
	The student's attitude supports communication.	3	
	The student's attitude enhances communication.	4	
Comments			
Delivery (pronunciation)	The student's poor delivery makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's delivery almost supports communication.	2	
	The student's delivery supports communication.	3	
	The student's delivery enhances communication.	4	
Comments			
Interaction (communication startegies)	The student's poor interaction makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's interaction supports communication.	3	
	The student's interaction enhances communication.	4	
Comments			
Transactional strategies (askin for repetition)	The student's poor use of transactional strategy in role-play makes communication difficult.	1	
	The student's fair use of the transactional strategy almost supports communication.	2	
	The student's good use of the transactional strateg supports communication.	3	
	The student's excellent use of the transactional strategy enhances communication.	4	

As displayed in Table 4, the READI scheme includes four main aspects related to the oral performance: vocabulary and grammar range, ease of speech, attitude, delivery, and interaction; each component is assessed on the basis of a scale from 1 to 4, whose descriptors indicate the level of achievement on the intended aspect. A last item was added to measure the students' use of the transactional strategy.

Methodology

Type of Study

This research project was developed under the model of qualitative research and has its bases in Action Research because it allows the teacher-researcher to identify their teaching context problems, analyze their own teaching practice, and produce changes in their language teaching and learning (Powell, E & Renner, 2003). It examines and understands the significance individuals or crowds assigned to a social problem (Creswell, 2009), that is to say, a qualitative study helps to understand the social world in which students are immersed and contribute to solve problems in their day-to-day in and out of school.

Participants

This study was carried out at a public school which is located in Sincelejo-Sucre, with a group of 35 pre-service teachers who were exposed to transactional communication strategies as the participants of this study; The group was in the first semester of the complementary cycle corresponding to grades 12 and 13 in the public school system; this course had 11 men and 24 women whose ages ranged between 17 to 20 years old; they came from Sincelejo city; these learners came from different social strata, specifically, strata two and three. This was very important for this study because students had difficulty in speaking skill when they were interacting each other and by means of this project, they had the opportunity to communicate in a second language and improved their competences to be open to the world. The basic English level was evidenced after a diagnostic test, this result was obtained after having taken the oral proficiency exam Cambridge KET in order to know what their English level was, that is targeted at basic level proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Data Collection and Instruments

In this research, different data gathering techniques were used to capture the participants' and some school members' views and perspectives about the EFL learning process, especially the speaking skill; Table 5 summarizes the techniques, respondents and instruments used in the diagnostic and implementation stages of the project:

Table 5. Data collection instruments and techniques in research project

Data collection technique	Respondents	Rational	Data collection instrument
Survey	Content area teachers	To collect data about the content area teachers view of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
	English teachers	To collect data about the English teacher view of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
	Pre-service teachers	To collect data about the students' insights of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
	Pre-service teachers	To collect data about teaching- learning process in class.	self-assessment format
Interview	School principal	To collect data about the principal view of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
	Coordinators	To collect data about the coordinators view of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Semi-structured questionnaire
Participant and non-participant observation	Researcher and an English teacher colleague	To collect data about the research's and an English teacher's insight of the current learning-teaching process and the language learners' needs	Journal and Observation form

Outcomes

The data analysis in the diagnostic stage of this project revealed a problem in the pre-service teachers' speaking skill. Taking into account this problematic issue, the researcher implemented six workshops based on TCS (Richards, 2008) that are listed in the following table:

Table 6. Workshops based on Transactional Communication Strategies

No.	Topic	Transactional Communication Strategies (Richards 2008)	Speaking strategies	Vocabulary	Phrases	Objectives
Workshop 1	Completing a passport	Asking for repetition	Role plays	Name, age, nationality, cellphone number, e-mail address, address	What's your name? How old are you? What is your nationality? What is your cellphone number? etc.	To ask and answer questions in order to obtain personal information.
Workshop 2	Getting to a place in Sincelejo city	Asking for more information	Guided dialogues	Go down the street. Cross the street. Turn left, turn right. Then, next, after that	Excuse me, how do I get to..., please? Excuse me, where is the...? Excuse me, can you tell me the way to...?	To give and follow directions in order to go from one place to another
Workshop 3	Identifying my famous person	Agreeing and disagreeing	Group discussions	Tall, short, fat, slim, young, old, ugly, intelligent, beautiful, handsome, polite.	What do you think about him/her? I agree, I think so, I don't agree, I don't think so, I'm not sure.	To describe people's appearance in their context
Workshop 4	Ordering food in a restaurant	Showing interest	Simulations	Chicken soup, fish soup, roast beef, roast chicken, rice, rice with chicken, salad, omelet, lamb stew, orange juice.	Can I help you? I'd like to have some breakfast. Would you like anything to drink? etc.	To order and express satisfaction with a meal in a restaurant.
Workshop 5	Buying food in a grocery shop	Getting time to think	Role plays	Can of coke, carton of eggs, carton of milk, a bar of butter, a kilo of beef, and a pound of rice so on so forth	I need a bottle of water. How many bottles do you need? How many eggs do you need? etc.	To ask and answer questions getting food in a grocery shop.
Workshop 6	Preparing a dish on a TV program	Asking for clarification	Sketches	Boil, chop, fry, grate, mix, pour, peel, slice, stir, spread, whisk, drain, add, flatten and roast as well as pictures related to them	Cook chicken, boil water, cut onion, peel carrots, wash tomatoes among others	To describe the steps for preparing a dish in a reality show environment

Each one of the workshops listed above followed the next sequence: In the first step a set of objectives was stated, in the second step, the setting stage, vocabulary and phrases related to the topic were presented; in the third step comprehensible input (vocabulary, grammatical structures, and transactional communication strategies) was exemplified and modeled; in the fourth step, the guided practice, role-plays, simulations, sketches, or guided dialogues were performed by using TCS. In the fifth step, independent practice, the main activity of the lesson was performed consisting of a speaking task in which the students were expected to use TCS. The last step was the assessment stage in which the pre-service teachers reflected on their own speaking process in each class by means of a self-assessment form; additionally, to measure the learners' speaking performance an adaptation of the READI Oral proficiency scheme (Finch & Sampson, 2004) was completed by the researcher to gauge the progress of every workshop.

After the completion of each workshop, the researcher submitted to analysis data according to Powell and Renner (2003) using six pre-established categories chosen to assess the students' performance: Vocabulary and grammar, fluency, attitude, pronunciation, interaction, and transactional strategy use that were subsequently classified in sub-categories. Table 7 shows the frequencies reported by each sub-category throughout the implementation of the six workshops:

Table 7 suggests that the objectives appointed in this research project were reached because the categories of analysis representing positive aspects surpassed the ones reporting negative issues implying significant progress in pre-service teachers' speaking skill as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Table 7. Categories and subcategories of analysis in research project implementation

Category	Subcategories	WKS 1	WKS 2	WKS 3	WKS 4	WKS 5	WKS 6	Frequency totals	%
Vocabulary and Grammar	Limited vocabulary	29	15	14	20	13	7	98	2.95%
	Little control of grammar	14	18	12	13	11	6	74	2.23%
	Good grammar and vocabulary range	54	64	64	60	73	78	393	11.84%
Fluency	Long delays to speak	35	43	29	24	14	10	155	4.67%
	Good speaking pace	48	44	61	66	76	80	375	11.30%
Attitude	Lack of confidence	16	17	13	12	8	7	73	2.20%
	Positive attitude toward communication	82	84	77	79	82	83	487	14.67%
Pronunciation	Poor intonation to express ideas	41	46	25	31	18	11	172	5.18%
	Effective intonation for communication	66	49	65	60	72	79	391	11.78%
Interaction	Limited interaction	11	4	8	14	10	8	55	1.65%
	Effective interaction	74	93	82	77	80	82	488	14.70%
Transactional strategy	Poor transaction communication	24	16	14	18	14	11	97	2.92%
	enhancement with TS	73	84	76	72	76	79	460	13.86%
Frequency totals		567	577	540	546	547	541	3.318	100%

Overcoming Limited Vocabulary and Little Control of Grammar

Limited vocabulary and little control of grammar were challenges students faced throughout the six workshop, but by mean of the use of transactional communication strategies, such as I know what you mean, great, that's interesting etc. They were able to use vocabulary ask for food, they progressively decreased at the end of the implementation stage; this means that the TCS helped the students to fulfill the use of correct patterns of the English language and to know how to transmit ideas in a clearer message (Williams, 2008), for example, in workshop 1 the subcategories *limited vocabulary* with 29 occurrences and *little control of grammar* with 14 went down to only 7 and 6 respectively in the sixth workshop; this suggests that, at the end, students were including more words and connected expressions to their speech, for instance, they said precise instructions to prepare their favorite dishes of the region and the others asked them about ingredients used in the preparation of the food implementing transactional communication strategies effectively like asking for clarification; in fact, the learners spoke with good order in sentences, so that they surpassed the difficulties. It is also extremely important to highlight the subcategory *good grammar and vocabulary range* in an average of 11.84% of the data as evidence of students' good performance during the workshops. As Richards and Renandya, (2002) state, a language speaker who has a good range of lexicon and who continually develops transactional strategies for learning new vocabulary, is a speaker who has more of possibilities to interact and exchange ideas in real language conditions. Accordingly, pupils were engaged in speaking activities and communication was enhanced with transactional strategies use.

Reducing Long Pauses for Better Fluency

Another important outcome in this project relates to the reduction of long pauses when speaking. First of all, the subcategory *long delays to speak* which represented those learners who took long pauses to utter words and expressions represented an improvement because learners' pauses were lessening in workshops 3, 4, 5 and 6; this finding evidenced that the learners ended up displaying few pauses in their speech, that is, communication kept on improving through the use of transactional communication strategies, according to Hughes (2002) who affirmed that, fluency is the ability learners have to speak in an understandable way, with good pace and appropriate strategies in order not to break down communication because listeners may lose their interest in the message. To support what is mentioned above, the subcategory *good*

speaking pace had a percentage of 11.30% in the overall findings which represents an effective use of a connected discourse in a fluent way which signified a positive impact on students' speech in this research.

Promoting Positive Attitudes towards Communication

It is important to say that the subcategory *positive attitude toward communication* had average scores over 80 incidences in workshops 1, 2, 5, and 6, which indicated that pre-service teachers' attitudes were positively influenced by the use of transactional communication strategies; testimonies and observations reported that the learners felt motivated in performing meaningful transactional communication activities from their real context ratifying what Richards and Schmidt (2010) state about motivation which is a combination of the attitudes, desires, and willingness that learners take to achieve an objective. As evidence, the data showed that the students encouraged their peers to fill a form to have a passport, they participated actively giving directions and descriptions of different people including among two or three adjectives to describe them.

Another evidence of the improvement in this attitudinal aspect is the *subcategory lack of confidence* that started with 16 frequencies in the first workshop and in the sixth one ended up with only seven occurrences.

Improving Pronunciation among Pre-Service Teachers

The findings of this study reported that there was an important impact on the pre-service teachers' pronunciation; the subcategory *poor intonation to express ideas* with 5.18% of the collected information proved that this pronunciation difficulty decreased little by little in each workshop; the data showed that the pre-service teachers' intonation when pronouncing some words and expressions led to mispronunciation in a number of cases throughout the proposal, however, with the execution of varied speaking tasks involving transactional strategies their pronunciation was clearer aligning with Hewing's (1995) theory that states that the point is to expose English learners to as many pronunciation activities as possible in order to improve this aspect.

In the implementation of this research project pupils were exposed to several oral tasks, for instance, completing a passport, getting a place in Sincelejo city, ordering food in a restaurant in which they had the opportunity to ask and answer each other's questions through

a good use of the transactional communication strategies; they acted in different settings conveying ideas with appropriate intonation and few pronunciation difficulties. To ratify this progress, the subcategory *effective intonation for communication* with 11.78% of data displayed that some learners uttered their ideas with good stress and pace, they also uttered long sentences and words well to comply with the activity's goals; so, the data showed that this subcategory had a steady progress during the implementation of the workshops.

Reaching an Effective Interaction Level in Speaking Tasks

Another positive impact of the use of transactional communication strategies in the EFL class corresponds to the improvement of the learners' interaction in the speaking tasks. In the implementation stage, the subcategory *effective interaction* with 14.70% got the highest frequencies among all categories; students spoke with more security having been able to express many words and expressions; this was observed when they interacted and exchanged information asking for repetition, saying instructions in a reality show, giving and asking directions to different places and so on; these findings refer to Brown's (2007) theory which states that interaction is a collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. In the same manner, the subcategory *limited interaction* with only 1.65% in the final workshops demonstrated the significant impact of the implemented strategies in this research project.

Enhancement of Communication with Transaction Strategies

The findings of this study proved notable that the subcategory *communication enhancement with transactional strategy* got an outstanding percentage of the frequencies with 13.86% of the data; this means that a great number of students displayed an effective use of transactional communication strategies such as *asking for repetition, showing interest, asking for more information, agreeing or disagreeing, asking for clarification* with which they were able to exchange information in varied scenarios; in fact, Richards (2015) claims that focus on transactional communication leads individuals to use communication strategies to make themselves understood and have a better interaction with each other in different scenes. With these strategies, the learners who participated in the study improved their communication skills and were able to give personal information to complete a form, they ordered different kinds of food and they described their favorite famous

person. Nevertheless, the subcategory *poor transaction* in 2.92% of the information dealt with those pre-service teachers who had some difficulties in communication and were confused to deliver the message in the target language. This negative aspect became in fair lessening in workshop 6 with only 11 of the occurrences which was significant at the end of the implementation stage.

To ratify the positive impact of transactional strategies on the pre-service teachers' speaking skill, the teacher's rubric results showed that the students' scores were consistent with the triangulation table, as shown in the following table:

Table 8. Average scores from adapted READI speaking assessment rubric

Assessment criteria	WKS	WKS	WKS	WKS	WKS	WKS
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vocabulary and grammar range	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.8	3.9
Fluency	3.5	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.8
Attitude	4.0	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.4
Pronunciation	3.6	3.0	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.8
Interaction	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.1
Transactional strategy	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.9	4.0

According to Table 8 the speaking assessment rubric reported that the speaking criteria concerning vocabulary and grammar range, fluency, attitude, pronunciation, interaction, and transactional strategy got averages over 3.8 in the sixth workshop; this information supported the finding that students integrated new vocabulary to their discourse and it was more contextualized grammatically while they were talking in the class events; this permitted them to be more secure to phrase thoughts and feelings in the oral communication act.

Conclusion

This research project was about to what extent transactional strategies can influence the speaking skill of pre-service teachers led to the conclusion that this research reached the proposed objectives.

To begin with, vocabulary and grammar enhancement with the use of transactional communication strategies allow students to recycle more words and improve their speech through the implementation of the transactional speaking range in different settings such as guided dialogues, and meaningful tasks that helped learners to become more confident to convey messages.

Also, the use of transactional communication strategies throughout speaking tasks in the classroom is a good way to better fluency because learners are exposed to the target language, using transactional communication to foster their use of the foreign language in real situations, which enables them to create a connected discourse, exchanging information to reduce long pauses and increase their communication flow at smooth paces.

Similarly, the attitude is essential when learners use the L2 because they need to be motivated to do the speaking task; that is, the use of transactional communication strategies contributes to the enhancement of positive attitudes, improving motivation, confidence, and security when EFL pupils interact in different activities such as role plays, discussions, and simulations that allow them to be immersed in meaningful activities.

Transactional communication strategies make a great contribution to students' pronunciation because if the learners are exposed to transactional speaking tasks, they alleviate their utterance mistakes on reason that this kind of activities are effective and lead to improve stress, intonation, even voice volume to communicate ideas so that pupils get the opportunity to interact with this transactional communication fostering their speaking pronunciation.

Transactional communication strategies are also essential to develop interaction due to the fact that students exchange information every day and with the transactional functions the language learners have clear speech. Consequently, a good interaction through transactional communication strategies builds up a safe learning environment for learners in which they are able to collaborate, exchange information in a transactional way, and communicate successfully with each other and promote speaking skills (Gillies, 2007). Therefore, transactional communication strategies support students' interactions since learners do activities in pairs or in groups in order to fulfill speaking tasks.

Transactional communication strategies reduce negative speaking aspects as limited vocabulary, little control of grammar, long delays to speak, lack of confidence, poor intonation to express ideas that are common when learners are exposed to oral communication; this type of strategies help learners swap information about their daily life making these weaknesses reduce.

Transactional communication strategies are useful in the pedagogical preparation of future teacher-researchers since they can apply this kind of strategy in order to improve speaking skill, specifically in the aspect of grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, attitude,

motivation, and interaction. Taking this into account this, teachers in public Normal schools in the region and in Colombia, are advised to incorporate transactional communication strategies in their teaching-learning process in order to comply with current trends in EFL, mainly concerning the suggested curriculum and national standards in order to prepare better elementary school teachers.

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