

Oral Communication Strategies' Presentation through Teachers' Modeling in EFL Classes

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Received: 30/09/2024

Accepted: 04/12/2024

Published: 31/01/2025

Abstract:

This article explores the views of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers regarding their use and demonstration of Oral Communication Strategies (OCS) and how these strategies impact learners' communicative abilities. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study collected data through a questionnaire administered to a purposive sample of 15 EFL teachers from various universities. The findings reveal that many teachers tend to use implicit modeling of OCS, which may not sufficiently develop learners' communicative competence. To address this, the study recommends a more explicit and interactive application of Oral Communication Strategy Instruction (OCSI) in classroom teaching. This method is designed to boost students' fluency and confidence in English communication. Additionally, the study underscores the need for continuous teacher training to improve the effectiveness of OCS modelling, ensuring better support for students in mastering communicative skills.

Keywords: *Teacher's Modeling; Oral Communication Strategies; English as a Foreign Language (EFL); Speaking Fluency; Communication Skills Development, Strategic competence.*

Introduction

Oral communication is a fundamental skill that EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers aim to develop in students to prepare them for effective interaction in educational and professional settings. Despite its importance, EFL learners often face unique challenges, including limited opportunities to practice English in daily life and high levels of language

anxiety. This study explores how teacher modeling of oral communication strategies (OCS) can address these challenges by providing students with a practical example of effective communication techniques.

The research question guiding this study is: *How does teacher modeling of oral communication strategies impact students' fluency, confidence, and participation in EFL settings?* The study's objectives are twofold: first, to examine the specific strategies teachers use to model effective communication, such as non-verbal cues, tone variation, and feedback; second, to assess the impact of these strategies on students' communicative competence and confidence.

Presenting OCS through teacher modeling is especially impactful because it combines explicit demonstration with immersive learning, allowing students to observe and replicate techniques in real-time communicative scenarios. This approach helps reduce language anxiety, fosters greater self-confidence, and enables students to overcome linguistic barriers. Van Der Wees (2012) notes that "educational modeling helps students learn through observation and repetition," which is particularly beneficial in the EFL context.

Thus, teacher modeling plays a vital role in enhancing interactive abilities, promoting active participation, and making language learning more inclusive and effective. By examining the influence of teacher modeling on students' use of OCS, this study aims to contribute practical insights to improve oral communication skills instruction in EFL classrooms.

1. Oral Communication Strategies in Foreign Language Teaching

1.1. Definition of Oral Communication Strategies

Oral communication strategies are a set of tools and methods individuals use to overcome difficulties encountered during speaking, whether linguistic or social, with the aim of conveying meaning clearly. These strategies include using appropriate linguistic expressions, organizing thoughts before speaking, employing body language to reinforce meaning, and searching for alternative words when vocabulary is lacking. These strategies play a crucial role in enhancing students' language skills, enabling them to handle various communicative situations with confidence and effectiveness.

Researches had shown that training students in these strategies improves their fluency and reduces anxiety related to speaking in front of others, ultimately enhancing their overall language performance. For example, Brown (2007) provides a comprehensive definition of oral communication strategies as "the means that speakers use to overcome communication obstacles and ensure mutual understanding (p.235).

1.2. Types of Oral Communication Strategies

Oral communication strategies are essential in EFL classrooms, aiding students in overcoming linguistic challenges and improving fluency. Key strategies include:

- **Idea Organization:** Helps students structure their thoughts before speaking, using tools like notes or mind maps to facilitate clear communication (Norton, 2014).
- **Lexical Substitution:** Allows students to replace unknown words with simpler alternatives or descriptions, keeping conversations fluid (Hirst, 2016).
- **Non-verbal Cues:** Uses gestures and facial expressions to enhance communication, especially when words fall short (Anderson, 2011).
- **Reformulation:** Involves rephrasing complex ideas for clarity and better understanding (Swan, 2015).
- **Repetition and Clarification:** Encourages students to repeat or seek clarification to avoid misunderstandings (Lee, 2017).

These strategies enhance students' confidence, helping them speak more fluently and manage communication anxiety. By developing these skills, students become better equipped to handle real-life conversational challenges, as highlighted by Brown (2007).

2. The Role of Modeling in Language Teaching

. Modeling, where teachers provide live demonstrations of effective communication strategies, is a fundamental teaching tool in EFL. Through this method, students gain practical insight into the application of OCS, observing and replicating the teacher's methods. Modeling also creates a safe environment where students can observe strategy use in real time, reducing

speaking-related anxiety and allowing for indirect error correction (Lee, 2014; Erickson, 2012).

Effective modeling fosters an interactive classroom atmosphere and promotes linguistic awareness, as teachers demonstrate not only language skills but also how to navigate various communicative situations. According to Blackwell (2016), modeling serves as a bridge, helping students develop their own strategies by observing how teachers manage conversation, negotiate meaning, and handle challenges such as hesitation or vocabulary gaps.

3. Teacher's Modeling of Oral Communication Strategies

Teacher modeling of oral communication strategies is a primary approach EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers use to improve students' communication skills. By demonstrating strategies like thought organization, non-verbal cues, and adapting to communicative contexts, teachers provide practical examples students can emulate. Cook (2013) highlights that "teacher modeling not only improves students' speaking ability but also teaches strategies for future interactions."

Key strategies include **conversation management**, where teachers show students how to start, sustain, and close conversations smoothly, helping build confidence and flow in dialogues (Larson, 2016). Teachers also model **negotiation and clarification techniques**, which assist students in handling misunderstandings effectively (Blackman, 2017). Modeling **hesitation-overcoming techniques** teaches students to continue speaking despite pauses, promoting fluency (Harris, 2015). Additionally, **self-correction techniques** help students learn how to correct errors discreetly, fostering autonomy in communication (Carter, 2014). Through these demonstrations, teachers equip students with essential tools for managing real-world communication challenges with greater independence and confidence, equipping them for success in diverse linguistic environments.

4. An Analysis of Teachers' Perspectives on Modeling Oral Communication Strategies in EFL Classrooms: A Field Study

In this practical section, a field study was conducted targeting a group of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working at the university level

in various educational institutions. The study aims to analyze their opinions and assessments regarding oral communication strategies and the extent to which they use modeling in the classroom. The teachers were selected based on their extensive teaching experience and the diversity of subjects they teach, providing rich data for analyzing the role of teacher modeling in enhancing students' oral communication skills. The findings from this study contribute to offering practical recommendations for improving teaching strategies and boosting students' communicative competence.

4.1. Study Sample :

The study sample consisted of 15 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working in various educational institutions at the university level. Participants were aged between 36 and 45 years, with a higher representation of females compared to males. Most of them hold advanced academic degrees, such as PhDs or Master's, lending credibility to their opinions. Their teaching experience exceeds 10 years, making them well-qualified to provide accurate assessments of the challenges students face in oral communication and the use of modeling strategies. The sample included teachers who teach subjects such as oral expression, written expression, and other related fields, offering a diverse range of perspectives and teaching experiences.

The questionnaire was carefully structured into several sections to ensure comprehensive data collection. The first section focused on gathering demographic information, such as the participants' age, gender, academic qualifications, and teaching experience. The second section delved into the teachers' perspectives on the oral communication strategies they use in their classrooms, particularly how they model these strategies for students. The third section explored the challenges teachers face when implementing these strategies, such as student hesitation, anxiety, or lack of vocabulary. Finally, the last section sought to gather suggestions from the teachers on how to improve the application of oral communication strategies in EFL teaching. This detailed breakdown allowed for a thorough analysis of the teachers' practices and provided valuable insights for the study.

4.2. Survey Question Analysis

This section aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the survey results conducted with a group of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

teachers. By exploring the teachers' responses regarding oral communication strategies and their application in classrooms, we can gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by both students and teachers. Analyzing these questions will provide valuable insights into improving the modeling of oral communication strategies and enhancing teaching effectiveness in the language learning environment.

Section 01: Background information

Table 01: First Section Findings Summary

Category	Details	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female.	77.8%
	Male	22.2%
Age	Majority: 36-45 years, "	90.0%
	Minority: 46-55 years	10.0%
Qualification	Master's or Magister,	55.6%
	PhD	44.4%
Teaching Experience	10-20 years	77.8%
	Over 20 years	22.2%
Subjects Taught	Written Expression	44.4%
	Grammar	22.2%
	Oral Expression	22.2%
	ESP	11.1%
	Sociolinguistics	10%
	Civilisation	10%
Oral Expression Experience	2-3 years	40%
	4-6 years	40%
	Intermittent	20%

The table provides a concise overview of the background information gathered from the questionnaire, highlighting key trends among the participants:

1. **Age:** The overwhelming majority of respondents are between 36-45 years old, with a small portion in the 46-55 age range. This suggests that most teachers are in their mid-career stage, likely having gained significant teaching experience and pedagogical skills.
2. **Gender:** The gender distribution is predominantly female (77.8%), which could be reflective of trends in the EFL teaching profession, where female educators often outnumber males. This could have implications for classroom dynamics and teaching styles.
3. **Qualification:** There is a fairly balanced split between teachers holding a Master's or Magister degree (55.6%) and those with a PhD

(44.4%). This indicates that the participants are highly qualified, potentially contributing to more informed and strategic teaching methods.

4. **Teaching Experience:** The majority (77.8%) of respondents have between 10-20 years of teaching experience, with a smaller percentage having over 20 years of experience. This suggests a seasoned group of educators who are likely adapted at using a variety of teaching strategies, including modeling in oral communication.

5. **Subjects Taught:** A diverse range of subjects is taught, with Written Expression being the most common (44.4%), followed by Grammar, Oral Expression, and ESP. The inclusion of subjects like Sociolinguistics and Civilisation indicates a broad teaching scope, which may influence the way oral communication strategies are modeled across different subjects.

6. **Oral Expression Experience:** The table shows that 40% of teachers have 2-3 years of experience, while another 40% have 4-6 years, indicating a fairly even distribution of experience levels. A smaller group, 20%, has intermittent teaching experience, suggesting some variation in how consistently they’ve taught oral expression. Teachers with more years of experience are likely more proficient in modeling effective oral communication strategies, while those with intermittent experience may apply these strategies less consistently.

Section 02: EFL Learners’ Speaking

Table 02: Second Section Findings Summary

Category	Details	Percentage (%)
Learners Speaking Level	Average.	77.8%
	Weak.	22.2%
Main Speaking Difficulties, "Inhibition, stress, lack of vocabulary, shyness, linguistic incompetence, language interference, fear of criticism."		
Learners Compensating Weaknesses	no	44.4%
	Not sure	33.3%
	yes	22.2%
Teachers Helping Students, "100% of teachers help: strategies include peer work, group work, motivational strategies, using native language, and setting weekly tests"		

The data highlights significant challenges that learners face in improving their speaking skills in EFL classes. Most learners are evaluated as having an "average" level in speaking, with a smaller proportion considered "weak." The main difficulties identified include psychological

barriers (shyness, fear of criticism), linguistic issues (lack of vocabulary, language interference), and emotional factors (inhibition and stress).

While 44.4% of teachers believe that students are not actively compensating for their weaknesses, a small portion (22.2%) see some efforts. This indicates that many learners rely heavily on external support, such as their teachers, rather than independently overcoming their difficulties.

Teachers, on the other hand, are highly proactive, with 100% indicating they help students overcome these issues. The strategies employed are diverse, ranging from collaborative work and motivational methods to practical tasks and confidence-building exercises. This suggests that teachers are committed to fostering a supportive environment to enhance oral communication, although the effectiveness of these methods varies depending on learner engagement.

The findings suggest that while teachers are providing support, there is a gap in learners' self-initiative to improve their speaking skills, pointing to the need for further encouragement of independent learning and practice.

According to a study by Brown (2007), training students in oral communication strategies increases their fluency in speaking and reduces the anxiety they feel when speaking in front of others, ultimately enhancing their overall language performance. Teachers play a crucial role in supporting the development of students' oral communication skills by providing educational models that help them apply communication strategies in real communicative situations (Ahmed, 2015, p. 84). Additionally, Najjar (2013) points out that over-reliance on external support from teachers may hinder the development of students' autonomy in using the language effectively.

Section 03: Oral Communication Strategies and Teachers Modeling in Class

Table 03: Second Section Findings Summary

Category	Teachers' Responses
Definition of OCS	Techniques and ways to sustain communication and avoid breakdowns.
OCS Development	-66.7% said both communicative and strategic competence develop.
	44.4% very important

Importance of OCS in EFL context	55.6% important
Students Use of OCS	-88.9% said students sometimes use OCS; Mostly unconsciously.
OCS Awareness	-44.4% stated students are not aware
	-55.6% stated teachers are unsure.
Teacher Role in Modeling OCS	Teachers act as guides and facilitators, showing students how to use strategies effectively."

The data reveals that teachers have a solid understanding of **Oral Communication Strategies (OCS)**, defining them as techniques to sustain communication and avoid breakdowns. However, there is a notable division in how these strategies are perceived to develop learners’ skills. While 66.7% of respondents believe OCS promote both **communicative** and **strategic competence**, a smaller portion focuses solely on communicative competence.

Interestingly, teachers acknowledge the high importance of OCS in EFL classes, with 44.4% considering them "very important" and 55.6% "important." Despite this, it appears that students **only sometimes use OCS**, and when they do, it is largely **unconscious**. This suggests a gap in active strategy use and awareness, as 44.4% of students are not aware of the significance of OCS, and many teachers remain unsure about their awareness.

Teachers view their role as **guides and facilitators**, helping students navigate and apply these strategies effectively. However, there is still room for improvement in consciously integrating OCS into the learning process, making students more aware of their importance and encouraging their active use.

Overall, while the value of OCS is acknowledged, further efforts are needed to bridge the gap between students' passive use and their conscious, strategic application of these techniques.

According to Swan (2015), the conscious application of oral communication strategies significantly improves learners' ability to sustain communication and avoid breakdowns Likewise, Carter (2014) emphasizes that while teachers provide valuable guidance, students must be encouraged to become more aware of these strategies and apply them actively to enhance their communicative competence. Erickson (2012) also points out that fostering an environment where students consciously use communication

strategies can lead to greater self-reliance and improved overall language performance.

4.3. Study's Findings

The field study conducted with a group of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers revealed that students' speaking skills are generally evaluated as being at an intermediate level. This suggests a need for more effective teaching practices to enhance students' speaking abilities. Additionally, the teachers indicated that the main challenges students face in oral communication include hesitation, a lack of vocabulary, anxiety, and the influence of language interference. These challenges hinder students' ability to engage confidently and fluently in conversations.

Moreover, the findings showed that some teachers model oral communication strategies, but often implicitly, making it difficult for some students to fully grasp and effectively apply these strategies. While implicit modeling may be beneficial in certain cases, many students require explicit and clear instruction on communication strategies to apply them independently. This highlights the importance of providing more structured and direct training on oral communication strategies in classrooms.

The study also revealed that the teachers' primary role in modeling oral communication strategies is that of a guide and facilitator. Teachers believe their role is to provide necessary guidance and direct students on how to use these strategies in various communicative contexts. This approach helps build students' confidence and enables them to overcome the difficulties they encounter while speaking.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role of oral communication strategies (OCS) in improving the effectiveness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, particularly through the intentional modeling efforts of teachers. It highlights the significant impact of teacher modeling on the development of oral communication skills among EFL learners. Findings indicate that teacher modeling of Oral Communication Strategies (OCS) not only helps students overcome common challenges such as speaking anxiety and limited vocabulary, but also serves as a practical guide that students can emulate to improve fluency and confidence. In EFL contexts,

where students often lack opportunities to use English outside the classroom, modeling becomes a powerful tool. However, a critical insight from this study is that students benefit most when modeling is explicit, structured, and paired with reflective practices. When teachers demonstrate strategies clearly and allow students to assess their use, students become more aware of OCS and are better able to apply them independently.

This approach encourages a shift from passive observation to active, conscious engagement with communication strategies, fostering a supportive environment where students feel comfortable experimenting and self-correcting. Teachers are therefore recommended to integrate reflective exercises, such as peer evaluation and self-assessment, alongside modeling to increase students' awareness and control over their communicative skills. Additionally, gradually transferring responsibility for strategy application to students can promote learner autonomy, allowing them to develop strategic competence alongside fluency.

The implications of this study suggest a balanced approach to EFL teaching, where teacher guidance and student independence are harmonized to create a more dynamic, interactive classroom environment. Moving forward, educators should consider incorporating consistent assessments of students' strategic competence to identify areas for improvement, enhancing both immediate classroom engagement and long-term language proficiency. By doing so, EFL students are likely to emerge as more confident, competent speakers, well-equipped to navigate complex communicative situations in English, both in and beyond the classroom.

Recommendations :The following recommendations offer actionable steps to enhance the effectiveness of Oral Communication Strategy (OCS) instruction in EFL classrooms.

- Adopt explicit and direct teaching of oral communication strategies to enhance students' understanding of how to use them in various communicative situations.
- Provide continuous training programs for teachers to improve their skills in modeling communication strategies more effectively.
- Encourage students to apply compensatory strategies, such as rephrasing and using non-verbal cues when facing vocabulary gaps.

- Create a supportive communicative environment to reduce students' anxiety and boost their confidence in speaking English.
- Utilize a variety of teaching techniques to make the learning process more interactive and diverse, catering to different student proficiency levels.
- Conduct regular assessments of student performance to identify individual challenges and tailor teaching strategies accordingly to enhance their communication skills.

Implementing these recommendations will help build student confidence, foster independence, and improve overall communicative competence in EFL classrooms.

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