Teaching Conversational Strategies Through Video Clips

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Abstract

This study explores the effects of teaching conversational strategies through video clips on learners' speaking performance. It was designed as an experimental study conducted with two groups of English majors. All participants received six weeks of instruction on four conversational strategies. The control group received direct instruction from the teachers' handout while the experimental group viewed six video clips and participated in observation tasks. Data was collected via pre- and post-tests on speaking performance and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that after the treatment with video clips, (a) the frequency of the use of these strategies increased, (b) the learners' speaking performance was enhanced, (c) there was a low correlation between the frequency of strategy use and the learners' speaking performance, and (d) the learners expressed a positive attitude towards the treatment.

After years of learning English, many students in Asia cannot communicate with confidence or success to meet the demand to use English for their careers (Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009; Kawale, 2011; Xiao & Petraki, 2007). This is also a common problem for Vietnamese learners, even university graduates (Phương Nguyễn, 2006). Possible reasons for learners' inefficiency in communication are low levels of language proficiency, lack of vocabulary to express ideas, shyness or lack of confidence, lack of an environment for practicing and using English, or simply lack of some necessary strategies to maintain a conversation (Thanh Ha, 2008).

Although some dynamic and proactive learners can improve their communicative abilities in their own way (finding chances to talk to English speakers or watching English films or TV programs), finding effective ways to prepare students for spontaneous communication is one of the biggest challenges for all current language teaching methodologies (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1994). Hence instruction in class is important to provide students with conversational strategies to help them avoid or overcome communication breakdowns. Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994) stated that conversational strategies are particularly helpful for language learners who frequently face difficulties in conversations, because these strategies provide them with a sense of security in the language.

Depending on the teaching context, conversational strategies can be taught to students through various ways, for instance, through picture dictation tasks (Kebir, 1994), pair-taping (Washburn & Christianson, 1995), or telephone conversation role-plays (Ting & Lau, 2008). In the current study, video clips were applied in teaching conversational strategies, as Hill (1989) claimed that carefully handled videos could provide a good base for speaking tasks. For EFL / ESL learners in Asia, the teaching of conversational strategies through video clips may also familiarize them with how conversational strategies are used in native English speakers' cultures.

Literature Review

Conversational Strategies

According to Riggensbach (1998), conversational strategies are certain conscious ways to help maintain communication (as cited in Walter, 2008). Dörnyei & Thurrell (1994) took these strategies to mean "an invaluable means of dealing with communication 'trouble spots', such as not knowing a particular word, or misunderstanding the other speaker" (p. 44). Finally, Kehe and Kehe (2004) proposed that conversational strategies are helpful methods for speakers and listeners who wish to continue a natural flow of conversation.

Conversational strategies are also viewed as a sub-division of communication strategies; sometimes the two terms *conversational strategies* and *communication strategies* are believed to be interchangeable. The term *conversational strategies* indicates those strategies which help speakers to maintain a conversation and to achieve their communicative goal.

Types of Conversational Strategies

Conversational strategies could be divided into nine types in order of significance: message adjustment or avoidance, paraphrase, approximation, appeal for help, asking for repetition, asking for clarification, interpretive summary, checking (for comprehension and confirmation), and use of fillers/hesitation devices (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1994).

Impact of Conversational Strategies on Communication

Conversation is a natural part of life in which people exchange information and create and maintain social relationships. However, not many English learners can make sense of conversational rules or patterns; hence, they face trouble in keeping their conversations going (Walter, 2008). Using conversational strategies has been suggested as one effective way to overcome problems in maintaining conversations. Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994) proposed that with these strategies, learners are well equipped to handle instances of naturally arising conversations. Walter (2008) also claimed that conversational strategies help raise learners' awareness of both form and function of the language. In short, conversational strategies are worth attention because they can facilitate interaction and fluency.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Video Clips in ESL / EFL Classes

Teaching English using video clips can be beneficial for students. Firstly, "video can give students realistic models to imitate for role-play [and] can increase awareness of other cultures by teaching appropriateness and suitability" (Arthur, 1999, as cited in Çakir, 2006, p. 68). Moreover, it is stated that only 7% of information is sent through words; the remaining 93% of communication is non-verbal (Mehrabian, 1972). Swan (1996-1997) proposed videos display a range of verbal and non-verbal behaviors that may make the material more meaningful to learners. Likewise, Gower, Phillips, and Walters (2005) stated additional information, provided by facial expressions, gestures, and physical backgrounds, makes the material easy to understand. In addition, when watching videos, learners can become more inquisitive and

intellectually stimulated (Denning, 1992). Videos are also useful for group work, for tasks from which learners can apply appropriately what they have learned with higher cognition skills (Denning, 1992). EFL learners can enrich their knowledge of culture when viewing authentic communication among native speakers (Rammal, 2006). Generally, video clips are a useful medium to help expose learners to the target language, from which many aspects of the language, including conversational strategies, could be acquired efficiently.

Apart from the benefits, by using video clips in ESL / EFL classes, teachers may face some difficulties. According to Çakir (2006), the main disadvantages are cost, inconvenience, maintenance, and in some cases, fear of technology. Moreover, the video sound and images, or quality of the copies, may not be ideal. Teachers should be especially well trained in using and exploiting videos and video clips, otherwise, their usage may become purposeless for students.

The Study

This study was conducted in an in-service center in the Mekong Delta. At in-service centers, learners who work attend university courses. The courses, for a variety of majors, can be on weekdays, weekends, or at night.

The learner participants are English majors, but most of them usually had difficulty in maintaining conversations although they had been provided with vocabulary and some basic structures. The problem was presumably in the way they negotiated the meanings in conversations. Thus, the researchers wanted to discover if and how this problem could be reduced or avoided when conversational strategies were taught to these students.

The conversational strategies in this study focus on checking for comprehension, confirming, asking for clarification, and using fillers / hesitation devices for two reasons. First, these strategies are believed to help learners negotiate the meanings in conversations and avoid communication breakdown. Second, the choice of these strategies was also decided by the choice of the clips and the content of the course textbook chapters so that the strategies could be taught and practiced effectively.

The research aimed to examine the effects of teaching conversational strategies through video clips on learners' speaking performance and to obtain insights into learners' attitudes towards the treatment.

The study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. Does teaching conversational strategies through video clips increase the frequency of the use of these strategies by the learners?
2. Does teaching conversational strategies through video clips enhance the learners' speaking performance?
3. Is there any correlation between the frequency of the learners' use of conversational strategies and their speaking performance after the study?
4. What are the learners' attitudes towards learning conversational strategies through video clips?

From these questions, it was hypothesized that teaching conversational strategies through video clips could increase the frequency of the learners' use of these strategies and enhance their speaking performance; moreover, there could be a connection between the learners' use of conversational strategies and their speaking performance; and finally, the learners' attitudes towards learning conversational strategies through video clips would be positive.

Methodology

Research Design

This experimental research was implemented with a two-group design. The two groups attended the same listening / speaking course for first-year students, which included a six-week supplementary course on four types of conversational strategies (checking for comprehension, confirming, asking for clarification, and using fillers / hesitation devices). The course classes and the treatment were primarily conducted in English; Vietnamese translations or explanations were used only when learners were confused. The control group received handouts and direct instruction on the strategies while the experimental group was taught with six video clips and video clip-based tasks. After the strategies were taught, both groups practiced the strategies with some pair and group activities such as discussion and role-plays.

Participants

Teachers. Four teachers, three Vietnamese and one American, were involved in the research. One of the researchers was the teacher of the experimental group. Another Vietnamese teacher who had been teaching English for over five years and was taking a master's course in English Methodology taught the control group and also rated tests with the researcher. The third Vietnamese teacher assisted in transcribing the recordings of the students' performance to measure the frequency of strategies used, as well as to check the learners' scores in case they were not compatible. The American teacher, a professor who teaches English using films and video clips, helped evaluate the video clips' content and the conversational strategies used in the clips and checked the transcripts of some clips.

Students. Sixty-four first-year English majors in two English language listening / speaking classes held in the evening at an in-service centre in the Mekong Delta participated in this study. The participants are from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and range in age from 18 to 32 years old. They were randomly divided into an experimental group and a control group whose general language ability was believed to be similar, based on their admission requirements. The participants were considered to be at the beginner level. Six of 32 participants in the experimental group, two with the highest, two with the average and two with the lowest scores, selected on the basis of their achievement in their speaking performance post-test, were individually interviewed on their attitudes towards conversational strategy instruction through video clips.

Research Instruments

Two speaking tests (a pre-test and a post-test) and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the study. The pre-test was given to the participants in both groups at the beginning of the study to measure the frequency of conversational strategy use and also to confirm both groups were at similar levels. All participants discussed the assigned topic in pairs with seven discussion questions (see Appendix A) for approximately five minutes. The post-test, which was given after the six-week intervention program, aimed at examining the change in the learners' speaking performance within and between the two conditions. This test had the same content as the pre-test, which was adapted from the textbook. That is, each pair had seven questions to discuss the similarities and differences of cities and towns.

A comparison was then made of the results of the pre- and post-tests of the same group to see whether there were any significant improvements in speaking performance and whether the frequency of use of these strategies by the two groups increased after the supplementary course. The learners' pre- and post-tests were recorded, transcribed, and then graded on the

same marking scale, comprising five components: range, accuracy, fluency, coherence, and interaction. All five components of the marking scale were used to grade speaking performance; the fifth component – interaction – was directly related to strategy use.

The semi-structured interviews, conducted in Vietnamese, served as a source of qualitative data to gain an insightful understanding of learners' attitudes towards conversational strategy instruction and the use of video clips in conversational strategy instruction. Of the eight interview questions, four focused on what learners thought of the conversational strategy instruction in the listening / speaking course and the other four aimed to discover learners' attitudes towards the use of video clips in the instruction of the strategies (see Appendix B).

Piloting

The pre-test and interview questions were piloted on two randomly chosen learners of English at a similar level with the participants at the school where the study was conducted to see if any modifications should be made. The interview questions were piloted on one learner in the research context. There were no significant changes after the piloting of the test and the interview questions.

Materials

The textbook used in the curriculum for the two groups was *Interactions Access Listening / Speaking*, Silver Edition, by Thrush, Baldwin, and Blass (2007). The students studied the first five chapters in this book. Six three- to five-minute video clips were carefully selected for the intervention program with the experimental group. The conversations in these clips were carried out by native speakers of English and did not contain subtitles. Five of the clips were compatible with the five chapters of the aforementioned textbook and the sixth clip served as a review for all of the strategies used in the supplementary course. The vocabulary and structures used in the video clips were at the level of the students in the experimental group.

Although the two groups followed the same textbook, the lesson plans for the supplementary course were designed differently for each group to serve the objectives of the study. The participants in the control group were provided with a handout of four conversational strategies (see Appendix C). For every chapter (one to five), they practiced one strategy when discussing any issue related to the topic of the chapter with their partners. In each subsequent chapter, they practiced a new strategy and simultaneously reviewed the previous one(s).

For the experimental group, each lesson plan began with a video clip with a topic relevant to that of the corresponding chapter in the textbook. Video-based observation tasks that raised learners' awareness on which strategies were used, and why and how they were used then followed (e.g., students watched the clip and then checked off items in a list of expressions as they were heard, found examples of the speaker confirming his / her understanding, or found examples of the speaker checking the listener's comprehension). From every video clip, there were one or more strategies that could be utilized for maintaining communication; therefore, the learners might explore one or more strategies from one clip and review these strategies from another clip. The strategies explored from the clips were then explained by the instructor and summarized on the handout provided to the learners. Only the learners in the experimental group had access to the transcripts of the videos.

Data Analysis Procedures

First, the learners' speaking pre- and post-tests were recorded and transcribed to measure the frequency of conversational strategy use by the learners. The formula used in Lam's (2004)

study and in Kongsom's (2009) study was adopted to calculate the frequency counts.

$$F = \frac{T}{W} \times 100$$

F (frequency per 100 words)

T (total raw frequency of strategy use)

W (total number of words)

Second, the results of the pre- and post-tests, graded by two raters, were used to examine the learners' speaking performance before and after the intervention program. To assess the inter-rater agreement on each test, a correlation test was run on the mean of the scores given by the two raters. The average scores on the pre- and post-tests were then analyzed by a descriptive test and a paired- samples T test with the SPSS program to measure whether there were any significant changes in the two groups after the intervention. Third, a correlation test with SPSS support was conducted to check for the interaction between the frequency of strategies use and learners' speaking performance in the post-test.

The interviews with the six learners were transcribed and translated into English. The English version was then organized into two categories: similarities and differences among the answers to each question. The categorized data were finally interpreted to gain a more insightful perception on the learners' attitudes.

Analysis and Findings

Frequency of Conversational Strategy Use

Through the researchers' observation during the course, some learners' factors presumably violated the results of the tests, including infrequent class attendance, lack of basic vocabulary or structures, and uncooperative attitudes when taking tests. The researchers set the requirement of at least 100 words per conversation by the learners on the pre-test and post-test for the reliability and convenience of the study. Since some of the students' conversations did not meet this requirement and some recordings were of poor quality, eventually the frequency was counted for 20 recorded conversations (ten pairs per group) for both the pre-test and post-test.

Table 1

Pre- and Post-Intervention Frequency of Conversational Strategy Use: Control Group

Conversational Strategies	<i>T / W</i>		<i>T / W x 100 = F</i>		Pre-Post Gains
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	
Checking for comprehension	1 / 2286	3 / 3161	0.04	0.09	+ 0.05
Confirming	1 / 2286	15 / 3161	0.04	0.47	+ 0.43
Asking for clarification	0 / 2286	3 / 3161	0.00	0.09	+ 0.09
Using fillers / hesitation devices	26 / 2286	35 / 3161	1.14	1.11	- 0.03

Note. *T* = total raw frequency of strategies use; *W* = total number of words; *F* = frequency of strategies use per 100 words.

As shown in Table 1, the use of three conversational strategies (checking for comprehension, confirming, and asking for clarification) increased. There were minimal changes in the

frequencies of strategy use for checking for comprehension (+0.05) and asking for clarification (+0.09), and rather significant changes in the frequency of strategy use for confirming (+0.43). The increased numbers of the three mentioned strategies indicated that the intervention in the control group led to positive changes in the use of strategies by the participants; however, the changes were slight.

In contrast, the frequency of using fillers / hesitation devices decreased in the post-test (-0.03). Moreover, the transcribed recordings showed that in both the pre-test and the post-test, the participants usually used *uh* or *um* whenever they hesitated. The decreased numbers showed that the learners hesitated in communication less than before the intervention. In other words, some of the participants paid attention to the appropriate use of filler devices in the post-test. One possible explanation for the learners' frequent use of *uh* or *um* whenever they hesitated was that teaching conversational strategies by giving the handout and explanations on the strategies could not raise learners' awareness much on how to use the strategies. As a result, just some learners could use the strategies appropriately when communicating with their partners.

Table 2

Pre- and Post-Intervention Frequency of Conversational Strategy Use: Experimental Group

Conversational Strategies	<i>T / W</i>		<i>T / W x 100 = F</i>		Pre-Post Gains
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	
Checking for comprehension	0 / 1627	12 / 2756	0.00	0.44	+ 0.44
Confirming	2 / 1627	21 / 2756	0.12	0.76	+ 0.64
Asking for clarification	1 / 1627	10 / 2756	0.06	0.36	+ 0.30
Using fillers / hesitation devices	28 / 1627	46 / 2756	1.72	1.67	- 0.05

Note. *T* = total raw frequency of strategies use; *W* = total number of words; *F* = frequency of strategies use per 100 words.

Table 2 shows that the use of three conversational strategies (checking for comprehension, confirming, and asking for clarification) increased in the experimental group. The changes in the frequencies of strategy use were +0.44 for checking for comprehension, +0.64 for confirming, and +0.30 for asking for clarification. The increased numbers meant more participants were able to use these three conversational strategies after the intervention. As with the control group, the use of fillers / hesitation devices decreased in the post-test for the experimental group (-0.05). However, the variety of devices used by the participants showed that the intervention program with video clips raised learners' awareness on the more appropriate use of various fillers / hesitation devices.

Speaking Performance

Descriptive statistics measured the mean scores of the two groups' speaking performance and paired-samples T tests compared the participants' speaking performance.

Analysis of the data shows that the experimental and control groups had similar speaking performance scores before the intervention program. However, after the program, the experimental group showed greater progress than the control group, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Pre- and post-test speaking performance scores of the experimental and control groups.

As seen in Figure 1, in the pre-test, both groups had similar minimum scores, but the experimental group gained slightly higher maximum post-test scores than the control group. However, the total mean scores of the two groups were similar at the beginning. After the intervention program, the lowest scores of the two groups, while increased, were still fairly equal, but the highest score of the experimental group was slightly higher than that of the control group. Noticeably, the total mean scores of the two groups in the post-test were different. The participants in the experimental group ($M = 7.14$) generally had much more improvement in speaking performance than the control group ($M = 6.65$). It is evident that using video clips in teaching conversational strategies was beneficial.

Correlation

A correlation test was conducted to check the interaction between speaking performance and frequency of conversational strategy use by the participants in the experimental group after the intervention. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation of Post-Intervention Speaking Performance and Frequency of Strategy Use: Experimental Group

		Frequency	Mean
Frequency	Pearson Correlation	1	.447(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.048
	N	20	20
Mean	Pearson Correlation	.447(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.
	N	20	20

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As seen from Table 3, the interaction between the speaking performance and the frequency of strategy use was statistically significant ($p = .048$). However, the correlation coefficient was small ($r = .45$). These figures mean that conversational strategies had a positive effect on the learners' speaking performance.

Interviews

Learners' attitudes towards learning conversational strategies. All six interviewees had a positive attitude towards receiving instruction in conversational strategies. For example, Learner 1 said, "I like the four strategies I have learnt. They are very useful and easy to apply in communication . . ." Learner 4's interest was in the teaching materials. She stated, "When learning these strategies, I like the materials the most because the clips are interesting. I can watch them in class, and sometimes when I cannot understand the clips well, I can watch them again at home. The handout of the conversational strategies is new, but necessary for me . . ." Generally, the interviewees found it useful to learn the strategies because these strategies could be applied in actual situations to solve oral communication problems and enhance fluency. The learners' positive attitudes showed that these strategies should be applied in listening / speaking courses since they help solve oral communication problems, enhance fluency, improve communication skills, and promote confidence.

Learners' attitudes towards conversational strategy instruction through video clips. The learners expressed positive attitudes towards conversational strategy instruction through video clips. Some reasons for their attitudes were that their learning and memorizing process was facilitated through hearing and watching simultaneously, the roles of the conversational strategies were revealed in the clips, the learners could learn how to use gestures in communication, and the clips attracted the learners' attention and motivated them to learn. Nonetheless, according to the learners' ideas on their difficulties and their suggestions, teaching the strategies through clips would be more beneficial if more careful consideration was given to the choice of clips so that they could be tightly woven into the curriculum.

Discussion

Research Question 1

The results showed that teaching conversational strategies through video clips could generally lead to greater use of the first three strategies. This result might be predictable since the use of video clips in teaching conversational strategies can attract learners' attention (Gower et al., 2005), and the observation tasks could raise the learners' awareness on the strategies used in the clips. Contrary to the researchers' hypothesis, the use of fillers / hesitation devices decreased after the intervention program. It was evident from the transcribed data that most of the participants showed excessive hesitation in their conversations before the strategy instruction, which led to the high frequency of filler / hesitation devices. Therefore, the total frequency of strategy use in the pre-test of both groups was high. After the treatment, the transcribed recordings from both groups illustrated that the strategy was utilized in a more appropriate manner. In particular, the recordings from the experimental group showed that in the post-test, many participants were able to use a wider variety of fillers / hesitation devices than in the pre-test.

Research Question 2

The results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test ($p = .040$) although the speaking performance of the two groups was the same in the pre-test ($p = .368$). The findings also showed that in the post-test, the experimental group made greater progress after the pre-test ($p = .00$). One possible explanation for the greater progress of

this group was that strategy instruction using video clips could better demonstrate how to avoid communication breakdown and enhance their conversational fluency. Moreover, it was observable that the clips could effectively illustrate how the conversational strategies are used with both verbal and non-verbal behaviors and equip the learners with more vocabulary, speaking expressions, and frequently used grammatical structures.

Research Question 3

The correlation test showed that there was a relationship between the learners' speaking performance and the frequency of strategy use in the experimental group ($p = .048$), but the correlation coefficient was small ($r = .45$). The performance of some participants was highly correlated with the frequency of their use of the strategies. However, some participants had a high frequency of strategy use, but their speaking performance was less than satisfactory, whereas other participants with a lower frequency of strategy use were able to perform well. As explained for Research Question 1, the reason for some of the less than satisfactory speaking performances is that the learners did not use the strategies appropriately, especially filler / hesitation devices. It could also be seen from the transcripts that using conversational strategies cannot enhance some weak learners' overall speaking performance if they lack essential vocabulary or grammatical structures. The results revealed that frequent use of conversational strategies could enhance the learners' speaking performance if they knew when and how to use the strategies in an appropriate manner.

Research Question 4

The interviews showed that the learners had positive attitudes towards learning conversational strategies through the video clips. Interviewees stated that conversational strategies played a vital role in solving oral communication problems, enhancing fluency, improving communication skills, and promoting confidence. Likewise, clips could facilitate the learning and memorizing process, display verbal and non-verbal communication in a dynamic context, and attract attention to the lessons. The interviewees recommended that more conversational strategies be taught with video clips.

Pedagogical Implications

For syllabus designers, it is vital to include conversational strategies in course books or teaching materials on listening / speaking since these strategies are very necessary for learners to maintain their conversations and avoid communication breakdown. These course books should be accompanied by additional materials, such as class audio CDs and video clips, to illustrate how the strategies are used in real situations. Additionally, the lessons on strategies should be designed in a manner that suits learners' levels.

EFL or ESL teachers of listening / speaking should flexibly and creatively choose conversational strategies, teaching methods, teaching materials, and tasks that suit learners' levels and needs. In the study, a method suggested as an effective way for teaching conversational strategies is raising learners' awareness of these strategies, particularly through watching video clips and doing observation tasks, and then practicing the strategies in role plays of similar situations. These tasks should be carefully planned and designed for each clip. In addition, when conversational strategies are taught through video clips, the topics, the content, the number and the length of video clips should be suitable for learners' levels. Moreover, unfamiliar words and expressions in a chosen clip should be explained in advance to minimize learners' problems when they watch the clip. Particularly for learners at a low proficiency level, video clips with subtitles – the first half of the clips does not include subtitles while the rest repeating

the same content does - could be used to motivate them to watch from which they can learn the strategies.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on teaching conversational strategies that help facilitate interaction and maintain fluency in conversations. Video clips, together with observation tasks, are suggested as an effective tool for carrying out this teaching process. Videos may also serve as a bridge to show Asian EFL / ESL learners how conversational strategies are used in native English speakers' cultures. Finally, it is vital for instructors to choose conversational strategies, video clips, and observation tasks to suit their learners' needs.

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Appendix A
Pre-Test and Post-Test

(Adapted from Thrush, Baldwin, & Blass, 2007)

Questions for Discussion

1. How are the buildings in a city? Are they different from the ones in a town?
2. What do you think about the traffic in a city? How about in a town?
3. Is the air in the city clean or polluted? Is it the same with the air in a town?
4. What means of transportation do people often use in a city and in a town?
5. Do a lot of people live in a city? How about in a town?
6. How is the lifestyle in a city? Is it different from the life in a town?
7. What are some similarities and differences between a city and a town?

Appendix B
Semi-Structured Interview
Learners' Attitudes Towards Conversational Strategy Instruction
and Strategy Instruction Through Video Clips

Today we will together discuss learners' attitudes towards teaching conversational strategies and using video clips in teaching conversational strategies in listening / speaking class. Everyone has his / her own view on teaching conversational strategies and using video clips in teaching conversational strategies. Therefore, you can share your thoughts without concerning about them. Now we will begin.

Question 1: How did you feel when you received the conversational strategy instruction in class?

Question 2: Why did you have such feeling?

Is it because. . . ? (Some clues in case learners give positive answers but cannot explain)

- you can apply these strategies to the actual situations and solve your oral communication problems
- the strategies help improve your speaking skill
- the strategies help enhance your fluency
- the strategies give you more confidence
- the strategies expand your English knowledge and provide more speaking techniques

Question 3: What did you like about the instruction of conversational strategies?

Did you like. . . ? (Some clues in case learners cannot answer)

- the conversational strategies taught
- the opportunity to practice speaking English
- the teacher and teaching method
- the materials and handouts
- the content of the instruction
- the class atmosphere

Question 4: What didn't you like about the instruction of conversational strategies?

What about. . . ? (Some clues in case learners cannot answer)

- the application of some strategies
- the instruction session
- the opportunity to practice speaking English

Question 5: What do you think about instructing conversational strategies through video clips in class?

Question 6: Why do you think so?

Is it because. . . ? (Some clues in case learners give positive answers but cannot explain)

- the strategies are comprehensible because you can see as well as hear the strategies are being used
- the strategies are real-to-life because the speakers use them in daily life interaction
- you can understand the strategies easily when you can see facial expressions, the gestures and the physical background of the speaker
- the use of video clips motivates you a lot when you attend listening / speaking course

- video clips are more interesting, appealing and draw your attention better than other kinds of materials

Question 7: What did you like about using video clips in instructing conversational strategies? Did you think. . . ? (Some clues in case learners cannot answer)

- the content of the clips is interesting
- the strategies are clearly displayed through the clips
- the images attract your attention
- the video-based tasks are effective

Question 8: What didn't you like about using video clips in instructing conversational strategies?

Did you think. . . ? (Some clues in case learners cannot answer)

- using video clips wastes your time
- the quality of some video clips is not good
- some technical problems may occur when you are watching the clips
- you cannot hear or understand the speakers in the video clips

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Appendix C
Handout of Conversational Strategies

(Summary of the four conversational strategies for the control and experimental groups)

Conversational Strategies

(Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987, and Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1992)

1. Checking for Comprehension

One speaker attempts to determine whether the other speaker has understood a preceding message.

Checking Questions

Responses

Ok?
Right?
Is that clear?
Are you with me?
Do/ can you follow me?
All right?
Got/ get it?
Do you see what I mean?
Do you know what I'm getting at?
Am I making myself clear?
Have I made myself clear?
Does that make sense (to you)?
Am I making sense?
Do I make myself clear?
Do I make myself understood?
Do you understand me?

Mmm. . .
Uh-huh. . .
(Yes,) sure
Oh, yes, go on.
Of course.
Yes, get on with it!
More or less, yes.
Well, not really. . .
Er. . .
Well. . .

2. Confirming

One speaker seeks confirmation of the other speaker's preceding utterance through repetition, with rising intonation, of what was perceived to be all or part of the preceding utterance.

If I (have) understood you correctly. . .
You mean. . . , right?
Do you mean to say. . . ?
So you mean. . . ?
Do you mean. . . ?
Does that mean. . . ?
What you mean is. . . ?
What you're saying is. . . ?

What you're trying to say is. . . ?
Are you saying that. . . ?
So you're saying. . .
In other words, . . .
If I've got it right, then. . .
So am I right in saying that. . .
So the basic idea is that. . .
So the general idea is that. . .

3. Clarification Requests

One speaker seeks assistance in understanding the other speaker's preceding utterance through questions, statements such as "I do not understand," or imperatives such as "please repeat . . ."

(I'm) sorry?

(I) (beg your) pardon?

(I'm) sorry, I didn't	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{hear} \\ \text{catch} \\ \text{get} \\ \text{understand} \end{array} \right.$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{the last part.} \\ \text{part about. . .} \\ \text{last/ first word.} \\ \text{. . .} \end{array} \right.$
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Sorry, what did you say?

Sorry, what was that again?

What was that word again?

Would / could you repeat that, please?

Would / could you repeat what you said, please?

Could you repeat that for me, please?

Would you mind repeating that?

Sorry, can / could you say that again please?

Sorry, can / could you repeat it more slowly?

Sorry, would you mind speaking a bit slower?

I'm sorry, I couldn't / didn't hear what you said?

Sorry, did you say ". . ."?

What? / You what? / When? / Where? / Who? / What kind of. . . ?

Hang on / just a minute, say that again?

I didn't quite catch that.

4. Using Fillers / Hesitation Devices

These are used to fill pauses, to stall, or to gain time to think when in difficulty (e.g., *Well*, *Now let me see*, or *The thing is*). Excessive and inappropriate use of fillers can be considered "bad" for native speakers and language learners alike, but in times of need, hesitation devices can be an invaluable aid to communication.

Well. . .

Um. . . / er. . .

Actually. . .

You know. . . / you see. . .

I see.

I / you mean. . .

As a matter of fact. . .

Let's see (now).

Now let me think / see.

I'll have to think about it.

Frankly, . . .

To be (quite) honest / frank, . . .

In fact, . . .

I wonder. . .

The thing is. . .

I see what you mean.

It's like this, you see. . .

Let's say. . .

What I'm trying to say is. . .

(Now) where should I start. . .

What I would say is. . .

How shall I put it?