


## Interactional pragmatic strategies in a Thai university English language classroom



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### ABSTRACT

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This study examined Interactional Pragmatic Strategies (IPSs) between a Filipino teacher and Thai students in a Thai university English language classroom. Using purposive sampling and a qualitative design, data were collected through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Discourse analysis was used for data interpretation and analysis. Findings revealed that both the teacher and students frequently employed a variety of IPSs to convey and clarify meaning, with repair, clarification, and repetition being the most common. Additionally, five context-specific strategies encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, scaffolding, and translanguaging, emerged, highlighting the dynamic nature of IPSs use in this EFL context. The teacher and students generally perceived IPSs positively, recognizing their value in supporting communication and language development. However, the teacher expressed concerns about the unconscious and possibly excessive use of certain strategies. Students noted that IPSs helped build confidence and overcome linguistic challenges, although rapid speech and anxiety remained barriers. A key limitation is the single classroom setting, which may affect generalizability. Practically, training in IPSs awareness and strategy application may benefit teachers, especially in multilingual classrooms. Pedagogically, the findings underscore the importance of inclusive communicative practices that embrace cultural and linguistic diversity, contributing to more effective and equitable language learning in EFL contexts.

**Contribution/ Originality:** The findings of this study contribute to an understanding of interactional pragmatic strategies (IPSs) used in EFL classrooms by revealing five context-specific IPSs discovered through micro-ethnographic analysis. It extends current theoretical frameworks by incorporating authentic classroom discourse as well as participant perspectives, and provides concrete implications for multilingual pedagogy, teacher development, and culturally responsive communication in the ELF classroom.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world of globalization, the English Language as a Lingua Franca (ELF) serves as a bridge language in the dialogues of speakers from diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. This transition has broadened the concept of communicative competence to encompass pragmatic competence, the ability to bridge meaning, strategically utilize situational context, and repair misunderstandings during real-time interaction (Vu, 2017). Vu (2017) highlights that pragmatic competence is essential for facilitating communication among linguistically diverse speakers, especially in ELF settings where meaning negotiation often replaces strict grammatical correctness. In EFL contexts, and particularly in multilingual classes, problems of communication do not generally result from the presence of grammatical errors as much as from the lack of awareness of the rules of pragmatics (Korkmaz & Karatepe,

2023). Understanding how interaction works in diverse classroom settings worldwide is crucial for developing adaptable and inclusive pedagogical approaches.

Although there is a worldwide trend towards teaching practical English skills, many Thai university English classes still rely on grammar-based teaching and pre-scripted conversational expressions. As is often the case, students may recall grammatical structures and create or speak a memorized conversation, but struggle to maintain genuine conversation on the spot and in real-time. This divide between form-oriented learning and actual use constitutes a longstanding challenge to gaining adequate communicative competence in ELF contexts (Ambele, 2023).

To address these issues, researchers have drawn increasing attention to the role of IPSs, including verbal and non-verbal strategies such as clarification, repetition, repair, gesture, and translanguaging, which enable speakers to negotiate breakdowns and co-construct meaning (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Taguchi, 2022). These strategies are essential in ELF settings, where mutual intelligibility, rather than native-like accuracy, is the primary goal of communication.

While studies have examined IPSs in global ELF contexts (Smit, 2010; Taguchi, 2022) and in some EFL classrooms in Thailand (Kulsawang & Ambele, 2024), there remains a notable gap in understanding how these strategies are actually used and perceived within Thai university settings. Prior Thai-based research has largely focused on isolated speech acts (e.g., apology and request strategies) or student perceptions without examining how teachers and students interactively deploy IPSs in spontaneous classroom discourse. Moreover, few studies have explored how non-Thai multilingual teachers, such as Filipino instructors, influence interactional dynamics and strategy use, despite their growing presence in Thai higher education.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating IPSs in an EFL classroom at a Thai university led by a Filipino teacher. The teacher's multilingual and cross-cultural background introduces a unique dimension to classroom interaction that is seldom studied in ELF research. Drawing on a micro-ethnographic approach, this study analyzes not only the types and functions of IPSs used in authentic classroom communication but also how both teacher and students perceive the communicative and pedagogical value of these strategies.

Accordingly, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What interactional pragmatic strategies are deployed by the teacher and students in a Thai university English language classroom?
2. What are the teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of interactional pragmatic strategies?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC)

CIC refers to the participants' ability, particularly the teacher, to use interactional strategies that support learning through real-time communication (Walsh, 2014). In ELF classrooms, where speakers come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, CIC becomes essential for constructing shared meaning using both verbal and non-verbal cues. This competence goes beyond linguistic accuracy, focusing instead on communicative adaptability and mutual understanding.

In such contexts, IPSs such as repetition, repair, translanguaging, clarification requests, and the use of gestures are critical for sustaining intelligibility and preventing communication breakdowns (Smit, 2010; Taguchi & Kádár, 2023). CIC enables teachers and students to co-construct meaning in various participation structures, including teacher-student (individual), teacher-whole class, and student-student interactions (Walsh, 2014).

To understand how IPSs function within CIC, Smit (2010) proposes a framework for classroom repair that is useful. She identifies three categories of "repairables": linguistic (e.g., grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary), interactional (e.g., mishearings, discourse, reference issues), and factual (e.g., instructional, regulative). While her model was developed for repair, these categories also help to classify how other IPSs such as repetition, rephrasing,

or translanguaging address specific communication challenges. In this study, Smit's framework was adapted to identify the cause of a breakdown, whether the strategy was self- or other-initiated, and how it was resolved through interaction.

## 2.2. Interactional Pragmatic Strategies (IPSs)

The theoretical foundation for this study is based on the taxonomy of communication strategies proposed by Dörnyei and Scott (1997), which organizes IPSs into resource-based, processing-time, and interactional categories. These strategies help second-language users manage breakdowns and maintain conversation, especially in ELF classrooms where intelligibility is prioritized over native-like fluency (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Taguchi & Kádár, 2023). This framework also serves as a foundation for the data analysis in this study, where IPSs are identified and categorized based on Dörnyei and Scott (1997) taxonomy to examine how these strategies function in classroom interactions.

Key resource-deficit strategies include message abandonment, circumlocution, approximation, and the use of all-purpose words. Lexical compensation strategies such as word coinage, retrieval, and the use of similar-sounding words allow learners to bypass lexical gaps without halting interaction (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Noviyenty, Morganna, & Fakhruddin, 2022). Processing-time strategies, such as stalling or using fillers (e.g., "um," "you know"), help speakers maintain fluency under pressure (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Merbawani & Hartono, 2024). Interactional strategies, such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, repetition, repair, and guessing, support mutual understanding between interlocutors (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Smit, 2010; Taguchi & Kádár, 2023).

This framework supports the study's aim of exploring how teachers and students use IPSs to overcome communication challenges in Thai university classrooms. The use of both verbal (e.g., rephrasing, guessing) and non-verbal (e.g., mime, gesture) strategies is considered essential in developing pragmatic competence in ELF environments (Wei & García, 2022). By applying Dörnyei and Scott's model, this study categorizes IPSs to better understand their communicative function and contextual relevance.

## 2.3. Interactional Pragmatic Strategies Model

This study employs a modified version of the Negotiation of Meaning Model, initially proposed by Varonis and Gass (1985), to examine the role and function of IPSs within real-time classroom interactions. The model offers a systematic framework for identifying communication breakdowns and analyzing the strategies employed by interlocutors to overcome these challenges. In this study, the model has been modified to consist of three components: Problem Indicator (PI), Result (R), and Reaction to Response (RR), as shown in Figure 1.

Trigger (T) → Problem indicator (PI) → Response (R) → Reaction to response (RR)

Figure 1. Negotiation of the meaning model.

As shown in Figure 1, Trigger (T): Something causes a problem in communication (e.g., unclear speech, missing words, wrong grammar). Problem Indicator (PI): One speaker shows that they notice a problem (e.g., "Huh?", "Sorry?", "What do you mean?" or prolonged silence (over three seconds)). Response (R): The other speaker (or the same speaker) responds by trying to fix or clarify the problem (e.g., repeating, repairing, rephrasing). Reaction to Response (RR): After the response, the first speaker reacts to show whether they now understand, still don't understand, or partially understand. Confirmation that mutual understanding has been achieved. Indicators include agreement markers ("Okay," "I see"), affirmative nods, or the smooth continuation of the conversation without further confusion.

The model further distinguishes between self-initiated and other-initiated strategies, highlighting the collaborative nature of communication in the classroom. Self-initiated strategies include actions such as self-repair or self-repetition, where the speaker independently addresses communication problems. Other-initiated strategies involve intervention by another participant, such as other-repair or other-rephrasing, where interlocutors collaboratively support mutual understanding. This distinction enables a more transparent and systematic analysis of classroom interaction, thereby avoiding conceptual overlap with related frameworks, such as repair theory and general interactional pragmatics. By employing this adapted model, the present study systematically captures how communication challenges emerge and how pragmatic strategies are deployed to restore understanding within Thai university EFL classroom interaction.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative study investigates IPSs through naturalistic observation of classroom interactions, focusing on both verbal and nonverbal communication without manipulating the environment (Lim, 2025). A micro-ethnographic approach was adopted to enable moment-by-moment analysis of interactional data (Chatwin, Ludwin, & Latham, 2022; Nybø, 2024) guided by audio recordings and field notes (Creswell & Inoue, 2025). To complement observational data, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insights into the teachers' and students' perceptions of IPSs. Through microanalysis, IPSs were categorized into linguistic, interactional, and factual types, allowing for systematic pattern identification and frequency analysis (Baguilat & Dawala, 2023).

#### 3.1. Context and Participants

This study was conducted at Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University, a public higher education institution in northeast Thailand, specifically within the bachelor's degree program in English under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The program emphasizes global communication and equips students with English proficiency relevant to international contexts and diverse professional fields. Listening and Speaking 2 was chosen to coincide with the study's focus on communicative English and interactional language. The course was taught by a Filipino non-native English-speaking teacher whose diverse and Thai students' backgrounds contributed to a culturally rich classroom environment. The curriculum focused on using English for practical purposes in daily life and academic areas through exercises such as vocabulary work, structured dialogues, role-playing, brainstorming, and discussions. Teaching strategies inside the classroom were designed to focus on modeling, open-ended questioning, and guided conversation practice, so that students would be encouraged to develop confidence and fluency. Role-play, spontaneous roles, and descriptions were employed to focus students' interaction strategies. Participants included one experienced Filipino teacher and around 44 first-year English major students of mixed gender.

#### 3.2. Data Collection Techniques

This study employed several qualitative data collection methods to strengthen triangulation and capture the full range of classroom interactions. The primary method was non-participant observation, complemented by high-quality audio recordings, extensive field notes, and semi-structured interviews.

Analysis through classroom observation facilitated a systematic classification of IPSs used by the teacher and students in the framing tasks (Creswell & Inoue, 2025). Spoken interactions were audio-recorded for detailed analysis, particularly during impromptu conversations and oral tasks. Furthermore, the field notes took into account non-verbal behaviors, classroom context, and nuances that could not be captured in the audio recordings.

Semi-structured interviews with the teacher and students were used to corroborate the observational data. These interviews aimed to gain insight into the knowledge, attitudes, and opinions that the participants held regarding IPSs. The teacher was interviewed in English, while student interviews were conducted in Thai to ensure comfort and the depth of their responses. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 35 minutes.

### 3.3. Data Collection

The participants and classroom context were selected using purposive sampling based on their potential to yield rich examples of IPSs in use. Initial observations were conducted across three English courses—Listening and Speaking 2, Public Speaking, and English for Negotiation. Following these preliminary visits, the Listening and Speaking 2 course was selected for in-depth data collection, as it featured frequent opportunities for spontaneous interaction and negotiation of meaning.

Data collection was conducted over a 16-week semester, totaling 48 hours of classroom instruction. The researcher observed as a non-participant throughout the study to minimize interference. All classroom sessions were recorded using high-quality digital audio equipment, and field notes were taken to document contextual and behavioral details.

To supplement classroom data, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the semester. The teacher was interviewed in English, while student interviews were conducted in Thai to support comfort and expressiveness. Each session lasted approximately 30–35 minutes and was scheduled at the participants' convenience. Ethical protocols were strictly observed, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The qualitative data from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were analyzed through two principal methods: Discourse Analysis (DA) and Qualitative Content Analysis. IPSs were identified and interpreted in the natural classroom discourse using Discourse Analysis. This involved investigating how speakers used strategies, such as repetition, clarification, repair, and others, to facilitate meaning negotiation and maintain communication. The interaction order was followed, and how IPSs were used to react to communicative problems was called into being. The present study also followed the model of [Varonis and Gass \(1985\)](#) and [Guo and Möllering \(2017\)](#), studying classroom language through the stages of trigger, indicator, and response. This framework, in conjunction with data triangulation across interviews, field notes, and class recordings, helped identify the important themes and patterns of the deployment of IPSs.

Preliminary coding throughout the fieldwork facilitated the development of the analysis focus, and second coding enabled a more interpretive reading of IPSs in conjunction with the research questions. Participants' views on IPSs were thematically analyzed using a qualitative content analysis. This process included both a priori and inductive coding, allowing themes to emerge organically from the data and correspond with the overall study aims. Coding centered on the themes of the types of strategies, interactional functions, and attitudes toward the use of IPSs. The analysis, which walked through [Point and Baruch \(2023\)](#), involved steps such as transcription, pre-coding, coding, memo writing, and interpretation. The data were managed with QSR NVivo 11 (Qualitative Solutions and Research (QSR) International) software for qualitative analysis of qualitative data. Transcripts and field notes were imported and categorized systematically.

After coding the data for RQ1, a hand-coded color examination was conducted to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. To ensure intra-rater reliability, the codes were read and reviewed at regular intervals, and the results were recorded to maintain consistency. Regarding inter-rater reliability, three experts in the research field cross-checked the coded data, confirming high inter-coder reliability. For RQ2, the credibility of the results was further strengthened through member checking. Preliminary analyses were fed back to participants to verify the fit of the findings with their experiences and whether their intended meanings were captured. The above series of actions collectively contributed to ensuring the trustworthiness of the data analysis. To further mitigate potential researcher bias, particularly the tendency to focus on specific students or groups noted in the field notes, data analysis was cross-checked against a wide range of interactions across different sessions and participants to ensure representativeness and analytical balance.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Teacher and Students' Deployed IPSs in the Classroom

This section presents the findings addressing RQ1: IPSs employed by the teacher and students to support communication in the EFL classroom. A total of 1,588 IPSs were identified during 48 hours of classroom interaction, including 835 self-initiated and 753 other-initiated strategies. Table 1 outlines the frequency and distribution of these strategies across various categories.

**Table 1.** The type and count of IPSs.

IPSs Type	Count (Self)	Count (Other)	Total
Acknowledgment	85	47	132
Backchannelling Cue	29	12	41
Confirmation	28	9	37
Clarification	113	140	253
Direct Appeal for Help	82	48	130
Encouragement	0	37	37
Guessing	61	4	65
Interpretive Summary	5	0	5
Modeling	2	9	11
Message Abandonment	1	0	1
Non-verbal	28	19	47
Own-accuracy Check	0	1	1
Prompting	34	24	58
Paraphrasing	1	0	1
Reinforcement	8	35	43
Responding	19	18	37
Repetition	85	164	249
Retrieval	59	16	75
Repair	124	135	259
Rephrasing	14	5	19
Scaffolding	0	3	3
Stalling	10	1	11
Translanguaging	15	22	37
Use of Fillers	32	4	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>1,588</b>

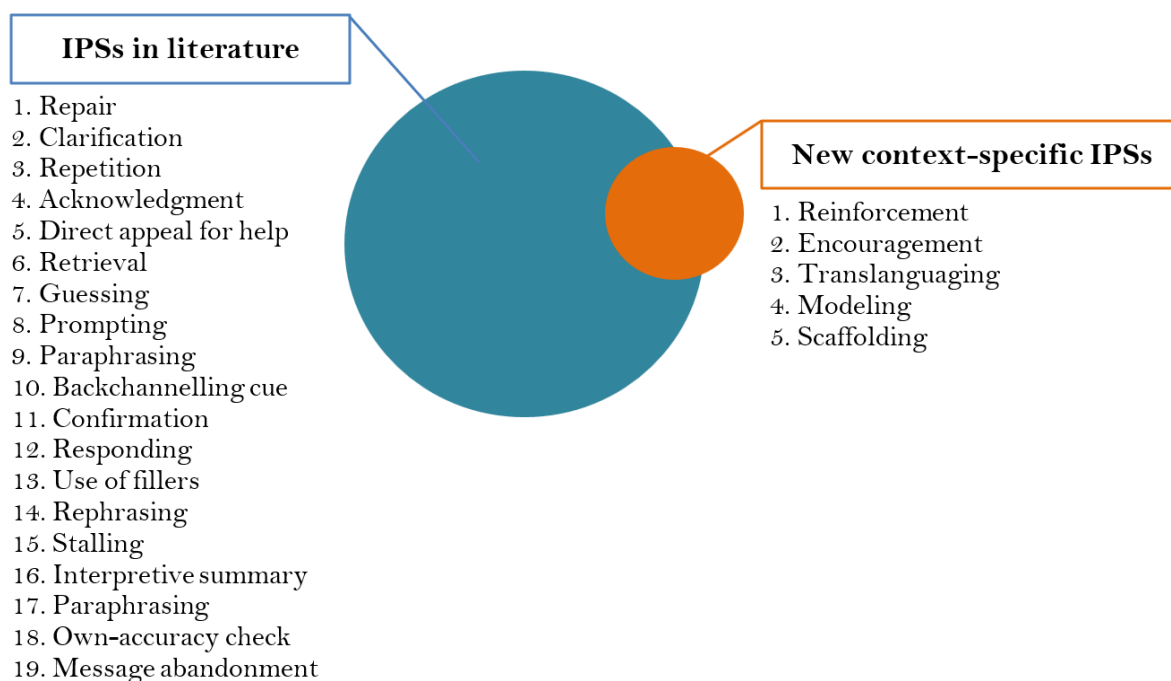
As shown in Table 1, the result revealed that the three most frequently used IPSs were repair ( $n = 259$ ), clarification ( $n = 253$ ), and repetition ( $n = 249$ ). These strategies were widely deployed to manage communication breakdowns and ensure mutual understanding, aligning with prior studies that highlight their centrality in ELF classroom discourse.

While Table 1, the text presents the complete frequency and distribution of all IPSs observed during classroom interactions. Figure 2 provides a focused interpretation by categorizing these strategies into two main groups: 19 well-established IPSs documented in prior literature and 5 newly identified, context-specific strategies namely, encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, scaffolding, and translanguaging. This conceptual synthesis highlights the study's contribution by distinguishing widely recognized strategies from those that emerged uniquely within the Thai EFL context, reflecting both theoretical insights and pedagogical implications for ELF classroom interaction.

As shown in Figure 2, these new context-specific strategies, which emerged organically from the Thai university classroom, are not widely documented in IPSs taxonomies, such as Dörnyei and Scott (1997), and played a prominent role in this EFL context. They were not only pedagogically motivated but also played a crucial role in shaping inclusive and responsive interactions. Their emergence reflects both the teacher's adaptive communication style and the students' cultural and linguistic needs. These context-specific IPSs reflect the adaptive and pedagogical functions of communication strategies in Thai EFL classrooms. Although traditional strategies help repair breakdowns, these



newly emerging routines, especially those teacher-driven, are crucial in supporting inclusive and emotionally cohesive classroom talk.



**Figure 2.** IPs in the literature and the new context-specific IPs.

In combination, the results highlight the diversity and multiplicity of IPs employed in this Thai ELF classroom, encompassing both globally established and locally developed practices. The tactical mobilization of repair, repetition, and clarification validates their pivotal role in the process of meaning-making, and the rise of tacitly pedagogically driven strategies demonstrates the active interplay between language learning and communicative interaction.

#### *4.2. Teacher's and Students' Perceptions of IPs Deployed in the Classroom*

##### *4.2.1. Teacher's Perceptions*

The section below discusses the teacher's perception of integrating IPs within the classroom. Two primary patterns were identified: communication impact strategies and influence on language development. These themes express the teacher's perspective on IPs as a means to facilitate communication and foster classroom interaction. Although the teacher conveyed overall positive beliefs, some neutral and ambivalent beliefs reflected both positive and negative perspectives.

The teacher held favorable attitudes toward IPs as a necessary means of bridging the communication gap and promoting an encouraging learning environment. Strategies such as repair, translanguaging, and non-verbal communication were emphasized. Nonetheless, the teacher expressed neutral perspectives, characterized by a mix of reflection and uncertainty, leaning towards a slightly negative stance, as demonstrated in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1:

"If my students still don't understand after I correct them, using examples or acting out and speaking some Thai words, what I mean can help clarify things for them."

Excerpt 2:

"I am often unaware of using IPs. Although I may sometimes notice them during interactions, I seldom consider how these strategies help me manage and overcome communication challenges."

Excerpt 3:

"It seems to me that when I see incorrect grammar, I correct and repeat it repeatedly, even if it seems redundant, to help students avoid repeating the same mistake. But sometimes, I wonder if so much repetition is truly helpful or counterproductive."

The findings indicated that the teacher perceived IPSs positively as fundamental to creating a collaborative and practical learning environment. This underscores the intuitive role of IPSs in language teaching, where teachers naturally adjust their strategies to respond to student needs. Moreover, repair was a key strategy for reinforcing language accuracy, while translanguaging provided students with opportunities to use Thai and English in meaningful contexts. Simplifying language and non-verbal cues further demonstrated the teacher's commitment to tailoring communication strategies to students' needs, thereby ensuring inclusivity and comprehension (see Excerpt 1).

However, the teacher expressed neutral perspectives on IPSs, combining reflection and uncertainty, as the teacher acknowledged the unconscious nature of using IPSs, recognizing that these strategies were often deployed instinctively rather than as consciously planned techniques (see Excerpt 2). Moreover, the teacher also expressed uncertainty about the impact of excessive repetition, questioning whether it was truly beneficial or counterproductive (see Excerpt 3).

This raises the possibility that while intuitive use of IPSs can be beneficial, it may also lead to inconsistent or less effective communication outcomes. Therefore, awareness training may be more valuable in optimizing these naturally employed strategies rather than simply introducing them as new techniques. This suggests a pedagogical dilemma while repetition can aid language acquisition, comprehension, and accuracy, overuse may lead to student disengagement, dependence on teacher corrections, or frustration. Some students may tune out repeated corrections, while others may become overly reliant on the teacher for accuracy, rather than developing self-monitoring skills.

Regarding the impact on language development, IPSs were viewed as critical in equipping students with real-world communication skills. The teacher perceived these strategies as essential for fostering fluency, critical thinking, and adaptability, prioritizing practical language use over grammatical perfection in the early stages of learning. Through real-world applications and interactive practices, the teacher established a dynamic and supportive classroom environment in which students were prepared for real-life communicative situations, as the following examples show:

Excerpt 4:

"I think my teaching is conversation-focused, and I prefer to get people into real-life roles as soon as possible and give them the tools to navigate them effectively."

Excerpt 5:

"I try to explain to my students that they need to talk, not concern themselves with grammar. I actually say keep them coming, and over time."

Excerpt 6:

"To me, asking questions that are critical to the topic supports students' construction of the knowledge and explaining and discussing what comes to their mind."

The teacher emphasized that practice and critical thinking are the keys to success. By promoting students to speak without worrying about mistakes, this created an atmosphere of support in which students could safely take risks with language production. Through prompting and response strategies, the teacher encouraged creative thinking and actual communication skills by using open questions that required rapid responses. Additionally, the teacher's use of IPSs was also evidence of an orientation to real-world communication (see Excerpt 4). Emphasizing fluency and flexibility at the expense of grammatical accuracy helped increase confidence and lower anxiety in students (see Excerpt 5). The second category, critical questioning, requires students to recall and use information, promoting cognitive engagement and developing problem-solving abilities in discourse situations (see Excerpt 6).



#### 4.2.2. Students' Perceptions

This section explores students' perceptions of using IPSs in the classroom. Two main sub-themes emerged: the benefits of IPSs for learning and communication, and the challenges associated with their use in classroom settings. In this study, students' perceptions of IPSs were mixed; while most students expressed positive views, some also reported neutral feelings, often shaped by communication challenges and the need for adaptation.

Students believed that IPSs significantly enhanced their learning experience. Many felt that strategies such as repetition (see [Appendix A](#), field note), clarification (see [Appendix A](#), field note), paraphrasing, nonverbal cues, and repair enabled them to express themselves more freely, despite having a limited vocabulary. The excerpts reflected students' confidence in negotiating meaning and interacting with the teacher and their peers. This suggested that IPSs contributed to a more inclusive and participatory classroom environment, allowing students to engage without fear of making mistakes, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 7:

"Repeating questions for clarity encourages me to express myself without fear." (Student D)

Excerpt 8:

"To me, using simple vocabulary helps keep the conversation going and makes it easier to clarify the meaning when the teacher doesn't understand." (Student G)

Excerpt 9:

"Using IPSs helps me feel more confident in speaking English. For example, when I forget a word, I can describe it using simple terms or gestures, like saying 'a person who works in the coffee shop' instead of 'barista.' This way, I can keep the conversation going without feeling stuck." (Student H)

Excerpt 10:

"To me, IPSs are useful when I know there's a word that fits better than what I can come up with in the moment, but I still want to say something and keep the conversation moving. If I blank on the word coffee shop, I can say 'café,' or otherwise communicate what I'm trying to say in words and gestures. That helps me to communicate, even when I don't know the vocabulary." (Student B)

Students could see IPSs as key to learning and communication, enabling them to be more engaged in class. Using strategies such as repetition (see Excerpt 7), clarification (see Excerpt 8), paraphrasing, and non-verbal cues (see Excerpt 9) helped students feel more connected to their oral experiences and gain control over clarification when experiencing difficulty with language. They also emphasized the idea that repairing and simplifying vocabulary helped keep the conversation going without fear and anxiety (see Excerpt 10). These beliefs implied that IPSs enhanced and encouraged understanding, and enabled students to talk within the classroom without 'fear of failure,' which led to a more inclusive and participatory classroom.

Simultaneously, despite its potential benefits as an IPS, students reflected a neutral stance, posing challenges, adjusting to, and expressing concerns about a variety of communicative setbacks. The excerpts indicated that pronunciation differences, vocabulary limitations, and fear of making mistakes hindered the effective use of IPSs. Many students expressed being anxious during unplanned conversations as well as with rapid speech, which indicated the necessity of more assistance from the teacher, as shown in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 11:

"When the teacher speaks too quickly, I also require a request for repetition immediately to understand the lesson." (Student B).

Excerpt 12:

"I feel that my limited vocabulary sometimes makes it challenging to communicate, so I simplify my words to express my ideas more clearly." (Student K).

Excerpt 13:

"From my perspective, I get confused when the teacher asks questions spontaneously during roleplay, as I need more time to process my response. For example, I often pause in silence or use fillers like 'um' or 'ah' while thinking about what to say." (Student D).

Students' responses highlighted specific challenges when using IPSs in fundamental classroom interactions. Students struggled with fast-paced speech and pronunciation differences, which made it difficult for them to understand the teacher's instructions (see Excerpt 11). Others felt that their limited vocabulary forced them to rely on simplified expressions, which sometimes hindered the depth and accuracy of their communication (see Excerpt 12). Additionally, some students experienced anxiety during spontaneous interactions, particularly when responding to unexpected questions or participating in role plays (see Excerpt 13). These challenges indicated that, while students recognized the value of IPSs, they often required additional time and support to apply these strategies effectively in real-time conversations.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Teacher and Students' Deployed IPSs in the Classroom

The results of this study showed that the teacher and students used a wide variety of IPSs during classroom interaction, with a total of 1,588 instances observed over a 16-week semester. The most common procedures were repair ( $n=259$ ), clarification ( $n=253$ ), and repetition ( $n=249$ ). These three strategies formed the basis for facilitating the flow of communication and resolving communication problems. The high frequency of their use aligns with previous research that highlights the primacy of these IPSs in organizing talk-in-interaction and achieving mutual intelligibility in ELF interactions (Smit, 2010; Taguchi, 2022).

The data also revealed the emergence of five context-specific IPSs – encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, scaffolding, and translanguaging – that are not generally documented in the literature on existing IPSs. These strategies were predominantly teacher-driven and pedagogically based, revealing insights into the adaptive nature of communication in the Thai EFL classroom. For instance, positive reinforcement was applied to reduce students' affective filter, enabling them to become more confident and participate more, especially for low-proficiency students. These techniques align with the communicative accommodation theory (Ghafar & Raheem, 2023), which posits that speakers adjust their language usage to facilitate social and affective closeness.

Modeling and scaffolding helped students construct accurate and contextually appropriate responses by combining a sentence and a prompt. These methods are consistent with the interactional theory of language learning, which emphasizes the importance of in-time support and negotiating meaning (Noviyenty et al., 2022). At the same time, translanguaging allowed the teacher and students to utilize various linguistic resources, including English, Thai, and Isan, to make meaning and sustain engagement. This resonates with Wei and García (2022), who considers translanguaging as a pedagogical practice that provides access, inclusivity, and more meaningful learning in a multilingual context.

### 5.2. Teacher's and Students' Perceptions of IPSs Deployed in the Classroom

In terms of perception, the teacher generally had strong views on IPSs as a means for facilitating classroom communication and student understanding. Methods such as repair and translanguaging were emphasized for their role in bridging languages. The teacher's belief aligns with the model proposed by Point and Baruch (2023), which also emphasized the role of communication strategies in overcoming language breakdown. Repair reflected Dörnyei's focus on giving students the chance to correct or work on their language. Furthermore, the inclusion of translanguaging and non-verbal strategies, as observed in this study, extends the findings of Wei and García (2022), highlighting the effectiveness of these strategies in multilingual classrooms and offering an innovative approach to bridging linguistic and cultural gaps.

The teacher's unawareness of IPSs is often used implicitly rather than consciously. Many communication strategies occur naturally during interactions without deliberate effort (Aboulghazi, Amiri, & El Karfa, 2024). This aligns with the idea that experienced speakers, including teachers, may intuitively deploy strategies like clarification, repetition, or repair without explicitly identifying them as IPSs (Walsh, Knott, & Collins, 2023). A more balanced approach to corrective feedback is recommended to mitigate the potential drawbacks of excessive repetition. Ha (2023) proposed that teachers use corrective techniques, incorporating elicitation, clarification requests, and corrective feedback to engage students in error correction. These strategies encourage active participation, helping students develop their cognitive and interactional skills in language use (Mahara & Hartono, 2024). The teacher's belief in IPSs as essential tools extended beyond linguistic correction to broader communicative development. In response to excerpts 4-6, the teacher emphasized the value of authentic communication, fluency, and critical thinking. This philosophy aligns with Walsh (2014), who considered that classroom interaction is not only a medium of delivery but also represents a mechanism for language development. By valuing fluency over accuracy and allowing students to join the conversation without worrying about grammatical mistakes, the teacher creates a low-stress environment where students are more willing to take risks. This aligns with Suratin and Sribayak (2025), who advocate for meaning-focused instruction in ELF classrooms.

Additionally, the teacher's focus on questioning and unscripted talk facilitates cognitive engagement. This method is based on Lesiana, Jaya, and Pratiwi (2024), who described social interaction as a driving force for critical reflection. Rasyid, Aini, and Varghesse (2023) also observed that direct questioning by teachers and peer dialogues generate higher-order thinking skills, promoting the retrieval, reorganization, and application of knowledge when communicating in real-life situations. These activities differ from traditional Thai EFL pedagogy, which has a discrete focus on rote memorization rather than communicative use. Through reconceptualizing the classroom in terms of interactional pragmatics, the role of the teacher is illustrated as one that can harness the power of IPSs to enhance classroom messages and impact students in terms of participant empowerment and identity as an English user (Yan, 2022).

Students' perceptions offer valuable feedback on the dual nature of IPSs, as both facilitators and obstacles to learning in EFL contexts. A significant number of students reported that IPSs (repetition, clarification, repair, paraphrasing, non-verbal cues) enabled them to compensate for a lack of vocabulary and to keep the conversation going. These results further support the notion that IPSs serve as compensatory strategies for handling communication failures (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). Mahmoud (2023) has also emphasized the importance of repair and simplification in maintaining a prolonged conversation. Thai students sometimes feel nervous about making mistakes and do not have the opportunity to engage in spontaneous English conversations; therefore, IPSs can offer a helpful structure to facilitate spontaneous interaction. The strategies they rely on gesturing, synonyms, and description are not only adaptive but also indicative of developing communicative efficacy.

However, the students also identified less significant obstacles, such as pronunciation differences, rapid speech, and lexical gaps. These findings are consistent with those of Jindapitak, Teo, and Savski (2022), who found that foreign accent and stress patterns can cause a comprehension barrier for EFL students. The challenge of rapid speech and teacher questioning, identified by many other students, adds an interesting twist to the cognitive load present in interaction. Students' vocabulary limitations may force them to avoid and simplify, which can impede learning (Hasan, 2024). Lindberg, McDonough, and Trofimovich (2023) reported that language anxiety, stemming from the fear of making errors or a lack of predictability, may significantly decrease students' willingness to perform. These difficulties underscore the need for support that IPSs draw upon during instruction. In the transmission phase, when teachers demonstrate techniques, they must also demonstrate the metacognitive activity of selecting strategies and applying them. The instruction and explicit teaching of repair strategies, the recurrence of gestures and clarification requests, might facilitate the students' interpretation of the intersectional pro-forms as conscious strategies rather than

circumstantial behaviors. Organized speaking activities, vocabulary aids, and questioning strategies can also minimize cognitive load and develop fluency.

In addition, the results demonstrate the sociolinguistic value of IPSs in the ELF classroom. [Ilahiy \(2023\)](#) argued that students must be equipped, as proposed, to accommodate the various Englishes; thus, pragmatic flexibility becomes more important than adherence to native-like norms. The students' ambivalent attitudes—viewing IPSs as both understandable and participatory, but having very low capacities to apply them in real situations—indicate a need for focused training that addresses both language and strategy development.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study examined IPSs used by a teacher and students in a Thai university EFL classroom, observing how these strategies facilitated communication and the negotiation of misunderstandings in real-time.

Regarding RQ1, results demonstrated that the teacher and students used a great variety of IPSs. For the 1,588 instances, repair, clarification, and repetition were the most frequently used strategies. These strategies were crucial for repairing linguistic errors, interactional breakdowns, and factual misunderstandings, and they played a key role in maintaining effective classroom communication. It is also worth mentioning that the study identified five IPSs: encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, scaffolding, and translanguaging, which were found to be unique to this Thai EFL context. These pedagogically and teacher-initiated strategies helped create a more inclusive, supportive, and culturally responsive environment.

Regarding RQ2, the teachers' and students' perceptions of IPSs showed a generally positive outlook. The teacher considered IPSs fundamental to building collaborative and learner-centered interactions, primarily occurring through repair, nonverbal cues, and translanguaging. However, some neutral comments were also made regarding the use of IPSs, along with concerns about repetition being overdone. Students acknowledged the benefits of IPSs, indicating that these strategies helped them feel more confident and become more effective communicators, especially when they faced difficulties with vocabulary or fluency. They also reported challenges such as speaking anxiety, using inappropriate words, and issues understanding fast and spontaneous speech.

Taken together, the results highlight the value of IPSs as compensatory actions for handling communicative breakdowns as well as instructional moves that help construct classroom discourse. The research contributes to an emerging body of ELF literature, elucidating both well-established and context-specific IPSs, as well as the use of conscious communication strategies in multilingual classroom contexts. These findings also provide pedagogical implications for EFL teacher education, classroom teaching, and lesson design with a view to developing students' communicative competence in EFL settings.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS

The study suggests that English language teaching in Thai universities and similar EFL contexts should integrate IPSs more intentionally. Teacher training should emphasize recognizing, applying, and balancing strategies such as repetition and repair, while also incorporating awareness of emerging, pedagogically adaptive strategies. These include encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, scaffolding, and translanguaging, which have been shown to support the emotional, instructional, and intercultural dimensions of communication. While [Dörnyei and Scott \(1997\)](#) taxonomy provides a foundational classification of IPSs; the findings of this study suggest the need for a conceptual expansion that incorporates these pedagogically motivated strategies. Curriculum design should promote authentic, meaning-focused tasks that not only develop communicative competence but also cultivate teachers' and learners' ability to engage in reflective and adaptive classroom discourse. Raising learners' awareness of IPSs can also build their confidence and autonomy in managing communication challenges. Finally, culturally responsive practices especially translanguaging should be encouraged to support inclusive and meaningful interactions, contributing to intercultural competence in diverse classroom settings.

## 8. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study, while insightful, has several limitations. First, the study was conducted in a single classroom with one Filipino teacher and Thai students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should involve a more diverse range of participants across institutions and cultural backgrounds. Second, the study focused on immediate classroom interactions without assessing the long-term impact of IPSs. Longitudinal studies could offer deeper insights into how these strategies influence communicative competence. Third, the research was limited to formal classroom settings; future work should explore how IPSs are applied in informal or real-world communication. Additionally, in-depth qualitative methods, such as case studies or learner diaries, could capture more personal experiences with IPSs. Finally, with the rise of digital learning, future studies should examine how IPSs function in online or hybrid environments to inform adaptive teaching practices.

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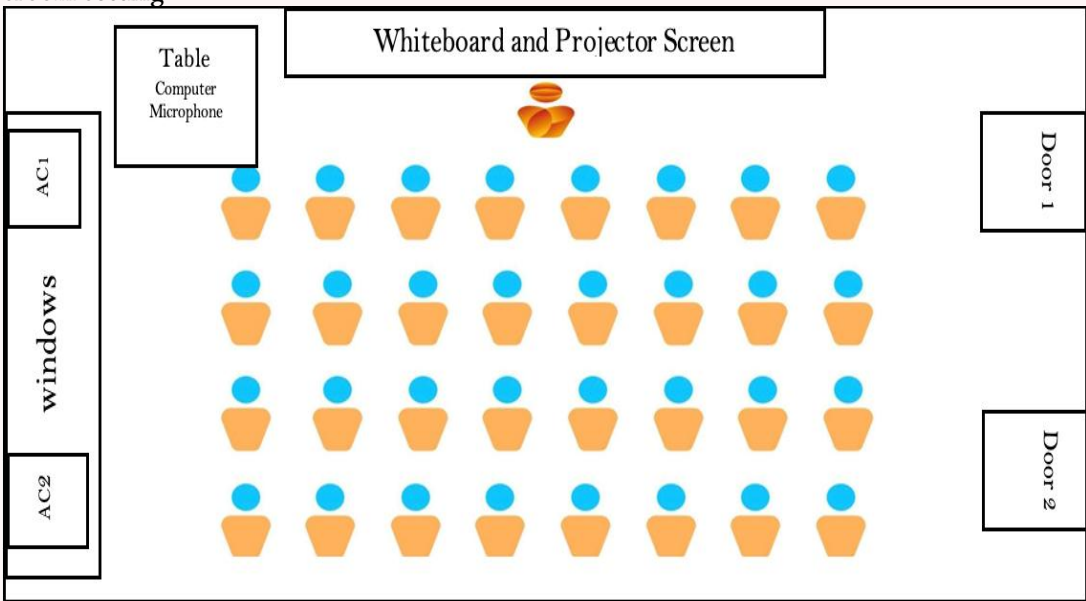


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#### Appendix A. Field note.

Location of observation: 2A-303		Participants' code: T1
Course title: Listening and speaking 2		Course code: 1551114
Topic of the lesson: Chapter 1: I am only a child		
<b>Classroom setting</b>		
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Layout:</b> Traditional arrangement of desks facing a whiteboard and projector screen.</li> <li>• <b>Technology:</b> Projector, computer, microphone, two air conditioning units.</li> <li>• <b>Classroom size:</b> Approximately 44 students present.</li> </ul>		
<b>Classroom activities</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Group and pair work activities</li> </ul>		
<b>Teacher's roles</b>		<b>Students roles</b>
<p><i>Facilitator</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The topic was introduced using a PowerPoint presentation, with key points displayed on the screen.</li> <li>2) Students were engaged in a discussion about vocabulary, with the teacher asking open-ended questions and using repetition to clarify meanings.</li> <li>3) Students were guided through a structured pair-work exercise on describing family relationships while the teacher closely monitored their conversations.</li> </ol> <p><i>Encourager</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Understanding was frequently checked by asking students to repeat key phrases and vocabulary.</li> <li>2) The teacher circulated around the room during a group activity, offering guidance and answering questions.</li> </ol> <p><i>Classroom manager</i></p> <p>The lesson began by reviewing the course outline and the book's content for five minutes. Then, the teacher gave clear instructions before each activity, ensuring students understood their roles in pair and group work.</p> <p><i>Evaluator</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The session concluded with a summary of the key points and the homework assignment.</li> </ol>		<p><i>Active participants</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Students listened attentively during the lecture portion and took notes.</li> <li>2) Students participated in the discussion by answering the teacher's questions with varying degrees of confidence and fluency.</li> <li>3) Students practiced conversational patterns, repeating sentences as the teacher modeled pronunciation.</li> <li>4) Students worked individually on classroom activities in English.</li> </ol> <p><i>Collaborators</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Students engaged in pair work, taking turns to ask about family members and practicing vocabulary in conversations.</li> <li>2) Higher-proficiency students initiated conversations confidently, while others needed prompting from the teacher.</li> </ol> <p><i>Explorers</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Students practiced conversational patterns, repeating sentences as the teacher modeled pronunciation.</li> <li>2) Students asked clarifying questions about unfamiliar terms.</li> </ol> <p><i>Observers</i></p>

2) Giving constructive feedback during students' pair work.	<p>1) Students listened attentively to vocabulary explanations, took notes, and asked clarifying questions about unfamiliar terms.</p> <p>2) Most students appeared hesitant to speak, while some were more willing to contribute.</p> <p><i>Peer Supporters</i></p> <p>1) Higher-proficiency students initiated conversations confidently and supported others during pair work.</p> <p>2) Some students expressed difficulty in constructing sentences and required additional scaffolding from the teacher.</p>
<b>Field note</b>	
<b>Descriptive field note</b>	<b>Reflective field note</b>
<p><i>Setting</i></p> <p>The classroom was well-lit, with large windows allowing natural light. The traditional desk arrangement allowed for easy interaction between the teacher and students.</p> <p><i>Interactions</i></p> <p>1) The teacher frequently used clarification and repetition to emphasize and clarify the points, which can help the teacher and students understand each other. For example, the teacher struggled with the cultural nuances of the students' Thai nicknames, which led students to clarify their names by repeating them several times. Moreover, the teacher's emphasis on pronunciation, particularly on stressing important words in sentences, helped students identify key phrases (e.g., "older brother," "middle child"). However, some students continued to struggle with the pronunciation of more complex terms (e.g., "fiancée").</p> <p>2) Mostly, students paid attention when discussing complex ideas with the teacher and friends. Some students requested the teacher to repeat their answers because they were not clear about the answers. One student repeated explanations to help the teacher clarify the meanings of Thai nicknames.</p> <p><i>Behavior</i></p> <p>There was a noticeable difference in participation levels; some students were more active in discussions, while others were more reserved. The teacher's encouragement led to increased participation over time.</p>	<p><i>Researchers' Role</i></p> <p>As an observer, we noticed that our presence in the room did not seem to affect the students' behavior significantly. However, some students did glance at me occasionally, perhaps wondering about the purpose of my observation.</p> <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <p>It was challenging to keep track of all the student interactions, especially during individual interaction as we paid attention to some students who sat in front of the first row of the classroom because they could speak quite well in English. According to group work, we also found myself focusing more on certain groups, possibly leading to a bias in my observations.</p> <p><i>Thoughts</i></p> <p>We were struck by how language proficiency influenced classroom dynamics. Students with stronger English skills were more willing to participate, while others remained quiet. This might be an important factor in IPSs employed in this setting.</p>

Appendix B presents the semi-structured interview questions for teacher and students.

#### Appendix B. Semi-structured interview questions for teacher and students.

<b>Semi-Structured Interviews for Teachers</b>	
<b>Grand tour questions</b>	
1	Please tell me about your educational background and work experiences related to English.
2	While studying English, did you have the opportunity to talk with other people in that language? Whom did you talk with? In which situation(s)?
3	How did you use English in your work? Whom did you talk to regularly?
4	Please tell me about using English in your daily routine.
<b>Main questions</b>	
1	How would you describe your general experiences with classroom interactions in an English language classroom?
2	How do you perceive the role of interactional pragmatic strategies in facilitating communication in your classes?
3	What strategies (paraphrasing, repetition, clarification, etc.) do you commonly use to manage classroom interactions, especially when a communication breakdown occurs?

4	How do you adjust your language or communication style to enhance mutual understanding with your students?
5	How do you typically respond when a communication problem arises between you and your students?
6	What strategies do you find most effective in resolving misunderstandings during classroom discussions?
7	From your observation, what strategies do your students use to clarify misunderstandings or to ensure they are understood?
8	How do you assess the effectiveness of these strategies? (refer to No.7)
9	How do cultural and linguistic differences among students influence your interactional strategies in the classroom?
10	In what ways do you accommodate these differences to maintain effective communication? (refer to No. 9)
11	How do you think these strategies impact the learning outcomes of your students?
12	What is your overall perception of using interactional pragmatic strategies in your teaching practice?

**Follow-up questions**

1	You mentioned using a specific strategy in that situation. Could you elaborate on why you thought this was the most effective approach?
2	When you rephrased your instructions, what alternative strategies did you consider? Why did you choose it?
3	How do you usually determine whether the strategies you used were successful in aiding mutual understanding?
4	You said that repetition helps students understand better. How do you decide when repetition is necessary versus when it might be redundant?
5	You noted that students responded well to your use of (a specific strategy). Have you identified any situations where this strategy did not work as well? Why do you think that was the case?
6	How do you adapt your strategies when you notice that some students struggle?
7	You discussed adapting your strategies for students from different cultural backgrounds. Can you share a specific example of how this adaptation was particularly challenging or rewarding?
8	How do you balance maintaining your teaching styles while accommodating the cultural and linguistic needs of your students?
9	You mentioned that you believe interactional pragmatic strategies are crucial in your teaching. Can you provide more details on how these strategies impact long-term learning outcomes?
10	In what ways do you think students perceive the effectiveness of these strategies? How did you receive any direct feedback from them?

**Semi-Structured Interviews for Students****Grand tour questions**

1	Please tell me about your educational background related to English and your background in English.
2	Please tell me about using English in your daily routine.
3	Explain how important English is for you now and in the future.
4	How often do you think you will use English? Why do you think so? Who would you like to communicate with in English?

**Main questions**

1	How do you feel about talking with your teacher and classmates in English during class?
2	Can you explain why communicating in English in class is easy or hard?
3	What do you do when you don't understand what the teacher is saying or when the teacher doesn't understand you?
4	Can you identify any points to ensure your teacher and classmates understand what you're saying?
5	How do you handle situations when there is a misunderstanding in the classroom and you have some time to address it?
6	What strategies help you most when you are trying to fix these misunderstandings?
7	How do you feel about how your teacher helps you understand the lessons?
8	Which of the teacher's strategies works best to make communication more transparent?
9	How do your culture and first language influence how you speak in class?
10	In what ways do you think your teacher and classmates consider cultural and first language differences when you speak in class?
11	What do you think about how communication strategies are used in the classroom?
12	How do you think communication strategies help you to learn effectively?

**Follow-up questions**

1	You said you used (a specific strategy) during a communication breakdown. Could you explain why you chose that particular approach?
2	When you responded to the teacher's question in a specific way, what were you trying to achieve? How did you know that your message was understood?
3	You mentioned that the teacher's use of (a specific strategy) helped you understand better. Can you describe a time when this strategy didn't work well for you? What happened?

4	When the teacher rephrased or simplified their explanation, how did you know? How did it change your understanding of the lesson?
5	You discussed how you try to resolve some misunderstandings with the teacher. Can you share more about when this didn't work as well as you expected? What did you do next?
6	How do you feel when a misunderstanding occurs in the classroom? How do you usually handle misunderstandings?
7	You mentioned that your cultural background affects how you communicate in class. Can you explain how this influences your interactions with the teacher and other students?
8	How do you feel when the teacher addresses cultural or linguistic differences in the classroom? Explain how this helps with your understanding or participation.
9	You noted that interactional strategies are essential for communication in the classroom. Give some examples of a strategy that you found particularly helpful or unhelpful.
10	How do you think your classmates feel about the strategies used by the teacher? How have you discussed these strategies with them? What was the consensus?

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