English Learners' Perceived Preferences for Different Types of Achievement Communication Strategies

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As the preliminary step for classroom instruction of communication strategies, this study explores communication strategies Korean English learners would prefer to use and how certain factors influence their preferences. In particular, the participants' preferences for achievement communication strategies are the interest of this study. It also considers whether proficiency and gender differences are related to the participants' communication strategy preferences. Survey questionnaires based on Paribakht's (1985) taxonomy of communication strategy were developed and distributed. 103 adult Korean English learners participated in the survey. Descriptive statistics showed that the participants preferred superordinate strategy most and the metalinguistic strategy least. The result also informed that while the preferences of the three communication strategies out of nine strategies were related to participants' proficiency level, there was no relationship between the communication strategy preference and gender. Implications of the findings are discussed in relation to classroom instruction and suggestions for future research are made.

[Perceived preferences for English communication strategy/gender difference/ language proficiency levels/의사소통전략 선호도/ 성별차이/언어 능숙도]

I. INTRODUCTION

While learning a new language, learners often experience difficulties in communicating in the target language. The difficulties are engendered by various causes such as a lack of vocabulary, lack of cultural references, or poor knowledge of structure. The issue is that these difficulties often lead to a discontinuation in communication and consequently demotivate language learners. In order to maintain the on-going communication, the learners consciously or subconsciously adopt communication strategies (CSs hereinafter).

In the field of foreign language education, CSs are frequently regarded as stepping

stones to continue communication and do it effectively as well (Littlemore, 2003). Since m aintaining communication itself can provide opportunities for practicing the language, being able to use CSs, especially the effective ones, is clearly important for language learners and their target language use and acquisition.

Being well aware of their critical roles, the 7th national curriculum of secondary school English of Korea also suggests explicit teaching of CSs by stating, "for effective communication, teach learners to frequently use various CSs in appropriate ways" (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 86). The assumption behind this statement is that CSs are teachable in classroom settings (Dörnyei, 1995; Kebir, 1994; Nakatani, 2005; Savignon, 1997). Given that learners can be motivated when learning what they prefer to learn, exploring language learners' communication strategy preferences is believed to be a needed preliminary step before actual instruction of the strategies in classroom settings.

In this regard, the present study surveys a group of Korean English learners to examine their perceived preference for the English CSs, in particular achievement CSs (Partibakht, 1985). Along with the participants' overall preferences of CSs, the study examines the extent to which the participants' preferences of CSs are related to gender and their level of target language proficiency. Three research questions the study poses are as follows:

1. What CSs do the participating Korean English learners prefer when faced with lexical difficulties in the target language?
2. What differences between males and females are expected in participants' communication strategy preferences?
3. What differences in communication strategy preferences can be expected according to participants' levels of English proficiency?

II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

1. Definitions of CSs

Since its important role in language learning and acquisition, many scholars have investigated CSs and resultantly defined them. First, Corder (1977, as cited in Bialystok, 1990) defines CSs as "a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty" (p. 3). Emphasizing aspects of interaction in communication, Tarone (1981) defines CSs as "a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared" (p. 288). Meanwhile, third, Faerch and Kasper (1983) are rather concerned with a speaker's

conscious adoption of CSs in their definition of CSs. They define CSs as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (p. 36). As such, different scholars define CSs differently, but what these definitions commonly indicate is that CSs include what speakers use to solve problems that occur during communication.

Recently, however, studies have gradually extended the boundary of language learners' uses of CSs beyond the problem-solving perspective. For instance, Poulisse (1997) argues for viewing CSs as a tool for clearer and more economical communication. Regarding code switching as one of the common CSs, second, Rampton (1995) points out that code switching is rather the unique ability of bilinguals than the indicator of their inability to grasp an expression in another language. In a similar vein, Cook (2000) also mentions that bilinguals actually play with language by switching language code. In this situation, code-switching is not adopted by language users to solve a communication difficulty but to show their multilinguistic competence.

2. Taxonomies of CSs

Along with the definitions, the efforts to classify the types of CSs were also made by scholars (Faerch & Kasper, 1984; Paribakht, 1985; Poulisse, 1993; Tarone, 1981). Among them, this study introduces two taxonomies. First, Faerch and Kasper (1984) categorize the CSs under either 'reduction' or 'achievement,' highlighting learners' conscious use of CSs. 'Reduction' CSs are the ones adopted by a speaker who is afraid of making a mistake and wants to increase his or her fluency by covering up the parts he or she is not competent. Therefore, the speaker who uses 'reduction' strategies rather give up or alter the originally planned communicative goal than cling to original plan. The strategies include topic avoidance, message abandonment, meaning replacement, and certain phonology avoidance. On the other hand, 'achievement' CSs, such as code switching, interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, paraphrase, and word coinage, are adopted by a speaker who tries to solve the problem of insufficient linguistic resources by expanding his or her communicative resources. Here, the speaker willingly takes the risk of using CSs and does not cease or give up communication.

Paribakht (1985) suggests a more detailed taxonomy of CSs based on the forty Iranian English learners' verbal output. She categorized CSs into semantic contiguity (e.g. comparison or superordinate), circumlocution, metalinguistic clue, linguistic context, use of idiom and proverbs, demonstration, exemplification, and mime (for further elaboration of each strategy, see Table 1 of this paper). Compared with the previous taxonomies, Paribakht's taxonomy is noteworthy in two regards. First, her taxonomy is based on the

output of learners of English, while others' taxonomies (Bialystok, 1983; Faerch & Kasper, 1984; Tarone 1981) come from the learners of other languages such as Spanish and French. As a result, researchers who are interested in English learners' CSs can refer to this taxonomy for their studies. Secondly, all strategies in Paribakht's taxonomy can be regarded as 'achievement' strategies with which a speaker expands his or her communicative resources to achieve the communicative goal originally set up. 'Achievement' strategies are used to "bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the second language learner and the linguistic knowledge of the target language interlocutor in real communication situations" (Tarone, 1981, p. 289). Also, achievement strategies are believed to have facilitating roles in communication (Kang, 2007, p. 126). Therefore, language learners' adoption of achievement strategies implies that the learners have better opportunities to be engaged in communication with successful delivery of their messages. Given that the researcher is interested in classroom instruction of CSs in EFL classrooms for learners' successful English communication, the current study adopts Paribakht's (1985) taxonomy of CSs to identify the participants' perceived preferences for English CSs when they are faced with lack of lexical knowledge.

3. CSs across Proficiency Level and Gender

Bialystok's (1983) study of the relationship between L2 proficiency and the use of CSs divided CSs into L1-based and L2-based strategies depending on "the source of information on which the strategy is based" (p. 105). For instance, while strategies such as switching into the first language and foreignizing belong to the L1-based strategies, semantic contiguity, circumlocution, and word coinage are all considered to be L2-based strategies. Using picture reconstruction task, she examined the CSs of French language learners. She found that, although the average number of CSs used was similar between the different proficiency groups, there were differences in the types of CSs used. Namely, learners in the high-proficiency group used more L2-based strategies which turned out to be more effective, while the low-proficiency group frequently used L1-based CSs, less effective strategies.

Paribakht (1985) also investigated whether proficiency is an important factor influencing the use of CSs and found the differences in communication strategy use among different proficiency groups. For example, the high-proficiency participants in her study used superordinate, comparison, circumlocution, and metalinguistic strategies more. In addition, the high-proficiency participants used the target language idioms and proverbs more while the low-proficiency participants used first language idioms and proverbs more. Again, the results suggest that there are differences in communication strategy use among learners at

different levels of proficiency.

With Chinese English learners, Chen (1990) conducted a similar study. The results showed that low-proficiency students used CSs much more frequently than high proficiency students do and the kinds of CSs were also different between the groups. Chen concludes that CSs used by high-proficiency students are more direct, economical, and meaningful than the ones used by their low-proficiency counterparts. Interestingly, this study also found that patterns of CSs might be dependent on learners' cultures. In this study, that is, participants did not use the mime and gesture strategies because the Chinese assume that using gestures during a conversation is rude (Chen, 1990, p. 174).

From previous research studies, it is clear that a learner's level of L2 proficiency is related to their uses of CSs. Moreover, high-proficiency learners appear to be more effective users of CSs than low-proficiency learners are. Therefore, one can assume that CSs used by high-proficiency learners might benefit low-proficiency learners' L2 communication. That is, instruction of some effective CSs may help low-proficiency students to overcome communication difficulties successfully.

Finally, regarding its relationship with gender, there have been studies that found gender differences in the use of language learning strategies (Green, & Oxford, 1995; Kaylani, 1996; Kyung Ja Kim, 2007; Seongwon Lee, & Eunji Lee, 2004), but few previous studies have investigated the relationship between gender and the use of CSs. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to investigate whether gender differences exist in learners' communication strategy preferences as it can also give some implications for the instruction of CSs.

4. Classroom Instruction of CSs

Even though there have been negative views about teaching CSs in language learning classrooms (Bialystok, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; Rossiter, 2003), there are also increasing studies that support the teachability of CSs in the classroom (Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2005; Kebir, 1994; Savignon, 1997). The first support for teaching CSs is proposed by Kebir's research (1994) on the use of CSs by adult immigrants in South Australia. By recording the learners and giving them feedback on the kind of CSs they were using in the classroom, Kebir found that her learners showed great improvement in their abilities to employ CSs and communication techniques. Based on her own research, Savignon (1997) also mentions that the training of CSs is effective when teachers encourage their students to use CSs such as asking for information, seeking clarification, circumlocution and linguistic or nonlinguistic efforts in order to maintain communication (p. 72). Dörnyei (1995) documented that teaching CSs, such as avoidance, circumlocution, and the use of fillers, led to improvements in the quality of circumlocution and increased

use of fillers among Hugarian English learners. In Japan, recently, Nakatani (2005) reports that explicit instruction of oral CSs in a 12-week EFL course succeeded in increasing awareness of CSs among the learners. Their raised awareness also led to the significant improvement in their proficiency test scores. Although these studies operationally define communication strategies differently, they are important in that they provide English language teachers with new incentive for improving learners' communicative abilities by supporting the teachability of CSs in classrooms.

Since there are many variables such as the learners or their proficiency levels to be considered in teaching CSs in classroom settings, more studies are also needed to enrich the research of classroom instruction of CSs. In Korean English education community where the communicative approach-based curriculum is being implemented and the explicit instruction of CSs in classroom settings is advocated by the government (Ministry of Education, 1998), it would be worthy trying to teach CSs in English learning classrooms. In this regard, the present study is believed to be a preliminary step to teach CSs to Korean English learners by examining their perceived preferences for CSs to overcome the gaps in their English lexis.

III. STUDY DESIGN

1. Operational Definitions of Variables

This study set up two independent variables and nine dependent variables. The first independent variable is gender and the second independent variable is proficiency level which is divided into high and low levels based on the results of a cloze test administered in this study. Following Paribakht's(1985) taxonomy of CSs, nine dependent variables are set, and they are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Types of Communication Strategies (Nine Dependent Variables)

Variables (CSs)	Operationalized definition of variables (Paribakht, 1985)
Superordinate	A strategy that provides a semantically related superordinate term for the target concept (e.g. [to explain the word 'drum'] This is a kind of a musical instrument)
Comparison	A strategy that uses similarities between the two items (e.g. [to explain the word 'broom']This is similar to a brush)
Circumlocution	A strategy that attempts to describe the characteristics of the concept (e.g. [to explain the word 'lantern']This lamp has a handle on it)

Metalinguistic clue	A strategy that gives metalinguistic information on the target item (e.g. [to explain the word 'swim'] This sporting verb sounds similar to skim)
Linguistic context	A strategy that provides a linguistic context for the target item, leaving the target item blank (e.g. [to explain the word 'memorize']If you are a new teacher, you should try to _____ your students' names first)
Use of idioms & proverbs	A strategy that clarifies the target concept using the idioms and proverbs of the first language or the second language (e.g. [to explain the word 'drum']There is an expression 'My heart is beating like this'")
Demonstration	A strategy that creates a concrete situation reflecting the target concept (e.g. [to explain the word 'run']Imagine that you don't have enough time to walk to your next class, you may need to do this to be on time)
Exemplification	A strategy that uses examples, such as certain people, or real events, that reflect the target concept (e.g. [to explain the word 'skate']In winter time, you can find a place to do this in front of the Rockefeller Center in New York City)
Mime	A nonverbal strategy that uses meaningful gestures explaining the target item (e.g. [to explain the word 'comprehend'] I would use mime to explain this, such as by pointing at my head with my index finger)

2. Participants

The participants of this study were 103 Korean students studying at an American university. They were fifty-two graduate, thirty-nine undergraduate, and twelve language program students. At the time of data collection, all of them were taking different ESL courses offered by the university. Among them, forty-nine were females and fifty-four were males. Their average age was twenty nine years old, and their average length of residence in the US was two years and six months. According to the results of their performance in cloze tests designed for the study, participants were later categorized as either having high-proficiency level or having low-proficiency level. The participants were asked to complete the survey voluntarily and were free to end their participation whenever they wanted.

3. Instruments

1) Survey

The first instrumentation for this study was a survey in which the participants' perceived preferences for nine types of CSs were inquired (see the Appendix A). In the survey, five concrete nouns (lantern; drum; coin; monkey; broom) and five verbs(memorize, run, skate, swim, and comprehend) were presented as unknown English word. Under each word, five

different communication strategies were stated indirectly and the participants were asked to express their preferences with five-point Likert-type scales. Total fifty items were presented in the survey and the numbers of the questions relative to each subcategory of CSs were as follows: nine questions for circumlocution strategy, ten questions for mime strategies, six questions for use of idioms & proverbs strategy, six questions for demonstration strategy, six questions for superordinate strategy, three questions for exemplification strategy, five questions for comparison strategy, four questions for linguistic context strategy, and one question for metalinguistic clue strategy.   Finally, the reliability coefficient calculated by internal consistency method (Cronbach's alpha) was .83.

2) Cloze Test

In this study, a cloze test was adopted to determine the participants' proficiency levels within the group (see the Appendix B). The cloze test has been believed as one of the integrative measures for overall language ability (Oller, 1979). That is, while searching for the coherent answers for the cloze test, learners' other language abilities should be tapped in together (Brown, 2004). Therefore, using cloze test is believed as a useful way to measure language learners' language proficiency in a short time (Heaton, 1990, p. 90).

A reading text for the cloze test was chosen from an ESL reading book. From the text, every fifth word was deleted except the case when the fifth word is proper noun. Because forty or fifty blanks are believed as a minimum number of blanks to make a cloze test reliable (Heaton, 1990), the current cloze test had forty blanks. The participants were asked to fill each blank with one word. Any acceptable words in addition to the exact words deleted were counted as correct and given 1 point. When the first marking was over, it was reviewed by a different rater.

The mean of the cloze test was 24.56. The lowest score was 4 and the highest one was 37.00. The computed standard deviation was 7.00. Then, the mean score became the criterion for dividing the proficiency levels for this study. Fifty-three participants who got scores above 24 (range: 25-37) were regarded as high-proficiency participants, and forty-six participants with scores less than or equal to 24 (range: 4-24) were grouped as low-proficiency group.

4. Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied using the SPSS (version 18.0). In order to investigate the participants' general communication strategy preferences, first,

descriptive statistics were used. Then, to examine whether gender is a factor influencing the perceived preferences among the participants in this study, t-test was conducted. In order to find the relationships between communication strategy preferences and participants' proficiency levels, Pearson's Correlation Coefficients and t-test were computed.

IV. RESULT

1. General Preferences for CSs

The answers for the first research question—participants' overall preference for CSs-were obtained through descriptive statistics. The mean scores of the items for each communication strategy were used in order to find out which CSs the participants prefer to use when encountered with lexical difficulties. The summary of results is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Nine Types of CSs

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Superordinate	3.70	.59	2.00	5.00
Comparison	3.64	.60	1.60	4.80
Exemplification	3.64	.86	1.00	5.00
Linguistic Context	3.61	.78	1.00	5.00
Circumlocution	3.57	.55	1.89	4.89
Demonstration	3.54	.74	1.00	4.83
Mime	3.36	.75	1.00	4.80
Use of Idiom & Proverb	2.92	.73	1.00	4.50
Metalinguistic Clue	2.03	.98	1.00	4.00

As shown in Table 2, the results indicate that the mean score of the superordinate strategy (*mean* = 3.70) is highest and that of the metalinguistic strategy is the lowest (*mean* = 2.03). That is, the participants of this study expressed thier preference for superordinate strategy most but metalinguistic clue strategy least. Next to superordinate strategy, the participants equally prefer comparison strategy (*mean* = 3.64) and exemplification strategy (*mean* = 3.64). Use of idiom and/or proverb was the second least preferred strategy among the participants of this study (*mean* = 2.92).

2. Perceived Preferences by Gender and Proficiency Level

The participants' perceived preferences by gender are summarized in Table 3. Among the male participants, first, the mean score of exemplification was highest (3.66 ±.90), but that of metalinguistic clue was lowest (1.98±1.04). Meanwhile, the mean score of superordinate was highest among the female participants (3.78±.65). Metalinguistic clue was also the subcategory of CSs whose mean score was the lowest (2.10 ±.94) in the female group. As shown in Table 3, however, t-test results tell that there was no statistically significant difference in perceived preferences for CSs by gender.

Table 3

The Results of t-test by Gender (N=95)

Variables	Male	Female	t	p
	Mean±SD	Mean±SD		
Superordinate	3.64 ±.55	3.78 ± .65	−1.172	.244
Comparison	3.64 ±.62	3.64 ±.59	−.028	.977
Exemplification	3.66 ±.90	3.63 ±.83	.162	.872
Linguistic Context	3.54 ±.82	3.70 ±.76	−1.034	.304
Circumlocution	3.60 ±.53	3.54 ±.58	.506	.614
Demonstration	3.53 ±.73	3.56 ±.77	−.244	.808
Mime	3.41 ±.70	3.33 ±.80	.511	.611
Use of Idiom & Proverb	2.90 ±.74	2.97 ±.74	−.469	.640
Metalinguistic Clue	1.98 ±1.04	2.10 ±.94	−.616	.539

Next, the preferences for CSs by participants' proficiency levels were computed. The results of Pearson's correlation coefficients show the overall correlations between the participants' proficiency levels and their preference for CSs are as follows.

The results in Table 4 show that proficiency level and the scores of preferences for seven CSs (circumlocution, mime, use of idiom and proverb, demonstration, linguistic context, metalinguistic clue, and exemplification strategies) are negatively correlated. On the other hand, the scores of preferences for superordinate and comparison strategies were positively correlated with participants' proficiency level. Among all nine CSs, however, demonstration strategy is the only variable which is significantly correlated with proficiency level. To answer the third research question - whether the proficiency level is a factor influencing preferences for CSs-, t-test was conducted, yielding the results prepared in Table 5.

Table 4
The Results of Correlation among Variables

Variables	P	SU	CI	MI	IP	DE	CO	LC	ML
SU	.069 (.507)								
CI	-.085 (.416)	.506 (.000)							
MI	-.168 (.112)	.186 (067)	.229 (.022)						
IP	-.073 (.488)	.231 (.021)	.546 (.000)	.077 (.453)					
DE	-.212 (.040)	.414 (.000)	.721 (.000)	.194 (.055)	.591 (.000)				
CO	.038 (.718)	.428 (.000)	.290 (.003)	.103 (.310)	.002 (.982)	.254 (.010)			
LC	-.184 (.075)	.347 (.000)	.622 (.000)	.261 (.009)	.539 (.000)	.739 (.000)	.144 (.148)		
ML	-.032 (.755)	.043 (.670)	.261 (.008)	.113 (.267)	.375 (.000)	.160 (.109)	-.103 (.301)	.215 (.030)	
EX	-.061 (.557)	.226 (.023)	.455 (.000)	.306 (.002)	.599 (.000)	.497 (.00)	.119 (.234)	.442 (.000)	.265 (.007)

P: proficiency, SU: superordinate, CI: circumlocution, MI: mime, IP: use of idiom and proverb, DE: demonstration, CO; comparison, LC: linguistic context, ML: metalinguistic clue, EX: exemplification

Table 5
The Results of t-test by Proficiency Group (N=95)

Variables	High proficiency	Low proficiency	t	P
	Mean±SD	Mean±SD		
Superordinate	3.70±.58	3.69±.62	.080	.936
Comparison	3.57±.56	3.65±.63	−.669	.505
Exemplification	3.53±.86	3.78±.86	−1.376	.172
Linguistic Context	3.41±.84	3.82±.64	−2.630	.010
Circumlocution	3.49±.61	3.65±.49	−1.422	.158
Demonstration	3.34±.81	3.78±.62	−2.907	.004
Mime	3.16±.85	3.57±.59	−2.641	.010
Use of Idiom & Proverb	2.83±.87	3.04±.56	−1.393	.167
Metalinguistic Clue	1.98±1.00	2.09±.92	−.564	.574

The results show that score of superordinate strategy is highest in high proficiency group in this study (3.70±.58) and that of metalinguistic clue strategy is lowest (1.98±1.00). Among the low proficiency group, linguistic clue strategy score is highest (3.41±.84). Like the high proficiency group, metalinguistic clue strategy also scores lowest

in low proficiency group (2.09±.92). Three subcategories of CSs show the statistically significant differences by proficiency level, and they are mime ($t=-2.641$, $p=.010$), demonstration ($t=-2.907$, $p=.004$), and linguistic clue strategy ($t=-2.630$, $p=.010$).

V. DISCUSSION

It was found that achievement communication strategy the participants of the study preferred to use most was superordinate strategy. Comparison and exemplification strategies were the second most preferred strategies, followed by linguistic context, circumlocution, and demonstration strategies. The participants of this study however less prefer to use the strategies such as mime and use idioms and/or proverbs. Lastly, the results showed that metalinguistic clue strategy was preferred least by the participants. Provided that the selections of CSs are related to their perceived effectiveness (Littlemore, 2004), the findings imply that the strategies the participants prefer to use are the ones they perceive as more effective than other strategies in the contexts of this research.

Regarding the second research question, the present study did not find any statistically significant relationship between gender and the preferences for CSs. This finding means that as long as English CSs preferences are concerned, there is no difference between male and female learners. Gender has been discussed as a factor influencing language learners' learning strategy use (Green, & Oxford, 1995; Kaylani, 1996; Kyung Ja Kim, 2007) and preference (Wehrwein, Lujan, & Dicarlo, 2007). Therefore, it would be desirable to explore the gender and language learners' preferences for and use of CSs further to reach a reliable conclusion.

Whereas the gender was found as a component having no influence on the participants' preference for CSs, proficiency level turned out to influence the participants' preferences for CSs. Even though not all nine CSs showed the same patterns of preference by proficiency level, three CSs, mime, demonstration, and linguistic clue strategies, showed the statistically significant differences according to the participants' English proficiency levels. That is, the participants categorized into the low proficiency group in this study preferred mine, demonstration, and linguistic context strategies more than their counterparts in the high proficiency group did.

This result can be discussed in connection with the findings of Paribakht's (1985) study of communication strategy use. The low-proficiency students in her study used demonstration, exemplification, and mime strategies more whereas CSs, such as superordinate, comparison, circumlocution, and metalinguistic clue, were used more by advanced learners of the study. Chen's (1990) study also found that exemplification

strategy was used more by low-proficiency learners in his study. In the current study, even though they were not statistically significant, the high-proficiency group participants' two most preferred CSs were superordinate and comparison strategies whereas the strategies low-proficiency group participants expressed their preferences included demonstration and exemplification strategies. Therefore, the fact that mime and demonstration strategies were preferred by the low proficiency group in this study and the fact that low-proficiency group used them more (Paribakht, 1985) indicate that preference for and use of CSs might be related to a certain extent. More systematic research inquiring the relationship between the two are therefore needed.

The results also tell that the correlations between the scores of the preference for CSs and proficiency were overall negative except two CSs (superordinate and comparison). Even though demonstration strategy is the only one significantly correlated, this result can be also viewed in relation to the findings of the previous communication strategy studies (Chen, 1990; Paribakht, 1985). Both studies found that the higher the proficiency levels of the learners were, the less frequently they used CSs. Of course, as language learners become more proficient, they might feel less necessity for the use of CSs due to their increased lexical knowledge. The findings of the current research can be understood in a similar vein in that the high-proficiency participants' perceived competence in lexical knowledge might have rendered their low preference for CSs in general. Another possible reason for the present result might be that the participants of this study do not perceive the CSs in this study were not that effective, resulting in overall low mean scores of preferences. A future research can have participants themselves write down the strategies they would use in given contexts in a hope to obtain more personalized and enriched data.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study identified the types of achievement CSs for which a group of Korean English learners express their preferences. The results also showed that the English proficiency levels affect English learners' preferences for some CSs, but that gender does not have any statistically significant influence on the participants' preferences for CSs. As the preliminary step for the instruction of CS, the results of this study are believed to be noteworthy in that they provide one picture of Korean English learners' preference for CSs.

Based on the findings of the study, some implications can be made for the classroom instruction of CSs. First of all, since gender was found to have no influence on making difference in preferences for CSs, teachers might not need to seriously consider teaching different CSs by learners' gender. The findings of this study however imply that teachers

had better pay attention to learners' proficiency levels if they are interested in teaching CSs in classrooms. That is, instead of teaching the same CSs to students whose English proficiency levels are different and thus whose preferences for CSs might be different, teachers can acknowledge the differences in preferences and make efforts to identify how different the preferences are and how to reflect the differences in their classroom instruction of CSs.

The findings of this study should be interpreted within this sample because the sample for the study was not selected randomly but by convenience. Given that the majority of participants of the study were studying at a US college, for instance, their English proficiency levels can be differently grouped in different research of CSs. A same research with a larger population may result in more reliable information regarding the preferences for CSs among Korean English learners. Second, the CSs dealt with in this study are limited to achievement CSs related to lexical difficulties. Consequently, some strategies that may be preferred by the learners under the authentic situations of communication (e.g. avoidance strategy) have not been considered in the study.

Regarding future research, first, through follow-up interview sessions or different data collection, a future study can investigate why Korean students of different proficiency levels prefer certain CSs more to other CSs. Also, identifying how other factors other than gender and proficiency levels (e.g. personality, aptitude, attitude, learning strategy, etc.) have influence on English learners' preferences for CSs may expand the understanding of preferences for CSs. When enough studies of preferences for CSs are conducted, future research can also explore the learners' actual use of CSs and its relationship with language proficiency level and gender. Kyung Ja Kang (2007) recently investigated twelve Korean ESL learners' actual use of communication strategies. If a similar study is conducted in a large scale, it would be possible to expand the understanding of uses of CSs and their relationships with proficiency levels and gender among Korean English learners. Finally, no studies have reported about the explicit instructions of CSs and its effects with Korean English learners. Referring to the preferred CSs found in this study, future research can focus on teaching those CSs in classroom settings and discussing its result in terms of learners' language performance and their perceptions of CSs as well.

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APPENDIX A
Survey of Preferences for CSs <Parts>

Direction: *Imagine that you do not know the meanings of the following words below but need to explain them in English. Indicate how you would explain the meanings by circling your preference (SA-strongly agree, A-agree, U-undecided, D-disagree, SD-strongly disagree) for the following statements:*

Monkey
1. I would use a mime to explain the word. For instance, I would scratch one of my cheeks with a hand, or use other gestures.

    SA   A   U   D   SD
2. I would say, "This is one of the closest animals to men."

    SA   A   U   D   SD
3. I would say, "There is a saying, 'Even this animal falls from a tree sometimes.'"

          SA   A   U   D   SD
4.   I would say, "This animal has a long tail."
          SA   A   U   D   SD
5.   I would say, "Suppose that you are visiting a zoo. You are taking a picture in front of this animal's cage. Suddenly, the animal snatches a banana from your hand. Can you guess what animal this is?"
          SA   A   U   D   SD

Comprehend

1.   I would say, "Sometimes, there is a phenomenon even scientists cannot _____."
          SA   A   U   D   SD
2.   I would say, "Suppose that you are taking an exam. You must read a paragraph first and then answer some questions. In order to answer the questions, you first have to understand or _____ the paragraph."
          SA   A   U   D   SD
3.   I would say, "This verb occurs when you understand something new or what you didn't understand before."
          SA   A   U   D   SD
4.   I would use mime to explain this, such as by pointing at my head with my index finger.
          SA   A   U   D   SD
5   I would say, "This verb is similar to understand."
          SA   A   U   D   SD

APPENDIX B
Cloze Test

Direction: There are 40 words deleted in the following passage. Please, read this passage carefully and *fill the each blank with one word* you think appropriate. You will have only 15 minutes. Please, don't talk about the answers with others during test.

Complaints of a Customer:

        Last Sunday afternoon, I _____ a tape-recorder at the Top Value Department Store in Causeway Bay.   After I had _____ for the tape-recorder, the _____ went to the stock _____ and came back a _____ later with a wrapped _____ which he said included the tape-recorder I had purchased.

_____ soon as I had been _____ the parcel and my _____, I left the department _____ and returned home.

When I got home, I unwrapped the parcel. You can imagine _____ surprised I was to _____ that the tape-recorder in _____ parcel was not the _____ I had purchased. In _____, it was a much _____ model. _____, when I _____ the tape-recorder in, I _____ that it did not _____ work properly.

I immediately _____ the tape-recorder back to _____ department store to ask them to exchange it for _____ model I had originally _____ but when I showed _____ salesman the tape-recorder and my receipt, he only pointed _____ a sign on the wall that read "Goods Purchased _____ Not Refundable."

I think _____ is unreasonable for the Top Value Department Store to _____ to give me either _____ tape-recorder that I originally _____ or a full refund _____ my money since it _____ they who made the _____ and not I and _____ I have a receipt _____ prove it.   I felt very angry at their attitudes _____ the customers. I think _____ I will never go _____ to the department store _____.

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