



## The Roles of Communication Strategies Training on Korean College Students' Investment and Identity in English Learning

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### Abstract

This study is an investigation of the roles of communication strategy (CS) training on Korean college students' attitudes towards English learning, their construction of investment (Norton, 2013; Norton Peirce, 1995), and their negotiation of identity. CS training included six strategies: code-switching, non-verbal communications, word coinage, appeal for assistance, avoidance, and circumlocution. During six weeks of CS training, 40 students completed written surveys. Of them, five participated in open-ended interviews. In vivo coding was applied to the interview data followed by thematic analysis to discover themes that recursively emerged from the codes. Survey data supplemented the interview data. Results showed that the students found CS training fresh, enjoyable, and helpful. They also found that CS training helped them increase their self-confidence and willingness to learn English, which provided a foundation on which to construct their investment and negotiate their identities as language learners. Focusing on explicit and efficient instruction in the use of CSs, this study demonstrates that providing explicit instruction in the use of effective CSs can play a critical role in students' language learning by raising their awareness, encouraging them to take risks, and providing them with models of and opportunities to learn and use CSs.

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## INTRODUCTION

English education in Korea has long been deeply rooted in transmission-based and grammar-oriented instruction (Uysal & Bardakci, 2014). As a consequence, despite many years of learning English, Korean people, while confident in reading and writing, often lack sufficient communication skills and confidence to engage in oral interactions in English (Park, 2023). This lack of speaking and listening proficiency results in difficulties achieving their communicative purposes but cannot be easily overcome without extensive exposure to the spoken language. Meanwhile, communication strategies (henceforth CSs) may be used to bridge their current linguistic resources to what they wish to express (Faucette, 2001). As Faerch and Kasper (1983) argued, CSs can be used as effective tools for "solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem" in a

particular situation by “reaching a particular communicative goal” (p. 36).

Effective communication skills involve linguistic, sociolinguistic, rhetorical, and strategic competencies (Park & Yang, 2021). Canale and Swain’s (1980) definition of CSs as options that supported “the ability to cope in an authentic communicative situation and to keep the communicative channel open” (p. 25) has subsequently been adopted by Chen (1990), Thornbury (2005), and Uztosun and Erten (2014). Similarly, Park and Yang (2021) described strategic competence as “the ability to use strategies to overcome communication problems resulting from lack of the other competences, especially linguistic” (p. 23). Accordingly, Uztosun and Erten (2014) recommended investigating how learners’ ability to use CSs supports their communicative competence, which would be highly relevant in the Korean context, where many experience difficulties in speaking English despite years of study.

This study is an investigation of how six weeks of CS training affected Korean college students’ attitudes toward English learning, and most importantly how they constructed their learning investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2013; Norton & Gao, 2008; Norton Peirce, 1995) in English and negotiated their identity as language learners during CS training. The goal is to explore how these college students constructed their relationship with English not as unitary, personally bounded, and ahistorical language learners, but as language learners with complex social histories and relationships and multiple desires (Norton, 1997; 2013).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Communication Strategies

Communication strategies, a term coined by Selinker in 1972, generally refer to work-arounds that language learners can readily employ to overcome linguistic deficiencies in interlanguage communication and achieve particular communicative goals (Dornyei & Scott, 1997; Mei & Nathalang, 2010; Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh, 2014; Sukirlan, 2014). Scholars have not reached consensus on a rigorous definition of a CS (Mei & Nathalang, 2010). However, Hua et al.’s (2012) definition as “a conscious attempt to communicate the learner’s thought when the interlanguage structures are inadequate to convey that thought” (p. 834), in which they reference Faerch and Kasper’s (1983) description of CSs as “the techniques employed when one fails to explicitly express oneself” (p. 834). Tarone (1980) also provided a useful definition of CSs as “tools used in negotiation of meaning ... [to reach] a communicative goal ... [in] a shared enterprise ... [for] which both the speaker and the hearer ... have responsibility ...” (p. 424). As Brett (2001) observed, CSs are particular tactics that language learners employ to solve communication problems, maintain active communication, and “improve the effectiveness of communication” (p. 53).

Emphasizing their social dimension, Cervantes and Rodriguez (2012) characterize CSs as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations in which they do not share the requisite meaning structures” (p. 114). Surkirlan (2014) takes both an interactional and a psycholinguistic perspective on CSs. From the former, they bridge for “the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the speaker and the linguistic knowledge of the interlocutor” in actual communication. From the latter, CSs provide a “as psychological problem-solving framework and are treated as mental phenomena which underlay actual language behavior” (Surkirlan, 2014, p. 2033). Nakatani and Gho (2007) also mention interactional and psycholinguistic perspectives. From the former view, “CSs are regarded not only as problem-solving phenomena to compensate for communication disruptions, but also as devices with pragmatic discourse functions for message enhancement” (p. 208). From the latter, CSs are considered “learners’ problem-solving behaviors arising from gaps in their lexical knowledge” (p. 208).

Faerch and Kasper (1984) classified CSs into reduction strategies and achievement strategies, which Cervantes and Rodriguez (2012) and Hua et al. (2012) investigated. They identified achievement strategies as including word coinage, code-switching, paraphrasing, appeal for assistance, and time-gaining strategies, which are employed for both compensatory and retrieval purposes to allow language learners to maintain their original communicative goals through alternative plans using accessible linguistic resources. According to Hua et al. (2012), achievement strategies are used to help “interlocutors bridge communication gaps” (p. 833).

In contrast, reduction strategies involve giving up part of their original communication goals and settling for conveying partial messages without solving problems they encounter (Cervantes & Rodriguez, 2012; Hua et al., 2012). Such strategies include meaning replacement, message abandonment, and topic avoidance (Cervantes & Rodriguez, 2012). Rastegar and Gohari (2016) found that high proficiency learners tend to use achievement strategies to strengthen communication with interlocutors, but low proficiency learners tend to use reduction strategies. In the present study, six strategies, including five

achievement strategies (code-switching, appeal for assistance, non-verbal communication, word coinage, and circumlocution) and one reduction strategy (topic avoidance) were introduced in a college English course.

Concerning frequencies of CS usage, Sukirlan (2014) found that the most frequent CS used by the language learners was circumlocution, which is particularly efficient for not only solving gaps in communication but also maintaining conversational flow. Teng's (2012) compared frequencies of strategy use before and after an intervention and reported that in a pre-assessment, circumlocution was the most frequently and word coinage the least frequently used strategy, but in the post-assessment, appeal for assistance was the most frequently used strategy while word coinage remained the least frequently used.

Paribakht (1986) found no differences in frequencies of CS usage between intermediate and advanced ESL learners in Canada, but others found differences between low and high proficiency learners. Hua et al. (2012) found that word coinage was the least used CS by both high and low proficiency learners, but that while high proficiency learners used self-repair most frequently, low proficiency learners used code switching most frequently. On the other hand, Chen (1990) found that low proficiency English learners in China used exemplification and high proficiency learners employed approximation or circumlocution more often. Uzatosun and Erten (2014), finally, found that high proficiency students used non-verbal communication more frequently than low proficiency students, and low proficiency students used message reduction and topic avoidance more frequently. Among these varied results, the most consistent finding is that word coinage is the least likely strategy to be used by language learners.

However, whether CSs should be taught has been controversial (Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh, 2014), and training in CSs is often omitted from teacher training and professional development programs. Bialystok (1990) argued that “what one must teach students of a language is not strategy, but language” (p. 147), with which Kellerman (1991) agreed. Maleki (2007) referred to Skehan's (1998) contention that teaching “skilled learners in using CS may stop development of their interlanguage knowledge resources” (p. 586). Taking a similar perspective, Cervantes and Rodriguez (2012) stated that, regardless of their level of L2 proficiency, most adult language learners already know ways of using CSs in their L1. Thus, as cognitive processes are the same in L1 and L2 (Kellerman, 1991), teaching CSs is redundant. In sum, it has primarily been argued that teaching the language itself is much more important than teaching alternatives to using it.

Nevertheless, many scholars have advocated teaching CSs (Brett, 2001; Cervantes & Rodriguez, 2012; Chen, 1990; Dornyei & Thurrell, 1991, 1994; Faerch & Kasper, 1983, 1986; Faucette, 2001; Maleki, 2007; Tarone, 1984; Tarone & Yule, 1989; Teng, 2012; Willems, 1987). Faucette (2001), for example, claimed that, as using CSs “empowers students to participate in communication by helping them to not give up” (p. 27), it was language teachers' responsibility to provide them with these tools. Maleki (2007) stated that “CS teaching is conducive to the development of strategic competence” (p. 585). Chen (1990) argued that “learners' strategic and, accordingly, communicative competence might be increased through recommended CS training” (p. 585), and Dornyei (1995) found that effective teaching of CSs could positively influence L2 development.

Park and Yang (2021) found that teaching CSs increased Korean college students' use of four compensatory strategies, code-switching, word-coinage, approximation, and non-verbal expression and positively influenced their willingness to communicate (WTC). Teng (2012) investigated the effects for Taiwanese college students of 15 weeks of CS training in nine strategies, including topic avoidance, word coinage, circumlocution, non-verbal communication, and appeal for assistance. The results showed that while the students rarely used non-verbal communication, they adopted appeal for assistance and circumlocution, confirming “the facilitating effect of CS training to Taiwanese EFL students” (p. 3569).

In light of such positive results, a goal of current study was to enrich the relevant literature and encourage the teaching of CSs in the curricula teacher training and professional development programs (Cervantes & Rodriguez, 2012) and other professional development opportunities. A mixed methods design entailing a qualitative investigation of the roles of teaching CSs on college EFL learners' construction of investment and a quantitative investigation of learners' attitudes towards six target CS strategies.

## Investment and Identity

The concept of investment was introduced by Bonny Norton Peirce (1995) in her article, “Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning,” in which she also discussed her research on language learners' identity, imagined identities and imagined communities, power relations, and how they are involved in the notion of investment. She first introduced the argument that scholars in the second language acquisition (SLA) field had not adequately dealt the questions of what makes a language learner motivated/unmotivated, extroverted/introverted, and confident/anxious. In addition, Norton Peirce (1995) argued that SLA theorists had not fully articulated “a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language

learner and the language learning context” and addressed “how relations of power in the social world affect social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers” (p. 12). She then argued that SLA theory should acknowledge that language learners have “a complex social identity,” and that the role of language is “constitutive of and constituted by” this identity” (p. 13). She concluded her argument with the position that from this perspective, “language is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication but is understood with reference to its social meaning” (p. 13). According to Norton (2013), the concept of motivation is limited as an explanation of “a learner’s commitment to learning the target language” (p. 16), because as “a primarily psychological construct” (p. 6), it is too one-dimensional to clarify how power relations, identity, and language learning are intertwined and so presupposes “a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner” (p. 17).

Norton Peirce (1995) explained investment as language learners’ “socially and historically constructed relationship” of the target language (TL) mediated by their “ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (p. 17). As individuals with “a complex social identity and multiple desires,” language learners continuously construe “a sense of who they are,” or their identity, and pursue ways to be integrated into their changing social world (p. 17-18). Accordingly, Norton (2013) asserted that language learners’ “desire and commitment to learn a language and their complex and changing identity” (p. 6) should be examined within a sociocultural framework. Darwin (2019) defined investment as “the commitment to the goals, practices, and identities that constitute the learning process and that are continually negotiated in different relations of power” (p. 245). From an instructional perspective, Park (2019) emphasized the crucial roles of language teachers and the use of effective learning material and instructional methods in the construction of investment.

Acknowledging the deep connection between identity and investment, Norton (2013) related a language learners’ identity to “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (p. 45). Darwin (2019) expanded Norton’s (2013) conceptualization by emphasizing rejection of the idea that “a person has an essential, fixed, and coherent core,” pointing out that “language learners have complex, multiple and sometimes contradictory identities” ..., so “when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with others, but are reconfiguring their relationship to the social world” (p. 248). Norton and Gao (2008) similarly described a language learner as “having a complex identity, changing across time and space, and reproduced in social interaction” (p. 110). Emphasizing the reciprocity between language learning and social growth, Darwin (2019) stated that a language learners’ negotiations of identity through language simultaneously build social organization and one’s sense of self.

Norton (1997) also shared West’s (1992) position on the influence of desire on identity, stating that “identity relates to desire – the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation, and the desire for security and safety..., which “are deeply connected to “the distribution of material resources in society” (p. 410). As people who obtain access to those resources in a society, they may also obtain access to power and privilege. Norton (1997) also mentioned West’s reference to Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of “the relationship between identity and symbolic power” (p. 410).

Referring to Weedon’s (1987) focus on “integrating language, individual experiences, and social power in a theory of subjectivity” (p. 411), Norton (1997) observed that the subject positions assumed by an individual depend on the power relations within specific social sites, which personal agency and language play an important role in constructing. Norton Peirce’s (1995) analysis of the identity construction of two immigrant women in Canada, Martina and Eva, during their target language learning experiences exemplified the notion of “social identity as multiple and a site of struggle” (p. 20). Martina’s multiple identities, including those of “an immigrant, a mother, a language learner, a worker, a wife” (p. 21) compelled her to invest in learning English, enabling her to overcome her language difficulty well enough to sustain a long conversation with her native English-speaking landlord and protect her family’s housing. Also, Norton Peirce found that Martina was able to establish her social identity among younger co-workers by “setting up a counter discourse in her workplace and resisting the subject position [of] immigrant woman in favor of the subject position [of] mother” (p. 23). Thus, her investment in language learning and her agency were mutually reinforcing. Norton Peirce (1995) also reported how Eva, an immigrant from Poland, claimed her right to speak, developed her communicative competence, and changed her social identity in her workplace from that of an immigrant to “a conception of herself as a multicultural citizen with the power to impose reception” (pp. 23-24).

With reference to these two cases of how immigrant women strategically utilized their limited communication skills in a second language to leverage their social identity and agency and simultaneously expanded their linguistic resources, the present study is an investigation of how Korean college students construct their identity and language learning investment during CS training, guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What are Korean college students’ attitudes toward CS training?
- 2) How have their attitudes toward English learning changed after CS training?

- 3) What are their attitudes towards the six CSs taught during the training?
- 4) How has the CS training affected their construction of investment and negotiation of identity as language learners?

## METHOD

### Research Context

This research was conducted in a required first-year English listening and speaking skills course in the Fall semester of 2022 at a four-year university in a metropolitan city in Korea. The class met for 110 minutes once a week for 15 weeks. The class was taught mainly in English, but Korean was also occasionally used. In addition to the designated textbook, the instructor had the flexibility to design supplementary materials and practice instructional methods to meet students' learning needs as long as they completed final assignments that met certain requirements. Accordingly, as an instructor of the course, I decided to employ CS training to help students learn techniques to solve their communication problems, maintain active communication, and improve their communicative efficacy (Brett, 2001). In addition to CS training, I also employed diverse instructional materials, such as American dramas, pop music, idiom instruction, grammar lessons, and vocabulary lessons, throughout the semester.

The participants in this study were 40 college students who were enrolled in three different sections of the course, two comprising first-year students majoring in social welfare and chemical engineering and one comprising second-, third-, and fourth-year students with diverse majors, who were re-enrolled in the course. The three sections had almost the same class format and used the same textbook and instructional materials. General information about the 40 participants is provided in Table 1:

**TABLE 1**  
*The Participants' General Information*

General information		The number of participants
Majors	Chemical Engineering	8
	Social Welfare	12
	Mechanical Engineering	3
	Chemical Engineering	2
	Mathematics	2
	Accounting	2
	Political Science and International Relations	1
	Global Commerce	1
	Electronic Engineering	1
	Software	1
	AI Convergence	1
	Industrial and Information Systems Engineering	1
	Japanese Language and Literature	1
	Global Media	1
	Economics	1
	Social Welfare	1
	Sports	1
Gender	Male	26
	Female	14

Unfortunately, I did not have external information about the participants' English skills, such as standardized test scores, but while observing and teaching them for 15 weeks, I discerned that most of the participants had beginner or intermediate proficiency. Also, I was able to determine that, except for a few, the participants had indifferent or lukewarm attitudes towards English learning, which was not surprising because they were taking the course not by choice but in order to graduate. Therefore, the tenor of the three sections was quite subdued, even though it was for English listening and speaking skills, which they found challenging.

To closely investigate the students' attitudes towards and experiences with CS training, I selected five focal participants to be interviewed, two social welfare majors and three chemical engineering majors (see Table 2 for demographic information). My purpose was to capture the actual voices of students discussing CS training as the major data of the study. During the selection process, I observed how engaged each student was in the training and sought those who showed active involvement. Also, I endeavored to recruit as many students as I could so as to have a broad representation of majors, linguistic backgrounds, and proficiency levels. In the two sections comprising social welfare students and re-enrolled students, the language proficiency of the students varied, while most of the students majoring in chemical engineering had beginner level of proficiency. However, only five students whom I asked to be focal students accepted my invitation.

In recruiting focal students, I followed ethical procedures, which included clearly explaining the purpose of the interview, that participation depended entirely on their choice, and that data could be withheld at their request without need of explanation. There was no risk of penalty for students who declined to be interviewed. To maintain confidentiality, all focal students are identified by pseudonyms. Table 2 shows the demographic information of the five focal students.

**TABLE 2**  
*The Focal Students' Demographic Information*

Participant	Gender	Major	English proficiency	Attitudes towards English before CS training
Minho	Male	Chemical Engineering	Beginner	Ambivalent attitude
Sohee	Female	Chemical Engineering	Beginner	Indifferent attitude
Soomin	Female	Chemical Engineering	Beginner	Ambivalent attitude
Ahyoung	Female	Social Welfare	Beginner/Intermediate	Favorable attitude
Jisoo	Female	Social Welfare	Intermediate	Favorable attitude

By interviewing these students, I was able to perceive their attitudes towards English before CS training more accurately.

## Communication Strategy (CS) Training

In each of the first six weeks of the Fall semester 2022, I introduced one of six communication strategies (CSs): code-switching, word coinage, non-verbal communication, appeal for assistance, circumlocution, and avoidance. Table 3 summarizes the six strategies and conversation topics.

**TABLE 3**  
*Six Communication Strategies*

Week	Communication strategy	Explanation	Conversation topics
1	Code-switching	The students can use Korean in an English sentence, particularly when they do not know the English words or grammatical elements. Thus, when they have communication difficulties in English, they can momentarily switch to Korean while speaking in English. For example, they can say, "I went to the 박물관 yesterday and saw lots of 전시품."	What did you do during the weekend?
2	Word coinage	Based on the lexical meaning of a target-language word they cannot access, the students can invent a new term to maintain the flow of communication or communicate a	Please tell us about your best friend! (Tell us the most memorable experiences with him/her and why

Week	Communication strategy	Explanation	Conversation topics
		desired concept. For example, if they don't know they word 'veterinarian,' they can coin the phrase 'animal doctor' instead.	you love him/her.)
3	Non-verbal communication	The students can use mime, gestures, and facial expression to make up for the lack of verbal expression in English.	Tell us about your favorite movie.
4	Appeal for assistance	The students can ask for assistance to keep the flow of communication by using such expressions as "Do you know how to call this in English?" They can use Korean as necessary.	Choose one of four pictures given to the group and describe what you see in the picture and how you feel when you look at it.
5	Circumlocution	When they encounter difficulties finding the right language to communicate their meaning, the students can describe to approximate their intended meaning. For example, "Mr. X drove a car with a top that came down" instead of Mr. X drove a convertible."	Please tell us about your high school, for example, its name, your favorite teacher and why, and the most memorable event in your high school life.
6	Avoidance	The students can choose not to talk about topics for which they lack adequate linguistic resources (Park & Yang, 2021), for example, by diverting the conversation to another topic: "By the way, what did we talk about last week?"	Tell us about yourself! (What do you usually do in your free time? What do you like? What do you usually like to eat?)

Each week, I first introduced the target strategy with a detailed explanation and examples of using the strategy in conversation. I also explained how it could be useful in actual English conversation and emphasized that the major purpose of using CSs is to maintain the flow of conversation. Then, I provided a topic for conversation and had them form groups of three or four in which to practice the strategy, taking turns to talk for one to two minutes to talk, while I monitored the time to ensure that every student had the opportunity to practice the target strategy. At the end of the CS lesson, they filled out a survey to reflect on their brief experiences using the CS.

## Data Sources and Analysis

Data included surveys responses and interviews. The surveys were administered to all 40 students after the strategy lesson each week, resulting in six different surveys from each participant. Each survey included four questions as follows, two of which elicited data only for qualitative analysis and two of which elicited data for quantitative analysis as well. Four questions from the survey are illustrated in Table 4:

**TABLE 4**  
*Survey Questions*

Questions	
Qualitative investigation	1. In general, what do you think after learning and practicing this week's communication strategy?
Quantitative investigation	2. On this scale of 1 to 5, please mark how beneficial you think the communication strategy you learned this week will be to you. What are your reasons?
	3. On this scale of 1 to 5, please mark how often you think you will use this communication strategy when speaking English? Please mark in scale 1 to 5. What are your reasons you?

Qualitative investigation	4. Do you think the communication strategy you learned this week makes you more willing to learn and speak English? Why or why not?
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The primary data for the study were the individual interviews. I conducted with the five focal participants when the CS training was finished. I selected focal students who, based on their active participation during classroom activities and engagement with CSs, were likely to provide rich data. In the interviews, the focal students discussed their previous experiences learning English, their attitudes towards English and emotions when speaking it prior to CS training, how these changed after the training, their general experiences during CS training, their perceptions of and attitudes towards each CS, how they perceived themselves as language learners, and whether they would continue to invest in learning English. The interviews were conducted via Zoom with four focal students and via email with the fifth, due to her illness at the time of the interviews. Each interview lasted 10 to 12 minutes and was conducted in Korean, recorded, and transcribed verbatim, with some parts translated into English for reporting purposes.

To answer the four research questions, I thematically analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006) the interview data from the five focal participants to discover themes that recursively emerged across the six sessions. Additionally, to answer research question two, I mainly analyzed interview data. To analyze interview data, as an initial step, I read and reread the transcripts as thoroughly as possible and generated initial codes using In vivo coding, which is particularly useful when doing educational research with youths such as students, following Saldaña's (2016) argument that the voices of youths, such as students, are often marginalized, and that "coding with their actual words enhances and deepens" (p. 106) understanding of their perceptions and worldviews. After generating In vivo codes, I organized them by each focal participant and further categorized the data into recursive themes. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) procedure of "sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes" (p. 89), I identified two themes for research question one, two, and four.

For research question three, I analyzed both interview data and survey data so as to focus on each CS. I first extracted excerpts from each of the focal participants' interviews in they mentioned particular CSs. Then I identified all the likes and dislikes about each CS as these recursively emerged. Then, for the quantitative analysis, I calculated the scores from the scales in the second and third questions from the survey. I used the survey to triangulate with the interview findings, which increased the precision and credibility of the overall analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The Roles of the CS Training

For the first and second research questions concerning the roles of CS training on first-year college students' attitudes toward CS training, two themes emerged. First, they found CS training fresh, enjoyable, and helpful, and second, they reported that CS training increased their self-confidence and willingness to learn. All expressed positive attitudes toward CS training.

Three focal students described their previous English learning experiences as difficult, resulting in troubled relationships with English. For example, Minh, a male chemical engineering major with lower-level English proficiency, had earlier recognized the importance of English in his life but had difficulty memorizing English vocabulary as shown in Excerpt 1:

[Excerpt 1] I felt that English is an essential language in our daily lives. I had an attitude that I should bear the difficulty of learning it. (Researcher: Did you have a good relationship with English?) Uhhh.. I had a love-hate relationship with English. It was a good but difficult relationship. [Minh, chemical engineering major, interview]

Park (2023) also found an ambivalent attitude toward English among first-year college students, like Minh, but they recognized the necessity of learning English at the same time. After six weeks of CS training, Minh reported that he found it not only novel and interesting, but also helpful for increasing his motivation and confidence that he could learn English in Excerpt 2:

[Excerpt 2] I never knew that there are CSs before. It was fascinating to know that there are strategies for practicing English communication like CSs. In the past, I didn't think that English was something that I needed to make a living, but now I realize that English is an essential language. Now that I have practiced conversing in English, I feel confident

because it's not so difficult to learn and practice. I think I can do it because using communication strategies motivate me to learn more. [Minho, chemical engineering major, interview]

Having gained self-confidence in his ability to communicate in English, Minho believed his competence would increase, which bolstered his willingness to learn and confirmed Park and Yang's (2021) finding that "training that raises learners' awareness of CSs and strengthens their applications of them through practice may have positive impact on their communicative competence and willingness to communicate" (p. 29) as well as Mesgarshahr and Abdollahzadeh's (2014) study showing that using CSs motivates lower level language learners. Other students also reported the positive impact of using CSs on their self-confidence and willingness to learn English.

Jisoo, a female social welfare major with upper-intermediate English proficiency, described her experience with the CS training in Excerpt 3:

[Excerpt 3] As I learned and practiced CSs systemically, I gained basic confidence in English. And I didn't have many opportunities to talk with my classmates in English before, but I got to talk in English naturally.... So I thought it was a good opportunity for me to grow together with my classmates as we talked in English, rather than always thinking, "oh, what if I make a mistake?" Consequently, I became interested in English, and I think I gained a lot of confidence through the CS training. [Jisoo, social welfare major, interview]

In her interview Jisoo, who had enthusiastically participated in the CS training, expressed having a close relationship to English. The training enabled her to gain confidence not only in English speaking but also in her general English abilities, which encouraged her to seek opportunities to use English as much as she could. Also, there was a considerable proficiency gap between them, both Minho and Jisoo provided positive testimonies, which support Mesgarshahr and Abdollahzadeh's (2014) assertion that "CSs improve learners' state of communicative self-confidence" (p. 62) regardless of their language proficiency.

Soomin, a female chemical engineering major, who had reported her earlier difficulties and low self-confidence in learning English, described the positive impact of CS training in Excerpt 4:

[Excerpt 4] When I learned CSs, I learned to change English words I don't know into Korean words or explain them with other English words. I think practicing CSs reduced my difficulties with speaking English because I could use Korean to explain what I couldn't say in English and use other strategies. So it was really helpful. I can't really speak if I have words I don't know, but I felt comfortable because I could switch them into Korean. [Soomin, chemical engineering major, interview]

From the excerpt, it can be inferred that that, as a student whose English proficiency was very low, Soomin was struggling with learning English, particularly vocabulary. However, using code-switching alleviated her difficulties. Hua et al. (2012) found that code-switching was the most frequently used strategy by low proficient students. Soomin confirmed this finding and found that code-switching reduced her anxiety about communicating in English and made her feel comfortable and more confident in her ability to maintain communication in English (Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh, 2014). This finding aligns with Park and Yang's (2021) assertion that once the learners became aware of and start to practice CSs, they experience amelioration of their communication difficulties.

Jisoo also stated that she found CS training novel although the concept was not entirely new to her in Excerpt 5:

[Excerpt 5] I think I implicitly and naturally learned something like CSs on my own before, but I have never learned CSs systemically and applied them to talk with classmates in class. That is why they felt a bit different and new, but I liked that aspect more. When I used them implicitly on my own, I wondered whether it would really be helpful for my English or was really okay to do. However, when you introduced CSs and we practiced them in class, I thought, 'this is how to use CSs.' I realized that there is no right way to carry out English conversation, and that it is very important to take the lead with initiative in my own learning. [Jisoo, social welfare major, interview]

Jisoo, who participated actively and was fully engaged in class, realized that learning and applying CSs helped her become an autonomous learner, which Wenden (1991) described as one "who has acquired the strategies and knowledge to take some responsibility for her language learning and is willing and self-confident enough to do so" (p. 163). Faerch and Kasper (1983) argued that "by learning how to use communication strategies appropriately, learners will be more able to bridge the

gap between pedagogic and non-pedagogic communicative situations” (p. 56). Faucette (2001) supported their argument that “learner autonomy can be thought of as the ability to bridge the gap” and “instruction can be thought of as the means to develop that ability” (p. 9). Once Jisoo, as an autonomous language learner, learned how to use the CSs properly from the instructor and practice them in class, she was equipped with tools that facilitated her self-directed learning outside the classroom (Faucette, 2001), which indicates a connection between CS training and student-centered learning (Park, 2023) and the valuable attribute of teaching CSs.

## The Students' Attitudes towards Six Communication Strategies

To answer the third research question, the interview excerpts from the focal students were mainly analyzed and the survey data from the whole participants were examined as back-up. Through the six weeks of CS training, the students developed positions on what they liked or did not like about each strategy. Before discussing a qualitative investigation from the interview excerpts and the survey data, a quantitative result from the question 3 of the survey is shown to explore the students' attitudes towards six CSs more affluently. Table 5 presents the quantitative result from the survey question 3.

**TABLE 5**  
*Result from the Survey Question 3*

	The number of students for each level (1=lowest – 5=highest) of the scale				
	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4	Scale 5
Code-switching	0	4	5	11	9
Word coinage	1	5	10	8	5
Non-verbal communication	0	0	0	22	12
Appeal for assistance	0	3	3	21	9
Circumlocution	1	10	7	13	3
Avoidance	2	0	9	12	10

### Code-switching

When I introduced code-switching, the first CS that the students learned and practiced, they seemed to be amazed at being allowed to use Korean during English conversation, and the class atmosphere got lively. The survey results showed that most students felt code-switching was convenient and felt confident while practicing it, as shared by a non-focal student in Excerpt 6:

[Excerpt 6] I did not experience difficulty but rather felt it was fun when I learned that I could replace English words I didn't know with Korean. [Non-focal student 1, social welfare major, survey]

Other students perceived that code-switching was helpful for their English learning as shown in Excerpts 7-8:

[Excerpt 7] It is helpful. It might not work to use code-switching in situations where I have to use English officially, but [here] I could replace some words that I don't know in English with Korean and later I could look up the English words and learn. In doing so, I think I could improve my speaking skill. [Non-focal student 2, chemical engineering major, survey]

[Excerpt 8] When practicing English conversation, I could maintain the flow of conversation using code-switching, and later it would be helpful for my speaking skills as I looked up and studied the English words that I didn't know. [Non-focal student 3, accounting major, survey]

These perceptions confirm Paramasivam's (2009) assertion, reiterated by Sukirlan (2014), that code-switching “can enhance second language learning by way of helping learners expand their second language repertoire and increase their

automatization of second language item” (p. 2036). A major theme from the focal students’ interview comments, however, was that while code-switching increased confidence in conversing in English and decreased anxiety, it was not helpful for improving English communication with English native speakers who did not understand Korean or infer the meaning from context. The two focal students in Park and Yang’s (2021) study shared similar perceptions, suggesting that code-switching might be a useful learning strategy but had no practical use when communicating with English native speakers. Some students who chose scale 2 and 3 responded that code-switching would not be useful because native speakers could not understand. In this vein, Minh summed up this view in Excerpt 9:

[Excerpt 9] I think code-switching was the easiest one. I could not speak in English because I didn’t know English words, but I could use Korean while practicing code-switching. After that, my attitude toward English changed, so I think code-switching is the most useful when learning and practicing. But I don’t think code-switching improves my speaking skill, because I still need to be able to speak the words that I don’t know in English to communicate. When practicing code-switching, I felt like I was giving up on English and just using Korean instead, so I felt like my speaking skill did not improve. [Minho, chemical engineering major, interview]

Despite the ambivalent positions of the students, code-switching opened the door to using CSs to maintain the flow of a conversation. Whether it hindered or benefitted their speaking skills, the students could at least resort to it instead of stalling when they did not know certain expressions in English (Sukirlan, 2014), and being able to maintain the flow of a conversation could increase their self-confidence and motivation.

### Word Coinage

Word coinage, the second CS introduced, was unlike code-switching in that the students had to invent English words to substitute those they did not know. In the survey, some students expressed their difficulty practicing word coinage as shown in Excerpts 10-11:

[Excerpt 10] I didn’t feel that word coinage was that effective to use because it took so much time. It was easier for me just to think of other English words for those I did not know. [Non-focal student 4, social welfare major, survey]

[Excerpt 11] I think it would be beneficial for sure, but I could not really practice word coinage well because I felt pressure when I tried to invent new words. [Non-focal student 5, accounting major, survey]

Ahyoung, a focal female social welfare major, agreed in Excerpt 12:

[Excerpt 12] When using word coinage in class, I often could not make up a word to use as a substitute. It is a strategy that requires replacing English words that I do not know with English words that I invent or already know, but I thought if I could not even think of easy words, I could frustrate the interlocutor. [Ahyoung, social welfare major, interview]

Park and Yang (2021) similarly reported that the students found word coinage difficult because they needed a high level of lexical fluency to coin new words. Even for intermediate or high proficiency students, word coinage could be quite a challenge (Rastegar & Gogari, 2016). Likewise, the survey result shows that 15 students chose level 2 and 3 on the scale, which implies they would not continue to use this communication strategy when practicing English speaking. Moreover, in other studies (Hua et al., 2012; Park & Yang, 2021; Sukirlan, 2014; Teng, 2012), word-coinage ranked as the least frequently used strategy. Nevertheless, Jisoo found word coinage beneficial for promoting her self-confidence as expressed in Excerpt 13:

[Excerpt 13] I thought word coinage was very beneficial. When I could not think of a word like “veterinarian,” I could form a term with words I did know and continue the conversation. While conversing with my classmates, I always tried to keep talking no matter how difficult it was, rather than equivocate. Doing so promoted my confidence in English speaking as long as I had the spirit and the mindset that I could do it. So, word coinage was a quite beneficial strategy for me. [Jisoo, social welfare major, interview]

Unlike students who found word coinage too difficult, Jisoo, with her passion for English and upper-intermediate proficiency, looked at the strategy from a different angle. Thus, it can be said that while all the students perceive each

strategy differently depending on their language proficiency, interests, and dispositions, they all resort to different strategies when encountering communication problems. Therefore, it is important for them to experience as a diverse range of strategies as possible from which to choose as they develop their own repertoires of strategies that suit their own situations.

### *Non-verbal Communication*

The students perceived non-verbal communication as the most familiar strategy because most had already practiced it before the CS training. In both the survey and the interviews, the students expressed positive opinions about using non-verbal communication. During their interviews, the focal students stated that using it was comfortable, helped make communications smooth, and promoted confidence in speaking English as expressed in Excerpts 14-16.

[Excerpt 14] I liked using non-verbal communication. I think it was easy to express what I wanted to say with my body. If you express English words you don't know with your body, the interlocutor can easily understand, so it was comfortable to use. [Soomin, chemical engineering major, interview]

[Excerpt 15] I really like non-verbal communication. I usually use something like it in my ordinary conversations. With non-verbal communication, I feel like I can deliver messages that I can't express in words. That makes English communication smooth, and this is what I like about it. [Jisoo, social welfare major, interview]

[Excerpt 16] Non-verbal communication, so-called body language, helped me to communicate in English although I am not good in English. I think I can talk with confidence even if I don't know the words or expressions. [Ahyoung, social welfare major, interview]

Moreover, some students expressed positive feedback on non-verbal communication in Excerpts 17-19:

[Excerpt 17] I think it is the most useful strategy when I communicate with native speakers. And it was comfortable to use. [Non-focal student 6, chemical engineering major, survey]

[Excerpt 18] It was familiar to use because I use non-verbal expressions a lot. I feel like it was easy to deliver my message to the interlocutor. [Non-focal student 7, chemical engineering major, survey]

[Excerpt 19] I used to get nervous easily, but using my body during communication made me less nervous and I could have more time to think about vocabulary when speaking. [Non-focal student 2, chemical engineering major, survey]

Sukirlan (2014) agreed with Dornyei's (1995) claim that "some people can communicate effectively in an L2 with only 100 words by using their hands, and they can imitate the sound or movement of things" (p. 2037). Although one student commented that "using non-verbal communication was more difficult than expected," most participants reported that they effectively used non-verbal communication to alleviate their communicative problems in English (Park & Yang, 2021). Furthermore, the fact that all students chose scale 4 or 5 for practical uses of non-verbal communication increased the credibility of the results of the qualitative investigation.

### *Appeal for Assistance*

When the fourth strategy, appeal for assistance was introduced, the students seemed to be familiar with it. Within each group, they readily consulted with each other using English to choose and describe one of the four illustrations provided, resulting in a lively class atmosphere. Several students commented in the survey that providing and obtaining help in active interaction with classmates made communication more comfortable as shown in Excerpts 20-22:

[Excerpt 20] It helped me to communicate smoothly and to maintain the flow of conversation. [Non-focal student 8, chemical engineering major, survey]

[Excerpt 21] It feels more like having a conversation with classmates and it was easy to react to the speaker. [Non-focal student 6, chemical engineering major, survey]

[Excerpt 22] I felt encouraged to interact with listeners when practicing appeal for assistance. [Non-focal student 9, global commerce major, survey]

Appeal for assistance allows lower-proficiency second language learners to immediately participate in a conversation (Faucette, 2001) and feel involved in active interaction with classmates, which made appeal for assistance an especially suitable strategy for the lower proficiency students in this study. However, three students registered dissenting opinions by choosing level 2 on the survey scale. Also, a focal student expressed criticism of this strategy in Excerpt 23:

[Excerpt 23] For communicating with native speakers, I don't think it is good, because if I am not familiar with the interlocutor, I would rather be speechless rather than ask for help. [Sohee, chemical engineering major, interview]

Other students might also have felt comfortable using appeal for assistance as an L2-based strategy among classmates with whom they were already acquainted but not with strangers. On the other hand, while asking a new acquaintance for help in communicating may feel awkward, it can also provide an opportunity to build a relationship, as Ahyoung's comment suggests in Excerpt 24:

[Excerpt 24] I like appeal for assistance because I can build intimacy with the interlocutor in the active interaction. [Ahyoung, social welfare major, interview]

### *Circumlocution*

When circumlocution, the fifth strategy, was introduced, the students generally found it difficult to practice. In both surveys and interviews, they expressed frustration with this strategy, and 11 students chose level 1 or 2 which implies they would not continue to use circumlocution when communicating in English. Several explained that finding alternative ways to say something still taxed their vocabulary knowledge and did not solve the problem as shown in Excerpt 25:

[Excerpt 25] I was at a loss while using circumlocution. While talking in English, I did not know how to say certain words in English, but I had to try to substitute with words I knew. So I was like, "how should I say this?" While using circumlocution, I encountered other vocabulary problems, so I felt really frustrated while talking. [Minho, chemical engineering major, interview]

Some survey excerpts also report frustration as shown in Excerpts 26-28:

[Excerpt 26] It was hard to use because I lacked the ability to find other words in English. [Non-focal student 3, accounting major, survey]

[Excerpt 27] Circumlocution was difficult because there were still English words I didn't know while I tried to use the strategy. [Non-focal student 10, software department, survey]

[Excerpt 28] When practicing, I would rather look up a word in the dictionary than using circumlocution. [Non-focal student 11, global media department, survey]

To use circumlocution as a strategy for L2 expression, the students may need to have a certain level of lexical resources on which to draw. Thus, circumlocution, an achievement strategy, might mainly help high proficiency learners to enhance communication training (Rastegar & Gohari, 2016). However, as Surkirlan (2014) has pointed out, referring to Campillo (2006), circumlocution "functions ... as a tool to cope with problematic vocabulary" (p. 2039), as long as the students have developed sufficient lexical fluency (Brett, 2001). Sohee's interview comment illustrates how circumlocution can be useful as expressed in Excerpt 29:

[Excerpt 29] There are a lot of times when I can't express my meaning because of words I don't know, but I think circumlocution is a solution for that.... I can substitute with expressions or words I do know. [Sohee, chemical engineering major, interview]

## Avoidance

When avoidance was introduced, the students seemed to be surprised that it was considered a CS. Some students felt comfortable practicing avoidance, but others did not. More than half of the students chose level 4 or 5, which means they were willing to use avoidance when practicing English speaking skills. In the interview Excerpt 30, Sohee gave positive feedback on the strategy:

[Excerpt 30] I think it was okay to use avoidance ... because it allowed me to avoid a topic or whatever I found difficult and talk about something else. [Sohee, chemical engineering major, interview]

In Excerpts 31-32, some students presented similar feedback:

[Excerpt 31] It was nice not to have to force myself to say things that were difficult and unclear. [Non-focal student 2, chemical engineering major, survey]

[Excerpt 32] It was comfortable to communicate when I could avoid saying something difficult. [Non-focal student 12, mathematics major, survey]

Given that, as Sukirlan (2014) observed, “the main reason for the students to use avoidance is their lack of target language resources” (p. 2037), avoidance can be an effective way to alleviate learners’ feelings of pressure in the face of communicative difficulties and allow them to naturally move on to topics for which they have adequate target language resources. However, as Jisoo pointed out in Excerpt 33, avoidance may be most effective as a short-term solution:

[Excerpt 33] I thought it would be better not to use avoidance as much as possible. It can be helpful to avoid topics when you can’t think of certain words on the spot. But in the long-term view, if I keep avoiding and have no will to learn what I don’t know, I won’t be able to advance in my English learning. Therefore, I think that it is better not to use avoidance, or if I do use it, it would be better to find and learn the words that I didn’t know for future use. [Jisoo, social welfare major, interview]

As Jisoo points out, avoidance can be convenient when words fail, but over time it can hinder language development. Moreover, considering Jisoo’s English proficiency, training with achievement strategies may be more effectively fit for students at her level (Rastegar & Gohari, 2016).

Another non-focal student pointed out in Excerpt 34 that avoidance could be socially problematic, an issue also raised in Park and Yang’s (2021) study.

[Excerpt 34] I think it would be impolite to the interlocutor if you just avoid the conversation topic. So, I would not use avoidance. If you don’t know, let’s say you don’t know and ask for help. In this way, you can develop your English skills. [Non-focal student 13, social welfare major, survey]

Despite the students’ different perspectives on avoidance depending on their language proficiency, dispositions, and learning interests, when used judiciously the strategy can alleviate pressures and maintain communicational flow when difficulties arise.

## Communication Strategies and the Students’ Investment and Identities

Overall, the testimonies of the five focal students showed that the CS training boosted their self-confidence and willingness to learn. It also inspired four of them to construct investment in their English learning and to negotiate their identities as language learners, as expressed in Excerpts 35-38:

[Excerpt 35] I think I need to study English consistently, so I will work hard on vocabulary every day and invest in online lectures. (Researcher: Why do you think you need to study English consistently?) I think it is important not to lose my momentum, so it’s important to do it little by little every day. [Minho, chemical engineering major, interview]

[Excerpt 36] I have always wanted to invest in learning English conversation, but I couldn't challenge myself because I didn't have the right tools for accomplishing it. However, during this CS training, I have formed a concrete goal to become proficient in English conversation, which I had only thought about so far. Actually, it has been six months since I started to take an online class called "Real Class." However, I only worked hard in the beginning and got lazy, but now I will study with determination again. [Ahyoung, social welfare major, interview]

[Excerpt 37] I think I will invest. Because I have thought about learning English conversation and it feels different from the English I have learned so far, I think I will be able to feel the joy of making progress. [Sohee, chemical engineering major, interview]

[Excerpt 38] It will be a little difficult to invest all my assets, but if possible, I will take some time to proceed with learning as much as possible. Or, I think I will at least put in the effort of making foreign friends or talking with them right away. [Jisoo, social welfare major, interview]

Park (2023) examined the role of student-centered learning in first-year college students' investment in their English reading. The approach not only helped students gain a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence, but also "broadened their learning spectrum and awakened their willingness to invest time and efforts into learning and specifically plan how to do so" (p. 77). The results of the present study confirm Park's results. Therefore, it can be concluded that the CS training had a positive impact on these four students' construction of investment in English learning.

On the other hand, the fifth focal student, Soomin, stated that she would limit her investment in English learning in Excerpt 39:

[Excerpt 39] I am willing to take English courses like this one at school, but I will not pay to take other courses outside of school. (Researcher: Why is that so?) Probably because I don't speak English much in my daily life, so I won't spend money on it. (Researcher: Do you mean you would not invest beyond what you do in school?) Yes, I don't think I'll invest material resources. I will take a general course like this one, but I don't think I will pay to take classes. [Soomin, chemical engineering major, interview]

It seemed that Soomin interpreted the term "investment" only in a financial sense, but her response also suggested that she was not willing to put extra time and effort into speaking English after the CS training, indicating that she placed a lower value on English learning than the other focal students because it did not play a significant role in her life. But perhaps her reluctance was also due to her difficulty acquiring the language and low confidence, which prevented her from positioning herself as a legitimate agent of her English learning (Bourdieu, 1991; Park, 2019). During class I observed her neutral facial expression, passive attitude, and lack of active participation. Given her lack of desire to become a legitimate speaker, her will to invest not surprisingly was diminished. As she was willing to make at least a minimal effort to continue learning, perhaps if her negative mindset was challenged by new ways of learning, she could develop a positive relationship with English (Park, 2023), which would give her a sense of ownership of the language (Norton & Gao, 2008).

Darvin and Norton (2015) explained that the concept of investment positions a language learner as "a social being with a complex identity that changes across time and space and is reproduced in social interaction" (p. 37). Acknowledging the inseparable relationship between identity and investment, Park (2022) described language learners' identities as "multiple, changing, and contradictory" (p. 832), suggesting the importance of exploring the influence of CS training on students' negotiation of identity. When asked at the end of each interview how they viewed themselves as learners of English, three focal students gave the following answers as expressed in Excerpts 40-42:

[Excerpt 40] I see myself as a learner who has a will. (Researcher: Do you think the CS training has an impact on that?) Yes, it was very good. [Sohee, chemical engineering major, interview]

[Excerpt 41] I don't see myself as an effective learner. I have always planned out what to do, but I have never carried it out well. However, I put my best effort and focus on what I have to do such as taking classes or doing assignments. I will also do my best to concentrate in the future. Therefore, I am still a weak learner and I know myself, but in the future, I want to carry out what I plan out and become a good learner. [Ahyoung, social welfare major, interview]

[Excerpt 42] I see myself as a promising learner. Of course, I can't say that I'm good at English right now and that I will be able to learn it perfectly in the future, but I think I have an opportunity to work hard so that I can grow well.

So through the CS training, I think I will become a promising learner who can open doors for not only myself but also people around me to grow together. [Jisoo, social welfare major, interview]

These three focal students used such phrases as “a will,” “my best effort,” and “an opportunity to work hard,” which indicates that they claimed what Norton Peirce (1995) termed “the right to speak” (p. 23) in their commitment to English learning. Moreover, similar to the students in Park’s (2023) study, they revealed their confidence in themselves as language learners, which suggests the critical influence of the CS training on their negotiation of identity. Of particular interest is Jisoo’s comment that she would open doors for not only herself but also people around her, indicating her understanding that language learners negotiate their identities within their social contexts (Darvin & Norton, 2023) and across time and space. Their interview responses indicated how the CS training opened doors for the focal students to not only re-negotiate their identities as language learners to but also examine their potential for further learning.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, first-year college students’ attitudes towards CS training, how it affected their attitudes toward and construction of investment in English learning, and how they negotiated their identity as language learners after the training were examined. Despite some criticism about the appropriateness of teaching CSs, this study reveals the primarily positive impact of CS training. Some focal students who had ambivalent attitudes towards and difficulty learning English found CS training novel and helpful, which positively affected their self-confidence and willingness to learn English as well as their negotiation of identity, construction of investment, and commitment to learning the target language. One focal student reported gaining learning autonomy through the CS training.

However, this study has some limitations which recommend directions for further research. One limitation is that only five focal students representing only two majors were interviewed about the CS training. Future studies should include a larger number of focal students with diverse backgrounds in terms of such aspects as majors, language proficiency levels, and language learning experiences. In addition, a comparison of the pre- and post-intervention quantitative data on all participants’ English speaking skills would have increase the credibility of the study.

A second limitation is the short amount of time for in-class activities in which students could practice the CSs. After they learned each CS, they conversed about an assigned topic within small group for 15-20 minutes, which provided little experience with the CS and little likelihood of developing deep understanding. For greater credibility and validity of the findings, in future studies, more practice with a greater variety of activities within an extended training period should be provided. Also, the students should be given speaking assignments for practice outside of the class.

A third limitation is the choice of CSs employed in the training. I tried to choose CSs that EFL students could use to maintain the flow of conversation when speaking English and alleviate the anxiety associated with communicating interlocutors. Of the six strategies, I selected five were achievement strategies (code-switching, appeal for assistance, non-verbal communication, word coinage, and circumlocution) and one reduction strategy (topic avoidance). Given that that high proficiency learners tend to use achievement strategies and low proficiency learners tend to use reduction strategies (Rastegar & Gohari, 2016), to accommodate the wide range of students’ language proficiency levels in this study and in most classrooms, it would be more appropriate to provide more balance between the two types of strategies.

Most of the students thought that the CS training was novel and fresh as they had never experienced it before. Also, it was shown that the CS training positively impacted their construction of investment and their identity negotiation. Thus, despite some limitations, this study supports the positive roles of CS training, confirming Sukirlan’s (2014) claim that “the more communication strategies the students have, the more opportunities they have to solve communication problems” (p. 2040), especially with regard to students who have inadequate linguistic resources in a target language. As Faucette (2001) observed, CS training is meaningful because it helps students “to not to give up the conversation” (p. 27). In this sense, CS training promises to provide a way forward for Korean people who are struggling with diverse communicative problems. Therefore, CSs need to be taught explicitly and effectively with adequate opportunity for practice.

Language teachers can open the first door to CSs by providing explicit and effective instruction in their uses, raising students’ awareness, encouraging them to take risks, and providing them with models and opportunities to practice (Cervantes & Rodriguez, 2012). Mesgarshahr and Abdollahzadeh (2014) emphasized that, besides using textbooks and lesson plans that include teaching CSs, language teachers should be experts in using CSs so they can “act as models of proper strategy use” (p. 65). Similarly, Maleki (2007) argued that training in a broad spectrum of CSs should be included in language course design to facilitate language teachers’ ability to suggest appropriate CSs to language learners with a wide

range of proficiency levels. It is also a teachers' role to create diverse in-class activities and out-of-class assignments that are interesting to learners to encourage them to practice using CSs (Cervantes & Rodriguez, 2012). Such instruction of the use of CSs can alleviate language learners' anxieties, encourage them not to withdraw from conversations, and promote their language skills. Moreover, in addition to the positive roles of the CSs included in the training, it is important to make sure that language learners' autonomy, self-confidence, willingness to learn, and commitment to persevere are supported. These are the factors that empower students, regardless of their language proficiency, majors, and language learning experiences, to participate in communications and persist in learning English. Once they perceive their dream of successfully engaging in English oral communications as achievable, they are likely to employ CSs to remain active in conversations and gain the practice and experience they need to make it come true (Rastegar & Gohari, 2016).

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## Appendix

### Interview Questions

1. Please tell me your English learning experiences before college (Whether pleasant or not).
2. Please tell me your attitudes toward or perceptions of English over time.
3. During CS training, how do you feel about learning and practicing CSs?
4. Among the six communication strategies, what is your favorite and most beneficial strategy? And why?
5. Among the six communication strategies, what is the least beneficial strategy? And why?
6. When you have an opportunity to communicate with foreigners, what kind of strategy will you use the most? Which strategy do you think you will not use the most?
7. Do you think CS training was helpful for your English learning? Why or why not?
8. How have CS training affected your attitudes toward or perception of English?
9. After CS training, how do you invest your time and efforts in learning English?
10. How do you look at yourself as an English learner?