Developing Students' Communication Ability

through Focus-on-Form Instruction and Strategy Training

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Introduction

MEXT has been revising Course of Study to implement communication-based classes since 1986. The latest Course of Study which starts from 2020 aims to develop students' communicative competence in a globalized world and to foster identity as a Japanese person. English class is required to be an authentic language learning class which can enhance learning English as lingua-franca, by fostering learner's identities. However, there are gaps between the policy and the practice in English teaching in junior high school. CLT is unfamiliar to the majority of English teachers and GTM and ALM are still familiar methods that were employed to teach English in current junior high school English classes. Accordingly, as Lee and VanPatten (2003) claim "traditional instruction consisting of drills in which learner output is manipulated and the instruction is divorced from meaning or communication is not an effective method for enhancing language acquisition" (p.137), remarkable development in students' communicative competence has not been seen yet. For application of CLT in Japanese English classes, deeper understanding of CLT by practitioners and appropriate support from educational institutions or teacher educators is necessary to achieve communicative English classes.

Thanks to the advice of NUFS TESOL course professors, my research was conducted on a synergy between SLA and language pedagogy. My research focus was on the relationship between language instruction and acquisition based on the theoretical perspectives that SLA affords. In my action research, I explore how FFI impacts junior high school students English learning, how communication strategies are learned, and how CSs supports beinner English learner's communicative competence.

Theoretical background

In this section, related literature is discussed and the theoretical background to this study is provided. These include:

(1) Communicative Language Teaching

(2) Communication strategies

(3) Communicative grammar teaching

(4) Assessment

Communicative Language Teaching

The goal of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is to develop the communicative competence of students.

Communicative competence. The term 'communicative competence' was coined by a sociologist, Dell Hymes (1967; 1972). Canale and Swain (1980), argue that communicative competence is composed of separate competences that interact. These are: (1) grammatical competence; (2) sociolinguistic competence; and (3) strategic competence. Canale (1983) subsequently identified discourse competence as a distinct fourth component. Savignon (1997) claimed that "Communication is the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning; and communicative competence is always context specific, requiring the simultaneous,

integrated use of grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence" (p. 225). Both Canale and Swain (1980) and Savignon (1997) agree that "all the components are interrelated" (Savignon, 1997, p. 23).

Definition of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). "CLT is properly seen as an approach, grounded in a theory of intercultural communicative competence, that can be used to develop materials and methods appropriate to a given context of learning" (Savignon, 2002, pp.22-23). Brown (2007) notes that CLT is based on a broad theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching. This theory has generated various ways of understandings, descriptions, and uses of CLT. The four interconnected characteristics of CLT are as follows:

(1) Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.

(2) Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes, organizational language forms are not the central focus but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish those purposes.

(3) Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.

(4) In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and respectively in unrehearsed context. (p.241)

Communication Strategies

Selinker (1972) identified the use of CSs as one of the processes affecting second language acquisition. Savignon, a language educator views, CSs are encompassed in communicative competence. Communication strategies (CSs) are what learners use "to overcome the inadequacies of their interlanguage resources" (Ellis, 1994, p.396). CSs in second language (L2) communication is understood as linguistic tools to bridge gaps in communication caused by lack of linguistic resources. Tarone (1980) regards CSs as the "mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on meaning in a situation where the requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (p.420). She puts emphasis on interactional aspects of CSs that contain any attempts to avoid communication breakdowns. Communication strategies are regarded as important vehicles for producing pushed output (Kasper & Kellerman,1980, as cited in Ellis, 1997) of learners. In the model of communicative competence, Canale and Swain (1980) defined strategic competence as, "verbal" and "non-verbal" communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient (p.30). Canale (1983) further expanded the concept of CSs to include strategies to enhance the effectiveness of communication with interlocutors (p.11).

Classification of communication strategies. Broadly speaking, CSs used by second language learners are reduction strategies and achievement strategies. The former ones are used to avoid speaking too much and the latter ones are used to maximize opportunities and to achieve their communication goals. (Færch & Kasper, 1983;1984). According to Dörnyei (1995),

avoidance or reduction strategies reduce or abandon an intended message, and achievement or compensatory strategies deliberately "manipulate available language" to carry out the intended message. He adds a group of stalling or time-gaining strategies, which "keep the communication channel open at times of difficulty" (pp.57-59). Achievement strategies are effective CSs use to maintain conversation and it bridges over the gaps between the learner's intention to communicate and shortage of linguistic resources. Through the use of various achievement strategies, learners engage in the process of meaning negotiation and receive feedback to help modify what is said. As known, this will help learners to participate more effectively during oral communication and develop their language further. In many second language classrooms, communication breakdown occurs between student-student interaction. In that case, CSs, especially achievement strategies are effective ones that learners use when they want to overcome the inadequacies of their interlanguage resources.

  Previous studies. A number of studies have dealt with the possibility that CSs may be teachable. Dörnyei (1995) studied 109 students studied at language courses that employed skills integration and communication-gap activities in five different secondary schools in Hungary. As a result, in terms of strategy use, the group which was given strategy training outperformed the control group with an increase in the use of fillers as well as the quality of circumlocution, with experiencing a strongly statistically significant improvement in speech rate compared to the control group (p.75). It suggested that more fluent students used more strategies because a positive correlation was found between the use of time-gaining fillers and speech rate (p.77). Even though numbers of researchers agree explicit instruction can support the awareness of strategic competence of learners, Brown (2007) warns that strategic competence is not something that can be achieved overnight. This could be due to the beliefs about learning that learners bring into the classroom (Bialystok,1983), or individual learner characteristics such as gender, motivation, or learning styles (Brown,2007). In addition, teachers have to be cautious to implement explicit instruction of strategies. Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) caution that the issue of strategies/strategic competence is multi-dimensional, and that "it may be too artificial an exercise to attempt to describe monolithically a series of strategies which in reality operate in multi-dimensional ways" (p.13). Sato (2005) argues that the raised awareness of strategy use in explicit instruction does not necessarily translate into strategy use in the short term. He confirms that learners need ample opportunities to use strategies in spontaneous communication for explicit strategy training to be successful over time.

Grammar Teaching

  In CLT, grammar is viewed as "a tool or resource to be used in the comprehension and creation of oral and written discourse rather than something to be learned as an end in itself" (Celce-Murcia,1991, p.466). "Grammar is a description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meanings that these forms convey" (Thornbury, 1999, p.13). Accordingly, Batstone and Ellis (2009) argued that "grammar teaching should be to assist learners to acquire new form-meaning mappings and to integrate these into their existing meaning systems" (p.203).

  FFI. In response to the limitations of purely communicative methodology, an approach to grammar instruction called focus on form was introduced in 1980s. Long (1988) distinguished this communicative grammar teaching concept as FFI from

traditional grammar teaching concept, focus on forms. Focus on forms refers to traditional grammar teaching, "where the students' primary focus is on form" (Ellis, 2006, p.100), while FFI refers to a new teaching approach which "overtly draw students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication" (Long, 1991, p.46). In other words, in FFI, "the primary concern of the teacher should always be the question of how to integrate attention to form and meaning" (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p.261).

Planned FFI and incidental FFI. Ellis (2001) defines FFI as "any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form" (p.1). According to Ellis (2008), planned FFI "requires a focused task and is intensive," while incidental FFI "is typically extensive (i.e., addresses a wide range of linguistic features)" (Ellis, 2008, p.827). Moreover, he recommends using incidental FFI by saying "(a)n incidental focus-on-form approach is of special value because it affords an opportunity for extensive treatment of grammatical problems (Ellis, 2006, p.102). As Lee and VanPatten (1995) claim, "learners need not only input to build a developing system but also opportunities to create output in order to work on fluency and accuracy" (p. 118), Lee and VanPatten (2003) insist that the teaching procedure of FFI should entail both structured input (form-focused input) and structured output (form-focused output) activities. They claim, "A focus on output in language instruction should make every attempt to have learners produce language that communicates something - has meaning - to someone else" (pp.169-170). They also argue that second language teachers can (and should) provide guided, form-focused instruction and corrective feedback in certain circumstances (p.197).

Current views of second language classroom methodology mostly agrees on the importance of form-focused instruction "within the framework of communication, ranging from explicit treatment of rules to noticing and conscious raising techniques for structuring input to learners" (Brown, 2007). Lightbown and Spada (2013) also supported this concept as stated, "Approaches that provide attention to form within communicative and content-based interaction receive the most support from classroom research" (p.195).

Ellis (2006) stresses the need for "longitudinal studies that investigate the effects of instruction over time" (p.103). The following studies here are rare studies which investigated the effects of instruction on the process of L2 acquisition. The context of the studies is also deeply related to my project. Sato, Fukumoto, Ishitobi and Morioka (2012) implemented yearlong action research projects of FFI in Japanese junior high school English classes. Those were designed to implement planned FFI (Fukumoto and Ishitobi), as well as both planned and incidental FFI (Morioka). Sato et al. (2012) also found that the use of FFI in Japanese junior high school classes "indicates that students learned grammar better through FFI than traditional grammar teaching" (p.296). Furthermore, they assert that, in combination with the findings from Sato et al.'s 2009 study, their results show that "grammar should be at the service of communication" and that a CLT approach can be significantly more effective than a grammar-based approach when communicative competence is the principal learning goal (p.296).

Assessment

Assessment refers to "all activities teachers use to help students learn and to argue student progress" (Black & William,1998,

p.43). Brown (2007) proposed five basic principles, (1) practicality, (2) reliability, (3) validity, (4) authenticity, and (5) washback for designing effective tests and assessments. He claimed that his propose represents a synthesis of what various assessment specialists cite as priorities for the design of language assessments (p.446). Krashen and Terrell (1983) states "using an approach in the classroom which emphasizes the ability to exchange messages, and at the same time testing only the ability to apply grammar rules correctly, is an invitation to disaster" (p.165, cited in Lee & VanPatten, 2003). J.D. Brown and Hudson (1998) made implications for testing and curriculum as washback effects can be either "positive" or "negative" (p.667). They claim, "a positive washback occurs when the tests measure the same types of materials and skills that are described in the objects and taught in the courses". They also highlighted negative washback, as saying "a negative washback effect will probably begin to work against the students' being willing to cooperate in the curriculum and its objectives" (p.668). To match between the goals and testing is relevant. Brown (2007) argues that washback enhances "the basic principles of language acquisition: intrinsic motivation, autonomy, self-confidence, language ego, interlanguage and strategic investment, among others" (pp.451- 452). As shown in the study of Black & William (1998), intentional use of assessment in the classroom to promote learning improves student achievement (Earl, 2007). Assessment is interactive between students and teachers, among students, it can enhance the effectiveness of both teaching and learning.

Performance tests. In situation of assessing performance-based skills, a common tendency has been to assess students without making criteria clear for them. However, in order to make the assessment fairer, more equitable, and clear for students, research on assessment over 20 years has highlighted various principles that should be employed in assessment (Gou, 2012). Brown (2007) proposed brief outline of factors that teachers have to take into account as follows;

(1)   state the overall goal of the performance

(2)   specify the objectives (criteria) of the performance in detail

(3)   prepare students for performance in stepwise progressions

(4)   use a reliable evaluation form, checklist, or rating sheet

(5)   treat performances as opportunities for giving feedback and provide that feedback systematically

(6)   if possible, utilize self-and peer assessment judiciously (p.482)

In addition to above conditions, there are some characteristics to make assessments better. Goh (2007) pointed out that performance-based assessment should be reflecting course content and goals, reliable, valid and it has to be criterion based. She proposed that as the first step, the outcomes have to be expected, ahead in the planning of course objectives. Second, teacher collaboration to develop inter-rater and intra-rater reliability are needed ahead. Third, comprehensible, meaningful display of achievement has to be shared with teachers.

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Research Issues and research questions

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My AR was conducted to evaluate the impact of FFI on students' learning in the context of junior high school English class in Japan. There are three research questions as follows;

1) How do students perceive FFI and participate in class?

2) How do students develop their skills to use communication strategies?

3) How do students develop their communicative competence through FFI and performance tests?

Method

Participants, curriculum and data collection.

Participants. The participants were junior high school first-year 35 students who were learning at the same public junior high school in a central area of Japan. English classes were held four times in a week, 140 hours in a year. The students were novice-level English learners who had experienced two years of *Gaikokugo Katsudo* (Foreign language activities) in elementary school.

Curriculum. The designated textbook was utilized to develop and modify my instruction. I employed a planned focus-on-form activity in each section, which included focused grammar teaching, reading, listening comprehension, and interactive activities. I modified a final lesson activity in each term as an incidental focus-on-form activity which would enhance productive skills. To develop communicative competence, communication strategy training was systematically incorporated into activities.

Data collection and analysis. In order to reveal various perceptions and skills that students acquired in CLT class, I collected qualitative and quantitative data. My quantitative data included student surveys on attitude, behavior, and performance tests. They were statistically analyzed to answer research questions. My qualitative data consisted of open-ended questions which were in the surveys. Other qualitative data were combined to obtain more complex understanding of the issues and to validate one set of the findings with the other. The numbers from qualitative data were compared three times in a year to see how the learner's perception changed. The quantitative data were based on surveys or portfolios with Likert Scale (Likert,1932). Likert Scale in my survey was designed to measure perceptions of students. The survey and the portfolio encompassed open-ended questions to draw precise reasons from students. Answers for the open-ended question were categorized and used for analysis. Additionally, I employed interview data. I focused the interview topic on perception of CSs and interviewed focused students in January. Focused students were nine students, who agreed to be participants. Each of them joined ten to thirty-minutes interview. Extra information which was not related to the questions were removed. The data was used to see how they perceived CSs and how they learned to use various CSs.
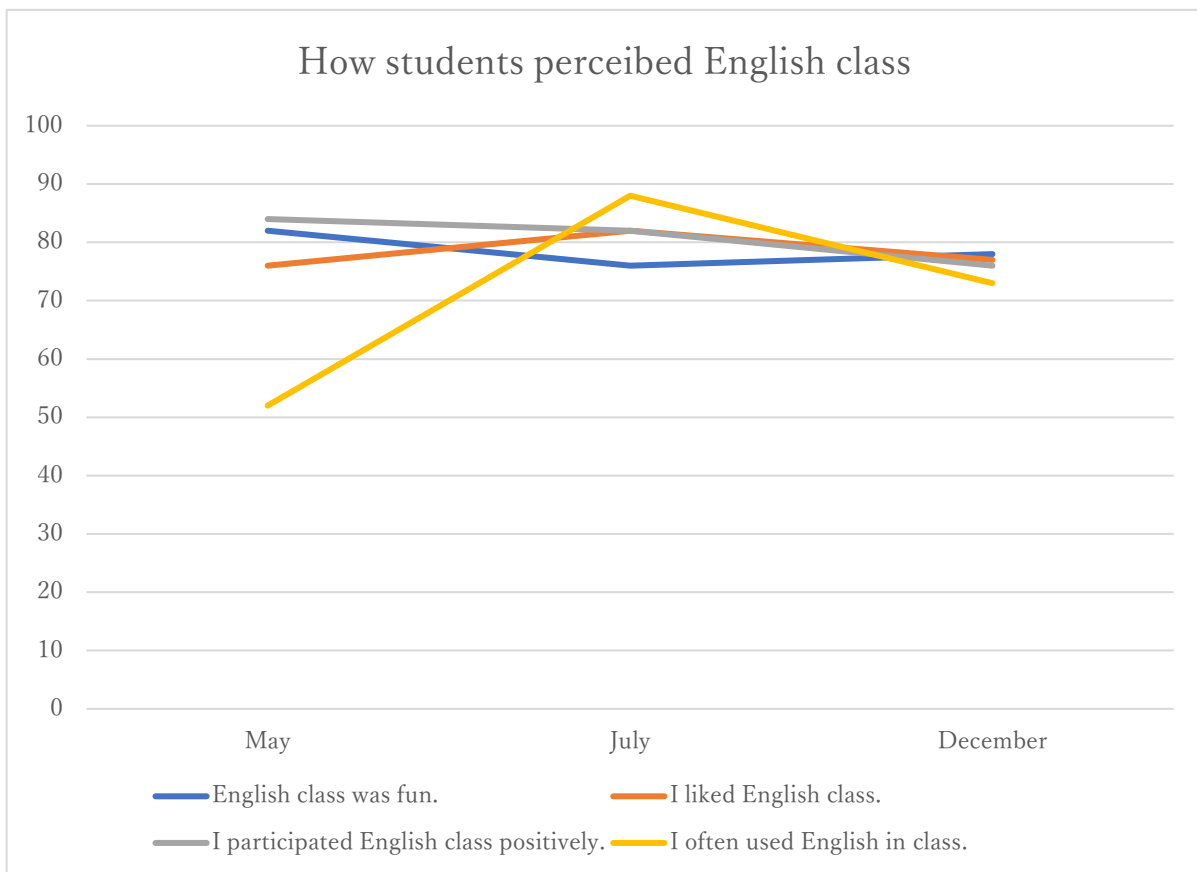
Results

The research explored how students perceived FFI and how they interacted with each other in their conversation. There were three research questions, and each research question was explored from multiple points.

Regarding the first question; How do students perceive FFI and participate in class?
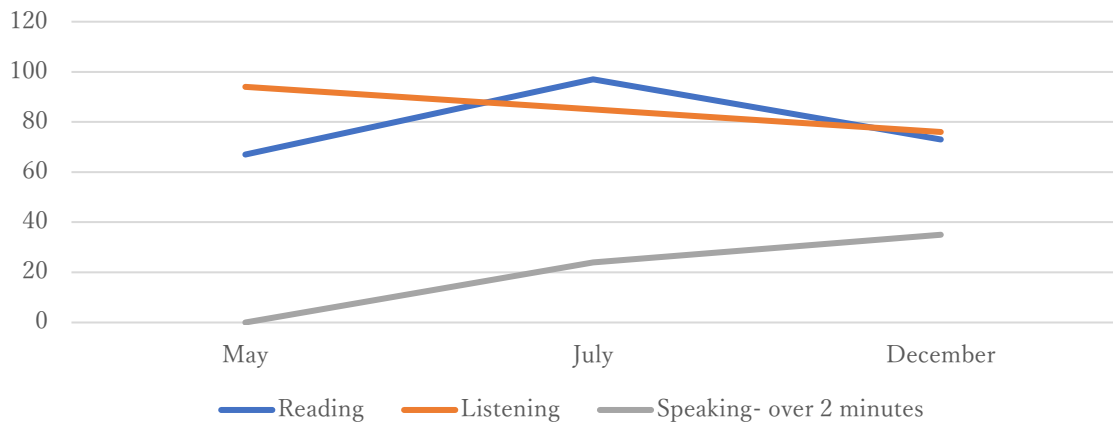
First, I examined students' perception of FFI in the surveys conducted in May, July and December. I asked students to choose the response which was the closest to their perceptions. Second, I examined open questions in the surveys. Lastly, I examined how incidental FFI was perceived based on the interview data. The interviews were conducted in January. Nine participants who agreed

to be involved in my interview participated in the interviews. Then I combined all data and discuss to answer my first research question.
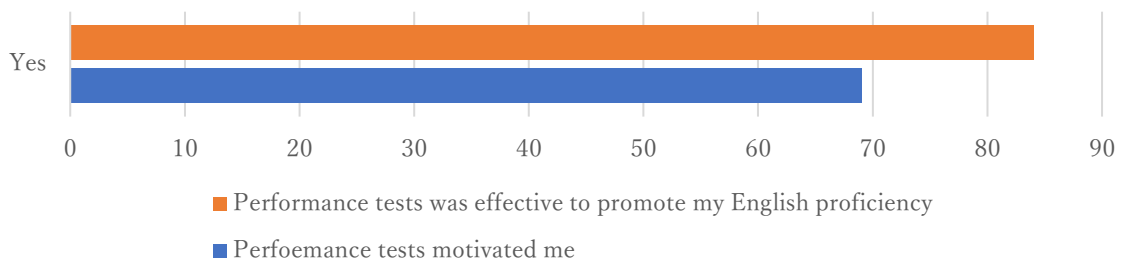
1-1; Students' perception of FFI. The percentage of students who reported English class was fun and somewhat fun were 82 % in May, 76% in July and 73% in February. The percentage of students that they liked English and somewhat liked English was 76% in April, 82 % in July, and 77% in December. The data showed the percentage of students who reported "they participated and somewhat participated class" were 84% in May, 82% in July and 76% in December. Students who reported "they used a lot or somewhat a lot of English" were 52% in May, 88% in July and 73% in December. Students who reported "they were motivated and somewhat motivated by performance tests" were 69%. Students who reported "performance tests were effective and somewhat effective" were 84%. Table 6,7, and 8 were perception regarding skills of English. I excluded writing skills here because writing means writing the English alphabet accurately for my students. They reported that students perceived 'they could read and somewhat read textbook' are 67% in May 93% in July and 73% in December. Students reported "they could understand and somewhat could understand English in class" 94% in May, 85% in July and 67% in December. The data showed that the possible length of speaking duration for over two minutes were 0% in May, 24% in July, 35% in February.

How students perceibed English class

Legend:
— English class was fun.
— I liked English class.
— I participated English class positively.
— I often used English in class.

Students who perceived thier skill development positively.

Reading — Listening — Speaking- over 2 minutes

How students perceived performance tests

Yes

Performance tests was effective to promote my English proficiency
Perfoemance tests motivated me

Students who perceived the development of English

Reading — Listening — Speaking- interaction over 2 minutes

Skill development- Speaking - Duration of time students perceived they can keep talking

Over 2min, 35		
Over 90 sec, 24		
Under 30 sec, 10		
Over 30 Sec, 7		
None, 0		
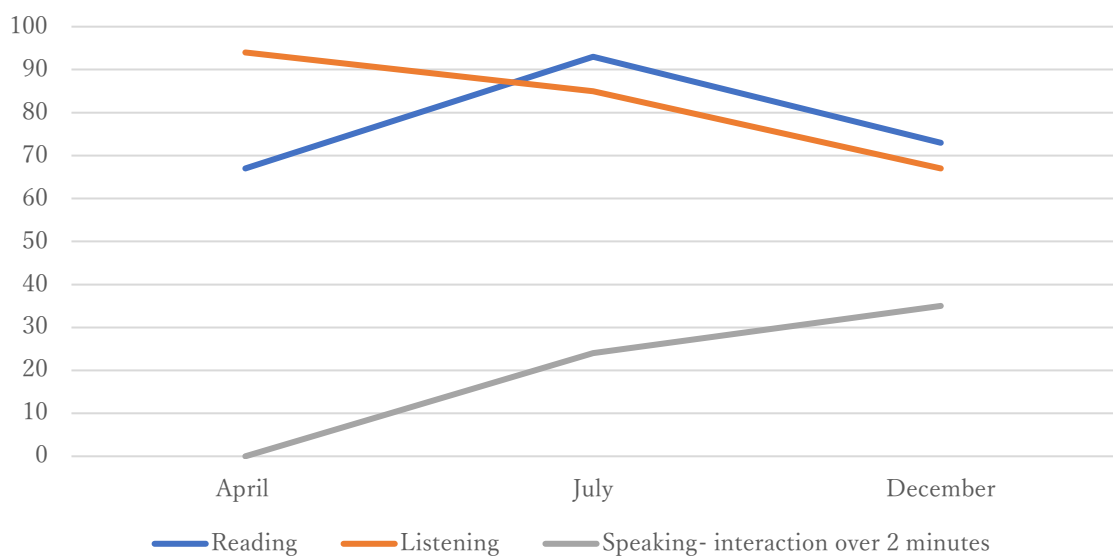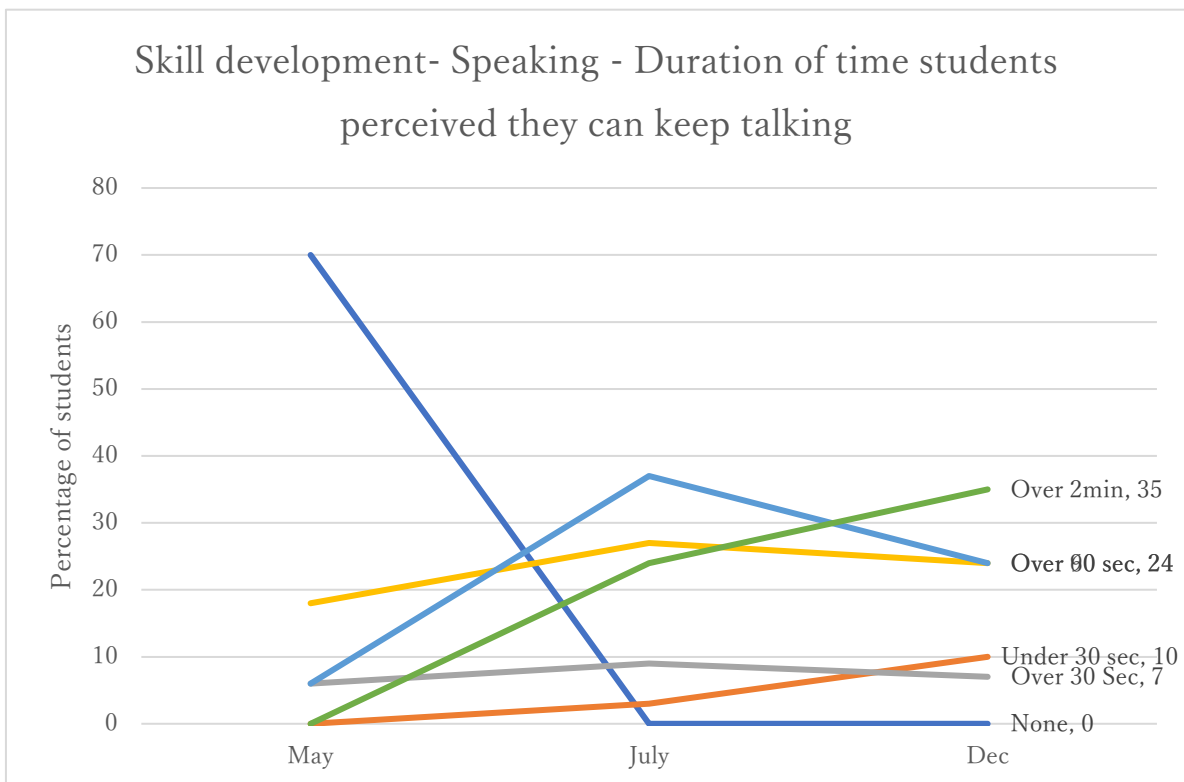
Why do you think performance test effective to develop your English class ?
Feeling of success or development I was a little nervous in performance test. However, I and my partner kept asking questions. My speaking skill got better. My English is still poor, but I have progressed. **Opportunity** I had to answer when I was asked a question.   Performance test gave me chance to use English. My partner helped my English. **Strategy** I always thought how I could keep the topic. **Higher goals** I found out that my English needs progress. I want to get better mark next time. I am not satisfied with my English yet.   I would like do performance test one more time!!

   1-2; Data from open questions in the surveys. To see students' comments about their perception for English class. Many students supported the activities employed in class. They found it was fun to participate in the activities. The negative comments showed the challenges that they had for English learning. Some told they were shy to speak to classmates, and others said it was difficult. To see how students perceived the purpose of learning English. Each student's comments included multiple perceptions so that their comments were classified with four perceptions and the total numbers of students who mentioned each perception were counted. First was to learn communication, second was expectation for their English use in their future. Third was general interests, and fourth was to pass entrance examinations. It showed many students perceived that they were learning English for communication through FFI. They were hoping to communicate with foreign people with their English in their future, and it also showed many students were struggling with entrance examinations.

Students perception of English learning

Category	Comments
Positive	I enjoyed talking with my classmates. All activities were fun.
	I did not understand well at first. But I gradually understand.
	I believe that all English I learned could support my speaking competence.
	I became to understand English textbook these days.
	I was not used to English at first, but I got used to it.
	Because I talked to my friends in English class, I could make more friends.
	I loved English class! It was fun. I would like to talk more next year.
	I did not like English, but I enjoyed activities.
	Performance test was a good opportunity for me to speak English.
	Because I talked to many classmates, I became to talk more.
	At first, I was very shy to talk in English. I was happy that I could keep talking for two minutes.
	I would like to use more CSs.
Negative	Sentences of English were getting longer. It became difficult to understand.
	I did not understand what my teacher said.
	Third person singular is still hard for me.
	I liked activity in the worksheet. But I did not like to talk to my classmates much.
	I would like to learn more vocabulary and grammars.
	I would like to learn grammars more.　I do not know why I study English.

There were the challenges that students had in activities, and students managed the challenges. The challenges that students had was how they could keep talking in pairs. They said to find a topic was hard. Then they attempted to overcome the difficulty by finding a better topic according to their partner. Through the communication breakdowns, they realized they needed to know how to ask questions or answer questions, and they found CSs were useful to prevent the pause.

How do they perceive performance in English?

	The purpose	Number of answers
1	Interests for communication.	10
2	Expectation for future.	16
3	General interests.	6
4	In order to overcome challenges.	11

1.　Interests for communication.

I would like to talk to many people.　I would like to guide street when foreigners ask me the way.　I can help foreigners visiting Japan if I have knowledge.　If we can communicate each other, we can build up good relationship wherever we go, in Japan or abroad. Language is necessary to share our feelings.

2.　Expectation for future.

I think if I can speak English, it would be beneficial to me.　I might possibly need English in my future. I might possibly need English in my job in my future.　I want to get a job which English is necessary in my future.　I do not want to be in trouble when I work in foreign country in my future. I need to prepare for the opportunity to go abroad.　There are foreign customers to my shop. I need to help them in my future.

3.　Interests in general.

International language is cool.　I am interested in foreign language　English can expand my world. English is a general knowledge now.　All people in abroad use English.　English has structures, which are different from Japanese. It would be cool if I can say it or write it properly.

4. **In order to overcome challenges.**
I study English because I am not good at English.　　I need to understand English more for my school subject. If I do not understand English, I cannot go to high school.
I need English to pass examination of any department in university.　English is necessary for high school or university. My brother had trouble to get into a university because of English.　I do not want to be embarrassed when I start to work.　I do not want to be involved in trouble in my future. I need to go to school, I do not want to be teased, I do not want to be scolded. I do not want to get my marks down.

Table.12. Students' challenges for performance test

Classification	Students comments
Finding a proper topic	I do not know what to talk about.　　It was hard to find a topic.
Developing a topic	It was hard to develop a topic.　The topic often scattered. We often changed topics by sentence by sentence.
Recovery from pause.	Conversation often stopped.　Once conversation stopped, it was hard to start again.
Lack of linguistic knowledge.	We could not find a word to say. It was hard to remember vocabulary and phrases. Both of us did not have enough English knowledge to express what we wanted to say.　When my partner did not use communication strategies, I found it was difficult to talk with him.
Lack of skills of English.	I could not use communication strategies effectively.
Task characteristics	It was one on one, and one has to ask a question and the other has to answer the question. Then we keep our conversation. It was hard because the responsibly.　In pair talk, there were both who speak much and speak less. Some pairs just ask me 'How about you?' So, I had to ask questions all the time.　Some pairs neither asked questions, nor used communication strategies.

Table.13. Students' management for the challenges in the performance test

	Classification	Students comments
1	Topic development	I gave appropriate topic according to the partner.　I modified my questions according to the level of my partner.
2	Skill development	I learned both how to ask questions and answer questions because I needed to do both. I learned the strategies to keep our conversation. I learned which conversation strategies I use and when I use them. I tried to talk as clearly as possible. I tried to use more communication strategies.
3	Others.	I modified my language according to my pair.　I modified the topic to suit character of the partner.　We taught each other. I imitated ALT's attitude in my interaction.　Talking with smile is important. Making interaction fun is necessary.

1-3; How incidental FFI was perceived based on the interview data. The interview data from nine students showed that eight out of nine students liked to talk in English. One who said a negative comment also mentioned he partly liked with talking in pairs. The positive reasons were classified into four: (1) learning process, (2) exchanging information with others, (3) learning from others, and (4) seeing their own progress. The first reason was that they enjoyed learning process. H1 said learning communication strategies was fun. M1 explained how she made effort when she was speaking in English and it was fun for her.

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The second reason was that they enjoyed exchanging information with others. H3 said that she was interested in new information of her classmates. L1 said that to talk about anime with her partner was fun for her. The third reason was that they enjoyed learning from others. L2 and L3 students said that they learned from others. The last reason was that they were happy to see their progress. H2 and H3 said that they were happy to find their progress. They found they could speak better than before. One with a negative answer said that he had trouble understanding English. The remedy he got was a help from his partner. He said when he understood what his partner was talking about, he enjoyed talking with the partner.

Regarding the second research question; How do students develop their skills to use communication strategies?

I conducted a survey with Likert-scale questions with comments according to CSs to students. 35 students participated in the survey in January. I asked students to choose whatever the closest alternatives for their perception and wrote their perception with comments. I also interviewed nine students about CSs. The results were combined to answer the research question.

2-1; Survey result with Likert-scale questions; how did students perceive each strategy? The data showed that students perceived CSs were effective to support their speaking. It showed students had preferences to use CSs in their conversation. The popular CSs were openers and closers, me, too., really, wow, how about you, comments, key word repeat (showing understanding). Whereas not popular ones were pardon, one more time, please, follow up questions, and adding explanations.

Table.14. Student's perception for CS.

Useful	Somewhat useful	Somewhat not useful	Not useful
74	26	0	0

Table.15. Useful or not useful CSs for students to use in their perception.

Category	CSs
Useful	Openers and closers. Me, too. Really? Wow! How about you? Comments. Key word repeat (Showing understanding).
Not useful	Pardon? One more time, please. Follow up questions. Adding explanations.

Research Issue 2-2; Survey results from open questions; why did students have preferences for CSs? Data from the interviews also confirmed that all focused students agreed CSs were useful in conversations. The data from interview offered the reasons of preferences in using CSs. As for 'Me, too', multiple participants pointed out it was useful for them. According to them, there were two benefits to use "Me,too" ; one was easy to use, and the other was to reduce friction between students and make the conversation more exciting. H2 noted that she needed to create good vibe with her partner while she was talking, and she realized showing the same interests was a good way to feel close to each other. M1 said that there were common things with the partner. She did not want to miss the common things because it made conversation fun. As for 'How about you?', they also pointed out three benefits of using it. One was easy to use. Second, it was useful when they could not find language resources to use. Third, they pointed out they could make a good rhythm to keep talking by using 'how about you?' This word functioned as a trigger to

get new information from the partner and prevented the pauses. 'Really?' was also frequently used CSs. M2 pointed out 'Really?' was easy to use. M3 said he wanted to show his surprise to his partner. M1 also said she wanted to show her surprise in the conversation. On the contrary, there were CSs which were not frequently used. Students pointed out that using 'Pardon?' or follow-ups were not useful for novice learners. As for 'pardon', they pointed out that they needed more practice to use this word. M1 told he did not know how to use this. H1 told that he didn't find the need to use this word. He said he used key word repetition instead. H2 told she felt bad if she asked in that way because it could bother her partner. The survey data (Table 17,) pointed out that to answer this CS was hard for students and might cause pauses in the conversation. In addition, the survey data showed follow-ups were hard. It showed they were not ready to answer or ask questions. The interview data showed that students selected effective CSs to support their conversation in many ways.

Table.16. Students' perceptions for each CSs

	Useful	Somewhat useful	Somewhat not useful	Not useful
Openers and closers	**20**	9	2	0
Fillers	13	**14**	4	0
Really? Wow!	**12**	**15**	3	1
Me, too.	**21**	8	2	0
Pardon?	0	6	**24**	1
How about you?	**21**	6	3	1
Ummm, let me see	2	9	**16**	4
Repetition to show understanding	7	**18**	6	0
Repetition for confirmation	9	**13**	6	3
Adding comments	**15**	**11**	5	10
Follow-ups (Explanation)	6	**13**	12	0
Follow-ups (Question)	2	**13**	**15**	1

Table. 17. Comments for each CS use.

Categories	Comments
Openers and closers	+ Greetings is something important for the conversation. + I can show respect to my partner with greetings. - I sometimes forget to say good-bye to my pair.
Fillers	+They are easy to use. +I can use these words any time. +They are simple and easy to use. +I had many opportunities to use the words. +I often get to know the facts that I don't know about my partner. +I can make my partner feel comfortable to show I am listening to him/ her with fillers. +I used these words as confirmation and showing my surprise. +My partner was relaxed to hear I was listening. - I just don't say 'Wow!' - I sometimes use 'Oh' instead of Ah-huh.
Me, too.	+I can use this word easily. +I don't have to say long words, +Many people have the same interests that I do. +I can show we have things in common.

+I found conversation is more fun when we have something in common.

Pardon? Slowly, please?   -I want to use this word but it is hard to answer and took a long time for my partner.

-The words are difficult to remember.

-I don't know when to use this word.   -I use How about you? Instead.

-This word doesn't pop up in my mind.

-I didn't have opportunities to use this word.

-Some of my classmates don't know what this means.

How about you?   +It's an easy way to ask about my pair,   +I simply use this phrase to ask the same question to my partner.   +It is easy to ask same questions.

+It is an easy way to keep continuing the conversation.

+I use this phrase to know about my pair.

Hesitation words. Let me see. Ummm   -It is hard to say Ummm.   -I cannot think with saying the word.

-I just simply think without saying anything.

Repetition for showing understanding   +I use key words repeat mainly to confirm my understanding.

Repetition for confirmation checks   + I get use to use key word repeat

Adding comments   -I didn't know what to say and it took a while to say something.

Follow-ups (Explanation)   -I answer to the questions with Yes, or No. It is hard to add something in English.   -I am not good at using this. -I don't know what to say.

Follow-ups (Question)   -I wanted to ask more but I didn't know how to say it.

-It is hard to ask questions in English.   -I don't know what to ask.

-My English is not good enough to ask more questions.

2-3; Interview results; how did students acquire CSs? The interview data showed explicit and implicit language socialization promoted strategic competence in my class. M1 learned key word repetition from instruction. It was hard for him at first, however, he learned how to use it through using it. M1 also described she chose CSs to use from a list. She developed how to use CSs through interacting with friends.

There were also other kinds of strategies. According to the data, students had several strategies to employ in conversation or performance tests. The data was classified into five purposes; (1) reaction, (2) topic, (3) language, (4) preparation, and (5) non-verbal communication. When I asked my focused students how they could keep talking, the low-level students pointed out that CSs use was important. They also mentioned they needed to have more linguistic resources that they could use in the conversation. Middle-level and high-level students pointed out several issues. They focused more on strategies of conversation management. First, they said topic development was relevant. Second, they said facial expressions or gestures were important. Third, they pointed out attitude was important. All conversations were managed by two dimensions, one was management of themselves and the other was management done for their partner.

Table.18. Did you know what you have to do in your performance test?   %

Yes	Somewhat yes	Somewhat no	No
22	56	22	0
What did you do in your conversation?			
Category	Comments		
Reaction	I used communication strategies. I tried to react to my partner.		
Topic	I tried to develop a topic.　I asked questions		

Language	I tried to answer longer. I added more phrases after I said Yes, no. I paraphrased what my partner said.
Preparation.	I memorized what I want to say.
Non-verbal communication.	I smiled and used my gestures. I tried to make my pair enjoy talking.

Regarding the third research question.; How do students develop their communicative competence through FFI and performance tests?

I'm going to answer the third research question from the targeted students' performance data in July and December. First, I am going to examine how M1 student participated in timed conversation performance test in December. Second, I am going to examine how M2 student performed in performance test in December. Lastly, I am going to examine how M1 and M2 students improved their conversation skills from comparing the performance tests in July and December.

3-1; How did student M1 perform in performance test in December? M1 had average competence in my group of learners. M1 participated in the performance test positively. She used various strategies in the performance test. She smiled and looked happy when she was talking with her partner. She also used relevant gestures to support the communication with her hands. To look at her language data, she took 15 turns in the conversation. In her turn takings, she showed three kinds of patterns. The first one was using CSs only. Second was asking questions, third was answering the questions and offering information. First, she used only CSs in eight turns, using mostly 'really'. Second, she asked questions twice in her turns 'What time do you get up?' and 'What time do you go to bed?' Third, she explained about her five times. Two turns were consisted of one sentence such as 'I get up at about six thirteen.' and 'Yes, I like table tennis.' and two turns contained two sentences, 'I watch TV. And I play table tennis.' 'I play table tennis, But Monday go home.', a turn was incomplete because of time limit. She introduced new topics as questions. Developing a topic was not seen. She used openers and closers in line 'really' twice in line 7, and 23. Hesitation phenomena, 'ummm' 'ahhh' were seen in line nine, 17 and 25.

Performance data in December. A = targeted students

Category	Feature
Preparation:	She prepared well for the performance test so that she could manage to talk without looking any references. She looked relaxed and smiled, laughed.
Non-verbal:	She used a lot of gestures. While she was thinking about what she wanted to say, she looked up and shook her body. While she was talking about herself, she pointed herself. When she was asking questions to her partner, she opened her arms with her palm up, and then sticking her arms toward her pair. When she wanted to show her surprise, she stretched her both arms with her palms up. She used clear and slow English. She used good eye-contact when she asked questions and listening to her pair. She smiled all through the conversation.

Language data.

1 A: Hello.	
2 F: Hello. How are you?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (1)*
3 A: I'm sleepy. **How about you?**	
4 F: I'm sleepy, too. What do you do after dinner?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (2)*
5 A: I watch TV. And I play table tennis.	

6 F: Oh, really?	
7 A: Yes. **Ummm** What time do you get up?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (3)*
8 F: I get up at six,	
9 A: **Really?**	
10 F: Yes, how about you?	
11 A: I get up at about six thirteen.	
12 F: It's late. What do you do after school?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (4)*
13 A: I play table tennis, But Monday go home.	
14 F; Oh, really?	
15 A: Yes, **how about you?**	
16 F: I play volleyball. I'm on the volleyball team. I don't like volleyball.	
17 A: **E? Really?**	
18 F: Oh, Yes. Yes.	
19 A: **Wow!**	
20 F: Ah.. Do you like table tennis?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (5)*
21 A: Yes, I like table tennis.	
22 F: Oh, I see.	
23 A: **Ah..** What time do you go to bed?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (6)*
24 F: I go to bed about ten.	
25 A: **Wow! Really?**	
26 F: Yes. How about you?	
27 A: I go I go to..	
	Pipipipi 2"00

Line	Strategy	Analysis
7	[Hesitation]	She made time to think next question.
9	[Reaction]	She said really with a surprise. The pair asked the same question using how about you?
17,19	[Reaction]	She showed her surprised to her pair's answer. That implies she likes her club activity. Her pair asked her if she likes her club activity.
23	[Hesitation]	She made time to think next question.
25	[Reaction]	She showed her surprise to her pair's answer. However, she could not complete the sentence because of the time. She wanted to talk about her time in English and screamed that she wanted to say the answer in English after the time was up.

3-2; Student M2. To see data from two-minute timed conversation performance test of M2 in December, he participated in the performance test positively. He prepared well, relaxed in the conversation. His gestures were relevant to support the communication. He used varieties of strategies in the performance test. To look at his language data, he took 14 turn takings in the conversation. In his turn takings, he used CSs 13 times in his turns, and CSs were followed by his answers to the question or questions to his partner. He used his CSs with answers or explanations in his language. In line 27, he used CSs and question, such as 'Mmm, but, mmm what cake do you like?' in line 7, 17, and 25, he used a CS and answer of a question such as 'Oh, I eat dinner at about five thirty.' His word numbers for each turn taking was minimum two words in line seven and line 19. The turn takings were consisted of CSs, repetition, and yes. The longest turn taking was line 15, 5 sentences. 'Sushi! Me, too. And I like natto. Natto rice. Natto rice much.' He introduced new topics with questions, and he added some explanations. His developed topic with giving comments to the pair. The comments were shown in line 6,9 and 19. Such as 'early' and 'late'. His longest topic

development was line 15. He said 'Sushi! Me, too. And I like natto. Natto rice. Natto rice much.' He attempted to say his favorite food was natto, he attempted to say he liked natto rice much.' He tried to develop the natto food saying he liked natto with rice much. He could use various type of CSs. He used openers and closers, Oh! Me, too. , Mmm, and repetitions. He used repetitions to show his acknowledgement four times in line nine 15, 23, 25.

Performance data in December.   B=targeted students

Category	Feature
Preparation	He prepared well for the performance test so that he could manage to talk without looking at any references. He looked relaxed and he afforded to give peace sign to the video recorder.
Non-verbal	He used varieties of gestures. While he was thinking, he used gestures that showing he was thinking. He looked up and touching his chin with one hand. While he was talking about himself, one of his hand was on his chest. When he was asking questions to his partner, he stretched his one arm toward the partner, with his palm up. He also moved his body forward to show the turn was moved to his pair. He used clear and slow English. He used good eye-contact when he was talking and listening to his pair. His Tender smile was seen all through the conversation.

Language data:

1 B: Hello, how are you?   *Topic initial elicitor sequence (1)*
2 S: I'm sleepy. How are you?
3 B: I am sleepy, too. What time do you get up? *Topic initial elicitor sequence (2)*
4 S: I get up at 6 o'clock.
5 B: **Oh, it's early.** [I …
6 S: [How about you?
7 B: **Umm** I get up at seven o'clock.
8 S: Oh, it's …   *(8,9,10 Self initiated – other repair – self repair)*
9 B: Late late.
10 S: Late.
11 B: **Oh…** What time do you eat for breakfast?   *Topic initial elicitor sequence (3)*
12 S: I eat breakfast at bread .. and bread and cocoa. How about you?
                                              (Self-initiated self-repair)
13 B: **Oh…** I eat at Japanese style. Do you like Japanese food?
14 S: Yes, I do. I like sushi very much.
15 AB **Sushi! Me, too**. And I like natto. Natto rice. Natto rice very much.
        What time do you eat dinner?   *Topic initial elicitor sequence (4)*
16 S: I eat dinner at about seven o'clock. How about you?
17 B: **Oh,** I eat dinner at about five thirty.
18 S: Oh, it's early.
19 B: **Early!** Yes.
20 S: What time do you go to bed?   *Topic initial elicitor sequence (5)*
21 B: **Go to bed.** I go to bed at about **ahhh** ten thirty. **How about you?**
22 S: Ahh. I go to bed at ten o'clock.
23 B: **Ten o'clock. Oh, me, too.** What do you play sports?
                                             Topic initial elicitor sequence (6)
24 S: I play table tennis and bowling. How about you?
25 B: **Oh, table..**   I play tennis, too.
26 S: Oh, tennis.
27 B: Mmmm But..   Mmmm   What do you like cake?
                                              Pipipipi   2:00

Line	Strategy	Analysis
5	[Comment]	He's commenting his friends' wake up time.
7	[Hesitation]	He's making time to think to say his wake up time.
9	[Negotiation]	He's telling the word the pair might want to say.
11,13,17	[Reaction and hesitation]	He uses 'oh' as his understanding of his pair and making time to think next question. He uses this oh several times.
15	[Shadowing]	In the flow of the story of Japanese food, He picked the word sushi that his pair said and he continued to talk about him and Japanese food.
19	[Shadowing]	He shadowed his pair's comment and emphasized it with adding the gesture and yes.
21	[Shadowing]	He shadowed the key word from the question and he earned time to think. He also used another hesitation strategy to earn time to think.
23	[Shadowing]	He shadowed the pair's answer and added he was the same.
25	[Shadowing]	He shadowed his pairs' key words and continued to talk about his favorite sports.

3-3. How did students use CSs in their performance tests? M1 used few CSs both in July and December. She used 'How about you?' effectively in the task in December. And showing her surprise made the flow of the conversation to develop the topic. M2 used many CSs in July. His shadowing in July was used for confirmation. He mumbled the word to himself or sometimes to his pair to confirm the idea. In December, confirmation skills were used not only for showing the confirmation, but also earning time to think, developing the topic. Both students heavily relied on memorized words and phrases both in July and December, however, there were more attempts to use their own prompted language in December for both participants.

3-4; How did M1 and M2 improve their conversation – management of turn takings and topic development. The number of turn takings were reduced from around 25 in July to 14 in December. The reason of reducing turn takings was because in performance in July, they just asked and answered immediately, changing topics sentence by sentence. The turns were taken immediately, it was similar to grammar drills, asking questions and answering the questions in turns. They improved topic management better in December. Student M2 took initiative to manage topic in both performance tests in July and December. In July, student M2 talked with student M1. There were 6 topic initial elicitor sequences in July, and the 5 topic initiators were practiced by M2, and only 1 topic initiator was practiced by M1. In December, M1 and M2 talked with different partners. M1 took two topic initial elicitors out of six in the performance test with student F, M2 took five topic initial elicitors out of six with student S. Not only the numbers of initiating topics, Student M2 improved quality of topic initiation. He initiated topics randomly in July, such as sports, TV, animals then sweets. However, in December, his topic initiation was related to the flow of the conversation. In December, he first initiated the topic as time to get up, then next initiated topic was breakfast, then the topic of dinner was initiated after the topic of breakfast. He also improved how to develop topics between topic initial elicitor. When he initiated the topic of breakfast, the topic of food was developed as Japanese food – Sushi – Natto rice. Student M2 spent time to talk about his favorite Japanese breakfast, Natto rice from line 11-15. As for Student M1, she did not develop topics well even in December. Both partners of M1 and M2 in performance tests in December showed good sense of developing topics. One initiated the topic of after school and sports in order. The other initiated topic of time to go to bed after dinner.

Performance data in July.　M2=A, M1=B

A:M2　B:M1	
1　A:　Hello!	
2　B:　Hello!	
3　A:　Ummm	
4　A&B: How are you?	
5　B:　How are you?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (1)*
6　A:　I'm sleepy. And how are you?	
7　B:　Ah, I'm sleepy, too.	
8　A:　**Oh,** I'm ******.	
9　B:　**Oh,** my name is ******.　*Etto*　What sports do you like?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (2)*
10 A:　I like table tennis.	
11 B:　**Oh, really?**	
12 A:　Yes!.	
13 B:　**Table tennis.**	
14 A:　I like sports?	*14 15 16 self-initiated self-repair*
15 B:　….	
16 A:　A!　Do you like sports?	
17 B:　**Do you like sports?** Ah I like tennis.	
18 A:　**Really?**	
19 B:　**Really. Yes.**　Do you watch TV?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (3)*
20 A:　**Oh, yes!**	
21 B:　**Yes. Oh.**	
22 A:　Do you watch TV?	
23 B:　Yes, I'm comedy and documentary.	
24 A:　**Oh! Me, too.**　Do you, do you like animals?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (4)*
25 B:　**Do you like animals.**　Oh, Yes, yes, Etto I have a pet.	
26 A:　**Oh.**	
27 B:　I have a dog. Dog name is Mimi. Mimi cute!	
28 A:　**Ah**	
29 B:　**How about you?**	
30 A:　I like animals.	
31 B:　Animals.	
32 A:　I love dog and horse.	
33 B:　**Oh oh oh really?**	
34 A:　Yes.	
35 B:　**Yes.**　**Umm.** Do you like cake?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (5)*
36 A:　Yes.	
37 B:　**Oh, okay.**	
38 A:　Chocolate cake.	
39 B:　**Oh, me, too.**　I like chocolate cake, too.	
40 A:　Do you like Japanese food?	*Topic initial elicitor sequence (6)*
41 B:　Yes. I like Japanese food is somen.	
42 A:　**Oh!**	
43 B:　Do you like Japanese food?	
44 A:　I like Japanese food sushi.	
45 B:　**Oh. Sushi. Yes.**　Thank you for talking.	

46 A:	Bye.
47 B:	See you.
48 A:	See you. 2'11

Discussion

Regarding research question 1: How do students perceive FFI and participate in class?

They overall liked how the English class was managed and they perceived development of own English skills. Accordingly, it turned out that students perceived FFI positively. The data showed how students perceived incidental FFI was important for their English learning. They agreed that incidental FFI was effective for their English learning. Firstly, incidental FFI showed the purpose of learning English was to have communication to students. Secondly, it gave better opportunities to learn a language for language learners. Students were given rich opportunities to cooperate, they learned from each other, then they managed how they talk with limited linguistic resources and found ways to solve the problems. Thirdly, it gave students opportunities to evaluate what they have learned in planned FFI. All those process in incidental FFI gave students opportunities to develop skills of communication.

Regarding research question 2: How do students develop their skills to use communication strategies?

Students shared perceptions that CSs were useful to prevent breakdowns. They told that it prevented pauses effectively. How they decided the usefulness was divided into two, one was speaker-oriented reasons, and the other was listener-oriented reasons. Speaker oriented reasons were 'It is easy to use', 'I use this when I don't know what to say', 'I do not know how to use it', 'I do not have this in my mind'. Students decided to use them or not in their convenience. On the other hand, listener-oriented reasons were 'I can make my partner feel comfortable to show I am listening to him/ her with fillers', 'I found conversation was more fun when we had something in common.' 'Some of my classmates do not know what this means.' 'I did not make my partner feel bad because my partner talked hard'. Students decided the usefulness of the CSs according to their pair's convenience. The interview data showed higher-level students tended to use listener-oriented reasons and lower-level students tended to use speaker-oriented ones. Accordingly, their development of strategic competence was not only through instruction but also by using them with other students. Students evaluated each CS and decided if they use it or not, or when to use it. They evaluated each CS through their own experiences, and then decided to use them, or not or when to use them.

Regarding research question 3: How do students develop their communicative competence through FFI and performance tests?

All through planned FFI and incidental FFI, students learned linguistic resources and they were explicitly and implicitly shown how to communicate with others. They evaluated what they have learned, then developed skills of communication in English. Firstly, they increased linguistic resources to use in the conversation. There were more numbers of words, phrases, or sometimes sentences are used in a turn. It enriched the contents of conversation. Secondly, they improved how to use CSs. CSs were used to show her feelings in her conversation. Another student increased the function of CSs. The CSs showed how he was involved in the conversation. In both students' conversation, CSs were effectively used to create good air between the speakers.

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CSs use were better developed in December. Accordingly, their performance in December was more natural, there were natural pauses between turn takings. Lastly, they improved topic management. I often observed that for the students who had limited linguistic resources, the first priority in their conversation tended to choose familiar linguistic resources. In July, they used this priority much. Their conversation tended to be like mechanical drills, the flow of the conversation was omitted, so that there were frequent turn takings occurred in July. In December, M2 and other two students created more natural flow of the conversation. It seemed they monitored and evaluated their conversation, then they developed the topic management ability even they still have very limited language resources.

Conclusion

The data showed that using FFI and performance tests in my classroom developed students' basic knowledge and various skills which are necessary in communication. Especially, it turned out that the incidental FFI was effective for language learning. It clearly showed students that the goal of language learning was to develop ability of communication and gave students ample input and output opportunities. Data showed that knowledge from input was activated by experience in incidental FFI. It indicated that students monitored and evaluated the skills and knowledge in incidental FFI, then they personalized them and developed communicative competence. Data also indicated that the opportunity enriched students' learning. Students learned from each other through incidental FFI. Another finding is that CSs training greatly contributed to develop students' communicative competence. CSs were useful to prevent the poses in their performance, it often covered their lack of linguistic resources in communication. It also affected their psychological factors in communication positively. The common understanding of CSs by students was that CSs were used to communicate with others. They are used to create good atmosphere between the pair and worked effectively in their communication.

There are some weaknesses in my AR. One was the number of students that I examined, the others were duration of time, and the the research focus. I had chance to teach the first-year students for two years. However, I felt two years were still not enough. I found when the students were different, there were individual characteristics differences, and group characteristics differences. Second, since my students were different in each year, the duration of research was limited within a year. I would like to see how they further develop their communicative competence in multiple years. Lastly, my research focus was only on speaking. I am also interested in how other skills would develop through FFI and performance tests.

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