

Abstract

Hübner, Anita. 2003. *Communication strategies versus learning strategies – a critical analysis illustrated by examples from conversations in English as a lingua franca*. MA thesis, University of Vienna.

The present thesis is devoted to the question of whether a clear distinction can be made between the concepts of communication strategies and those of learning strategies.

A brief introduction dealing with the role of English in the present world and its function as the most widely used lingua franca leads to the question of communication strategies, and Chapter 2 first concentrates on a critical examination of the various attempts at defining communication strategies. Basically three main aspects are focused on: (a) the defining criteria of communication strategies (i.e. problematicity and consciousness), (b) the question of whether communication strategies should be considered as learner-specific phenomena or not, and (c) the approach chosen to define and investigate communication strategies (i.e. sociolinguistic versus psycholinguistic approaches). After that theoretical discussion the paper turns to more practical issues and illustrates the most common and most important types of communication strategies identified in the existing literature by examples from recorded real-life conversations in English as a lingua franca.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the concept of learning strategies, again starting with a (brief) critical examination of the definitions proposed. Subsequent to this, the two most prominent and most frequently cited taxonomies of learning strategies are presented and subjected to some critical scrutiny. While one of them represents the ‘conservative’ view, i.e. one that basically maintains the distinction between communication strategies and learning strategies, the other one stands for a rather ‘revolutionary’ approach and drops this distinction.

Inspired by this ‘revolutionary’ perspective, Chapter 4 finally focuses on and investigates the relationship between strategies identified as belonging to the fields of communication and learning respectively.

After a critical examination of existing views and opinions, the question of the strategy used in lingua franca conversations is taken up again and considered more thoroughly. As it turns out, the borderlines between communication and learning strategies are, in fact, extremely fuzzy, and a clear separation of the two concepts is hardly possible.