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Wright, C orcid.org/0000-0003-3962-7903, Tsakalaki, A and Lin, M (2022) "Now I hear what you say" - how short EAP courses can foster successful academic interactional strategies. Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 55. 101074. ISSN 1475-1585

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2021.101074

“Now I hear what you say” - how short EAP courses can foster successful academic interactional strategies

ABSTRACT

In globalised higher education, strategies to build academic interactional competence can be key to international students’ success, e.g. in seminars and oral assessments. Linguistically, academic interaction requires meaning-focused, other-oriented oral skills, which can be challenging for international second-language (L2) students to acquire, even with specific training. This study reports on data from 230 postgraduate students of mixed L1s, comparing use of L2 listening and speaking strategies at the start and end of a 5-week English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme at a UK university. We found a moderate significant improvement over time in meaning-focused listening strategies, and some evidence in increased use of a wider range of speaking strategies. Further factor analysis revealed a subtle but clear shift towards more other-oriented stance in both listening and speaking strategy use, although with much individual variation, and no significant correlation with proficiency. This study, one of the first to use speaker stance analysis in studying L2 academic communication, shows that even short-term EAP courses can have valuable potential in boosting strategies and skills, particularly in listening, which are needed for successful academic interactional competence.

Keywords: academic interactional competence; EAP; strategies; skills; disposition; speaker stance

INTRODUCTION

Researchers and language teachers have long been interested in the challenges in learning to communicate and interact effectively in a second language (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 2007; Tavakoli & Wright, 2020). Within EAP programmes, the huge growth in international students attending English-medium higher education courses raises the stakes for training students in good academic oral interactional abilities. Such abilities can affect both students' academic success (Andrade, 2006; Trenkic & Warmington, 2019), as well as impacting on their successful sociocultural adaptation (Wright & Schartner, 2013). Setting aside for now the issue of evaluating academic performance related to displaying content-specific knowledge, this study examines how to encourage specific listening and speaking strategies to boost interactional abilities in academic settings, adding the relatively underexplored impact of speaker stance, within the context of a typical short English for Academic Purposes course.

Decades of research into L2 communicative competence highlights the complex mix of factors involved in good interactional abilities (Lennon, 1990; Nation, 2007; Ortega, 2011; Savignon, 2007). Teachers and learners alike are familiar with the EAP demands of preparing presentations which can be fluently communicated, followed up by more hesitation in the following unprepared question and answer session. Two main areas of research are relevant here. First, from a psycholinguistic perspective on speech processing, it is important to understand how to foster the kind of meaning-focused, dialogic communicative competence that is required for successful spontaneous or creative interaction (Segalowitz, 2010; Wright & Tavakoli, 2016). This would help teachers and learners seeking to build a broader sense of

communicative adequacy in the classroom (Revesz, Ekiert & Torgersen, 2016; Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018).

Second, from a pedagogic perspective, the use of strategies - either for language learning or communication - have also been identified as essential in building interactive effectiveness, in and out of academic settings (Cohen & Macaro, 2001; Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Nakatani, 2006, 2010; Oxford, 1995; Walsh, 2011). Strategic competence, explained in more detail subsequently, refers here to a psycho-social mix of actions and attitudes which language learners may use to try to improve their language use. This may include communication strategies to compensate for gaps in linguistic or sociocultural knowledge (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Poulisse, 1993), or specific efforts to improve different aspects of language learning (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Oxford 1990, 1995). Attitudinal factors are also presumed to play a role, reflected in learners' willingness to communicate (Macintyre, Clément, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998), and readiness or positive "disposition" towards the efforts needed to create shared understanding (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; Littlejohn, 2008). Another factor in strategic competence has recently been identified: the degree to which active engagement between speaker and listener - "speaker stance" - can limit or aid dialogic interaction (Ge, 2011; Wang, Bristol, Mowen, & Chakraborty, 2000). However, how to transfer good understanding of strategic competence into EAP teaching for interaction has not been fully explored. Therefore, greater understanding of interactional strategic effectiveness from both psycholinguistic and interactional perspectives can be useful for learners and teachers alike to help address some of the challenges in developing successful communicative abilities in and out of the EAP classroom (Segalowitz, 2010).

Additionally we argue here that some of the barriers to developing effective communicative interactional abilities in L2 contexts, such as international EAP settings, may

arise from prior educational experience. Classroom learners used to standard language tests may rely on form-focused processing as being most likely to lead to the best score, if what is required is efficient management of learned information required by analytic-type tests (Field, 2008; Wright, 2018). They may also lack instruction in or practice of the kinds of communicative and socio-affective strategies needed for interactive discussion (Tavakoli & Wright, 2020). But for the thousands of international students studying on academic English programmes (EAP) in Anglophone settings such as the UK, it is a great challenge to overcome these barriers and adjust to the kind of meaning-focused interactive discourse which is expected (Andrade, 2006; Wright & Schartner, 2013). In order to help address this challenge, it is common to follow a short EAP course incorporating speaking and listening practice, to help their communicative abilities in academic interaction (Wen, 2018).

However, the effectiveness of such short courses on academic interactional abilities has not been widely studied, to our knowledge. There is thus a gap in understanding whether, and how quickly, EAP courses can impact on developing meaningful interaction abilities for academic purposes, such as in seminars: a gap which has motivated this study. Academic interaction also requires mastery of critical thinking and content knowledge (Lin, Preston, Kharrufa & Kong, 2016), which we do not specifically address in this study. Here, we seek to shed light from research from the two strategic competence themes identified previously of processing and stance, to help practitioners understand why some students may struggle, even if well motivated, to make much progress in becoming more communicative in interaction.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

A wide range of research has been conducted to understand the development of L2 oral interaction. We focus here on ideas arising from psycho-social research which we believe can usefully inform teaching practice in relation to developing the kind of oral interaction needed in international study settings. First, cognitive-focused research looks at building greater cognitive and utterance fluency in speech production (Segalowitz, 2010), or developing better cognitive abilities for listening for meaning and gist (Field, 2004; Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, 2011). This paradigm is sometimes used to make a top-down/bottom-up distinction in operationalising speaking and listening (e.g. Cook, 2008; Field, 2004; Graham et al., 2011; Seedhouse, 2013), which can also be seen as similar to the meaning-focused vs. form-focused dichotomy used in CLT (Whong, 2013). In line with research into communicative abilities in the classroom (e.g. Bachman and Clark, 1987; Chen & Wright, 2017; Walsh, 2011), we see meaning-focused speaking processes as focused on message-oriented top-down interactional speech, vs. step-by-step bottom-up form-focused construction of a transmission-style utterance (Ellis, 2001; Seedhouse, 2013). Both types of speech may be fluent, but meaning-focused speech would be seen as aligned to a goal of creating a listener-relevant interactive utterance, where accuracy may be less of a priority. By contrast, form-focused speech may be based on training in monologic speaking as performance, which may be accurate but potentially based on pre-learned expressions or rehearsed recitation, and without necessarily taking the hearer into account (Wright, 2018, 2020). Current sociocultural interest at pragmatic discourse-level has also yielded interesting and useful insights into L2 interactional research (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010; Walsh, 2011), including evidence of classroom interaction typically as based on speech as transmission rather than interaction (Seedhouse, 2013).

A second psycho-social paradigm derives from behavioural and attitudinal research on individuals' use of communication strategies (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Poulisse, 1993) and language and learning strategies (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Oxford 1990, 1995). In this paradigm motivational factors are assumed to play a role in individuals' willingness to communicate ("WTC", e.g. Macintyre et al., 1998), and success can depend on developing a positive "habit of mind" or "disposition" towards effective communication (Littlejohn, 2008).

In addition, cultural and educational psychological studies have considered the notion of speaker stance. Research suggests there is a dichotomy between shared versus individual stance in "transactive dialogue" (Faulkner, Littleton, & Woodhead, 2013: 219), as seen in the notion of *self-orientation* versus *collective-orientation* in task-completion (Wang et al., 2000; Ge, 2011). Not much work has yet emerged on speaker stance in applied linguistics or EAP work, but it can be argued that self-orientation may underpin a tendency to act as a *safer speaker*. If speaking is seen as risky, then producing accurate if rather limited speech may be enough to fulfil self-oriented goals of production without checking comprehension. Such speech may be prioritised over the demands of more risky creative interactive communication which arguably requires *other-orientation* (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Segalowitz, 2010; Wright, 2018). All these psycho-social perspectives are useful to understand problems in developing effective communicative interaction; however, it is unclear how far existing research has been applied to specific EAP contexts, to help support reliable evidence-based practice in academic settings.

Many western educational settings may include assumptions that communicative or interactive learning is required in many disciplines to achieve better academic outcomes, in terms of criticality, or the higher-order conceptual and analytic skills in handling abstract ideas required at academic level (Bloom, 1956; Ellwood & Nakane, 2009). Criticality in interaction is

defined here as the ability to verbalise one's thinking, discuss ideas with peers and reach conclusions based on the discussion (Lin et al., 2016). In such contexts, communicative interactional abilities and strategies may be required, including listening effectively for meaning, checking comprehension of potentially difficult abstract or technical terminology, articulating complex constructs, being able to check peers' understanding and rephrase if required. It can be challenging even for home students to develop critical interaction, and may be even more so when doing this in a second language. For international students, successful interactions may be crucial to getting that highly prized international academic qualification, and yet little is known about the processes involved in building up greater levels of academic interaction. Further work needs to be done on the general questions of building academic criticality and conceptual analysis skills among international students. We argue here, however, that the foundation of academic communicative success starts with improving learners' listening and speaking abilities and boosting their disposition to take part, emphasising top-down meaning-focused processing and other-oriented stance, as highlighted here.

One recent study (Nakatani, 2006) reported on a novel systematic adaptation of Oxford's (1995) Strategic Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to test communicative strategic competence. The study aimed to test the value of specific listening and speaking strategies for communicative tasks, acknowledged by Oxford not to be specifically tapped by the SILL (Oxford, 1995). The study of 62 Japanese female first year university students correlated questionnaire results with performance on a classroom oral communicative task, finding that higher scores on specific interactional strategies (social-affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies and negotiation for meaning) correlated with higher marks on the communicative task.

The strategies identified by Nakatani (2006), in our view, provided a foundation for considering such strategies from the perspective of a meaning-form interactional distinction as well as self or other-oriented speaker stance. Such strategies could therefore be useful when supporting international students adapting to the kind of communicative demands of international higher education, e.g. in the high-stakes context of an academic seminar, where the student has to handle the specific skill demands of listening and speaking while thinking about other people's contributions, using what we term here L2 *academic interactional competence.* This ability entails a shift towards *creative competence* (Wright, 2020), needing top-down, meaning-focused, other-oriented strategies to handle unprepared dialogic interactions, away from a reliance on *performative competence* (Wright, 2020), which is more form-focused, self-oriented, often rehearsed interactional speech, based on accurate transmission (Seedhouse, 2013). This kind of speech can be relatively fluent, but usually only if carefully prepared, as is often the case in heavily exam-based educational systems from which many EAP students tend to come (Tavakoli & Wright, 2020). Given the heterogeneity of academic interaction (Seedhouse, 2013), it is seen as difficult to predict the sequences involved in "collaborative construction of knowledge" (ibid: 212). Building appropriate capacities to manage both top-down, meaning-based processing and appropriate other-oriented stance to enable effective interaction is therefore seen as highly challenging (Tavakoli & Wright, 2020). Finding ways to support EAP students to develop such interactional capacities was the driving force behind this study.

STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In light of the issues reviewed previously, this study aimed to investigate whether and how EAP courses could support learners in developing more broad meaning-focused, other-oriented

listening and speaking strategies. From our review of the literature, we have assumed such strategies serve to underpin successful academic interactional competence. Nakatani's (2006) study of interactional strategies in an L2 communicative setting provided a suitable reliable foundation to re-examine these questions in an academic context. Adapting his research for a typical EAP pre-sessional course, we constructed a questionnaire to tap strategy development over time across four domains, by comparing across two dichotomised aspects: between meaning vs form-focused strategies, and self vs. other-oriented speaker stance. The study investigated strategy use across both listening and speaking modes, and whether there were identifiable patterns over potential changes in strategy use. We were keen to see how quickly any changes could be found, e.g. whether a typical four-week course would be enough to see any measurable significant shifts in strategy use.

We were also interested in the related but separate question of whether there was any association between individuals' strategy scores and their proficiency, measured in IELTS scores from tests taken before arrival in the UK, or with scores on university-based tests of academic listening and speaking taken at the end of the EAP pre-sessional course. However, given our focus on shifts in strategies at this point, and ecological doubts about the impact of such strategies on the kind of assessed tests used in this context, we do not go into details on these data here.

This study's research questions were:

1. What levels of strategy use do EAP learners report comparing listening and speaking strategies?
2. What levels of strategy use do EAP learners report comparing meaning-focused and form-focused processing?

3. What levels of strategy use do EAP learners report comparing other-oriented and self-oriented stance?
4. Does reported strategy use change over a 4-week pre-sessional course?

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Recruitment

655 students taking a five-week pre-masters' level pre-sessional programme at a UK university were invited to join in the study, and course organisers scheduled time at the end of class to complete the strategy-use questionnaire twice, first in week 1 (Time 1) and again in week 4 (Time 2) of the course. Any students who did not wish to join the study could leave class without missing any curricular content. Full ethical procedures were followed, to ensure consent to take part was understood to be on a voluntary basis and to maintain full anonymity. Individual inspection of all scripts allowed us to remove individuals within those classes who did not complete the questionnaire at both times, leaving a final pool of 230 participants from across 12 classes. 204 were from Mainland China or Taiwan, the remainder from Iraq, Middle East or SE Asia. 130 were female, 100 were male; the cohort were spread across a range of disciplines (mainly business, social science and humanities). All of them had arrived in the UK within two weeks of starting this short EAP course. In case proficiency played a mediating role, students' IELTS scores, prior to arrival in the UK, and exit test scores from the university's internationally-standardised English Language Assessment (UELA) were noted. Regression analyses confirmed there were no significant associations between assessment scores and reported strategy use at either point of data collection, so proficiency as a specific factor is not investigated here.

Measures

Strategy use: For measuring strategy use, a questionnaire of 48 items was used, to test 12 types of strategies (variables), with 3-6 items per strategy type. Strategies were adapted from Nakatani's (2006) Oral Communicative Strategy Inventory, adjusted to be appropriate for an academic EAP context rather than an EFL context. The 48 questions were then randomised and produced in two versions, to avoid ordering effects. Piloting revealed no differences between the versions.

The questions corresponded to a total of six listening and six speaking strategies to allow for between-mode comparisons. The internal consistency of the 32 items addressing speaking strategies is reported by Nakatani (2006) to be high at .86 measured by Cronbach's alpha. The same was true for the internal consistency of the items addressing listening strategies with a Cronbach's alpha of .85. To allow for between-process comparisons, items were coded as meaning-focused and form-focused processing, and also for other-oriented and self-oriented stance. For ease and clarity here, we focus first on the meaning vs form distinction. Two strategies were reframed slightly differently to Nakatani's (2006) design, listening less actively, and thinking in L2, which we interpret here as relating to bottom-up reliance on translation from or into L1. Here, we have renamed the listening factor as Listening More Actively (LMA), and counter-balanced this against Speaking while Thinking in English (STE). This adaptation enabled us to provide a balance between listening and speaking via English or not, while still allowing for comparability with Nakatani's (2006) study. See Table 1 for a list of the variables and the codes for analysis (see Appendix A for the variables and coding of item numbers, and the full questionnaire with all 48 items and other vs self-orientation coding).

<INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

TABLE 1

List of Variables and Codes for Analysis

Variable	Code	Meaning (M) or Form (F)
Listening - Fluency-Maintaining	LFM	M
Listening – Negotiation for Meaning	LNM	M
Listening – Gist-Orientation	LGO	M
Listening – More Active Listening	LMA	F
Listening – Scan-Orientation	LSO	F
Listening – Word-Orientation	LWO	F
Speaking – Fluency-Maintaining	SFM	M
Speaking – Negotiation for Meaning	SNM	M
Speaking – Socio-Affective Factors	SSAf	M
Speaking – Accuracy	SAcc	F
Speaking – Message-Alteration	SMeA	F
Speaking – Thinking in English	STE	F

The items within each variable were pseudo-randomly worded as a positive or negative self-reporting statement, to avoid priming specific answer patterns (negatively worded expressions are marked with an asterisk in Appendix A). Responses were measured on a Likert scale of 1-10 corresponding to how much the participant felt the statement applied to their language strategy behaviour at the time of testing (1 = not at all, 10 = completely). An even-numbered scale was used to avoid answers in the middle of the scale which could be ambiguous between a “don’t know” response, or neutral attitude (Dörnyei, 2007).

Methods of analysis

All data from the questionnaires at both times of testing, and from participants' entry and exit language scores, were entered into SPSS for analysis. Any negatively-worded items were reverse-scored so all items are analysed out of 10 – as noted previously, scores were taken as indicating how much the participant felt the item applied to their language strategy behaviour (1 = not at all, 10 = completely). Results at both times were found to be normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilks test: $p < .001$). To address the research questions, data were analysed by mode (listening vs speaking), by type (meaning-focused vs form-focused) and by time (Time 1 vs. Time 2).

RESULTS

Strategy Use by Mode and by Time

In order to get a global insight about similarities and differences in strategy use in listening versus speaking (RQ1) over time (RQ4) we calculated the means of all variable scores for each mode of strategy (shown in Table 2).

<INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>

TABLE 2

Mean Listening and Mean Speaking Strategy Scores at T1 and T2

	T1		T2	
Mode of strategy	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Listening	6.43	0.73	6.54	0.71
Speaking	6.15	0.58	6.27	0.56

Note. $N = 230$

A factorial repeated-measures ANOVA was performed to test for statistically significant differences between the mean scores for listening and speaking strategies (MODE = listening versus speaking) at entry and exit of the course (TIME = Time 1 versus Time 2). Bonferroni correction was applied to account for Type 1 error, the probability of discovering a false-positive result. Listening strategies were found to score overall significantly higher than speaking strategies with a medium effect size ($F = 41.91$, $p < .001$, $r = .39$). The use of both sets of strategies increased significantly over time, with a small effect size ($F = 11.04$, $p = .001$, $r = .21$). The interaction of MODE and TIME was not statistically significant ($F = 0.01$, $p > .05$, $r = .02$), which indicates that progress in listening and speaking strategies over time followed a similar pattern.

Strategy Use by Type and by Time

Mean scores for meaning-focused and form-focused strategies (RQ2 and RQ4) were calculated first for listening (Table 3) and then for speaking mode (Table 4). A factorial repeated-measures ANOVA on listening strategies was performed to test for statistically significant differences between types (TYPE = meaning-focused versus form-focused) at different times (TIME = T1 versus T2). Bonferroni correction was applied to account for Type I errors. The ANOVA showed that form-focused listening strategies were used significantly more than meaning-focused strategies with a medium effect size ($F = 81.43$, $p < .001$, $r = .51$). There was no significant difference in the use of strategies between T1 and T2 ($F = 0.02$, $p > .05$, $r = .03$) and

the interaction of TYPE and TIME was not statistically significant ($F = 0.85$, $p > .05$, $r = .06$) meaning that progress in both types followed similar patterns over time.

<INSERT TABLES 3 AND 4 ABOUT HERE>

TABLE 3

Mean of Meaning-focused and Form-focused Listening Strategy Scores at Time 1 and Time *2*

	T1		T2	
Type of strategy	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Meaning-focused	6.19	0.78	6.22	0.78
Form-focused	6.61	0.91	6.57	0.73

Note. N = 230

TABLE 4

Mean of Meaning-focused and Form-focused Speaking Strategy Scores at Time 1 and Time 2

	T1		T2	
Type of strategy	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Meaning-focused	5.63	0.64	5.74	0.60
Form-focused	6.55	0.77	6.67	0.77

Note: N = 230

Next, differences in the mean scores of meaning-focused versus form-focused speaking strategies over time (shown in Table 4) were explored with a factorial repeated-measures ANOVA. The ANOVA showed that, overall, form-focused speaking strategies were used significantly more than meaning-focused speaking strategies with a large effect size ($F = 391.47$,

p <.001, r = .79) and that use of both types raised significantly from T1 to T2, with a small effect size (F = 10.01, p = .002, r = .20). However, the interaction of TYPE and TIME was not significant (F = 0.82, p > .05, r = .05) showing that the students' strategies progressed in a similar manner over time.

Overall, the omnibus ANOVAs, as presented previously, showed that form-focused strategies were consistently used significantly more than meaning-focused strategies for both listening and speaking at both times. Using the original meaning vs. form distinction, then, it seems the four-week course did not have a significant impact in fostering a shift towards more communicative strategies.

However, it is possible that omnibus groupwise methods of analysis are unable to capture more nuanced shifts in the use of strategies over time, particularly in relation to the self vs other stance orientation investigated in research question 3. We therefore used principal component analysis (PCA) to explore patterns in the responses for strategy use at Time 1 and Time 2 (RQ3 and RQ4). Lack of changes could be taken to indicate a reluctance to move away from a form-focused transmission mode of speaking (Seedhouse, 2013), or self-oriented speaker stance (Wang et al., 2000). PCA was used for each mode of strategy use to explore whether students shifted their performance from using some strategies more than others over the course of the 4 weeks of the course. This method identified main factors explaining cumulative variance in strategy use for listening and speaking at each time (T1 and T2). The higher scoring factors consisted of groups of strategies that were mostly used at each time. This offered an informative insight into the type of strategies the students were using that complemented the previous analysis with more information on the shift in strategy preferences over time.

For listening strategies, PCA was conducted on the 23 items at T1 with orthogonal

rotation (varimax). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = .72. Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 (253) = 959.58, p < .001), indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. Eigenvalues were obtained for each component in the data. Seven components had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and in combination explained 54.5% of the variance in strategy use. Appendix B shows the factor loadings after rotation. The highest scoring factor mapped closely onto strategies that perceived listening processes as negotiation for meaning. The second factor mapped onto guessing strategies orientated both at the context of what is being said and picking up familiar words. Factor 3 mapped onto form-focused strategies, such as translation in L1 or focusing on pronunciation. Factor 4 represented other form-focused strategies, such as listening for the first word or part of a sentence, listening for the verb or speaker's message. Factor 5 was about message clarity - listening for the main point or indicating if the meaning was not clear, but it also contained giving up listening when they couldn't understand. Factor 6 represented both listening for the gist of what is being said and picking up familiar words. Factor 7 represented passive listening strategies, such as listening silently even if they don't understand. Overall, students seemed to use some meaning-focused strategies as shown by Factor 1 and 2 explaining a cumulative variance of 19.2% of strategy use at T1, but they also used a lot of form-focused strategies represented mainly by the remaining four factors (35.3% of the explained variance).

A PCA using the same principles was performed for T2. The KMO measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .82). Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 (253) = 1406.78, p < .001), indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. Six factors were identified and in combination explained 56.5% of the cumulative variance in strategy use in T2. Appendix C shows the factor loadings after rotation. The highest scoring

factor included strategies from all six categories of our original coding representing a mixture of meaning-focused and form-focused strategies. What is noticeable, however, is that it contained a lot of other-oriented strategies, such as moving away from a preference for use of familiar words by the speaker, listening for what is emphasised by the speaker and for the main point of what is being said. Factor 2 represented mainly meaning-focused strategies aiming to maintain fluency, negotiate for meaning and grasp the gist. There were, however, a couple of form-focused strategies associated with scanning for verbs or first words in a sentence. Factor 3 mapped closely on negotiation for meaning. Factor 4 represented more self-oriented strategies, such as pretending to understand even if they have not, and translation in L1. Factor 5 represented form-focused strategies, such as listening for individual words and pronunciation. Factor 6 represented not giving up listening even if they don't understand everything that is being said but still valuing listening more than asking questions. Overall, at T2 students seem to be using a slightly different repertoire of strategies moving towards more meaning-focused and other-oriented strategies as illustrated by Factors 1-3 explaining 35.1% of the variance in strategy use. The remaining 21.4% of the explained variance is represented by factors containing more self-oriented, form-focused strategies.

The findings of the two PCAs suggest that, with regard to listening, over the course of four weeks, as a group, participants seemed to perceive listening increasingly as an interaction. They gradually shifted away from the need for accuracy towards aiming for understanding the speaker's message. Form-focused listening strategies were used at both times, but there was a shift to more meaning-focused listening strategies, as shown by the increased percentage in cumulative variance explained by this type of strategy use from T1 to T2. It is worth noticing

that at both times there was considerable individual variation in strategy use, as shown by the variance that remains unexplained by high scoring factors.

For speaking strategies, at Time 1, PCA was conducted on the 25 items with orthogonal rotation (varimax). The KMO measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = .69. Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 (300) = 1069.59, $p < .001$) indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. Eigenvalues were obtained for each component in the data. Six components had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and in combination explained 47.2% of the variance in strategy use. Appendix D shows the factor loadings after rotation. The highest scoring factor related to aiming for accuracy, such as paying attention to pronunciation and speaking clearly. Factor 2 was a combination of self-oriented and other-oriented strategies including using a range of vocabulary, simplifying so that others understand them but also staying quiet and giving up speaking if they were not understood. Factor 3 mapped closely on relying on L1. Factor 4 mapped on meaning-oriented, other-oriented strategies illustrated by maintaining a conversation despite making mistakes. Factors 5 and 6 reflected less flexible, more hesitant speakers, who use familiar vocabulary and do not paraphrase to aid understanding or fit different situations, and do not feel confident about asking the help of others when they are not understood. Therefore, speaking strategies in T1 seem to be dominated by form-focused, self-oriented strategies as shown by Factors 1, 3, 5 and 6 which explained 30.7% of the cumulative variance in strategy use. The remaining 16.5% of variance was explained by Factors 2 and 4, which were a mixture of form-focused and meaning-focused, other-oriented strategies.

A PCA using the same principles was performed for T2. The KMO measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .81). Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 (300) = 1651.09, $p < .001$), indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. Six

factors were identified and in combination explained 54.9% of the cumulative variance in strategy use in T2. Appendix E shows the factor loadings after rotation. The highest scoring factor, explaining 15.7% of variance, represented mainly other-oriented strategies aiming to alter their message for better comprehension. Factor 2, explaining 10.5% of variance, consisted of a mixture of other-oriented and self-oriented strategies, as indicated by willingness to speak and simplify to facilitate understanding but also being silent if they don't understand the topic and giving up if they are not understood. Factors 3-6, explaining 29% of the remaining variance, contained mostly form-focused, self-oriented strategies, such as using only familiar words, thinking in L1 and repeating until they are understood, giving up if they were not understood and feeling hesitant about speaking. Hence, it is evident by the analysis that at T2 there is a clearer pattern of using other-oriented strategies (see Factor 1 and 2) aimed at maintaining conversation and convening a message than in T1.

Overall, the PCA analysis showed that there was a shift in the pattern of strategy use in this group of students over the course of the 4-week programme, although there was about 50% of variance not explained by the factors emerging from the analysis. The shift was more visible in the use of listening strategies, where students seemed to become increasingly less concerned about the accuracy of their listening and were more interested in understanding the gist of the message the speaker intended to convey. Use of speaking strategies was also found to change in that other-oriented strategies seemed to gain a clear place in the student's repertoire at T2. However, self-oriented (mainly form-focused) strategies were still being used at T2 to a larger extent for speaking than for listening.

In case proficiency impacted on strategy responses, we ran correlational analyses on both T1 and T2 scores, but there were no significant correlations, indicating proficiency was not a key issue in changes in strategy use.

Overall, in response to our research questions the findings confirm that listening strategies were used more than speaking strategies, particularly to build more meaning-focused listening, even over the limited four weeks of the EAP course. There was no clear indication that meaning-focused speaking strategies were more widely used at the end of the EAP course, using our original meaning-form codings. However, using PCA to uncover more subtle patterns, we found that students used a mixture of form-focused and meaning-focused strategies at both times of testing which indicated a clear shift in the pattern of strategy use over time from self-oriented to other-oriented stance, even over such a short programme.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the extent to which international EAP students used listening and speaking strategies, alongside speaker stance, in academic interactions, in light of the longstanding interest in how to build communicative and interactional competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 2007; Walsh, 2011). The study's four research questions addressed use of specific strategies for interactional listening and speaking, using a questionnaire adapted from Nakatani's (2006) inventory of interaction strategies. In view of research indicating that speaker stance (other vs. self-orientation) may be relevant for effective interaction, the data were also analysed using PCA to assess how far meaning-based strategies could be mapped on to other-orientation. The study further examined how quickly any change in strategies could be seen, for example, whether a short intensive EAP course would bring any observable increase in strategy

use (compared at the start of the course and the end). Overall, the findings provide robust evidence to support the claim that even a short EAP course can make a difference to use of meaning-focused strategies and other-oriented speaker stance, which are argued to boost students' academic interactional competence in broad terms, particularly for listening.

There was significantly higher-rated use of strategies for listening compared to speaking at both times (RQ1), although there were fewer clear differences between meaning-focused and form-focused strategy use (RQ2). Some strategies showed significant change towards more meaning-focused use over the 4-week pre-sessional course (RQ4), but overall students retained a high level of form-based use. This is reassuring in demonstrating that immersion in the target language country can quickly have an impact, even for students from large language cohorts who may still spend a lot of time operating in their L1 (Wright, 2013).

The strategy scores were also analysed using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) to see how far they reflected adjustments in speaker stance (RQ3) from more self-oriented stance (related to form-focused use) to more other-oriented stance (related to meaning-focused use). A pattern of latent factors emerged, differentiating between a more self-focused "transmission" approach to interaction (Seedhouse, 2013: 212), and a more other-focused positive disposition towards successful comprehension (Faulkner et al., 2013; Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). It remained clear that many students seemed to remain disengaged from proactive communicative strategies, quick to give up if they are not understood, or preferring to stay quiet rather than try and engage in the discussion. However, our data emphasise that even in a short time, students can develop a more positive disposition, or readiness to take part, shifting towards strategies to boost meaning-focused interaction and other-oriented speaker stance.

There are potential limitations in a study like this based on student self-reports in that we could not triangulate student responses with actual classroom behaviour to check for use of strategies in practice. However, the design of the questionnaire, specifically worded as ratings of students' actual strategy use, rather than attitudes towards strategy use, aimed to minimise the risk of skewed values. We also acknowledge that some classroom teachers may have provided some techniques on how to improve interaction, and thus potentially impacting on some of the students' improvement. However, the findings from such a large longitudinal cohort (n=230, split across 12 classes), would suggest the shifts reliably reflect a deeper development in implicit student disposition, rather than conscious changes among specific students due to explicit teacher input. Indeed, we suggest here that if these implicit improvements can be seen without any systematic instructional guidance, then using these strategies explicitly as a toolkit to specifically foster strategies tailored to individual students' needs could be even more impactful on their progress. We also believe it is essential to understand whether type of proficiency assessment may impact on beneficial use of strategies, e.g. comparing IELTS exams to university placement or post-course tests, though this study did not evaluate these issues specifically here. Irrespective of measures of L2 proficiency, of course, is a wider question of academic adjustment - if a student is unfamiliar with the demands of academic discourse, in terms of having to process complex or new concepts quickly, and constructing an appropriate response, then such demands can be overwhelming or detrimental to their academic success (Coward & Miller, 2010; Trenkic & Warmington, 2019). We therefore need to revisit what students expect themselves in successful interactions, and about the learning journey involved in moving away from a performative or transmission sense of feeling obliged to know 'what to say', with a careful self-oriented focus on accurate form, towards 'having a go' with a more confident, other-oriented

disposition towards willingness to focus on the message, and a deeper level of creative engagement in interaction (Hattie & Donogue, 2016; Wright & Schartner, 2013). We believe that using a structured strategy approach as identified in the questionnaire presented here, can play some part in informing both research and practice for exploring these questions and building more effective academic interactional competence.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the extent to which international EAP students may develop effective strategies for building the kind of creative communicative interaction needed in western academic settings, such as seminars. We argued that standardised EFL strategy questionnaires to check use of interactional strategies, such as that developed by Nakatani (2006), could also be aligned with a broader view of meaning-based, other-oriented communicative abilities, which we see as helpful in building effective academic interaction. Using longitudinal quantitative analysis of a cohort of 230 international students on a five-week intensive EAP course in a UK university, we found that self-reported use of meaning-focused, other-oriented strategies improved, such as checking comprehension, maintaining fluency, focusing on gist, thinking in English. This is helpful news for learners and teachers that it is possible to see a shift towards more effective interactional communication in less than 5 weeks.

However, we found wide variation across the cohort and sustained use of form-focused, self-oriented strategies remaining at time 2. While admitting that four weeks is a very short time to adjust strategies to fit a new setting, we suggest the patterns shown here may perhaps be embedded in prior language education experience, where knowing what to say accurately may be

more highly valued than taking risks in engaging in other-oriented creative discussion, and would remain a barrier to building effective academic interaction (Wright, 2018).

In sum, our findings indicate that a variety of strategies may be useful to overcome barriers to academic interaction, and can provide a framework for EAP teachers to work on with students to help improve communicative interaction in specific ways. Given the short timescale in this study during which we could see some student strategies changing, we believe there is a high functional value for including explicit teaching of strategies for communication in EAP programmes, e.g., to highlight and practice more risk-taking strategies, and to embed specific tasks to build other-orientation particularly in speaking.

We further argue there is a strong value in future research looking at integrating the notion of other-orientation into interactional strategy use, as we increase our understanding of how to foster successful interactions in typical academic settings. Such research would help teachers and students move from reliance on transmission-based L2 performative competence, such as rehearsed presentational speech, to creating more effective and successful L2 academic interactional competence.

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Appendix A

Strategy Variables for 48 Items, Coded and with Item Number as Listed on Questionnaire (Items Reverse-Coded in Scoring), and Full Questionnaire as Provided to Participants:*

Listening

Listening Fluency Maintaining – LFM (4 items)	3, 10, 36, 45
Listening Gist-Orientation - LGO (3 items)	8, 17, 20
Listening More Actively - LMA (3 items)	1*, 28*, 40*
Listening Negotiation for Meaning – LNM (6 items)	4, 5, 6, 9, 14*, 23
Listening Scan-Orientation – LSO (3 items)	22, 38, 46
Listening Word-Orientation - LWO (4 items)	15, 16, 27, 39

Speaking

Speaking Accuracy – SA (5 items)	2*, 12, 24, 41, 48
Speaking Fluency-Maintaining – SFM (6 items)	11, 13, 29, 32, 37, 47*
Speaking Message-Altering - SMA (3 items)	7, 42*, 44
Speaking Negotiating for Meaning - SNM (4 items)	18, 21, 35, 43*
Speaking Socioaffective - SSAf (4 items)	19, 30, 31, 34*
Speaking Thinking in English - STE (3 items)	25, 26*, 33*

Full Questionnaire

Rate yourself on how much you agree or disagree with the statements below, on a scale of 1 ("not at all") to 10 ("very much").

1. I believe it is better to listen than ask questions in class.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. I aim to finish my sentence even if I know I may make mistakes.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. I aim to work out what my classmates mean, even if they hesitate a lot.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. I ask my classmates to explain a word or phrase if I don't understand it.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. I ask my classmates to slow down if I can't understand what they have said.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. I ask my classmates to use easy words if I can't understand them.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. I ask a classmate to help when I can't communicate well.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. I don't mind if I don't understand every detail.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. I ask my classmates to repeat their words if I can't understand them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. I pay attention to my classmates' rhythm and pitch when they speak.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. I choose how to say things to fit different situations.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. I correct myself when I notice I have made a mistake.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13. I don't mind using fillers like "um" or "er" when I cannot think what to say.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. I give up listening if I don't understand what my classmates are saying.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

15. I guess my classmates' meaning by picking up familiar words.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

16. I try and notice the first word in a sentence.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

17. I guess what my classmate is going to say based on the context.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

18. I often pay attention to my classmates' reactions to see if they have understood what I am saying.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

19. I don't mind speaking even if I might make mistakes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

20. I guess what my classmate will say based on what they have said so far.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

21. I give up when I can't make my ideas understood.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

22. I listen for the verb in each sentence to help me understand.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

23. I make it clear to my classmates if I haven't been able to understand them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

24. I pay attention to my pronunciation when I speak in class.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

25. I think first of a phrase I already know in English and then try and make it fit the situation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

26. I think what I want to say in my native language and then translate into English.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

27. I try and catch every word my classmates use when they are speaking.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

28. I translate into my native language little by little when my classmates are speaking.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

29. I try and use a good range of vocabulary.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

30. I try to encourage my classmates to take part in discussions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

31. I try to relax when I feel very worried about speaking.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

32. I try to speak clearly so that my classmates can hear me easily.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

33. I use an electronic dictionary to find a word quickly when I want to say something.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

34. I will stay quiet in discussions if I don't understand the topic.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

35. If my classmates do not understand me, I can use simpler expressions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

36. I take note of my classmates' pronunciation to help me understand them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

37. I pay attention to my rhythm and tone when I speak.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

38. I notice the first part of a sentence and guess what my classmate means.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

39. I pay attention to words which my classmates emphasise in their speaking.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

40. I prefer it when my classmates use expressions we have already been taught.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

41. I prefer to write down my ideas before I speak in class.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

42. I prefer using familiar words and expressions in our lessons.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

43. I repeat what I say until my classmates understand me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

44. I restart what I want to say if I can't get my first meaning across.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

45. I show agreement (e.g. say yes or nod) even if I don't understand what my classmates are saying.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

46. I try and catch the main point of what my classmates are saying.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

47. I take my time to express what I want to say.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

48. I think about grammar and word order before I say something.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

APPENDIX B

Summary of PCA Rotated Factor Loadings on Listening Strategy Use at Time 1

Item	Negotiating meaning	Guessing strategies	Form-focused strategies (A)	Form-focused strategies (B)	Active listening	Listening for gist and words	Passive listening
I ask my classmates to slow down if I can't understand what they have said.	.81						
I ask my classmates to use easy words if I can't understand them.	.78						
I ask my classmates to repeat their words if I can't understand them.	.64						
I ask my classmates to explain a word or phrase if I don't understand it.	.56						
I guess what my classmate is going to say based on the context.		.72					

I guess what my classmate will say based on what they have said so far.	.65				
I guess my classmates' meaning by picking up familiar words.	.54				.43
I translate into my native language little by little when my classmates are speaking.		.65			
I take note of my classmates' pronunciation to help me understand them.		.58			
I try and catch every word my classmates use when they are speaking.		.47			
I pay attention to words which my classmates emphasise in their speaking.		.44		.42	
I prefer it when my classmates use expressions we have already been taught.		-.42			
I try and notice the first word in a sentence.			.69		
I listen for the verb in each sentence to help me understand.			.62		

I pay attention to my classmates' rhythm and pitch when they speak.		.46				
I notice the first part of a sentence and guess what my classmate means.	.44	.45				
I give up listening if I don't understand what my classmates are saying.			.73			
I make it clear to my classmates if I haven't been able to understand them.			.50			
I try and catch the main point of what my classmates are saying.			.47	.46		
I aim to work out what my classmates mean, even if they hesitate a lot.				.76		
I believe it is better to listen than ask questions in class.						.67
I don't mind if I don't understand every detail.						.63

Note. $N = 230$

APPENDIX C

Summary of PCA Rotated Factor Loadings on Listening Strategy Use at Time 2

Item	Other-oriented strategies	Active listening	Negotiating meaning	Self-oriented strategies	Form-focused strategies	Passive listening
I prefer it when my classmates use expressions we have already been taught.	-.73					
I pay attention to words which my classmates emphasise in their speaking.	.67					
I try and catch the main point of what my classmates are saying.	.66					
I aim to work out what my classmates mean, even if they hesitate a lot.	.56					
I notice the first part of a sentence and guess what my classmate means.	.50					

I guess my classmates' meaning by picking up familiar words.	.50		
I listen for the verb in each sentence to help me understand.		.68	
I make it clear to my classmates if I haven't been able to understand them.		.65	
I guess what my classmate is going to say based on the context.	.44	.53	
I try and notice the first word in a sentence.		.53	
I guess what my classmate will say based on what they have said so far.	.48	.52	
I pay attention to my classmates' rhythm and pitch when they speak.		.47	
I ask my classmates to slow down if I can't understand what they have said.			.82
I ask my classmates to use easy words if I can't understand them.			.73
I ask my classmates to explain a word or phrase if I don't understand it.	.43		.65

I ask my classmates to repeat their words if I can't understand them.	.59			
I show agreement (e.g. say yes or nod) even if I don't understand what my classmates are saying.		.75		
I translate into my native language little by little when my classmates are speaking.		.63		
I try and catch every word my classmates use when they are speaking.			.74	
I take note of my classmates' pronunciation to help me understand them.			.57	
I give up listening if I don't understand what my classmates are saying.				-.70
I don't mind if I don't understand every detail.				.57
I believe it is better to listen than ask questions in class.			.42	.52

Note. $N = 230$

APPENDIX D

Summary of PCA Rotated Factor Loadings on Speaking Strategy Use at Time 1

Item	Accuracy-focused strategies	Self-oriented & Other-oriented	Relying on L1	Meaning oriented	Less flexible in L2	Hesitant in L2
I pay attention to my pronunciation when I speak in class.	.81					
I pay attention to my rhythm and tone when I speak.	.75					
I try to speak clearly so that my classmates can hear me easily.	.51					
I correct myself when I notice I have made a mistake.	.43					
I think about grammar and word order before I say something.						
I try and use a good range of vocabulary.		.64				
I give up when I can't make my ideas understood.		.58				
I try to encourage my classmates to take part in discussions.		.57				

If my classmates do not understand me, I can use simpler expressions.	.55			
I will stay quiet in discussions if I don't understand the topic.	.51			.50
I try to relax when I feel very worried about speaking.	.48			
I think what I want to say in my native language and then translate into English.		.72		
I use an electronic dictionary to find a word quickly when I want to say something.		.61		
I think first of a phrase I already know in English and then try and make it fit the situation.		-.47		
I prefer to write down my ideas before I speak in class.				
I take my time to express what I want to say.				
I aim to finish my sentence even if I know I may make mistakes.			-.704	
I don't mind speaking even if I might make mistakes.			.641	
I often pay attention to my classmates' reactions to see if they have understood what I am saying.			.511	

I repeat what I say until my classmates understand me.	.74	
I restart what I want to say if I can't get my first meaning across.	-.67	
I prefer using familiar words and expressions in our lessons.	.46	
I ask a classmate to help when I can't communicate well.		.66
I don't mind using fillers like "um" or "er" when I cannot think what to say.		.54
I choose how to say things to fit different situations.		-.43

Note. $N = 230$

APPENDIX E

Summary of PCA Rotated Factor Loadings on Speaking Strategy Use at Time 2

Item	Mainly other-oriented	Self-oriented & other oriented	Relying on L1	Hesitant in L2 (A)	Less flexible in L2	Hesitant in L2 (B)
I pay attention to my pronunciation when I speak in class.	.77					
I pay attention to my rhythm and tone when I speak.	.68					
I try to speak clearly so that my classmates can hear me easily.	.66					
I correct myself when I notice I have made a mistake.	.60					
I try and use a good range of vocabulary.	.54	.54				
I take my time to express what I want to say.	-.53					
I often pay attention to my classmates' reactions to see if they have understood what I am saying.	.52					
I think first of a phrase I already know in English and then try and make it fit the situation.	.50					

I try to relax when I feel very worried about speaking.	.48			
I try to encourage my classmates to take part in discussions.	.46			
I will stay quiet in discussions if I don't understand the topic.		.68		
I give up when I can't make my ideas understood.		.61		
I don't mind speaking even if I might make mistakes.		.57		
If my classmates do not understand me, I can use simpler expressions.	.43	.47		
I think about grammar and word order before I say something.				
I use an electronic dictionary to find a word quickly when I want to say something.			.72	
I prefer to write down my ideas before I speak in class.			-.64	
I think what I want to say in my native language and then translate into English.			.59	
I prefer using familiar words and expressions in our lessons.			.47	.43
I choose how to say things to fit different situations.				-.67
I ask a classmate to help when I can't communicate well.				.58

I restart what I want to say if I can't get my first meaning across.		-.77	
I repeat what I say until my classmates understand me.	.52	.61	
I aim to finish my sentence even if I know I may make mistakes.		.52	
I don't mind using fillers like "um" or "er" when I cannot think what to say.			.70

Note. $N = 230$