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Selective strategy use depending on oral skill: An analysis of EFL course books using categorical modelization

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Abstract

As recent research has shown that teaching second language (L2) learning strategies explicitly contributes to an increase in strategy use and in oral proficiency, this study explores the type of oral skill strategic instruction employed in some of the most common textbooks used in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain. The study considered strategy instruction and if the type of oral skill, listening or speaking, affected strategy choice. Three variables and their association were considered using a statistical modelization perspective. Results showed that strategies were selected according to type of skill, that the type of strategies selected for explicit instruction and implicit use

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did not differ significantly, and that strategies are contemplated mainly implicitly in textbooks within the units, and so explicit instruction of strategies is not sufficiently promoted in textbooks.

Keywords: strategy, explicit versus implicit teaching, skill, textbook analysis, last year Secondary Education, modelization analysis.

Resumen

Motivado por el hecho de que investigaciones recientes han demostrado que enseñar explícitamente las estrategias de aprendizaje de la segunda lengua (L2) contribuye a un incremento en el uso de estas estrategias y a una mejora de la competencia oral, este estudio explora el tipo de enseñanza estratégica presente en algunos de los libros más usados en segundo de Bachillerato en España. El estudio consideró si la enseñanza de estrategias de aprendizaje era implícita o explícita, y si el tipo de destreza, comprensión o producción oral, para el que se realiza dicha enseñanza afectaba de alguna manera a la propia selección de estrategias. Se estudió la asociación entre las tres variables (enseñanza, estrategia y destreza) usando una perspectiva de análisis basada en la modelización. Los resultados mostraron, primero, que la selección de estrategias dependía de la destreza; segundo, que el tipo de estrategias seleccionadas no difería estadísticamente según su tipo de enseñanza, explícita o implícita; y tercero, que la enseñanza estratégica en los libros de texto se realiza, en su mayor parte, de una manera implícita, por lo que la enseñanza explicita es insuficiente.

Palabras clave: estrategia, enseñanza implícita versus explícita, análisis de libros de texto, Bachillerato, modelización categórica.

Introduction

The study carried out by the Ministry of Education in Spain (MECD, 2012) emphasizes the need to promote actions conducive to the development of the oral competence of students, particularly as compared to other European countries. Furthermore, previous studies about language testing in Spain have noted the need to incorporate an oral component in the University Entrance exam (Bueno Alastuey and Luque Agullo, 2012), and procedures that guarantee the improvement of current oral competence proficiency levels (Laborda, Luque, Muñoz & Bakieva, 2015) so that students acquire a level that matches the requirements of the European

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labor market (Halbach, Lázaro & Pérez, 2013). Among the actions that could be taken, the use of strategies for second language learning has shown strong correlations with EFL proficiency (Lee & Oxford, 2008). What remains unclear is whether L2 learning strategies can be explicitly taught (Anderson, 2005), acquired through exposure (Eslinger, 2000) or transferred from the first language (Wolfersberger, 2003). Recent studies seem to conclude that explicit teaching of L2 strategies is effective and beneficial for acquisition (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Graham, Santos & Vanderplank, 2011; Lyster & Saito, 2010), particularly when it is integrated in mainstream teaching practices (Anderson, 2005). Specifically, "some types of strategies appear to be more related to success in language learning than others" (Griffiths, 2013, p. 92) although "there are no good or bad strategies, there is good or bad application of strategies" (Anderson, 2005, p. 762).

Course book evaluation has also formed part of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research for several decades (Mukundan & Ahour, 2010; Tomlinson, 2011) in the search for appropriate textbooks for specific learners' needs and classroom situations. Generally, research literature has focused on aspects concerning the skills (Rezza, 2011), on how communicative competence is developed (Gómez-Rodriguez, 2010), or on specific linguistic aspects (Mukundan, Nimehchilasem, & Hajimohannadi, 2011; Zapata, 2011). However, very little research has been carried out on how strategic teaching of L2 strategies is considered in textbooks. Since teaching L2 learning strategies explicitly seems to increase strategy use and oral proficiency according to recent studies (Cross, 2009; Lam, 2010; Lam & Wong, 2000; Plonski, 2011), this work, which is part of a wider project[2], analyzes i) the frequency and types of strategies considered, ii) whether they are implicitly or explicitly taught, and iii) which of them are associated to either of the two oral skills, listening or speaking, in some of the most used course books in the second year of *Bachillerato*[3] in Spain.

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(2) Research Project FFI2021-22442 "Orientación, propuestas y enseñanza para la sección de inglés en la prueba de acceso a la universidad", financed by the Ministry of Education, Spain. Its objective is to offer proposals for testing oral competence at the end of Higher Secondary Education.

(3) Second year of *Bachillerato* is the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain.

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Acquisition and use of L2 learning strategies

L2 learning strategies have been defined as "thoughts and actions, consciously selected by learners, to assist them in learning and using language in general, and in the completion of specific language tasks" (Cohen, 2011, p. 682). In Anderson's terms (2005), strategies are conscious, they might be observable, and they are processes which are not used in isolation as single actions. Moreover, there is an active involvement on part of the learner in their selection and use (Ibid, 2005: p. 757). L2 learning strategies have been classified in different ways, for example, "strategies for learning and use, strategies according to skill area, and strategies according to function» (Cohen, 2011, p. 682). However, the notion of strategy, and specifically that of language learner strategies, is still being refined in several research fields (Griffiths, 2013). Some of the problems reported include the fact that the different categorizations in strategy literature overlap (Anderson, 2005), strategies for L2 learning and L2 use are difficult to distinguish in real life (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002), strategies are considered either too general, fuzzy or incoherent (Rose, 2012a), and most questionnaires enquiring about strategy use seem to be inaccurate or unreliable (Rose, 2012a,b).

Despite the current lack of consensus on any particular classification scheme (Chaudron, 2006; Plonski, 2011; Rose, 2012a,b), and the criticism of some authors (Dornÿei, 2005) to previous research in the field, "a wide range of tools available for identifying, classifying and measuring L2 strategies" (Anderson, 2005, p. 760) have been developed in the last two decades, including taxonomies, think-aloud protocols and reflective journals. One of the most widely used inventories is Oxford's classification (Oxford, 1990; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). This six factor taxonomy includes six major categories: memory strategies, which help learners link one L2 item or concept with another; cognitive strategies, which involve mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information "to aid the acquisition, storage and use of information" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8); compensation strategies, which are "techniques used by learners to compensate for missing knowledge" (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002, p. 371), metacognitive strategies, used to self-direct or regulate language learning; affective strategies, which "help to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes" (Deneme, 2010, p. 81); and social strategies, which are related to learning through the interaction with other people. The taxonomy includes subcategories for each of the major categories.

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Although the author has reformulated part of the classification (Oxford, 2011) and some authors have noted that some of the categories might overlap (Dornÿei, 2005), this taxonomy was chosen in our study for a number of reasons. First, it was chosen because it remains as the "most widely used strategy inventory" (Cohen, 2011, p. 693) "for L2 strategy research" (Anderson, 2005, p. 760), and it is still utilized by many authors (see, for instance, Griffiths, 2013, p. 59). Second, according to Anderson (2005, p. 760), "reliability and validity data are available for the taxonomy", its validity is high and translated versions have been used in many research projects. Thirdly, it was found to account the best for the variety of strategies reported by learners when compared to other classification schemes (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002), and it includes most of the strategies from other schemes. Additionally, recent classifications based on learners' self-regulation mechanisms do not solve the methodological problems attributed to the taxonomy used in the present paper as they present the same problems regarding categorization fuzziness (Rose, 2012a,b).

The importance of L2 strategic instruction has arisen from research studies which show that efficient language learners use those strategies (Morales & Smith, 2008; Cohen, 2011), and that proficient strategic use is correlated to language learning success and proficiency (Manchón, 2008; Anderson, 2005). Furthermore, recent research has shown that proficient learners use strategies in more appropriate ways (Cohen, 2011; Griffiths, 2013), "matching strategies to the task" (Chamot, 2005, p. 116) and using metacognitive knowledge. Consequently, it seems important to study how L2 learner strategies instruction is considered in textbooks, since adequate use of L2 learners' strategies may improve students' proficiency, and thus, knowledge of strategies seems paramount.

Implicit and explicit teaching of L2 learning strategies

The dichotomy between implicit vs. explicit teaching, which has been a focus of research for applied linguists for several decades (DeKeyser, 2003), has extended to L2 learning strategies and to whether those strategies can be explicitly taught in the classroom.

Explicit learning involves "conscious awareness and intention" (Brown, 2007, p. 291) to learn, and it is a process where students seek out the

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structure of information that is presented to them. Alternatively, implicit learning is "learning without conscious attention or awareness" (Brown, 2007, p. 291). It occurs "without intention to learn and without awareness of what has been learned" (Brown, 2007, p. 292). Regarding teaching, explicit instruction in textbooks would involve overt information about the items to be learnt, whereas implicit teaching would mean no reference is made to those items although the learner must use them to fulfill certain activity or task. For this study, L2 strategies were the items considered (see appendix III for examples).

The effectiveness of explicit teaching of strategies has been questioned (Skehan, 1998), and some authors consider that strategies can be transferred from the L1 (Kellerman, 1991). However, transference is not automatic (Anderson, 2005), and less proficient learners tend to use the same strategies without making significant progress. Moreover, an overuse is associated to low proficiency levels (Anderson, 2005; Manchón, 2008). Nevertheless, most strategies are effective, promote learning and can result in improved oral competence (Anderson, 2005; Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Manchón, 2008), specifically when they are associated to explicit instruction and integrated in the regular language classroom (Plonsky, 2011). Furthermore, the use of strategies gives learners a sense of security for real life and classroom communication (Manchón, 2000).

In sum, there is a general agreement on the fact that strategy use is associated to success in language learning and should be integrated in mainstream language instruction (Manchón, 2008), especially if oral competence is a goal of language teaching and testing in Europe (Amengual-Pizarro & Méndez García, 2012). Additionally, there is a growing interest in incorporating an explicit focus on learning strategies and learning-how-to-learn into language curricula following European guidelines (Council of Europe, 2001; Wong & Nunan, 2011). However, the approach in which L2 learning strategy instruction is considered for listening and speaking in some textbooks commonly used in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain has not been explored. This issue is relevant in the sense that it allows considering whether strategy instruction in textbooks forms part of mainstream instruction or "if it remains at the level of isolated initiatives" (Manchón, 2008, p. 223), as teachers will tend to do in class what the textbook chosen suggests. Consequently, the focus of strategy instruction, explicit or implicit,

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present within the textbooks and the type of learning strategies associated to either of the two skills, listening and speaking, will be a good indicator of the way strategy instruction is taking place in real mainstream classrooms.

Furthermore, research has rarely considered in depth the possible associations among L2 strategies, type of teaching focus –implicit or explicit-, and oral skill developed-listening and speaking- in textbooks. Consequently, the aim of our research was to explore such associations by including in the same design the three variables, using a type of statistical analysis which would be able to provide answers for this complex situation. The following hypotheses regarding strategic instruction for the oral skills in textbooks were formulated:

1. The frequency of implicitly used strategies within the units in second year Bachillerato course books is higher in implicit use than in the explicit teaching focus independently of the skill considered.
2. This higher frequency of strategies associated to implicit teaching also applies independently of the type of strategy considered.
3. L2 strategies will be selected in terms of the skill being introduced in the textbook unit, and thus, we hypothesize a partial association between Strategy and Skill not affected by Teaching Focus.

Method

Instruments

A checklist (Bueno-Alastuey and Lugue Agullo, 2015a) was created to analyze oral skills development in textbooks. After the checklist was created, five course books[4] were selected to be evaluated. From each of those books, two randomly selected units were analyzed by the authors using the checklist.

Part of the checklist created focused on strategy instruction and included sixteen items. The first two were categorical exclusive[5] items

(4) The five books analysed were the most widely used in the year 2012 in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain according to the data provided by publishing companies, as they sold 134,654 copies.

(5) Categorical questions/variables are single-choice or multiple-choice questions such as yes-no questions or questions with several possible answers. They are exclusive if the choice is restricted to one option and inclusive if more than one option can be selected.

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stating, first, whether there was any explicit L2 learning strategy instruction in the listening and speaking sections of the units analyzed, and, secondly, whether there was any explicit instruction in any other specific listening or speaking sections of the textbook or in support material - teacher's book, extra material, resource book, web pages referenced, etc. - but not within the units themselves. Explicit instruction inside the students' units was labeled *Explicit Internal*, whereas explicit instruction of strategies found in other sections of students' textbooks or in support material was labeled *Explicit External*. Given the time pressure felt by teachers to cover the curriculum, this distinction between what can be found inside the units and outside the units was considered important.

Explicit instruction, both internal and external, was operationalized as any explicit explanation given about a strategy and how to use it, while implicit use of a strategy was defined as any question or part of an activity in which learners were supposed to employ a specific learner strategy without any reference to its name, how that strategy should be used, or its benefits (see Appendix III for specific examples in the textbooks).

Those two first questions in each section were followed by six further categorical and not exclusive statements enquiring about the type of 1st level strategies (the six major categories in Oxford´s taxonomy: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social), and 2nd level strategies (subcategories proposed by Oxford (1990) for each of her major categories) instructed explicitly inside the units. The following two questions, questions 5 and 6, checked which specific 1st and 2nd level strategies were instructed explicitly outside the units, and in support material of the textbook pack. Finally, questions 7 and 8 examined which 1st and 2nd level strategies were supposed to be used implicitly to complete the tasks/exercises.

Instrument Analysis

First, a descriptive analysis was carried out to find out the frequency and type of strategies used in the textbook units. As shown in the first section at the bottom of Fig.I, the most frequently used strategies were cognitive (Cog) and metacognitive (Met) strategies followed by compensation (Com) strategies, which were also fairly used, and by memory (Mem) and social (Soc) strategies, which were scarcely employed. Finally, affective (Aff) strategies were the least used.

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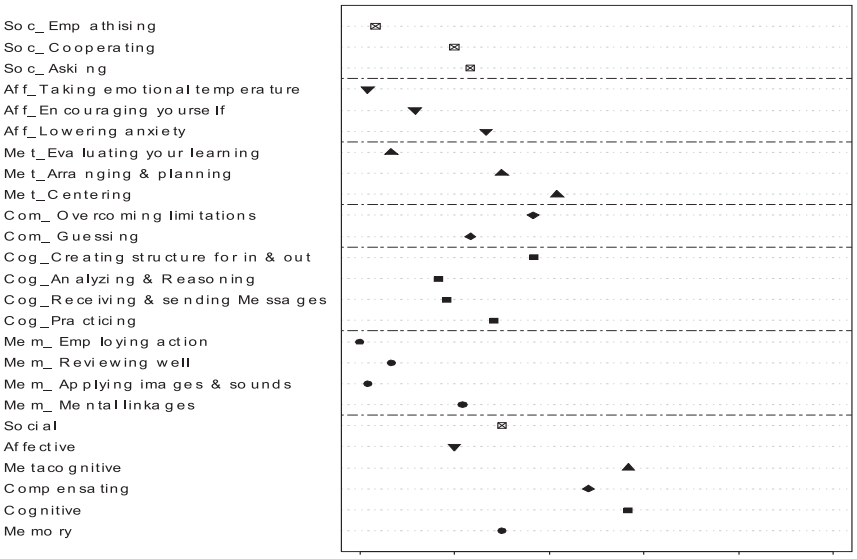
FIGURE I. Frequency and type of strategies.[6]



As for the most used at the 2nd level of specificity(see Fig. 1), there were only three strategies which were frequent, the metacognitive strategy of centering, the most frequent in absolute terms, the compensation strategy of overcoming limitations, and the cognitive strategy of creating structure for input and output.

The pattern of inclusion of strategies in textbooks described in the present work is fairly coincident with that of other studies which have used Oxford's classification (Anderson, 2005; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Salashour, Sharifi & Salahshour, 2013; Vandergrift, 2005) to find out which L2 strategies are associated to more proficient levels. However, metacognitive strategies, which have been reported to be more effective for learners' proficiency than cognitive ones, were less frequently found than cognitive strategies in our textbook analysis.

(6) Symbols (circles, triangles, squares) are associated to each of the six types of first level strategies. Thus, the sections above the general one also use these six symbols for the introduction of percentages in second level strategies.

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These frequencies confirm the need to establish in a methodological sense how the textbooks selected deal with explicit and implicit teaching of L2 strategies, what types of strategies are used and how they might be associated to the two oral skills.

Design and data analysis

The data obtained were placed on tables and coded according to the variables strategy, teaching focus, and skill. The first variable, strategy, was coded into type of major category used: memory [mem], cognitive [cog], compensation [com], metacognitive [met], affective [aff], or social [soc]. The second variable, teaching focus, considered first the type of instruction (explicit vs implicit), and secondly, the section where the instruction took place (within unit, internal vs in other sections of the textbooks or in support material, external); thus, this variable was coded in three levels: implicit (Impl), explicit external (Expl.E), or explicit internal (Expl.I). The distinction implicit internal vs. external was not considered relevant because implicit use does not involve any type of overt instruction and our focus was on explicit instruction. Finally, the third variable, skill, included listening (Lis) and speaking (Spe).

Using this coding system (see footnote 5), the statistical analysis was established following a categorical 3-way design, were strategy was denoted as A, teaching focus as B, and skill as C variable. All analyses were carried out using the R[7] program of statistical analysis.

As this study considered three categorical variables and their possible association, a modelization perspective (i.e. log-linear analysis based on the generalized linear model) proved to be the optimal way to establish their possible statistical associations, rather than using classical simple chi-square analysis, which does not work when the frequency table is three-dimensional. This perspective can reveal the potential confusion, between marginal and conditional associations, and it also allows determining which is the best model to explain the connections among variables. The Paik (Paik 1985) diagram of Fig. II shows a visual

(7) All statistical analyses were performed using the free-GNU R software, R version 3.0.0 (R Foundation for Statistical Computing, http://www.r-project.org/) with {MASS}, {vcd}, {vcdExtra}, {gmodels}, and {contrast} libraries. Statistical significance was set at probability of.05.

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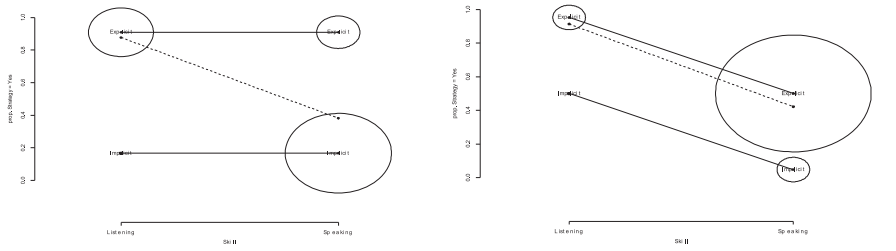
representation of this type of confusions. The dashed line connects the marginal proportions of use of this cognitive strategy when associated to each of the two skills. In both sections of Fig.II it appears that strategy and skill are associated. Concretely, within listening, there is a higher rate of use of strategies than in speaking (the slope of the line is positive). However, when the teaching focus is considered, the center of the circles show the conditional probabilities of use of strategy for the skill and teaching focus in conjunction. From this perspective, given the hypothetical case on the left, the apparent association between strategy and skill is lost (the null slope of the solid lines is different to the slope of the dashed line), whereas in the case on the right, such association is maintained despite the teaching focus (the slope of the solid lines are equivalent to the dashed line).

FIGURE II. Paik diagram: differences between diverse types of complex associations on a three-way design.[8]



A two phase analysis was carried out, and decisions were taken depending on the results of more traditional tests of statistical significance of the type G^2 (or the Likelihood ratio statistic: The standard goodness of Fit statistic on the categorical context[9]) together with AIC and BIC complementary measures based on the informativity provided by the models (AIC, Akaike's information criterion, or BIC, Schwarz Bayesian information criterion), following specialized literature (Agresti, 2012).[9]

(8) The variables strategy, teaching focus and skill are, in this figure, considered within two hypothetical situations.

(9) see Appendix I for details of statistic and Goodness of Fit Indexes

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In the first phase, from all the possible models (Appendix I, section c) only the statistically significant models were selected (see Appendix I, section a for details). In the second phase, the significant models were compared following a comparative (or conditional) perspective (Appendix I, section b). The comparison determined that the Joint independence model was the optimal one, (AC, B) Type, in statistical terms, for our analysis. This model was significantly better than the simpler one in the hierarchy, Mutual Independence: Mut.Ind. (A, B, C), and showed optimal values regarding informativity (AIC = -12.071, and BIC= -77.560). Statistical details about the two phase statistical analysis appear in justification section of Appendix I.

Furthermore, given the relevance of this model for our predictions, a more detailed analysis was carried out in a third phase, in which the logic of classical experimental designs was applied to our categorical design. Thus, a simple effect analysis versus a main effect analysis was considered for the three categorical variables (Maxwell & Delaney, 2003). That is to say, the association given by AC (or Strategy*Skill), in connection with the independent component B (or Teach.Focus). Additionally, the association AC was contemplated from its two possible directions, from Strategy To Skill, and from Skill to Strategy. For further details, see Appendix II.

Results and discussion

Regarding the first hypothesis, there is an apparent difference of frequencies between implicit use and explicit instruction (for more specific details about the distribution of strategies, see (Bueno-Alastuey and Agulló, 2015b). As can be seen in Table I (section a), there was more implicit use required (Impl.) than explicit instruction both within the unit (Expl. I), and outside the units (Expl. E) (marginal frequencies 51, 21 and 73 for ExplE, Expl.I and Impl respectively). In other words, strategies were less frequent in explicit teaching in general for all types of strategies and in absolute terms, so the variable considered, strategies (A), and teaching focus (B) were independent.

After finding out that textbooks provided very low explicit reference to strategies, we considered this pattern both for speaking and for listening (23 vs 28, 10 vs 11, and 33 vs 40 respectively). These data confirm our first prediction, that the frequency of strategies considered

within the units in second year *Bachillerato* course books is higher in implicit use than in explicit teaching independently of the skill considered.

TABLE I. Frequency of strategy use according to teaching focus[10]

a)	Lis	Spe	
Expl.E	23	28	51
Expl.I	10	11	21
Impl	33	40	73
	66	79	145

b)	Mem	Cog	Com	Met	Aff	Soc	
Expl.E	3	12	11	11	9	5	51
Expl.I	3	5	4	4	2	3	21
Impl	12	17	14	19	1	10	73
	18	34	29	34	12	18	145

c)	Mem	Cog	Com	Met	Aff	Soc	
Lis	8	14	17	20	6	1	66
Spe	10	20	12	14	6	17	79
	18	34	29	34	12	18	145

Concerning the second hypothesis, differences of use between explicit and implicit teaching were consistent for all types of strategies (see Table I, section b). For instance, use of cognitive strategies was higher for implicit teaching (17) than for external explicit (12) and internal (5), and this pattern is similar in all the columns (representing different major

(10) Explicit internal –Expl.I-, explicit external –Expl.E-, implicit –Impl- and skill (listening –Lis- and speaking –Spe–).

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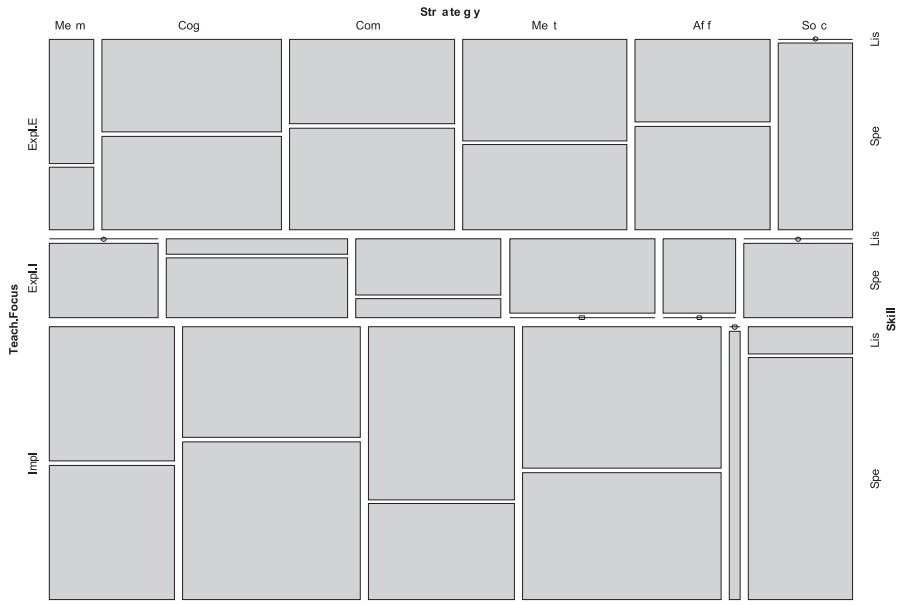
categories of strategies). Thus, our second hypothesis was confirmed, so the superior frequency of strategies associated to implicit teaching also applies independently of the type of strategy considered.

Third, we studied whether L2 strategies are selected in terms of the skill being introduced in the textbook unit (hypothesis 3) independently of the teaching focus. The results of the statistical analysis established an association between type of skill and strategy and thus type of strategy depended on skill and not on teaching focus (see Appendix II for further details). As was anticipated in the introduction, research has not considered whether there is a differential use of strategies according to the type of skill when controlling other possible variables, which avoids the potential confusion between the marginal (net) and the conditional association for the variables considered. For instance, the possible association between strategy and skill in the three-way design does not reveal how the teaching focus may alter this association. As shown in Table I, section c, there is a sharp contrast among the types of strategies included for explicit instruction or implicit use for the two skills analyzed. In general terms, the frequency of strategies developed for speaking is higher than for listening in some strategies, particularly regarding the use of social strategies, cognitive and memory ones. This pattern is inverted for compensation and memory strategies, which show a higher use in the listening skill. Affective strategies are used uniformly for both skills. Thus, our third hypothesis was confirmed.

The data regarding this third hypothesis is illustrated in Figure III below, which shows the contrast between explicit instruction (both within students' units [Expl. I] and in other sections [Expl. E]), and implicit use (Impl.) depending on skill.

Even though the figure shows there is some contrast between the implicit use of some kind of strategies between skills, for example affective strategies are not used implicitly for listening, it is clear that implicit use of strategies is predominant over explicit both within the units and in other sections.

FIGURE III. Selective strategy use in connection with teaching focus and skills[11].



Our design involved the use of a modelization perspective to establish the association between the three categorical variables considered (for details on the possible types of associations, see Appendix I, section c). The analysis of our data resulted in a partial (joint) association, of the type (AC, B[12]). which was deemed to be the most appropriate one for describing the interaction of the three variables. Figure IV, where full figures represent statistical significant differences, illustrates the statistical details from this model comparing the use of the six major categories for each of the skills (lower two sections) and the employment of each category for both skills (third section). Finally, it also establishes the contrast between explicit instruction or only implicit use of L2 strategies.

(11) See section C in Appendix I for numerical values.
(12 A for Strategy, B for Teaching focus, and C for Skill.

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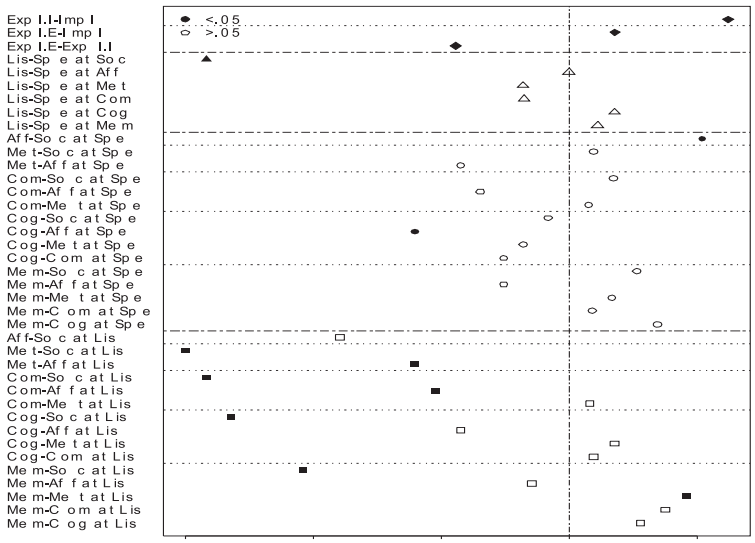
FIGURE IV. Results using joint association model (AC, B).



Considering differences between skills, social strategies were dealt with significantly more in the speaking sections than in the listening sections. However, the highest quantity of significant differences took place within skills and specially in listening (see bottom section of Figure IV: full squares). There were a number of strategies being considered significantly more than others within both skills, showing books tend to propose the same kind of strategies for the same skill ignoring alternative ones.

Regarding speaking, there were significantly more social and cognitive than affective strategies being illustrated and used (see second section of Figure IV: full dots). Consequently, there seems to be a predominance of social and cognitive strategies being explicitly instructed and implicitly dealt with in speaking although the only significant difference appeared in affective strategies which are not dealt with sufficiently in speaking.

There are more significant differences in how strategies are considered in listening. Social strategies were used significantly fewer times than all other types of strategies. This should be an expected finding because course books seem to deal with listening as an individual skill,

consequently strategies fostering collaboration are not explicitly instructed or implicitly asked for. However, students could benefit from collaborating to understand recorded passages and especially to activate background knowledge by sharing experiences and knowledge to aid in listening tasks.

Affective strategies were also used significantly fewer times than metacognitive and compensation strategies, and memory strategies significantly fewer times than metacognitive strategies in listening. Therefore, course books do not deal enough with social, affective and memory strategies for listening and students' exposure to these kinds of strategies is significantly more limited than to the other three kinds of strategies.

Finally, Figure IV also shows results of the marginal effect produced by the teaching focus, confirming our first prediction and the third part of the joint model. The difference between implicit use and explicit instruction was statistically significant and confirmed there was significantly more implicit required use (Impl.) than explicit instruction both within the unit (Expl. I), and outside the units (Expl. E). Furthermore, there was significantly more explicit instruction in support material and specific sections outside the units (Expl. E) than within the units of the students' textbooks (Expl.I) for both skills.

Teaching implications

As shown by research both in Spain and in Europe (see the study carried out by the Ministry of Education in Spain, MECD, 2012) there is a need to promote actions conducive to the development of the oral competence of students. Among these, there is a growing interest in incorporating an explicit focus on learning strategies and learning-how-to-learn into language curricula following European guidelines (Council of Europe, 2001; Wong & Nunan, 2011).

Moreover, as strategy use is associated to success in language learning, its explicit integration in mainstream language instruction would probably lead to higher competence levels (Manchón, 2008), particularly with the consideration that learning strategies can be teachable (Griffiths, 2013). If proficient learners are better at using appropriate language learning strategies, and this involves matching the type of strategies to the type of

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task, then, explicit instruction is needed and should be the aim within the units of a textbook. However, our analysis shows that explicit instruction is scarce within the units analyzed.

Furthermore, a wider array of strategies should be offered to provide an adequate range of them to decide which one matches the task better depending on skills, so as to maximize the learners' choice. Nevertheless, this study shows that the variety of strategies being taught and used remains scarce. Consequently, teachers and book authors should make an effort to widen the number and variety of learning strategies they offer their students.

Limitations of study and recommendations for further research

Although "researchers in the field widely agree on the theoretical benefits that learning strategy research provides for foreign language education" (Rose, 2012a, p. 92), the taxonomy used (Oxford, 1990) in this study has been questioned for the categorization of strategies, data collection instruments and contradictory results (Rose, 2012b). Nevertheless, this taxonomy was used because it has been widely used, has high validity and more recent taxonomies, including the notion of self-regulation (Dörnyei, 2005; Oxford, 2011) have also been shown to suffer from the same definitional fuzziness they criticize (Rose, 2012a,b). Our methodological design, which has shed some interesting results when analyzing associations between strategies and two more variables, should be applied to other situations and strategic taxonomies including self-regulation phenomena, in order to find out whether the apparent association existing between type of strategy and skill still exists when the type of strategies analyzed are different. Moreover, it would be interesting to consider in future studies whether the association between alternative strategy taxonomies in the three-way design reveals changes in this association produced by the teaching focus. Additionally, it would be challenging to compare how the different strategy classifications interact with other variables in a wide range of contexts.

The study of oral strategies should form part of wider studies which contemplate how oral competence is dealt with in EFL textbooks. Although textbooks devote some space to strategic development, and they select strategic behavior in terms of type of skill, the majority of them

include that as supplementary material, which might or might not be used by teachers, or they might just consider their use for different tasks without the inclusion of any explicit reference to strategic instruction.

Conclusions

This study measured the frequency of L2 learner strategies in five of the most common textbooks used in the last year of Higher Secondary Education in Spain. The frequency of strategies was considered in terms of the skill being developed, listening or speaking, and the focus of teaching, implicit or explicit. Our results showed that frequency of strategies was higher in implicit use than in the explicit teaching focus independently of the skill considered. Within explicit teaching, there was more frequency of strategies in complementary material outside the textbook units than inside them. Furthermore, the superior frequency of strategies associated to implicit teaching also applied independently of the type of strategy. Finally, according to the results of the modelization analysis, L2 strategies were selected in terms of the skill being introduced in the textbook unit, but independently of the teaching focus. Consequently, different strategies are selected for the two strategies contemplated, but no choice is given for explicit teaching or implicit use in the course books analyzed, where the same types of strategies are introduced.

Therefore, bearing in mind the fact that some types of strategies do appear to be more related to success in language learning than others (Griffiths, 2013, p. 692), and that explicit teaching of some of these strategies contributes to an increase in strategy use and in oral proficiency (Graham & Macaro, 2008; Cohen, 2011; Grifiths, 2013), then the textbooks selected may not provide sufficient explicit practice. Moreover, as research has shown (Cross, 2009; Lam, 2010; Lam & Wong, 2000; Plonski, 2011), learning strategies are in fact teachable (Griffiths, 2013), and "effective strategy instruction should be part of instructed language learning" (Manchón, 2008, p. 225). However, the lack of explicit instruction within the units points to a lack of awareness of the importance of L2 learning strategies for successful oral language performance on the part of publishing houses, who do not seem conscious of the effectiveness of explicit interventions followed by practice proposed by some authors

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(Graham & Macaro, 2008). They also point to the more than likely lack of strategy instruction students experience as teachers will tend to do in class what there is within the units of the book chosen rather than complementary material in other sections, such as exam practice sections which is considered as optional, and usually ignored because of lack of time.

However, it must also be considered that efficient use of learning strategies (Morales & Smith, 2008) has to do more with degree and appropriateness than with quantity, as Griffiths confirms (2013, p. 77) when she reviews studies about the use of learning strategies of higher level learners, supporting Rubin et al. (2007, p. 142) statement that "unless learners select strategies in the service of some task, skill and goal, they will not easily find the most appropriate strategies and be successful". Nevertheless, in the textbooks analyzed only some types of strategies are offered for some skills, and strategy instruction depends on the skill being taught. Therefore, the choice of strategy to be taught or used depends on skill and textbooks tend to favor certain strategies over others in the tasks or explicit instruction they provide. This points to a more than likely lack of enough knowledge of all kind of strategies for oral production and reception skills.

If the most effective strategy instruction should be explicit and integrated in the regular language classroom, the course books used in this educational stage do not fulfill this objective and limit strategy instruction to specific sections outside the units and particular strategies depending on skill.

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Appendix I

Statistical results of modelization analysis

Using the R program of statistical analysis[13], a two-stage analysis was completed. In these two stages, decisions were taken according to both the more traditional tests of statistical significance of the type G^2 and also complementary measures based on the informativity of the models (AIC or BIC) (see Agresti, 2012).

The first phase in the analysis was carried out to select the statistically significant models (see section b), allowing the selection of Models Hom.Ass. {AB, AC, BC}, Con.Ind.3 {AC, BC} and Joint.Ind.2 {AC, B}. Then, the selected models were compared in the second phase following a conditional perspective (section c), concluding that the Joint independence model {AC, B} was the optimal one from those initially selected. This model was significantly better than the simpler one in the hierarchy, Mut.Ind. {A, B, C}, but did not differ from the more complex ones which were also relevant, Con.Ind.3 {AB, AC} or Con.Ind.1 {AC, BC}, because they involved a single association, AC, that also appeared in the reference model.. This was confirmed since the relative (conditional) comparison among the three possible models that involve simple associations revealed that the only model showing significant differences with the more complete one of the type (Hom.Ass. {AB, AC, BC}) was the Con.Ind.2 {AB, BC} model. Therefore, the AC association is significant (see details on section c). As a whole, the selected model is the one offering optimal informativity values (AIC = -12.071 and BIC= -77.560; in contrast, AIC=-2.995/ BIC=-32.763, or AIC=-6.781/BIC=-42.502); respectively for Hom.Ass. {AB, AC, BC} and Con.Ind.3 {AC, BC}) so this model was selected for our analysis.

a) Different modelization hierarchical models for a multidimensional situation with three categorical variables: A (Strategy), B (teaching focus) and C (Skill).

---

(13) All statistical analyses were performed using the free-GNU R software, R version 3.0.0 (R Foundation for Statistical Computing, http://www.r-project.org/) with {MASS}, {vcd}, {vcdExtra}, {gmodels}, and {contrast} libraries. Statistical significance was set at *probability of.05*.

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- **Complete association (Saturated model) {ABC}**. Complex association (or 3-factor interaction) among all variables. A two-way association is in turn modulated by the third variable (i.e. The association of Strategy & Teaching focus will in turn change when the variable Skill is introduced).
- **Homogeneous association {AB, AC, BC}**. All pairs of variables are associated, Strategy & Teaching Focus, Strategy & Skill, and Teaching Focus & Skill. Whatever the conditional association between two variables is, strong or weak or not present, it is the same for all levels of the third variable, thus neither C modifies the association AB, nor B modifies the association AC, or A modifies the association BC.
- **Conditional independence {(B+C)*A} or {AB, AC}.** Two associations of two factors. The model holds that variables A and B and also A and C are associated, but B and C are conditionally independent. I.e. given: Strategy * Teaching Focus, and Strategy * Skill, but Teaching focus & Skill are independent through all and each levels of the variable Strategy.
- **Joint independence (or partial association) {AC, B}.** An association of only two factors and a main effect. For instance, Skill and Strategy are associated, but Teaching focus is independent.
- **Mutual independence {A, B, C}**. All variables are independent. In this case, Strategy, Teaching focus and Skill.

b) Global modelization analysis and results

Model	df	$\chi 2$	$p(\chi 2)$	G^2	$p(G^2)$	AIC	BIC	
Com.Ass. {ABC}	0	---	---	---	---	0	0	
Hom.Ass. {AB, AC, BC}	10	12.885	.230	17.005	.074	-2.995	-32.763	*
Con.Ind.1 {AB, AC}	20	25.670	.177	31.885	.045	-8.115	-67.650	
Con.Ind.2 {AB, BC}	15	28.504	.019	36.455	.002	6.455	-38.196	
Con.Ind.3 {AC, BC}	12	13.017	.368	17.219	.142	-6.781	-42.502	*
Joint.Ind.1 {AB, C}	17	28.616	.038	36.498	.004	2.498	-48.106	
Joint.Ind.2 {AC, B}	22	25.673	.266	31.929	.079	-12.071	-77.560	*
Joint.Ind.3 {BC, A}	25	40.851	.024	51.165	.002	1.165	-73.254	
Mut.Ind. {A, B, C}	27	40.837	.043	51.209	.003	-2.791	-83.163	

*p > 0.05

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c) Conditional Modelization Analysis

Model	G^2	df	Delta G^2	Delta df	p(Delta)	
Com.Ass. {ABC}	---	---	---	---	---	
Hom.Ass. {AB, AC, BC}	17.005	10	17.005	10	.074	
Con.Ind.1 {AB, AC}	17.219	12	0.214	2	.899	
Con.Ind.2 {AB, BC}	36.455	15	19.450	5	.002	*
Con.Ind.3 {AC, BC}	31.885	20	14.880	10	.136	
Con.Ind.3 {AB, AC}	17.219	12	14.710	10	.143	
Con.Ind.1 {AC, BC}	31.885	20	0.044	2	.978	
Joint.Ind.2 {AC, B}	31.929	22	19.280	5	.002	*
Mut.Ind. {A, B, C}	51.209	27	---	---	---	

* $p \leq .05$

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Appendix II

Statistical Details for Selected Model Joint Association (Strategy*Skill) + Teach.Focus (AC,B) following a simple/main effects focus of analysis.

Global: G^2 (22) = 31.929, AIC = 157.56

a) Association AC: "Strategy on Skill" direction

Strategy		Skill = Listening					Skill = Speaking				
		Param	SE	z	p(z)		Param	SE	z	p(z)	
Mem vs	Cog	0.560	0.443	1.263	.207		0.693	0.387	1.790	.074	
	Com	0.754	0.429	1.758	.079		0.182	0.428	0.426	.670	
	Met	0.916	0.418	2.190	.028	*	0.336	0.414	0.813	.416	
	Aff	-0.288	0.540	-0.533	.594		-0.511	0.516	-0.989	.323	
	Soc	-2.079	1.061	-1.961	.050	*	0.531	0.399	1.331	.183	
Cog vs	Com	0.194	0.361	0.538	.591		-0.511	0.365	-1.399	.162	
	Met	0.357	0.348	1.024	.306		-0.357	0.348	-1.024	.306	
	Aff	-0.847	0.488	-1.736	.082		-1.204	0.465	-2.587	.010	*
	Soc	-2.639	1.035	-2.550	.011	*	-0.163	0.330	-0.493	.622	
Com vs	Met	0.163	0.330	0.493	.622		0.154	0.393	0.392	.695	
	Aff	-1.041	0.475	-2.193	.028	*	-0.693	0.500	-1.386	.166	
	Soc	-2.833	1.029	-2.753	.006	*	0.348	0.377	0.924	.356	
Met vs	Aff	-1.204	0.465	-2.587	.010	*	-0.847	0.488	-1.736	.082	
	Soc	-2.996	1.025	-2.924	.003	*	0.194	0.361	0.538	.591	
Aff vs	Soc	-1.792	1.080	-1.659	.097		1.041	0.475	2.193	.028	*

* $p \leq .05$

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b) Association AC: "Skill on Strategy" direction

Skill	Strategy	Param	SE	z	p(z)	
Lis vs Sp.	Mem	0.223	0.474	0.470	.638	
	Cog	0.357	0.348	1.024	.306	
	Com	-0.348	0.377	-0.924	.356	
	Met	-0.357	0.348	-1.024	.306	
	Aff	0.000	0.577	0.000	1.000	
	Soc	-2.833	1.029	-2.753	.006	*

* $p \leq .05$

c) Independent Factor B: Teaching Focus

Teach.Focus		Param	SE	z	p(z)	
Expl.E vs	Expl.I	-0.887	0.259	-3.422	.001	*
	Impl	0.359	0.183	1.965	.049	*
Expl.I	Impl	1.246	0.248	5.032	.000	*

* $p \leq .05$

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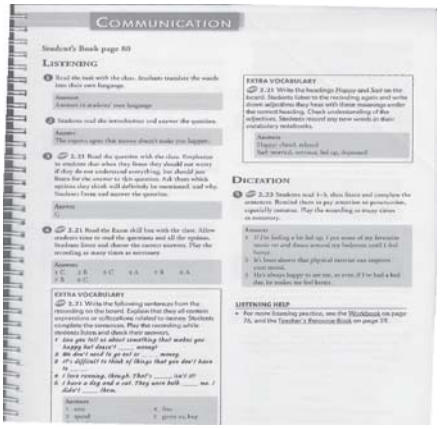
Appendix III

Examples of strategies found in textbooks (internal), teachers' books and supplementary material (external). When a specific written explanation on the use of the strategy was given, they were considered explicit. If no explanation was given, then strategies were implicitly used.


COMMUNICATION

Student's Book page 80

LISTENING

EXTRA VOCABULARY

DICTATION

EXTRA VOCABULARY

LISTENING HELP


4

Sense It

Amazing Facts-

True or False?

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Listening Implicit: in the students' book, learnes will have to use some strategies to carry out the listening exercises, but there are no suggestions as to which strategy should be used in the exercises. Moreover, the teacher's book does not provide any recommendation either.

Speaking Implicit: several speaking activities are introduced for the students to carry out, but o suggested use of any strategy is provided in the students' or the teacher's book corresponding pages.

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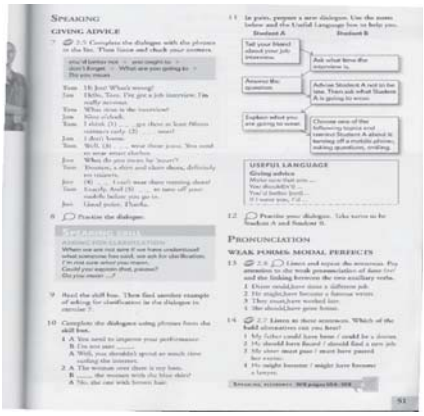
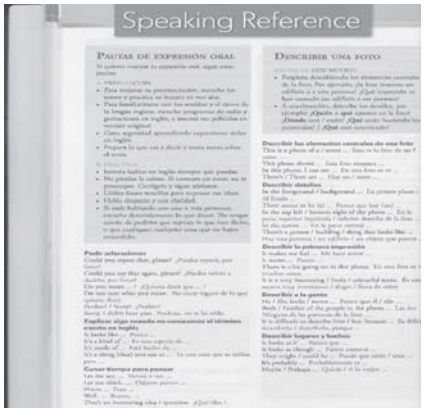


Speaking explicit internal: the students' book explains in exercise 8 the use of a social strategy, *asking for clarificatio.*



Speaking explicit external: in the final reference section of the workbook, there is a revision of speaking strategies using the native language of students. Some of the strategies considered here include social strateges, *asking for clarification,* affective ones, lowering anxiety, and cognitive ones such as *creating structure for input and output* and practicing.

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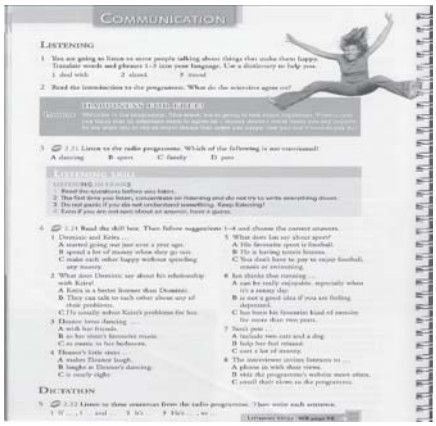
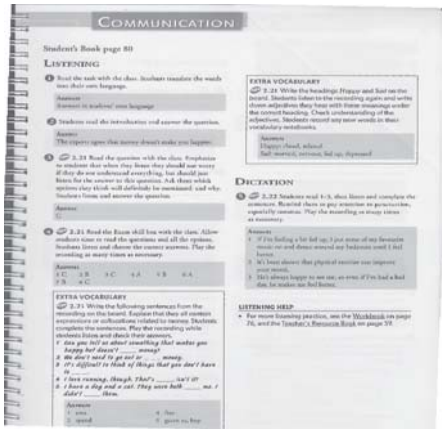

COMMUNICATION

LISTENING

DICTATION


COMMUNICATION

Student's Book page 80

LISTENING

EXTRA VOCABULARY

DICTATION

LISTENING HELP

Listening Explicit Internal: Exercise 2.21 in the students' book explains the use of two strategies, an affective one, *lowering anxiety,* and a compensating strategy, *guessing*.

Listening explicit external: exercise 2.21 in the teachers' book suggests the usage of an affective strategy, *lowering anxiety,* to be used by students. However, this strategy is not mentioned in the students' book. That is the reason it has been considered Explicit External

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