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TEACHING ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE  
THE SPANISH EFL LEARNERS' FLUENCY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

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**To Sara and Sofía**

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## Abbreviations

AA: Appeal for authority.

ALTE: The Association of Language Testers in Europe.

ANOVA: Analysis of variance.

AR: Asking for repetition.

C: Chunks.

C1: Low control group.

C2: High control group.

CB: Canonical Biplot.

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference.

CPE: Cambridge Proficiency in English.

CSs: Communication strategies.

CVA: Canonical variate analysis.

E1: Low experimental group.

E2: High experimental group.

EAP: English for academic purposes.

EFL: English as a foreign language.

ELF: English as a Lingua Franca.

ESL: English as a second language.

ESOL: English for speakers of other languages.

ESP: English for specific purposes.

F: Frequency.



FL: Foreign language.

GF: Gap-fillers.

IL: Interlanguage.

IPT: Implicit theory.

KET: Key English Test.

L1: First language.

L2: Second language.

LLS: language learning strategies.

MANOVA: Multivariate analysis of variance.

n: Row.

p: Columns.

P: Paraphrasing.

P1: Low proficient piloting group.

P2: High proficient piloting group.

PAR: Providing active response.

PCA: Principle component analysis.

PI: Pre-test interview.

POI: Post-test interview.

POS0: Post-test storytelling oral task.

POWC: Post-test writing composition task.

POWS: Post-test written storytelling task.

PSO: Pre-test storytelling oral task.

PWC: Pre-test writing composition task.

PWS: Pre-test written storytelling task.

R: Restructuring.

S: Shadowing.

S/he: She or he.

Sign: Significance  $p < 0.05$ .

SL: Second language.

SLA: Second language acquisition.

Ss: Strategies.

TL: Target language.

UCLES: University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, V6 and V7: Variables.

x: Matrix.

## **General Introduction**

### **1. Introduction**

Language teaching has recently become challenging to both teachers and learners since it has become more demanding in relation to the different variables that interfere in the learning process. Continuous research has been done in the field of interlanguage (IL) and second language acquisition, with a special focus on the learner's behavior and teaching methodologies. As a result, there has been a great shift in the curriculum design and the interest of the specialists who have become more interested in the learning process rather than the learning as a product. Researchers are intensively working on how to orient their investigations towards classroom implementation for better linking with the teaching of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

The movement towards a new notion of teaching (Faerch and Kasper, 1980) includes not only the transmission of knowledge but also the development of competencies. The new teaching is supposed to lead the students to autonomous learning in which the teacher is to be present to guide or judge the learning process. Notwithstanding, some competencies prove themselves to be harder to develop than others because of the nature of the unlimited variables interfering in the process of working these competencies out. Several research projects demonstrate that learners are more preoccupied with developing their speaking and writing skills than they are with the rest of the skills (Benali, 2011; Lafford, 2004; Victori, 1992). This is predictable in second or foreign language (SL/FL) context that is generally characterized with a lack of practice and exposure to authentic forms of the target language. Although writing is practically more explored than speaking, students seem to need more systematic instructions and guided practice to improve their ability to express their ideas in a more organized manner that suits the topic and the readers. Unfortunately, speech is less expanded as a skill inside the classroom even with the advances in the speed of communication system and mobility, which have spurred globalization and have led to the exponential growth of the use of ELF. This has put great pressure on

different countries to come up with various linguistic educational policies and projects that have the goal of improving students' communicative competence.

Therefore, analyses of the learners' interlanguage and its communicative effect on the interlocutor have become a widely investigated phenomenon. Recent trends of research have dealt mainly with assessing the communicative potential of the learners' language by means of emphasizing the learner's role, his/her communicative needs in the FL and the effect that his/her IL exerts on the interlocutors. Special interest was given to the problem-solving process with the aim of exploiting the intermediary ways that the learners use to overcome their communicative problems and to convey their message. A vital aim of this area of research is a better understanding of the interplay between the factors involved in SL/FL communicative competence to improve the act of teaching/learning. This new field of research has provided different theoretical and empirical studies with insightful implications and findings that help clarify the controversy of communication in general, but which also highlight the complexity of the communicative skills in both written and spoken forms.

The fundamental aim of this study is to investigate the teachability of communication strategies and to shift the focus from the product to investigating the process and the possible ways of improving its particular steps to get better results in both oral and written performance. By detecting the problems the students come across during their spoken or written tasks; by having a good understanding of their cognitive as well as pedagogical underpinnings; and by providing the adequate strategies to overcome these problems, teachers will be able to predict and understand their learners' problematic instances. This will give them the ability to provide better conditions and instructions for successful communication, as well as shed light on the neglected aspects which separate speech from writing. It is obvious that many people learn to translate their spoken dialect into standard written English or vice versa, disregarding the fact that both spoken and written forms are linked to the social background, second language (L2) proficiency, age, race, gender, personality, culture, and motivation of the writer, speaker and audience; and ignoring the possibility to switch between

formal and informal communication or to use different strategies depending on whom or what topic they are addressing.

The influence of all the aforementioned factors in the use of SL/FL was not only discussed and analyzed by second language acquisition (SLA), but it was also studied and proved by other fields of research as: cognitive psychology (Galotti, 2011; Dweck, 1996), speech processing (Dell, 1986; Levelt, 1989), interaction (Long, 1985; Pica and Doughty, 1988; Swain, 1985), discourse analysis (Tarone and Yule, 1989), language learning strategies (Cohen, Weaver and Li 1996; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) all of which contributed to form the variety of theories and approaches that can be used in recent investigations concerning all aspects of second language acquisition.

This study draws from the field of communication strategies (Dörnyei and Scott, 1997; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Poulisse, 1990; Tarone, 1980), since it is concerned with the investigation of the teachability of written and oral communication strategies to enhance the students' communicative competence in both contexts. A more detailed explanation of this term and the interrelated terminologies (communicative competence, learning strategies and mental processes) is offered in the following chapters of this work.

## **2. Rationale**

Substantial body of research dealing with communication skills exists (Cohen and Macaro, 2007); however, some skills have been more considered and scrutinized than others. Research on writing has been particularly bountiful (Manchón, 2009; Victori, 1999); whereas, research on speaking has been more scarce (Cohen et al., 1996; Nakatani, 2006, 2010; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Speaking or oral communication has been regarded by many psychologists as not always directly observable since they are believed to be based on mental processes that are not easily reportable. For this reason, many researchers (Rees-Miller's, 1993; Ridgway, 2000) overemphasize that strategies (including communication strategies) cannot be taught and that strategy training is not a useful methodology to improve the learners' competence. Still, there are others who defend strategy teaching and research, and believe that as long as it is done carefully, complete data is possible

(Ericsson and Simon, 1993; Lewis, 2011; Nakatani, 2010) and that adopting strategy training as an approach for L2 teaching is surely worthwhile. In fact, findings in recent research (Cohen and Macaro, 2007; Lewis, 2011; Mariani, 2007, Nakatani, 2010; Zhang, 2008) indicate that strategies-based instruction is one of the most effective practices of pedagogy in classroom implementation. Therefore, there is a need for more research on strategy-training and the possible different or common aspects between oral and written communicative strategies following the new stream of methodological research for the best method that is still situated in a non-unitary position.

Research on communication strategies has been conducted focusing on specific subclasses of strategies at a time, and on comparing their use in different tasks (Dörnyei, 1995; Faerch and kasper, 1983; Gass, 2002; Littlemore, 2001; Poulisse, 1990). However, there are few works that deal with all the communication strategies within the same study (Dörnyei and Scott, 1997; Nakatani, 2006). In short, more studies are needed to involve all the possible communication strategies and compare the use of oral and written strategies within different tasks.

In the field of communication strategies there has been a substantial call for the triangulation of data collection (Gao, 2007; Phakiti, 2003), which is not the case in most of the studies on strategies: communication strategies (CSs), and language learning strategies (LLSs). Research on CSs has always regarded questionnaires or interviews as the best method to collect the biggest amount of data due to the belief that communication strategies (or strategies in general) are mental processes that cannot be observed. However, there is always the problem that not all the strategies are conscious, which implies that language users are not aware of all the strategies they make use of. That is, a combination of questionnaire, tasks and observation in detecting and measuring CSs is what this study offers to investigate the communicative behaviors, fluency and self-confidence of language users because they have proved to be difficult to observe on some moments and hard to explain on others.

Another aim of the research is to compare the use of communication strategies in relation to the proficiency level of the language users since investigations in the

field have not provided any specific classification of the types and frequency of use of the communication strategies in relation to high or low proficient learners (Cohen and Macaro, 2007). In other words, we still need consistent studies able to specify which proficiency levels use which strategies with which frequency and under which conditions. In an attempt to fill this gap the actual study is comparing the strategies used by high and low proficient students in their oral and written performance.

Production problems are frequent in both oral and written communication even in our mother tongue as Kellerman, Bongaerts and Poulisse explain “Anyone would experience situations when a particular L1 referent could not be retrieved or has to be labeled, relabeled or described in written or oral communication” (1987: 102). Therefore, communication strategies are necessary to overcome communicative problems and to avoid communication breakdown. This research is working both on written and oral production with the aim of training students to use communication strategies to improve their performance and to raise their self-confidence. It has the objective of filling all the aforementioned gaps in the field of communication strategies by offering a triangulation of data collection (questionnaire, observation, and a set of oral and written tasks), by using an inductive strategy-training methodology, by offering a comparison between the use of a large list of strategies in different tasks, and by providing a comparative study of quantity and types of communication strategies used by low and high proficient learners.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

The current study seeks to investigate the effect of strategy-training on the use of CSs by Spanish EFL high-school students in both oral and written productions. It also compares the effect of language proficiency on the use of CSs in spoken and written forms, and studies the impact of the training on the subjects’ fluency and self-confidence. This study will be geared towards the following objectives:

1. To examine the quantity of communication strategies used by Spanish EFL high-school students in both spoken and written performance.

2. To investigate the impact of strategy-training on the use of communication strategies by Spanish EFL high-school students in both spoken and written productions.
3. To scrutinize the interaction that comes into play between the training and the learners' fluency in writing and speech.
4. To explore the effect of the training on the students' self-confidence in spoken and written forms.
5. To examine the effect of the medium of communication (written vs. spoken) on the frequency of CSs used by the subjects to overcome their communicative problems.
6. To study the effect of the level of proficiency on the types and frequency distribution of CSs that the subjects use in oral and spoken communication.

#### **4. Research Questions**

Based on the above objectives the following research questions were posed:

The first research question is concerned with the use of communication strategies by the subjects in both oral and written productions, and it can be divided into four research sub-questions:

##### **Research question 1**

- 1.1. To what extent will Spanish low proficient EFL high-school students resort to communication strategies to prevent communication breakdowns?
- 1.2. To what extent will Spanish high proficient EFL high-school students resort to communication strategies to avoid communication disruption?

The second research question is related to the effect of strategy-training on the use of communication strategies by Spanish EFL high-school students and is divided into the four following research sub-questions:

##### **Research question 2**

- 2.1. Will the strategy-training improve the use of communication strategies of Spanish low proficient EFL high-school students in the spoken communication?
- 2.2. Will the strategy-training enhance the use of communication strategies of



- the Spanish low proficient EFL high-school students in the written medium?
- 2.3. Will the strategy-training improve the use of communication strategies of Spanish high proficient EFL high-school students in the spoken communication?
  - 2.4. Will the strategy-training enhance the use of communication strategies of the Spanish high proficient EFL high-school students in the written medium?

The third research question has to do with the impact of the strategy-training on the students' fluency in both mediums of communication. It can be divided into the following four research sub-questions:

### **Research question 3**

- 3.1 Will the strategy-training have an effect on the Spanish low proficient EFL high-school students' fluency in speech?
- 3.2 Will the strategy-training have an effect on the Spanish low proficient EFL high-school students' fluency in writing?
- 3.3 Will the strategy-training have an effect on the Spanish high proficient EFL high-school students' fluency in speech?
- 3.4 Will the strategy-training have an effect on the Spanish high proficient EFL high-school students' fluency in writing?

The fourth research question is concerned with the effect of the strategy-training on the subjects' self-confidence in speaking and writing, which is divided into four research sub-questions as follows:

### **Research question 4**

- 4.1. Will the strategy-training have an impact on the Spanish low proficient students' self-confidence in spoken communication?
- 4.2. Will the strategy-training have an impact on the low proficient subjects' self-confidence in writing tasks?
- 4.3. Will the strategy-training have an effect on the high proficient students' self-confidence in speech?
- 4.4. Will the strategy-training have an effect on the high proficient students' self-confidence in writing?

The fifth research question is related to the effect of the proficiency level on the types and quantity of the communication strategies used by the low proficient and the high proficient subjects.

### **Research question 5**

5.1. Will the level of proficiency have an impact on the types and the frequency distribution of the communicative strategies used by the low proficient subjects?

5.2. Will the level of proficiency have an impact on the types and the frequency distribution of the communicative strategies used by the high proficient subjects?

These questions are formulated in terms of the hypotheses cited below:

### **5. Research Hypotheses**

- 1 Spanish EFL low proficient students will use fewer CSs than high proficient ones.
- 2 Spanish low proficient EFL students will use oral help seeking strategies more than the high proficient EFL students.
- 3 The strategy-training will improve the use of oral CSs of both low/high proficient EFL students.
- 4 The strategy-training will enhance the use of written CSs by the low and the high proficient EFL students.
- 5 The strategy-training will upgrade the low/high proficient EFL students' oral fluency.
- 6 The strategy-training will augment the low/high proficient EFL students' written fluency.
- 7 The strategy-training will improve the low/high proficient EFL students' self-confidence in oral communication.
- 8 The strategy-training will enhance the low/high EFL students' self-confidence in writing.

All the previously mentioned research questions and hypotheses are based on results of previous research on CSs teaching or observation that will be mentioned in the following chapter of the actual research as a way to establish the theoretical framework of the study.

# Chapter 1

## Theoretical Framework

This chapter sets out the theoretical grounding of the actual study. It is comprised of three related sections. The first one deals with writing skill approaches, and provides a brief definition of writing as focused by an EFL/ESL view point. More issues are tackled, namely the ones associated with teaching/learning writing and the possible problems or difficulties the FL writers may encounter.

The second section deals with speaking and how it has been evolving during the last few years namely in relation to FL teaching. It also provides a general comparison between speaking and writing in terms of function, nature and form.

The third section of this chapter supplies the definition and classification of communication strategies and an overview of the taxonomies and approaches to this term. It also explains the differences or similarities between communication strategies and other related terms like learning strategies, communicative competence, processes and plans.

### **1. Writing in Second/Foreign Language**

Writing is a means to create and communicate one's ideas and feelings; it helps students learn how to think critically and creatively, and to organize their ideas in a cohesive and flowing manner. It is "thinking-made tangible" (Dysthe, 2001: 3) for both the reader and the writer to record, scrutinize and reuse. The writing process is identified as an individualized search for adequate words and expressions and joining them together to get the appropriate structure for the target reason. Although it was criticized by some philosophers as false art that would deviate the students from the honest pursuit of truth, the sophists described it as a skill needed to manipulate the beliefs of others and to get power, and for others it was a means to discover knowledge. Writing through history has been a controversial topic that has raised strong debates about the necessity and the usefulness of teaching this mysterious art.

Since the forties, studies on writing in ESL/EFL has seen a continuous movement of theories and approaches of teaching/learning writing that have tended to follow the changes of everyday life and the different functions composition has being gaining throughout all these decades. Consequently, a succession of approaches and theories have dominated the teaching/learning of the written form and oriented the implementation of this skill inside the classroom.

### **1.1. Product-based Approach**

The structural approach to writing that considers the written form as a textual product and a coherent organization of lexical elements by using the studied rules, was mainly based on ideas inherited from Behaviorism, Structuralism and the Transformational Grammar of Chomsky, which gave no importance to the context of the text and focused only on the structure to analyze the meaning of any composition. The structuralism's decontextualization of texts has had different implications to teaching and analyzing writing, the most important of which are:

- The mechanistic view that human communication works by transferring ideas from one mind to another via language (Shanon and Waver, 1963).
- The writers are passive users of language whose role is limited to implement a system of rules to produce a written piece of language.
- Formal accuracy is the essential aim beyond the teaching of writing to “avoid errors ostensibly caused by first language interference, and to reinforce appropriate second language behavior” (Silva, 1990: 12).
- Writing is to be taught not with the aim of the improvement of the skill itself, but as a means to reinforce previously learned linguistic items.

Writing is then regarded as a mere production of already memorized structures and rules, and the audience is limited to the teacher who has a fixed idea about the notion of correctness and who is strictly interested in the accurate use of the learned structures. Although the product approach, often referred to as current traditional rhetoric (Mariani, 2007; Mastuda, 2003, Pullman, 1999), received a number of criticisms for its orientation towards the product that aimed at improving the learners' writing competence through:

- The repetition of the previously learnt structures.
- The production of already given grammatically correct sentences.
- Promoting the idea that the purpose of writing is the product, which is expected to reflect a predefined inactive reality without any consideration of process, authorial identity or audience.

Still, it has brought something new to the field of discourse analysis and composition pedagogy since it was concerned with the analysis of the written form of the language, especially native-writers' compositions, of different genres (narration, exposition, argumentative, descriptive, etc.) and styles to get the basic subclasses such as words, sentences and paragraphs as a model to teach writing to speakers of other languages (Arapoff, 1976; Carr, 1967; Jamshidnejad, 2011). The re-assessment of the approach resulted in an increasing awareness of the importance of bridging the gap between controlled and free writing, and gave birth to the writing-as-process movement, which has led the field toward a paradigm shift, revolutionizing the teaching of writing.

### **1.2. Process-based Approach**

In the seventies research on writing began to focus on the process rather than the final product in teaching writing. Ten years later, Hairston (1982) argued that the teaching of writing had undergone a "paradigm shift" in moving from a focus on written products to writing processes. There was a tendency to consider writing as a dynamic process as expressed by Zamel:

The focus of research on composition has shifted. Rather than investigating what students write, teachers and researchers are beginning to study the composition process itself. They are now working under the assumption that before we know how to teach writing, we must first understand how we write (1982: 196).

This was the starting point of a new philosophy of discourse analysis pioneered by scholars such as Emig (1971), Flower and Hayes (1981) that considered writing as a complex and individualized task which can be divided into five overlapping parts of a complex process that are repeated various times during the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. The same idea of presenting writing as a recursive process was supported by Dheram (1996) who

explained that “the writer can access task environment and switch from one writing sub-process to another at any time. The writer does not plan everything first, and that done, writes about it, but planning and writing is integrated in one another” (28).

The prewriting is what the writer does before starting writing which can be an act of reading or investigating the topic in question. In the drafting the writer organizes and elaborates his/her ideas. During the revision step what the writer does can be described as an act of rewriting to correct and elaborate the message in response to the feedback obtained from readers; whereas editing is a more detailed correction that scrutinizes the text for any type of errors. Publishing is the last stage that puts the finishing touches to refine the product and to share it with the reader. Writing, then, is considered as “not a simple act, but rather an intricate set of steps and choices” (Scott, 1998: 31) that many researchers like Zamel (1987) and Raimes (1987) have proved that writing strategies are transferable from L1 to L2, which explains the fact that effective writers in L1 are so in L2. This raises the importance of investigating and teaching those strategies as a “cognitive process in which writers form an internal representation of the knowledge to be used in writing” (Lauer and Asher, 1988: 11-12). Consequently, the writing process was seen as a “nonlinear, exploratory and generative process, whereby writers discover and formulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel, 1987: 165) that is highly personalized, but that can be improved by applying these strategies in the classroom context. These strategies help making students aware of the steps they should follow and engaging them into a continuous practice of the writing steps to reach “ greater control over what they write, how they write it, and the evaluation of their own writing” (Zamel, 1987: 165). This methodology makes writing a less demanding task for the writers since the steps are explained and the practice is repeated multiple times using different topics and dividing the writing process into short recursive steps. It simplifies the act of writing and gives the writer the opportunity to modify and improve the writing at any stage of its production, taking advantage of feedback provided by peers or teachers.

Recently, the process approach has been analyzed from different perspectives and has been criticized for having a somewhat 'monolithic' view of writing (Badger and White, 2000). It was regarded as an approach that narrowly focuses on the skills and processes of writing in the classroom, but as a result it fails to take into account the social and cultural aspects which have an important impact on the different kinds of writing (Atkinson, 2003). Johns (1995) criticized the Process Movement:

This movement's emphasis on developing students as authors when they are not yet ready to be second language writers, in developing student voice while ignoring issues of register and careful argumentation, and in promoting the author's purposes while minimizing understandings of role, audience and community have put our diverse students at a distinct disadvantage as they face academic literacy tasks in college classrooms where readers and writers roles, context, topic, and task must be carefully considered and balanced (Johns, 1995: 181).

Accordingly, writing is the systematic and logical arrangement of ideas into organized sentences and paragraphs that can be learned through exposure to well written texts and through putting the basic notions taken from good models of effective writers into practice (Silva, 1990). However, there was still a need for a different approach that could take into consideration both the function and the form of the target language, and that which would be able to increase the importance of the writer's identity and his possible engagement with the reader through the written text. There was then a strong need for an approach able to deal with the written performance as a personalized creation of ideas, emotions and personal experiences as a means of social interaction between the writer and the reader.

### **1.3. Genre Approach**

The genre approach was considered by many researchers as an extension of the product approach (Badger and White, 2000). Both approaches consider writing as a linguistic skill with a slight difference that the genre approach provides by emphasizing the social context in which the writing is produced. The genre approach then oriented the writing pedagogies towards the contextualized teaching of writing by explaining the functions the written forms may have in the

students' social life. Many authors like Philipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) argued that language can never be separated from the context in which it is used and that all languages are embedded with culture, functions and ideologies that should be taken into consideration in the act of teaching. The genre approach is underpinned by a functional model of language which focuses on the relationship between the discourse and the context in which the language is used and that "... each audience and context is idiosyncratic. That is, each discourse community has individual qualities" (Rabbini, 2003: 126). From the aforementioned definitions and explanations of the objectives of the genre approach we can conclude that "a genre approach is not a matter of applying formulaic prescriptions of how a text should be structured. Instead, it is based on an analysis of how a text creates meaning in its context of use and then how this knowledge can be utilized by students to write in the same genre themselves" (Gallagher, 2000: 14). A more explained definition of what a genre approach holds is that provided by Swales:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience (1990: 58).

The writing pedagogy based on the genre approach is an interactive collaboration between the students and the teacher in which the teacher plays the role of an assessor who provides the learners with the target models to be analyzed and followed in their personal performance guiding them towards the autonomous production.

Like the previously mentioned approaches, the genre approach received some criticisms about the way it develops the learners writing competence because by teaching particular genre the teacher is not expecting the students to express their own ideas (Caudery, 1998). It is also criticized that the success of the lesson



depends to a great extent on the teacher's selection of adequate materials to be used as models of teaching writing.

#### **1.4. Teaching Writing**

Writing skills are harder to develop than other skills since they are more demanding and are not regarded as a simply "individually-oriented, inner-directed cognitive process, but as much as an acquired response to the discourse conventions . . . within particular communities" (Swales, 1990: 4). The act of writing is individual but it has to fit within the social context to which it is directed, and it has to respect the cultural and intellectual norms set by the target language community. Thus, teaching writing to non-native writers requires a detailed planning by the teacher in which s/he has to decide on the skill to be developed, the means of implementation and the appropriate topic to tackle which guaranties a high level of students' engagement. If the teacher manages to combine the previously mentioned characteristics in a lesson plan and integrate the target language culture as well as the supposed audience's expectations, he will be sure of generating an atmosphere of effective and creative learning that leads the language user to write with a "readerly" sensitivity (Kern, 2000). From all the former approaches it is clearly seen that the teaching of writing has arrived at a stage in which both the teacher and the learner should interact to create the input/intake. The goal of this is to relate the teaching of writing to the classroom and to the social context of the teaching/learning situation as pointed out by Bazerman:

We can no longer view writing as limited textual practice, understood only as the bounded rules of the page. Nor is writing to be understood only as the product of an isolated mind . . . Writing is potentially responsive to and dependent on everything that is on the social stage (1993:9).

Keeping in mind that writing competence in the mother tongue is not always transferred automatically to the foreign language, though a minimal influence was empirically proved (Connor, 2002), the teacher should teach writing as a new area and avoid having great assumptions of what the students may do or know until they can prove the opposite. A good objective pre-assessment of the types of problems the learners have at the linguistic, functional and the procedural level is an essential starting point for teaching writing. According to Ellis (2000), it is

through analyzing learners' errors that we elevate "the status of errors from undesirability to that of a guide to the inner working of the language learning process" (2000: 53).

### **1.5. Problems in Writing**

Writing presents itself as a difficult activity especially to SL/FL writers. It is a psychologically and cognitively demanding task which is the result of many hours of individual work on ordering ideas and correcting structures in the absence of a possible feedback which could help the writer to shape his message and to re-orient it towards what might be a more plausible product.

Writing is a heavy process particularly for novice students who face various kinds of difficulties, extensively described by recent research (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1982; Jamshidnejad, 2011) as mainly related to the teaching methodology, the writer's linguistic competence, the topic, and the reader. That is, to produce a written text, the writers need to use strategies of knowledge integration as well as creating unique combinations and links between his her prior knowledge and the new topic. If to this situation we add the lack of a constructive criticism that could help the students use better structures and linking words to make of his written task a comprehensive piece of language, the writing task becomes a *dangerous and unattractive* experience that no novice student would like to go through.

Other aspects that make writing problematic are:

- The rigidity of the writing genres.
- The teaching methodology in which writing is separated from other school subjects (Boscolo, Del Favero and Borghetto, 2007).
- The use of writing as a rhetorical exercise and evaluation tool to assess the student's linguistic competence.
- The difficulties of applying the conventions governing the use of the visual communicative devices in the written material (better known as punctuation), which the students normally use to give a reliable form to their performance rather than to emphasize meaning or to clarify ideas.

Bowen, Madsen and Hilferty (1991) recognize the difficulty of the writing task and stress the differences between writing and speaking by explaining that writing

is not only speech jotted down on paper, it is “more an individual effort than speaking, while at the same time more rule-bound and, therefore, more error-prone” (252).

Writing is subject to different intervening variables that affect the performance of the writer and the selection of his ideas and words depending on the type of readers s/he is supposed to address, his/her linguistic competence, his/her attitude towards the target language and the topic of the task, the degree of motivation and his/her knowledge of the target language (TL) culture.

From all the aforementioned information about writing we can conclude that being a good writer and overcoming the previously mentioned writing problems imply combining a mastery of different abilities as Cox listed:

- An increasing control over the structure and organization of different types of texts.
- A growing ability to handle complex or demanding subject matter.
- A widening range of syntactic structures and an expanding vocabulary.
- A growing capacity to write independently and at length.
- An increasing proficiency in re-reading and revising or redrafting the text, taking into account the needs of the audience.
- Developing ability to reflect on and talk about the writing (1994: 175-176).

All these abilities can be developed through rigorous practice and effective instructional strategies that pave the way for the student to get in touch with the writing skill by evaluating his/her written performance as “not good or bad itself, but as it succeeds or fails in getting the response intended” (Mc Crimmon, 1973: 7) in a specific context.

## **2. Speaking in Lingua Franca**

Speaking is perceived as the use of a sequence of words to express a specific notion taking into consideration the rules of the target language. It is generally considered as the most important part of communication, without neglecting the value of the act of listening in making any communicative situation a successful

one. Developing the learners' speaking skill has become fundamental in language teaching since mastering a language includes improving the four basic skills as mentioned in *the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (understanding "listening and reading" speaking "spoken interaction and spoken production" and writing) (CEFR, 2001). Although teaching the spoken form has been put aside during most of the language teaching history, it is recently regarded as an accepted and desired objective in the field of language teaching. Actually, speaking is no longer ". . . the Cinderella of the language modes . . ." (Howe, 1994: 144) since we are in the era of teaching languages as a whole taking into consideration the needs of the learners and adapting the objectives to the teaching context. Speaking can be divided into "various dimensions of different speaking events in order to describe different speaking genres" (Harmer 2010: 343) like interactive, non-interactive, planned, unplanned transactional (focusing on the exchange of information) and interpersonal types (serving to establish and maintain social relations). These genres have different functions and uses which normally need a diversity of teaching methods in order to deal with each genre appropriately and to cope with the different assumptions that language users have.

### **2.1. Speaking vs. Writing**

Writing has always been defined as a secondary system that visualizes the spoken language and records it in an everlasting tangible form. However, early research on linguistics has focused on the writing form as the most important part of the language to be studied and deeply analyzed in an attempt to grasp the systematic principles underlying both the use and the usage of languages. This bewildering situation that has given written language a social priority over the spoken one is owed to the fact that languages with both spoken and written forms have been considered less powerful than the ones with spoken form only (Atkinson, 2003; Badger, 2000; Boscolo, 2007; Householder, 1971) to the extent that the spoken form has rarely been studied and its features have not been recognized. Meanwhile, since the beginning of the twentieth century, the field of linguistics has endeavored to investigate and examine methodically the spoken performance of both native and non-native speakers, which balances the biased comparison between spoken and written forms of languages. The two types of language

embodiments are, finally, considered in complementary distribution where one code is found in a particular environment and the other one is expected in other contexts. This indicates that the two superficially different elements are in fact the same linguistic unit at a deeper level and that language users have the potentiality to select a particular code in explicit milieus, and that such a choice of the medium is likely to have particular implications (Brown and Yule, 1983; Hakdins, Lewis and Budden, 2011; Jamshidnejad, 2011).

At this level it seems important to make a comparison between speaking and writing, as different styles of discourse, to point the differences and the similarities that make a genre more suitable than the other in certain circumstances. Still, both speaking and writing have a great deal in common such as “propositional content, actional intent, modality, stylistic variation and others” (Sindermann and Horsella, 1989: 438). There are also other factors that differentiate speech and writing in terms of nature, function, and form.

## **2.2. Natural Differences**

Each discourse type has innate advantages related to its nature. Speaking has less formal restrictions and is produced spontaneously in real time. It gives the speaker a great range of expressive tools apart from the linguistic utterances such as intonation, stress and gestures, facial expressions and body language that simplifies the act of conveying an oral message. Moreover, the interaction that the speaker is likely to receive during his speech, which can be verbal or non-verbal, guides towards the possible adaptations of his/her speech to successfully transmit the target information. There is also far greater pressure for written accuracy than there is for accuracy in speaking (Harmer, 2010). Such advantages are not met by the writer, yet we cannot deny that written language exhibits other prestigious characteristics such as “gains over real time, as learner can go back in the text beyond the limits of short term memory” (Sindermann and Horsella, 1989: 438). The written form has always been seen as a more accurate and formal permanent manner of recording information with no limitation on time. It is a highly organized code that requires greater clarity through the use of grammatical and stylistic techniques for signposting and relating the ideas for the message to be deciphered and analyzed at any time.

Speech does not benefit from this advantage of being heard and scrutinized outside its context, except in cases where the spoken performance has been recorded for research or investigation purposes. Thus, the spoken code is highly related to the context in which it is produced and when taken out of this stage it may look absurd or even meaningless since it might lose a great part of its meaning that is normally conveyed through non-verbal language. On the contrary of the written form that can be always registered and similar, the spoken form throughout time becomes very susceptible to transmission of errors and misunderstandings in view of the fact that it is always difficult to remember and transmit the oral message exactly as it was produced for the first time.

Perhaps the most important difference between written and spoken forms is that “. . . there is a greater need for logical organization in a piece of writing than there is in a conversation, for the reader has to understand what has been written without asking for clarification or relying on the writer’s tone of voice or expression” (Harmer, 2010: 48). Additionally, there are the twin problems of spelling and writing which make the written form more demanding as well as more prestigious than the spoken one. Research on linguistics, discourse analysis and corpus analysis has recently revealed a great deal about how the spoken discourse differs from the written one in terms of purposes: “in speaking and listening we tend to be getting something done, exploring ideas, working out some of the word, or simply being together. In writing we may be creating a record; committing events or moments to paper” (Jones, 1996: 12).

In fact, although written and spoken codes have much in common, they remain different but complementary, and they prove to be related both developmentally and theoretically. Hence, “spoken language tends to be informal, spontaneous and interactive . . . written language tends to be formal, edited and non-interactive” (Cox, 1994: 170). Still, they have always been essential in the development of the language users’ skills and in the community’s linguistic maturing.

### **2.3. Functional Differences**

There has recently been a huge increase in written communication because of the advent and popularity of e-mail, web forums, internet messenger services and text messaging (Scrivener, 2005: 192). This new kind of *writing* overlapped the rules of

writing and that of speaking since it has its own rules and rituals imposed by the need to write quickly within a limited number of words. This new type of communication in many cases is not considered as writing since it counts with symbols and forms that can substitute the gestures and body movements usually used in spoken language.

Therefore, we might question to what extent this new way of interaction is *writing* and the importance of other types of the written form, that are completely distinct from speech in our daily life. Writing can be generally divided into the formal pieces of language that we create inside and outside the classroom. It has different functions which go from public to personal purposes, from literary, expository functions that can be academic, legal or journalistic, to straight informative functions that require an interlocutor, up to the most personal recording functions (appointments, form-fillings, lectures, presentations, etc.) Brown and Yule (1983) described the written language as the best way to record, store and transmit messages and the spoken language as a code with a unique function of transmitting messages.

Moreover, both the spoken and the written forms of language have different functions in different situations depending on the purposes, styles, registers, structures and eventually different conventions to organize the information. The used code is always to respect certain dimensions and characteristics imposed by the general context and to be as Langford explained:

. . . adjusted in various ways according to what specific purposes they have, what particular people they are attempting to communicate with, in what capacity they see themselves as communicating, and what particular circumstances seem relevant at the time and in the situation the attempted communication is taking place (1994: 13).

Indeed, spoken and written languages are strongly listener or reader-oriented which assigns a different function to each of the two codes depending on the objectives of the speaker or writer and on the context in which each form is produced and received. Both speakers and writers tend to have a great amount of shared background knowledge with their audience, although the speakers generally share more information about the topic and the context of use that

includes listener timing expectations and attitudes. Therefore, a great part of oral communication is non-verbal and the message is, inside its original context, successfully conveyed. The writer on the contrary should resort to explanations and contextualization of his message to avoid any possible confusion.

Many people actually do less writing than speaking in our day-to-day life. But still the written form is the most prestigious way in formal context, and its functions are wider than the spoken medium.

#### **2.4. Differences in Form**

The differences in form between spoken and written codes are likely to be embodied in the grammatical structures which are normally analyzed as the result of different functions and restrictions of each medium. Brown and Yule described writing as:

A more elaborated linguistic system characterized by the use of complex rather than simple clauses, a greater variety of clause type, more specific vocabulary, a higher frequency of complex verb phrases and tenses, and a greater variety of devices for expressing such syntactic processes as relativization, normalization and complementization (1983: 101).

Unexpectedly, research has shed considerable light on the complexity of the spoken discourse defining some of its features as cited below:

- Conjoined short phrases and clauses.
- Employs more vague or generic words than written Language.
- Employs fixed phrases fillers and hesitation markers.
- Contains slips and errors reflecting on-line processing
- Involves reciprocity.
- Shows variation between formal and casual speech.

(Luoma, 2004: 1).

Speech is normally undemanding and informal (except highly literate public oratory or political speeches), which indicates the use of unsophisticated vocabulary and incomplete sentences since we usually speak in familiar contexts and about informal topics. In other words, the spoken medium is a field in which the speaker feels more comfortable in using his/her limited vocabulary and grammatical rules; hence, "most spoken language consists of parasyntactic phrases



which are marked as related to each other, not so much by the syntax as by the way the speaker says them using pausing, rhythm and intonation” (Brown and Yule, 1983: 4). Then, the spoken performance is an oral text with less complicated vocabulary, simple syntax and less contextualizing information than the written medium.

### **2.5. The Spoken Form in the Classroom**

Most teachers feel reluctant when the subject to teach is spoken language as it seems problematic to decide on a specific spoken variety, on the type of structures, on the nature of the spoken resources, on the communicative situation to make the input meaningful to the learners, and then, on the functions the students would be interested in giving to the learnt subject-matter. Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information and that needs a great deal of practice and dedication to be fulfilled successfully. All the aforementioned characteristics of the spoken language make it essential for the learners to know how to produce grammatical structures, pronunciation and vocabulary, but also they are expected to understand when, why and in what ways to produce the language (Florez, 1999). It is difficult for teachers to control the continuous changes in the spoken form, if compared to the written one, is lately experimenting because of the social, political and economic movements. These changes affect greatly the “international languages” or what we normally call “Lingua Franca” as a medium of interaction between communities and the functions the spoken form may have in explicit contexts.

The recent trends in language teaching focus on bringing the outside world into the classroom, and on selecting adequate materials and activities that can satisfy the needs of the learners, who highly influence the teachers’ objectives and methodology. However, it is also strongly believed that the general context of teaching second or foreign languages can be fused into the teaching of languages to speakers of other languages in general as Harmer (2010) explains: “With the picture shifting like this, it makes sense to blur the distinction and say, instead, that whatever situation we are in, we are teaching ESOL (English to speakers of other languages)” (20). By this argument we are not claiming that the other components of the teaching contexts are not as equally important as the students

are, but we are arguing the fact that the starting point of any act of teaching should always be the students, for it to be successful.

## **2.6. Teaching Speaking in a Lingua Franca**

Recently, studies on language teaching and learning are introducing a new notion based on what in sociolinguistics is defined as “Lingua Franca”. This term, which was first recorded in English in 1678, can be defined as a mixed language composed mostly (80%) of Italian with a broad vocabulary drawn from Turkish, French, Greek, Arabic, Portuguese and Spanish. It was in use throughout the Eastern Mediterranean as the language of commerce and diplomacy in and around the Renaissance era. At that time, Italian speakers dominated seaborne commerce in the port cities of the Ottoman Empire. Franca is the Italian word for Frankish. Its usage in the term Lingua Franca originated from its meaning in Arabic and Greek, dating from before the Crusades and during the middle ages, whereby all Western Europeans were called “Franks” or Faranji in Arabic and Phrankoi in Greek during the times of the late Eastern Roman Empire. Indeed, any language that goes beyond the boundaries of its original community and works as a means of communication between communities that have different mother tongues can be described as a Lingua Franca.

Thus, English today is perfectly considered a Lingua Franca or a global language which includes numerous varieties suggested not only by its native speakers, but also created by its non-native speakers, who introduced different “world Englishes” that should be taken into account at the time of selecting a variety to be offered to our students. There is no longer a limited native speaker model to follow, but a high and low proficiency level of speakers of English all over the world that is based on effective communicative skills as a rule to judge speakers’ proficiency. Hence, the kind of English we select as teachers should be the one that satisfies the needs and the aims of our teaching context, as the contexts are unlimited and the “Englishes” are numerous. During this new era of ELF that includes all the existing “Englishes” (EFL, ESL, EAP, ESP, ESOL . . .), accuracy has been a controversial concept that causes intellectual conflicts between those who focus on fluency as the basic competence, and those who stand against that model

of teaching, considering it inappropriate for language learning purposes. To sum up, teaching speaking is a vast ground of choices that can be accommodated to any purpose, and the teachers' responsibility is either to select the adequate variety which fits the needs of his/her students, or to show them the "pluricentricity" as a way of giving them the opportunity to recognize the different kinds of English so as to form a general background knowledge, which may allow them to be effective users of English in different contexts. English is considered international and so should be the teaching of this language as an international process that can be adapted to any context to cope with the needs of their users, avoiding all the boundaries (Harmer, 2010: 21-22).

In fact, as Des Fountain claimed when he quoted a thirteen year old student's statement, the teaching/learning process is more productive if there is an opportunity of interaction inside the classroom and a certain level of interrelatedness between speech and learning. As the student explains, "you learn a lot more if you can talk and communicate and discuss things with people rather than a teacher standing in front of you and drumming information into you" (1994: 55).

While teaching/learning speaking both students and teachers deal with a tricky subject matter that needs specific resources, materials and activities. Consequently, not all teachers succeed in choosing adequate activities and methodologies that can match the needs and capacities of a whole class since, as Johnson (1994) thinks, it is impossible to determine beforehand how students can perform orally in a given situation. Following the same stream, he stated that "we may have general expectations of them, but their talk may follow totally different but still relevant paths and patterns" (64).

Eventually, due to the actual standardization of academic practices and proficiency levels across the European countries, through educational policies and projects (Erasmus Exchanges, The Bologna Accords, The context and Language Integrated Learning, the European Portfolio, The Comenius and The Socrates program. See Appendix 1 for more information), learning languages, especially English, has been converted into a major necessity. Besides, learners express that their need to develop their speaking skills is harder to improve when compared to

writing skills because of the limited opportunities of practicing communication inside the classroom. The spoken form is still a problematic area that requires more research and studies to decode the systematic characteristics of this competence for both learners and teachers to be able to deal with it by providing the best possible conditions.

Speaking is a complicated multi-faceted skill since the learner's oral performance can be conditioned by a variety of factors like the interlocutor, the topic, the timing, the degree of motivation, the speaker's personality and proficiency level together with a long list of other cultural and social factors. These factors have been studied in detail by researchers in fields such as discourse analysis (Faerch and Kasper, 1986; Tarone, 1981), speech processing (Dell, 1986; Levelt, 1989), language learner strategies (Cohen, 1998; Cohen and Macaro, 2007; Nakatani, 2010; Nakatani and Goh; 2007) and communication strategies (Alwi and Adams, 2009; Ataollah, 2010; Bailey, 2010; Bialystock, 1983; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Jidong, 2011; Littlemore, 2001; Tarone, 1984). Therefore, all the aforementioned intervening variables, if summed to the organizational difficulties, the syllabus constraints and the students' reluctance to participate in oral activities, could justify the avoidance of teaching/learning of the spoken form inside the classroom.

### **3. Defining Communicative Competence**

Communicative competence can be defined as the ability to interact effectively using verbal and non-verbal means of negotiation. Spitzberg (1988) defined communicative competence as "the ability to interact well with others" (p.68). He added, "... the term 'well' refers to accuracy, clarity, comprehensibility, coherence, expertise, effectiveness and appropriateness" (p. 68). Communicative competence, then, includes linguistic and sociocultural knowledge that are interdependent and essential for the language users to build or exchange meaning since "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes, 1972: 278), and "there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar" (Canale and Swain, 1980: 89).

This is not the case in Chomsky's generative-transformational theory (1965) of competence/performance that describes competence as the shared knowledge of

the ideal speaker-listener set in a completely homogenous speech community. This enables the language user to produce and understand an infinite set of sentences out of a finite set of rules. This view was criticized by Hymes (1972) as being limited to linguistic knowledge in production and understanding, since according to him it “carries to its perfection the desire to deal in practice only with what is internal to language, yet to find in that internality that in theory is of the widest or deepest human significant” (Hymes, 1972: 269). For Hymes, Chomsky’s theory is a “Garden of Eden” description of language behavior that neglects the role of sociocultural factors and personal variables in the use of language, because according to Hymes, who based his theory on Labov’s investigations, the social factors interfere not only in the external performance but also in the inner competence. That is, the sociocultural rules affect the use of the whole linguistic system and oblige language users to opt for certain grammatical, semantic or syntactic rules rather than others in a determined communicative situation.

Hymes’ communicative competence (1972) defined as sociocultural knowledge and Chomsky’s dichotomy are both interrelated parts of the communicative competence that involves “knowing not only the language code, but also what to say, to whom and how to say it appropriately in a given situation” (Saville-Troike, 1982:22) which means that communicative competence is a combination of cognitive and behavioral perspectives to achieve a communicative goal.

A more detailed model of defining communicative competence is that of Canale and Swain (1980) in which they stress the interaction of social context, grammar and meaning. They consider that Hymes’ sociolinguistic model of communicative competence is interesting, but it cannot stand alone to define the communicative competence. Therefore; as previously mentioned, Canale and Swaine claim that both the grammatical competence and the sociolinguistic competence are complementary and compulsory in the study of communicative competence. Moreover, integrative theories like the one by Widdowson (1978); Canale and Swaine (1980) believe that the role of the sociolinguistic factors is overemphasized in the use and selection of the grammatical forms. It also gives a consideration to the importance of the level of complexity of those grammatical forms in the decision of the speaker in using some forms rather than the others. Eventually,

according to them what should occur at some point prior to the selection of the semantic, grammatical and social behavior varieties is the analysis of the grammatical forms for the fulfillment of the following criteria: grammatical complexity; transparency with respect to the communicative function of the sentence; generalizability to other communicative functions; the role of a given form in facilitating acquisition of another form; acceptability in terms of perceptual strategies; and the degree of markedness in terms of social geographical dialects (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Finally, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) introduced a more detailed definition of communicative competence and suggested a framework that includes the strategic competence, which they consider that no theory had mentioned before. So, for them, communicative competence involves four essential parts which are: grammatical competence (knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology); sociolinguistic competence (appropriateness that includes knowledge of sociolinguistic rules of use and rules of discourse including the use of speech markers; address forms, and the appropriate use of vocabulary in a specific communicative situation); discourse competence (knowing how to use and respond to speech acts, and how to organize or recognize the unity of an oral or written message); and strategic competence (verbal or non-verbal) strategies the speakers use to avoid communicative breakdowns that may be the result of performance variables or limited proficiency level (including false starts, hesitations and other performance factors, avoiding grammatical forms that have not been fully mastered, and keeping the communicative channel open).

When Bachman (1990) took his turn, he developed the new component of communicative competence introduced by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). He presented a different model of communicative competence that he divided into language competence and pragmatic competence:

1. Language competence: a set of specific knowledge components that are utilized in communication via language and that include:
  - Organizational competence: vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology and graphology.

- Textual competence: cohesion and rhetorical organization.

Bachman based his definition of pragmatic competence on Van Dijk's (1977) description of pragmatics to explain the relationship between language users and the context of communication:

The pragmatics must be assigned an empirical domain consisting of conventional rules of language and manifestation of these in the production and the interpretation of utterances. In particular, it should make an independent contribution to the analysis of the conditions that make utterances acceptable in some situation for speakers of the language (Van Dijk, 1977: 189-90).

## 2. Pragmatic competence:

- Illocutionary competence: ideational, manipulative, heuristic and imaginative functions.
- Sociolinguistic competence: sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, differences in register, naturalness, and the ability to interpret cultural differences and figures of speech.

Thus, pragmatics is concerned with the relationship between the utterances and the act of speech that the speakers/writers tend to express through these utterances.

In his communicative language framework Bachman divided Canale and Swain's "discourse competence" into "illocutionary competence" and "sociolinguistic competence" which he relates to each other through "strategic competence" defined as:

. . . the capacity that relates language competence or knowledge of language, to the language user's knowledge structures and the features of the context in which communication takes place. Strategic competence performs assessment, planning and execution functions in determining the most effective means of achieving a communicative goal (Bachman, 1990: 108).

Although the aforementioned theoretical models of communicative competence define the strategic competence in different ways, they all agree on the importance of this competence for language users.

All the previous communicative language theories are useful in guiding and forming empirical research in language teaching. The teaching of languages has seen a shift of focus from a model that considered language as structure to a new model that teaches language as a functional context embedded with meaning. As Bachman (1990) concluded that:

What has emerged from these ideas is an expanded conception of language proficiency whose distinguishing characteristic is its recognition of the importance of context beyond the sentence to the appropriate use of language. This context includes both the discourse, of which individual utterances and sentences are part, and the sociolinguistic situation which governs, to a large extent, the nature of that discourse, in both form and function (1990: 82-83).

Communicative language teaching is, then, a model that approaches language learning objectively and analytically through the teaching of structural, functional and sociocultural aspects of the language. It is an approach that offers the learners the opportunities to live the language as a personal experience through direct exposure to a real contextualized target language (Stern, 1981). All these rules of communicative language teaching were contemplated in Rivers' (1972) communicative theoretical framework in which she distinguished between "skill getting" and "skill using" activities that the teachers should offer to language learners. These activities guide them first to the skills that form the communicative ability, and then provide them with the opportunities to practice these skills separately. That is, the learners are offered the possibility to improve their communicative competence in stages, focusing on each skill at a time. As Rivers pointed out, "the students must learn to articulate acceptably and construct comprehensible language sequences by rapid associations of learned elements" (1972: 71).

To conclude, communicative language teaching should provide interactive practice through spontaneous and genuine use of the target language. Rivers' (1973) previously mentioned framework was later on expanded by the researcher to explain that the contact and use of language in its natural context should be organized and presented taking into consideration the learners personality and cultural background. This ensures that the teaching act gives them the freedom to



perform creatively and to be themselves at all times with the object of weaning “our students early from dependence on direction . . . , thus preparing them psychologically for the uninhibited autonomy of the confident language-users” (Rivers, 1973: 34).

The anchor of communicative language teaching should be the belief that the major aim is to enable the student to evaluate his/her ability to understand and express him/herself using the target language appropriately in his own way without getting absorbed by the target language culture.

#### **4. Defining and Classifying Communication Strategies**

In second language acquisition, defining CSs is similar to defining the strategic use of IL system for communication. The FL learner resorts to CSs only when he finds difficulties in attaining a specific communicative goal through his IL system. Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, following the psycholinguistic approach to defining CSs, referred to this phenomenon as production strategies that do not include IL comprehension, and defined it as a “. . . systematic attempt by the learner to express meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate target language rules have not been formed.” (1983: 5). Second language communication strategies have been regarded by CSs researchers as the procedures used because of IL deficiencies (Bialystok, 1990; Connor, 2002; Dörnyei and Scott, 1997; Lewis, 2011; Nakatani 2010; Tarone, 1977). CSs were mostly described as a non-native behavior or incorrect linguistic performance to overcome the obstacles or crises that occur either when their communicative ends outrun their communicative means (Corder, 1983; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Lewis, 2011; Paribakht, 1985), or when they have difficulties in verbalizing a mental plan as a result of a linguistic deficiency (Ataollah, 2010; Cook, 1993; Faerch and Kasper, 1984; Mariani, 2007; Tarone, 1981; Váradi, 1973). Following the same stream, Dörnyei and Scott defined CSs as “the mismatch between L2 speakers’ linguistic resources and communicative intentions (which) leads to a number of systematic language phenomenon whose main function is to handle difficulties or breakdowns in communication” (1997: 174). A wider definition which includes all types of CSs, and the one that will be adopted throughout this paper, was suggested by the interactionalists Tarone, Cohen, and Dumas who defined CSs as both the

production and the comprehension of the TL. They state that “Communication strategies . . . a systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed” (1983: 5).

However, there is still controversy surrounding the definition or identification of CSs as opposed to certain types of strategies like learning and production strategies. From this background of different definitions and approaches we can conclude that no conclusive definition of this term can be provided due to the various terminologies. (For a clear comparison of the most important definitions of CSs including the ones cited above see Appendix 2).

### **5. Communication Strategies vs. Language Learning Strategies**

One of the principle confusions in the field of SLA research is the distinction between CSs and LLSs. Some authors regard them as synonymous as a result of the identical data used in investigating both terms (utterances of IL speakers). The degree of difficulty to distinguish those two interrelated terms is reflected in Corder’s explanation:

This is particularly the case with features of an utterance which bears a resemblance to features of the speaker’s mother tongue. They may be regular characteristics of his language at the time of study, in which case they could be supposed to result from the Interlanguage grammar which he has created himself, and are therefore the product of a strategy of learning (1983: 19).

On one hand, CSs are considered as the product of a strategy of learning, and one might argue that CSs may hurdle acquisition and help the learner develop skills to compensate for his/her linguistic deficiencies (Ellis, 2000). Others like Tarone propose a contrasting point of view and conclude that “Learning may result from the use of a communication strategy . . .” (1980: 420).

On the other hand, LLSs that were first described and defined in the 1970’s in studies on good learners by (Rubin, 1987; Wong-Fillmore, 1979). These studies presented LLSs as an act of processing input to develop linguistic knowledge, and as techniques or devices that learners may use to acquire language (Rubin, 1987). Hardly ever contrasted with communication strategies, learning strategies were

introduced to the field of language learning and teaching as the conscious, intentional individual behaviors or skills that distinguish learners and which can be learnt and improved since as Weinstein, Husman and Dierking explained “learning strategies include any thoughts, behaviors, beliefs or emotions that facilitate the acquisition, understanding or later transfer of new knowledge and skills” (2000: 727).

Other researchers (Tarone, 1977; Váradi, 1973) looked upon CSs from a different perspective, defining them as conscious attempts to convey the learner’s ideas when his interlanguage fails to do so. This explains that the only way to distinguish CSs from LLSs is to describe them in terms of function. That is, language learning strategies are those used to achieve learning, and communication strategies are the ones that aim at avoiding communicative breakdowns (Tarone, 1984). Still, the distinction between the two terms is not clear; the difference cannot be explained adequately; and there is little consensus in the literature concerning the relationship between CSs and LLSs. As Littlewood holds “(One issue) about which we have no precise knowledge is the nature of the relationship between CSs and learning” (1984: 40) because of the complexity and the ambiguity of the learning process.

From all these competing definitions we can conclude that the identification of CSs, as opposed to LLSs, may be speculative since no empirical investigation has proved to get to the clear-cut criteria that define CSs with respect to LLSs.

## **6. Communication Strategies and Communicative Competence**

Tarone defined CSs as “. . . a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (1981: 285). According to her, meaning structures include linguistic and sociolinguistic structures, and CSs do not make up part of the speaker’s linguistic knowledge, but they belong to his use of the target language. That is, communication strategies are considered to make up part of the communicative competence, which includes other three different components (grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence). They are believed to be put together through the strategic competence that is seen as the capacity that relates language

competence, or knowledge of language, to the language user's knowledge structures and the features of the context in which communication takes place. As Bachman explains: "Strategic competence performs assessment, planning and execution and functions in determining the most effective means of achieving a communicative goal" (1990: 107).

This concept raises the question about the relationship between CSs and communicative competence, and encourages researchers to explore the field of communicative strategies and communicative competence that were studied to determine:

- To what extent the learners' utterances in the target language are affected by the native language (Taylor, 1975).
- The procedures used to express concepts for which TL words are unknown (Tarone, 1977).
- The manner in which TL lexicon is simplified (Bialystok and Frohlich, 1980; Blum-Kulka and Levenston, 1983).

Communicative competence can be defined as the ability to use the linguistic system appropriately in a specific situation using linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980). The difference between sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence is that in the first one the speaker respects the norms of the speech community with whom he is communicating; whereas, the second enables him to use certain strategies to compensate for his lack of knowledge.

The notion of strategic competence was recognized by an influential area of language education, The Council of Europe's CEFR (2001). It defines some of the student's abilities in using foreign languages and among these abilities it tackles the communicative competence, which is described as being composed of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence. Interestingly, strategic competence highly underpins the three competences as seen in the following extract of the CEFR:

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and social

agents develop a range of competence. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences (CEFR, 2001: 10).

This is a wider sense of describing strategies than the linguistic and the communicative models that consider communicative strategies as metacognitive functions that include planning, monitoring and evaluating both productive and receptive acts.

### **7. Communication Strategies a Process or a Plan**

*Strategies* and *processes* were far from being distinguished because at the beginning they had been used arbitrarily due to their similarities that integrated one in the definition of the other, and, thus, made identification difficult. To quote Blum and Levenston (1978) "Simplification is understood as the act of simplifying, the strategy of communication, the process whereby specific meanings are communicated on specific occasions" (43). Later on, Bialystok (1983) distinguished *strategies* from *processes* by stating that *processes* are obligatory; whereas, *strategies* are optional. *Processes* in SL research are regarded as the underlying cognitive principles that are scrutinized when studying *strategies*. Nonetheless, these criteria still do not present a clear-cut line between *strategies* and *processes* since they have no objective ground that assures their validity. Thus, *strategies* and *processes* are two phenomena whose categorical separation is a difficult task that may even seem impossible in some cases. Wagner (1983) and Bialystok (1983), use the two terms interchangeably due to the "obfuscation in the literature between strategies and processes" (Bialystok, 1983: 100).

However, if *process* as an indispensable element in IL is to be defined separately, the definition will be less obscure, and its use will be more specific. In this sense the *process* can be defined as a dynamic sequence of different states of an object or system, which means that a *process* is every continuing development that results on changes.

Meanwhile, when *strategies* were dealt with in the field of CSs they underwent a change to be characterized as a subclass of plans, which are entities that control the order in which a sequence of operations is to be performed. In this general sense, *strategies* are no longer treated as *processes*, but rather as plans “for solving what to the individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular goal” (Faerch and Kasper, 1980: 60). According to the authors a strategy should satisfy two criteria to be regarded as part of the planning phase to reach the communicative goal: problem-orientedness and consciousness.

## **8. Criteria for Identifying Communication Strategies**

### **8.1. Problem-orientedness and Consciousness**

One of the major defining criteria of CSs used in many approaches is the *problem-orientedness* referring to the fact that CSs occur when a goal presents itself to be problematic. This results in the language user’s recognition of his/her linguistic insufficiencies and his/her consequent need to expand his/her knowledge to avoid communicative breakdowns (Klaus and Buhr, 1976: 974). Following the same stream, Bialystok (1983) named *problem-orientedness* as a ‘problematicity’ in communication that raises the need for CSs to reach a specific goal. So far, this theoretical definition of *problem-orientedness* as a criterion to classify and identify CSs, has been extended by many researchers to include three different types of communicative problems cited by Dörnyei and Scott (1997), in an attempt to explain what has been known in the field as resource deficit:

- Own-performance problems: the language user notices that his/her knowledge is to some degree incorrect and resorts to “self-repair, self-rephrasing and self-editing mechanisms” (Dörnyei and Scott, 1997:183).
- Other-performance problem: the language user realizes that the input of his/her interlocutor is incorrect and consequently makes use of his/her strategies to negotiate meaning.
- Processing time pressure: using strategies to gain time like gap-fillers, hesitation and repetition, especially, when the target language is SL/FL.

On the basis of these definitions, we can conclude that CSs are *problem-orientedness* tactics that the language user selects deliberately to solve his/her communicative problem. This was recognized by Faerch and Kasper, who commented that CSs are “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” (1983: 36). This refers us to the second criterion in defining CSs which is a state of *consciousness* that the language user undergoes while trying to overcome his/her communicative *problematicity*. That is, CSs are conceptualized as problem-solving devices whose conscious use is directed towards counteracting the imbalance between ends and means (Faerch and Kasper, 1983, 1984; Kellerman, Poulisse and Amerlaan, 1997).

For many scholars, *consciousness* is not a prerequisite criterion in identifying strategies since it has always been dealt with as a relative characteristic that depends on “individual and situation variables as well as on the linguistic material and the psychological procedures” (Faerch and Kasper, 1983: 47).

However, the relationship between *consciousness* and *problem-orientedness* is still a controversial topic as many researchers find it difficult to decide whether *consciousness* means that “the individual is conscious of having a problem, or that he consciously uses certain plans to solve this problem” (Poulisse, 1990: 19). Another problematic issue concerning consciousness in relation to CSs is the degree of the user’s *consciousness*, especially, when it comes to automatized strategies as a result of frequent use (Faerch and Kasper, 1980; Gass and Selinker, 1994; Lewis, 2011; Sharwood Smith, 1979; Tarone, 1977).

Researchers in the field tend to discuss CSs from a psychological perspective (Bialystok, 1990; Cohen, 1998; Dörnyei and Scott, 1997; Faerch and Kasper, 1983, 1984; Gass and Selinker, 1994; Kumaravadivelu, 1988; Selinker, 1972; Weimann and Daly, 1994) and provide their views on the issue. Palmberg (1979) addresses the idea that language learners automatically resort to the usage of interlanguage strategies genetically, and speak a SL/FL as fluently as a native speaker without resorting to high level of *consciousness*.

According to Faerch and Kasper consciousness is a criterion of strategies and is strongly involved in their application since, for them, “plan criteria of ‘problem-orientedness’ and ‘consciousness’ are relevant criteria as seen from the perspective of foreign language (FL) learning and teaching” (1983: 2). However, Bialystok (1990) questions the ‘intentionality’ or ‘consciousness’ in strategy application because she believes that if the learner’s strategy application were intentional, then “there would be systematic relations between the use of specific communication strategies and specific conditions of the communicative situation” (1990: 5).

Different from most scholars in the field of CSs, Gass and Selinker (1994) argue that language learners apply interlanguage strategies automatically or subconsciously instead of using them intentionally. Weimann and Daly (1994) supported Gass and Selinker’s (1994) theory and asserted that some communication strategies “are overlearned and seem to drop from consciousness” (Weimann and Dulay, 1994: 109). That is, CSs may start as conscious tactics or plans but they normally become highly automatized after certain applications.

Concerning the same issue Dörnyei and Scott (1997) commented that “one can be conscious of a language problem, the intent/attempt to solve this problem, the repertoire of potentially applicable communication strategies, the way to a communication strategy, the use of a less-than-perfect stopgap device” (Dörnyei and Scott, 1997: 184). Later on, Cohen (1998) recognized that strategy application was a conscious process and defined CSs as “those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through storage, retention, recall, and application of information about the language” (1998: 4).

In sum, the bulk of theoretical and empirical studies in the field acknowledge that the application of CSs might be either conscious or sub-conscious, but still there is a confusion concerning the mental stage in which this consciousness takes place.



## **9. Communication Strategies in SLA Research**

It was Selinker (1972), with his paper "Interlanguage" who first drew attention to "Strategies of second language learning" and "Strategies of second language communication" as an inferable phenomenon in Interlanguage studies in an attempt to account for second language learners' errors. However, Váradi (1973), in his article on strategies of target language communication was the first researcher to investigate this phenomenon experimentally, to establish a model of IL communication, and to stress the interactional perspective of communication strategies involving native speakers' responses. Other studies have been proposed by Corder (1983) who defined CSs as ". . . the devices whereby he (the learner) exploits whatever linguistic knowledge he possesses to achieve his communicative ends" (15). Then there was the work of Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1983) which provided a framework of strategies analysis and restricted the term to become learner specific behavior by defining it as ". . . a systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed." (14). Later on, the fact that research into CSs should be based on genuine data (discourse) was highlighted by many other researchers who criticized the previous definition given by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1983), which implied that learners use CSs only in cases of emergency. They also commented that the list of CSs given by Váradi, 1973; Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1983 had only analyzed the product (CSs) but not the process. In other words, the new works stressed the fact that the identification of CSs was difficult because the studies did not take into account the form that the information took on before the CSs operated. Thus, IL research was seen as having regressed to the position of Error Analysis which studied the product to speculate about the casual process. Bialystok (1983), on her turn, presented a research on some factors in the selection and implementation of CSs in which she formed a definition of the best strategies (L2 based Ss which take account of the specific characteristics of the intended message), and the best strategy users (the ones who combine sufficient formal L2 proficiency with the flexibility in strategy selection). In the same article, the researcher went beyond the identification, classification, and description of CSs to a description of the conditions that make learners more likely to adopt a specific strategy, and

presented an important comparison of Ss effectiveness in conveying messages. Poulisse, Bougaert and Kellerman (1984) also provided an important reference by investigating some kinds of CSs that SL learners use to overcome problems of communication which resulted in a number of taxonomies of CSs classification and identification.

Hitherto, the stated studies do not present an advanced level of SLA research on CSs since they were afterwards criticized for having a narrow scope of investigation by focusing on description. Thus, research on CSs has to be developed by using a large variety of tasks with different items, and also by going beyond description to interpretation, prediction, and explanation of data. Consequently, with this view of developing CSs research, there has come the notion of controlling some factors that may affect the use of CSs by L2 learners, and the idea of taking those factors into consideration while analyzing the collected data as Kellerman (1979) has explained “. . . to achieve generalizability we would then have to determine the range and the nature of contextual variables that also play a role in the ultimate linguistic encoding of strategies” (Kellerman, 1979:37).

From this background, researchers' interest in the issue of CSs has grown and there are many studies concerned with how CSs can be acquired and developed by L2 users (Ellis, 2000; Taylor, 1975; Widdowson, 1978). There is also the possibility of transferring oral communication strategies to written texts and vice versa (Sindermann and Horsella, 1989).

## **10. Types of Data for Studying Communication Strategies in SLA Research**

There are different types of data to study CSs:

### A- Interactional data

- Classroom data: ordinary classroom interaction (teacher/students, and students/students).
- Interviews: face to face interviews.
- Phone or cyber conversations.

B- Textual data

- Written data, which is elicited through tasks where the subjects are required to write about a specific topic that will produce the required phenomenon.

C- Spoken data

- The data that the researcher elicits through interviews or conversational tasks. This type of data is normally an interactional one that includes introspection where subjects are required to explain why they used certain utterances or strategies, immediately after performing the tasks, to simplify the work of the analyst. However, according to some researchers, like Ellis (1994) introspection as a method of elicitation in IL research is difficult, and the difficulty is that of all observations of whatever kind. The only safeguard is in the final consensus of our farther knowledge about the topic in question, later views correcting earlier ones, until the harmony of consistent system is reached.

**11. Taxonomies of Communication Strategies:**

**Taxonomies of Communication Strategies by Dörnyei and Scott (1997: 196-197)**

**Table 1**

<b>Bialystok (1990)</b>	<b>Poullisse &amp; Scott (1995)</b>	<b>Nijmegen Group</b>	<b>Dörnyei &amp; Scott (1995)</b>
<b>BASED STRATEGIES</b>	<b>CONCEPTUAL STRATEGIES</b> Analytic Holistic	<b>SUBSTITUTION STRATEGIES</b>	<b>DIRECT STRATEGIES</b>
<b>CONTROL-BASED STRATEGIES</b>	<b>LINGUISTIC/CODE STRATEGIES</b> Morphological creativity Transfer	<b>SUBSTITUTION PLUS STRATEGIES</b>	<b>Resource deficit-related strategies</b> .Message abandonment .Message reduction .Message replacement .Circumlocution .Approximation .Use of all-purpose words .Word-coinage .Restructuring .Literal translation .Foreignizing .Code switching .Use of similar sounding words .Mumbling
		<b>RECONCEPTUALIZATION STRATEGIES</b>	

			<p>.Omission .Retrieval .Mime</p> <p>Own-performance problem-related strategies .Self-rephrasing .Self-repair</p> <p>Other-performance problem-related strategies .Other-repair</p> <p><b>INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES</b> Resource deficit-related strategies .Appeals for help</p> <p>Own-performance problem-related strategies .Comprehension check .Own-accuracy check</p> <p>Other-performance Problem-related strategies .Asking for repetition .Asking for clarification .Asking for confirmation .Guessing .Expressing non understanding .Interpretive summary .Responses</p> <p><b>INDIRECT STRATEGIES</b> Processing time pressure-related strategies .Use of fillers .Repetitions</p> <p>Own-performance problem-related strategies .Verbal strategy markers</p> <p>Other-performance Problem-related strategies .Feigning understanding</p>
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**Table 2**

<u>Tarone (1977)</u>	<u>Fearch &amp; Kasper (1983)</u>	<u>Bialystok (1983)</u>	<u>Paribakht (1985)</u>	<u>Willems (1987)</u>
AVOIDANCE	FORMAL REDUCTION	L1-BASED STRATEGIES	LINGUISTIC APPROACH	REDUCTION STRATEGIES
<b>Topic avoidance</b>	<b>Phonological</b>	<b>Language Switch</b>	<b>Semantic contiguity</b>	<b>Formal Reduction</b>
<b>Message abandonment</b>	<b>Morphological</b>	<b>Foreignizing</b>	<b>-Superordinate</b>	<b>-Phonological</b>
PARAPHRASE	<b>Syntactic</b>	<b>Transliteration</b>	<b>-Comparison</b>	<b>-Morphological</b>
<b>Aproximation</b>	<b>Lexical</b>	<b>L2-BAESD STRATEGIES</b>	<b>. Positive</b>	<b>-Lexical</b>
<b>Word coinage</b>	FUNCTIONAL REDUCTION	<b>Semantic Contiguity</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Functional reduction</b>
<b>Circumlocution</b>	REDUCTION	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analogy</b>	<b>-Message abandonment</b>
CONSCIOUS TRANSFER	<b>Actional red.</b>	<b>Word coinage</b>	<b>Synonymy</b>	<b>-Meaning Replacement</b>
<b>Literal</b>	<b>Modal red.</b>	NON-LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES	<b>. Negative</b>	<b>-Topic avoidance</b>
<b>Translation</b>	<b>Reduction of propositional content</b>		<b>Comparison</b>	
<b>Language switch</b>	<b>-Topic avoidance</b>		<b>Contrast &amp; Opposite</b>	
APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE	<b>-Message Abandonment</b>		<b>Antonymy</b>	
<b>MIME</b>	<b>-Meaning Replacement</b>		<b>Circumlocution</b>	
	ACHEIVEMENT STRATEGIES		<b>-Physical description</b>	ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGIES
	<b>Compensatory Strategies</b>		<b>.Size</b>	<b>Paralinguistic strategies</b>
	<b>-Code switching</b>		<b>.Shape</b>	<b>Interlingual strategies</b>
	<b>-Interlingual Transfer</b>		<b>.Color</b>	<b>Interlingual strategies</b>
	<b>-Inter Intralingual Transfer</b>		<b>.Material</b>	<b>Borrowing/code switching</b>
	<b>-IL based Strategies</b>		<b>-Constituent Features</b>	<b>-Literal Translation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Generalization</b></li> <li>• <b>Paraphrase</b></li> <li>• <b>Word coinage</b></li> <li>• <b>Restructuring</b></li> </ul>		<b>.Elaborated features</b>	<b>-Foreignizing</b>
	<b>-Cooperative strategies</b>		<b>-Locational property</b>	<b>Intralingual Strategies</b>
	<b>-Cooperative Strategies</b>		<b>-Historica property</b>	<b>-Approximation</b>
	<b>-Non-linguistic strategies</b>		<b>-Other features</b>	<b>-Word coinage</b>
	<b>-Retrieval strategies</b>		<b>-Functional</b>	
			<b>Description Metalinguistic</b>	
			<b>Metalinguistic Clues</b>	

			<p>CONTEXTUAL APPROACH</p> <p><b>Linguistic Context</b></p> <p><b>Use of L2 idioms of L1 idioms and proverbs</b></p> <p><b>Idiomatic transfer</b></p> <p>CONCEPTUAL APPROACH</p> <p><b>Demonstration</b></p> <p><b>Exemplification</b></p> <p><b>Metonymy</b></p> <p>MIME</p> <p><b>Replacing verbal output</b></p> <p><b>Accompanying Verbal output</b></p>	<p>-Paraphrase</p> <p>.Description</p> <p>.Circumlocution</p> <p>.Exemplification</p> <p>-Smurfing</p> <p>-Self-repair</p> <p>-Appeals for assistance</p> <p>.Explicit</p> <p>.Implicit</p> <p>.Checking Questions</p> <p>-Initiating repair</p>
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## Table 3

An addition of Problem Solving Mechanisms from Dörnyei & Kormos (1998):

<p><b>Problem-Solving Mechanisms</b></p> <p><b>RESOURCE-DEFICIT</b></p> <p><i>Lexical</i></p> <p>Message abandonment Message reduction Message replacement Code switching Approximation Use of all-purpose words Complete omission Foreignising Word coinage Literal translation Restructuring Circumlocution Semantic word coinage Direct appeal for help Indirect appeal for help</p> <p><i>Grammatical</i></p> <p>Grammatical substitution Grammatical reduction</p> <p><i>Phonological and Articulatory</i></p> <p>Retrieval -Tip-of-the-tongue phenomena Use of similar-sounding words Mumbling</p> <p><b>PROCESSING TIME</b></p> <p><b>PRESSURE</b></p> <p><i>Pauses</i></p> <p><i>Non-lexicalized pauses</i></p> <p>Unfilled pauses Umiming and erring Sound lengthening</p> <p><i>Lexicalized pauses</i></p> <p>Fillers</p> <p><i>Repetitions</i></p> <p>Self-repetition Other repetition</p> <p><b>OWN PERFORMANCE</b></p> <p><i>Self-correction</i></p> <p>Error repair Appropriacy repair Different repair Rephrasing repair</p> <p><i>Asking check questions</i></p> <p>Comprehension checks Own-accuracy checks</p> <p><b>OTHER PERFORMANCE</b></p> <p><i>Meaning Negotiation</i></p> <p>Asking for repetition Asking for clarification Expressing non-understanding Asking for confirmation Interpretative summary Guessing Other repair Feigning understanding</p>
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Based on the previous summary of the various taxonomies of CSs provided by Dörnyei and Scott (1997) we can conclude that the differences between the taxonomies in the field of CSs are only in terms of terminologies and classifications. All the definitions and categories of CSs differ only in their level of specification, in distinguishing between different types of the same strategy (Paribakht (1985) distinguishes between different kinds of circumlocution, as does Willems (1987) for paraphrase and Poulisse (1990) for reconceptualization, and in the approach they use: interactional or psycholinguistic focus on the speaker's role.

In sum, researchers on CSs can be generally divided into those who approach via taxonomies and those who base their research on a psychological approach. Scholars that use taxonomies tend to describe the forms used in the learner's L2 performance, and expand the categories of CSs to infer about the psychological processes that underline them. These studies directly encourage the teaching of CSs to improve the learners' communicative competence. Besides, the psychological approaches are opposed to teaching CSs because they consider them as cognitive processes that are explored through studying the learners' L2 performance.

The similarities between all the taxonomies in the field of CSs were summarized by Bialystok as follows:

. . . variety of taxonomies proposed in the literature differs primarily in terminology and overall categorizing principle rather in the substance of the specific strategies. If we ignore, then, differences in the structure of the taxonomies by abolishing the various overall categories, then a core group of specific strategies that appear consistently across the taxonomies clearly emerges (1990: 61).

## **12. Approaches to Defining Communication Strategies**

From all the aforementioned taxonomies, specialists distinguish between three major approaches: interactional, psycholinguistic and integrated approach (Dörnyei and Scott, 1997; Ellis, 2000; Faerch and Kasper, 1984; Nakatani and Goh, 2007).



### **12.1. Interactional Approach**

From a linguistic standpoint, strategies are described in terms of problem solving. The focus is on the CSs as a product that can be analyzed as a negotiated meaning in which both the speaker and his/her interlocutor participate effectively. Long (1983), identified two types of interactional strategies that provide a *comprehensible input* for SLA research: avoidance strategies (selecting salient topics, treating topic briefly or avoiding topics), and repairing strategies (clarification requests, confirmation checks and tolerating ambiguity). The latter were considered as more interesting in the teaching of CSs, and were dealt with as elements of discourse used as resource data to study the L2 learners' performance. The aim was to formulate rules of teaching that can push the learners to use comprehensible input in their communication.

Pica (1994) stresses the importance of CSs in promoting SLA. Learners obtain comprehensible input because the use of CSs makes the input more tangible for the interlocutor and easier to express for the speaker. It provides feedback that hints at the problems and helps the speaker modify his/her message adapting it to his/her interlocutor's interest and capacity.

The interactional approach within CSs research is clearly seen in Tarone's taxonomy of CSs where she defined them as "Tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communicative goal" (Tarone, 1980: 420). In this taxonomy CSs were divided into five main categories: Intra-language based, inter-language based, appeal for assistance, mime and avoidance. Tarone quoted Flyman to explain that CSs have got two different functions since "there are strategies intended to overcome the differences between the learner's and the native speaker's linguistic knowledge as well as strategies that are applied when there does not seem to be any solution to the problem" (Flyman, 1997:58).

Although some researchers such as Paribakht (1985) adopted Tarone's taxonomy to develop their own typologies, Tarone herself expressed the lack of generality in her taxonomy.

## 12.2. Psycholinguistic Approach

The psycholinguistic scholars were interested in the cognitive processes observed in L2 learners. They all dealt with CSs as internal mental plans that can be analyzed but that can never be taught because according to them teaching CSs is like teaching mental cognitive processes (Bialystok, 1990; Bialystok and Kellerman, 1987; Faerch and Kasper, 1980, 1983, 1984 and Poullisse, 1990, 1993). These specialists studied CSs as independent and isolated units of analysis paying no attention to the interactional context in which they are produced. CSs are analyzed as part of the learner's language and not as a product of meaning negotiation between the interlocutors; and they are identified and grouped according to their underlying mental processes.

Faerch and Kasper's framework of CSs (1983) described what happens in the mind of the learner during two main different phases of the speech production model: *planning* phase and *execution* phase. The CSs used during these phases were divided into two broad categories which are:

- *Reduction strategies* (that the learners use to avoid communicative problems and are divided into formal and functional reduction strategies. Formal reduction includes the reduction of the morphological, syntactical or lexical reduction of the communicative code, while functional reduction involves the reduction of the communicative goal.
- *Achievement strategies* (that the learners use to face the problem and to develop an alternative plan in order to achieve the original goal). Achievement strategies are divided into two sub classes which are compensatory and retrieval strategies. Compensatory strategies involve replacing the original plan with a strategic one (word coinage and code switching); whereas, retrieval strategies occur when the speaker retrieves the item required to achieve the original plan.

Later on, Bialystok (1983) in her taxonomy based on previous taxonomies especially that of Tarone (1977), discussed the importance of the source of information from which the strategy is derived in studying communication

strategies. In her taxonomy, she initially divided strategies into L1 based strategies (language switch, foreignizing and transliteration) and L2 based strategies (semantic congruity, description and word coinage). However, these were later redefined according to the distinction between *analysis* and *control*, based on cognitive psychology. Bialystok (1983) argues that CSs result from a cognitive mental mechanism that operates on linguistic processing. The two major components of language processing in Bialystok's cognitive framework are *analysis* of linguistic knowledge and *control* of linguistic processing which gave rise to two types of CSs: *Knowledge based* (adjusting the message by exploiting knowledge of the concept) and *Control based* strategies (manipulating the means of expression by using other resources).

Another group of researchers introduced the so called Nijmegen project (Bongaerts and Poulisse, 1989; Kellerman, 1991; Poulisse, 1990). Using the same theoretical framework as Bialystok they developed a new psycholinguistic model of CSs. The project was described by Littlemore as "one of the most comprehensive pieces of research into student's use of communication strategies to have been carried out to date" (2001: 243).

This project was basically based on answering three specific questions: (1) what is the relationship between the subject's L2 proficiency level and their use of compensatory strategies? (2) What is the relationship between compensatory strategies used in L1 and L2? (3) What are the relative effectiveness compensatory strategy types?

The project used a variety of comprehensive data as a means to investigate the topics in question. The group of researchers who worked on the project developed, in several papers, a context-free process oriented taxonomy that meets three basic requirements:

- *Generalizability*: independence across learners, task and proficiency level.
- *Parsimony*: the fewer categories the taxonomies include the better they are.
- *Psychological plausibility*: strategies that coincide with the field of language processing, cognitive processing and problem-solving.

The proposed taxonomy (see table 1 & 2) that explains the mental processing of CSs production consists of two *archistrategies* called *conceptual* and *linguistic code* which (Dörnyei, 1995: 58) described as following:

1. Conceptual strategies: manipulating the target concept to make it expressible through available linguistic resources.
  - a- Analytical strategies: specifying characteristics features of the concepts.
  - b- Holistic strategies: using a different concept which shares characteristics with the target item.
2. Linguistic/code strategies manipulating the speaker's linguistic knowledge.
  - a- Morphological creativity: creating a new word by applying L2 morphological rules to an L2 word.

The Nejmegen project was criticized by Poulisse (1994) and others as being a product-oriented taxonomy that does not, sufficiently, take into consideration the processes underlying the production of CSs.

Poulisse came out with a new taxonomy that included three major types of strategies:

1. *Substitution strategies*: the omission or substitution of one or more lexical features by an alternative item (code switching, approximation, use of all-purpose words and complete omission).
2. *Substitution-plus strategies*: it's similar to the previous strategy with the addition of an unusual L1 or L2 "morphological and/or phonological encoding procedures, ex. Foreignizing" (Poulisse, 1993: 179).
3. *Reconceptualization strategies*: involves a large change in the preverbal message at the conceptual preparation when more than one chunk is changed (Poulisse, 1993: 180).

The limitations of Poulisse's taxonomy were pointed out by Kellerman and Bialystok (1997), who explained that the taxonomy fails to distinguish between substitution and reconstruction, and it does not deal with aspects of strategic behavior apart from the lexical ones.

### **12.3. Integrated Approach**

The third approach is the integrated one that presents a compound standing point by combining the problem-solving devices and the "various pre-and post-articulatory phases of speech processing" (Dörnyei and Kormos, 1998: 350).

One of the pioneers in this field was Canale (1983) who provided a framework of CSs that included problem-solving strategies which compensate for disruptions in communication due to the speaker's linguistic deficiencies; and non-problem solving strategies which involve maintaining communication and gaining time for thinking. These latter strategies, which improve communicative effectiveness, have been less investigated (Clennell, 1995; Dörnyei and Kormos, 1998; Dörnyei and Scott, 1995; Nakatani, 2006; Olshtain and Cohen, 1989).

Dörnyei and Scott (1995) and Dörnyei and Kormos (1998) presented an integrated model of CSs based on all the previous taxonomies with the idea of taking into consideration both meaning negotiation and communication maintenance. That is, they provided a framework that includes strategies related to the pre-articulatory phase, and the ones which arise during the interactive communicative phase. This model includes four types of communication strategies which are related to different phases of speech processing: *direct strategies*; *indirect strategies*, *interactional strategies* and *processing time pressure* which have various subcategories.

1. *Direct strategies*: alternative self-contained strategies that provide the target meaning. They are subdivided into four subcategories, *resource-related* strategies (message abandonment/reduction/replacement, circumlocution, word coinage, foreignizing, code switching, mime. . .), *own-performance*, *problem-related* strategies (self-phrasing and self-

repair), and *other performance problem related* strategies (other repair).

2. *Indirect strategies*: they facilitate meaning negotiation by means of creating conditions that avoid communication breakdowns (e.g. appeal for help, comprehension check, asking for repetition, asking for clarification, guessing, expressing non-understanding, etc.)
3. *Interactional strategies*: occur when “the participants carry out trouble-shooting exchange cooperatively” (Dörnyei and Scott, 1997: 199). Those are the strategies that make the negotiation of meaning possible (e.g. gap-fillers, repetition, verbal strategy makers and feigning understanding).
4. *Processing time pressure*: problems that occur during planning and encoding of the pre-verbal phase and that are resolved by lexical, phonological, or grammatical problem-solving mechanisms or by stalling strategies.

Another integrated approach was presented by Nakatani (2006) in which he included apart from compensatory and interactional strategies a further set of strategies, rarely investigated in the field of CSs, called *metacognitive* strategies. These are considered to be responsible for the learner’s self-regulatory processes during the planning, monitoring and evaluating phases involved in the learning task.

Summing up, the different approaches and taxonomies to describe and classify CSs ranging from a narrow view (Poulisse, 1990) to a broad one (Dörnyei and Scott, 1997; Lewis, 2011; Nakatani, 2006) have not been too different in clarifying and explaining the underlying processes of CSs since the variation was more in terms of terminology and categorization rather than in the particular strategies. The results were guided by the orientations of the researchers and the field of interest, which shapes to some extent the perspectives of dealing with CSs, without getting far from the traditional theories that still inspire many researchers.

## **13. Determinants of Strategy Selection**

### **13.1. Context**

#### **13.1.1. Context of Learning /Acquiring**

The context in which learners receive language determines the specific features of their IL, and the types of CSs they will use. Therefore, research in SL/FL teaching has been too much interested in designing syllabi that develop learners' communicative ability by relating the learner's needs to the teaching goals through providing contextualized material that facilitates the practice of the target language in natural-like situations. However, these attempts have not succeeded in developing the learner's communicative competence because they become competent only in the situations they have been exposed to in their syllabus. Success in other new situations depends on their ability to use their knowledge creatively to suit these new situations. Thus, it is more feasible to study how learners can develop their creative ability by using their IL to convey new concepts, and how they can derive knowledge from their L1 in case their IL is insufficient to achieve a specific communicative goal.

#### **13.1.2. Context of IL Use**

The context or the situation in which the learner finds himself obliged to use his CSs also determines the type of CSs selected. This context includes the interlocutors, the setting (time and space), and the concept itself (the nature of the idea to be conveyed). In an extended discussion of the notion of context we can note that the scope of context is not easy to define, and that we must consider the social and psychological world into which the language user operates at any given time to be able to understand the message. The context includes language user's beliefs and assumptions about temporal, spatial or social setting, prior, ongoing, and future actions (verbal and non-verbal), the state of knowledge and attentiveness of those participating in the social interaction at hand. Therefore, CSs are usually related to both the speaker (his linguistic background, his language proficiency, and his knowledge about the topic) and the task demands (concept to be conveyed, the setting, the type of relationship between speaker and hearer). The speakers' effectiveness depends on the extent to which they suit the content as a whole.

### **13.2. Task Demands**

One of the most important factors that may bias the speakers/learners to use a specific strategy over another is the task they are required to fulfill. The biases may be the results of two important factors, which are the concept or the idea to be conveyed and/or task instructions including the communicative situation that makes certain strategies more used than others. For arguments sake, we quote Bialystok and Frohlich (1980), “The (picture) Recreation task motivated the students not to give up after they first consider contextual aspects of utterances in the interpretation and analysis of elicited data in SL CSs studies is intensive” (3).

### **13.3. Personality Characteristics**

Research on CSs has proved that the selection of CSs varies from one learner to another depending on their age and personality. Factors like aptitude (intelligence), self-confidence, anxiety, and the degree to which the learner insists on solving the problem he is facing. As Corder explained:

There is some evidence that there is a personality factor invoked (in the manipulation of Communicative Strategies). Different learners will typically resort to their favorite strategies, some are determined risk takers, others value social factors of interaction above the communication of ideas just how hard one tries will vary with personality (1983: 19).

## **14. Teaching Communication Strategies**

Savignon (1983) reported on a pioneer language teaching experiment involving a communicative approach, which, for the first time, included student training in what she called *coping strategies*. Since then, much research has been conducted to identify and classify CSs yet less attention has been paid to the possibility of exploiting CSs inside the classroom.

The teachability of CSs has always been a controversial subject in the literature. Viewpoints differ greatly due to pros that defend the teaching of CSs, and cons that reject it. Arguments against the teaching of CSs are based on the notion that strategic competence develops in the speaker’s L1 and is freely transferable to target language use (Bongaerts, Kellerman and Bentlage, 1987; Poullisse, 1993, 1990). That is, language learners have their applicable CSs repertoire already



developed regardless of their L2 proficiency level (Ataollah, 2010; Kellerman and Bialystok, 1997; Lewis, 2011). So, rather than teaching CSs, it may be more useful to provide the learners with more linguistic baggage as Kellerman concluded that “there is no justification for providing training in compensatory strategies in the classroom . . . teach the learners more language and let the strategies look after themselves” (1991: 158).

Following this stream of thought, Bialystok (1990) argues that CSs are the reflection of the underlying cognitive processes, and therefore, it would be useless to focus on surface structures to improve strategy use or communicative competence. She points out that “the more language the learner knows, the more possibilities exist for the system to be flexible and to adjust itself to meet the demands of the learner. What one must teach students of a language is not the strategy, but language” (Bialystok, 1990: 147). Canale and Swain (1980) also supported the same idea since according to them CSs are to be acquired in real-life interaction and not to be learned in classroom tasks.

Other researchers, notwithstanding, believe in the effectiveness of strategy training (Brooks, 1992; Chen, 1990; Faerch and kasper, 1983, 1986; Haastrup and Philipson, 1983; Lewis, 2011; Paribakht, 1986; Rost and Ross, 1991; Tarone and Yule, 1989; Willems, 1987). However, very little research on strategy training has been conducted to investigate the teachability of CSs. As Bialystok pointed out, “there is little empirical research investigating the pedagogy of CSs, so descriptions and evaluations of any procedure are somewhat speculative” (1990: 149); Still, there are some studies that confirm the validity of strategy training like the ones reported on by Faerch and Kasper (1986) and Tarone and Yule (1989) who all gave evidence of the teachability of CSs, and supported the idea of strategy training as a means “to allow the learner to operate with a small vocabulary, and permit speech to remain fluent” (Nation, 1990: 97).

Others go further to stress the fact that teaching CSs may be useful if it is implemented with the objective of raising the learner’s *metacognitive awareness* (Kellerman, 1998:98). This concept was elaborated by Faerch and Kasper who provoked a theoretical shift in defining the act of teaching:

If by teaching we also mean making learners conscious about aspects of their (already existing) behavior, it is obvious that we should teach them about strategies, in particular, how to use communication strategies most appropriately (1980: 98).

From the aforementioned interpretation of the notion of teaching we can conclude that the acceptance or rejection of CSs training is basically based on the belief of what teaching is. It is obvious that the ones who argue against the teaching of CSs have a narrow view of teaching, namely, that teaching consists of passing on new information. Bialystok and Kellerman (1987) provided a good example of the reason behind the controversy on teaching CSs by stating that “it is one thing to encourage their use (and create the conditions in which they can be used) and quite another to actively teach communication strategies in the classroom” (1987: 172).

However, for the supporters of CSs training, teaching in a broader sense includes what Dörnyei described in six interrelated strategy training procedures (Dörnyei, 1995: 62-64):

1. **Raising learner’s awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs:** “making the learners conscious of strategies already in their repertoire, sensitizing them to the appropriate situations where these could actually work”.
2. **Encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs:** to manipulate available language without being afraid of making errors.
3. **Providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs:** using listening and visual materials and guiding the learners to identify, categorize and evaluate CSs used by other speakers.
4. **Highlighting cross-cultural differences in CSs use:** includes the teaching of stylistic appropriateness of CSs explaining both use and usage.

5. **Teaching communication strategies directly:** providing CSs and the possible use of those structures by “presenting linguistic devices to verbalize CSs which have a finite range of surface structure realizations”.
6. **Providing opportunities for practice in strategy use:** practicing CSs is essential because they “can only fulfill their function as immediate first aid devices if their use has reached an automatic stage” and “this automatization will not always occur without specific focused practice”.

Summing up, teaching CSs can be used either to make the learners aware of their already existing CSs or to introduce new strategies through a training course which, as Oxford stated, should indicate “why the strategy is useful, how it can be transferred to different tasks, and how learners can evaluate the success of this strategy” (1990: 207).

## **15. Review of Some Empirical Studies: Methodologies, Data Analysis and Findings**

### **15.1. Earlier Studies**

For any research to be trustworthy it should be backed by previous findings and methodologies. The review that this chapter includes will provide a starting point for this paper and provide an idea about what should be included in a research process to reach the best results, and to avoid hindrances that may cause the work to deviate from its designed path. In the forthcoming summaries of earlier studies we include an overview of the most important investigations in the field of SLA research to provide a firm background believed to be able to demonstrate our awareness of the previous methodologies, data collection, data analysis and findings of the field that will help a lot in constructing instruments and selecting the appropriate methodology.

**Váradi**, in his article “Strategies of target language communication: Message adjustment” (1973), provided a model of IL production that focused on the strategies that the second language learner might resort to when s/he experienced

a 'hiatus' in his/her knowledge of the TL. In order to convey a message, which Váradi called the optimal message that included the optimal meaning, the learner selects the correct target form that might convey his message. The researcher explained that during meaning selection two possibilities might arise: the learner might find a satisfactory form through "formal reduction" or "replacement", and use it; or s/he might find it impossible to express his message through his available TL means at his/her stage of acquisition; thus s/he adjusts his meaning to his encoding capabilities which implies, according to Váradi, a sacrifice of a part of the optimal meaning. The final selected meaning was called the adjusted meaning, and the process itself was called reduction. In other cases, instead of reducing the optimal meaning the SL learner might opt for a 'replacement' of the message by substituting this optimal message for new subject matter, preferably as close to the optimal meaning as his IL could allow. Moreover, the researcher hypothesized that if the learner did not possess a ready form for his selected optimal meaning, he might resort either to formal replacement (paraphrase or circumlocution), reduction or formal reduction, and what is called adjusted meaning would then become the last in a series of modified meanings. This model was tested out through a pilot study done with two groups Hungarians (group 1 included nine students, and group 2 ten students) of intermediate adult learners.

### Methodology

One group was taught English sixteen hours a week for nine months, while the other studied it at the same rate for only six months. The experiment was conducted in two phases: in the first phase, both groups were asked to describe some related series of drawings. Group 1 was asked to do it in English then in Hungarian in 45 minutes, and group 2 was required to do it in Hungarian first then in English. The given time was 30 minutes for the whole task. Both groups were asked to avoid translating from the memory what they had written in the first version, or invent a radically different story. In the second phase the subjects of the two groups were asked to translate their stories as faithful as possible.

The rationale behind this experiment was to ensure that differences between the two versions of stories given by the two groups were due to meaning adjustment

phenomenon. The learners resorted to this phenomenon under the compelling force of their imperfect competence in the TL.

The researcher took into consideration the possibility that some subjects would change their stories simply because they did not like it, or because they noticed something that they had to modify or add in their second version. Therefore, the translation task in the second phase of the experiment was designed to filter out precisely such cases. This translation task also helped in deciding where message adjustment occurred in the sense that if the learner had used a wrong form believing that it would convey his optimal meaning in his translation of that specific form from English to Hungarian he would give a Hungarian form which is not equivalent to the English one that he had chosen, which would imply that no message adjustment occurred but rather a performance error. However, if he used the form only because it presented the closest approximation to his optimal meaning that his IL allowed he would surely translate the English form into Hungarian with its correct equivalent because he knew the form in his foreign language. This ability indicated an awareness of the differences between the Hungarian and the English form, and consequently signified that message adjustment had occurred.

#### Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was presented in two tables; one summarized the various types of message adjustment, and the other showed the results of a rough statistical analysis of the ratios of unadjusted versus adjusted messages, formal versus semantic adjustment, and intentional versus extensional reduction in terms of the number of lexemes affected. It was stressed by the researcher that these propositions were influenced by so many factors such as the level of proficiency of the learner, and his ability 'to activate' his knowledge about the optimal message.

Before concluding, the researcher clarified that his experiment could only give a quantitative assessment of TL communication, and that a qualitative one would require not only an adequate framework, but also an investigation in relation to the interaction between learners and native speakers. Moreover, to better assess

the learners' proficiency in communicating using message adjustment strategies, their speech had to be judged in terms of acceptability and appropriateness.

The results of this experiment supported the theoretical presuppositions especially that of message adjustment use by SL learners in communicating concepts for which they lack the form in the TL. They also suggested the utility of similar experimental instruments for research of this type. As a final point, the researcher raised the idea that this experiment could be a stimulus for further research on CSs of foreign language learners.

**Bialystok** in her paper "some factors in the selection and implementation of communication strategies" (1983) tackled the controversial issue of distinguishing between communication and learning strategies, and she stressed the need for theoretical attempts to distinguish learning strategy from communicative ones.

However, Bialystok highlighted the importance of some productive works that led to the identification and classification of CSs (Blum and Levenston, 1978; Tarone, 1981). She also points out the existence of rich and systematic frameworks describing the ways in which learners operate within their IL to communicate difficult concepts.

Nevertheless, according to Bialystok (1983) there was still a need for more work to show the extent to which the implementation of the previously mentioned framework was systematic, and its validity in comparing strategies according to their effectiveness. Consequently, this paper tries to fill this gap by attempting to answer questions like: who would use which strategy, when, and with what effect?

### Methodology

The research was divided into two parts. The first one was to answer the second part of the question (who, when). The subjects were a group of sixteen grade students learning French in high school, and a group of fourteen adults learning French in a Civil Service French language Training Program. All the subjects were required to complete a test to provide an assessment of proficiency. Because the adults were more advanced than the young students, their test was more difficult.

A picture reconstruction task, where subjects were asked to describe a picture so that a native speaker of French (one of the two research conductors) could reconstruct it correctly, was designed to collect the data in both conditions. The picture was to be reconstructed on a large flannel board using cardboard cut-out objects. The picture reconstruction also had series of incorrect items which were based on one of the following characteristics:

- 1- Semantic similarities between the incorrect item and the target item.
- 2- Phonetic similarities.
- 3- Cross lingual similarities.
- 4- Items related to the context of the basic picture.

Moreover, this task was designed to meet three principal criteria:

- 1- Simulate a real communicative exchange in which one of the interlocutors was monolingual.
- 2- Include difficult concepts for the subject to convey.
- 3- Allow a control over the items of communication.

The task was administered by two researchers to each student separately. One researcher introduced the other as a monolingual native speaker of French, and asked the subject to describe the pictures in details using only French to enable their interlocutor to reconstruct them. There was no time limit, and the data was tape-recorded and later on transcribed.

The second part of the research was conducted to answer the second part of the research question (with what effect?). For this purpose, seventeen native speakers of French participated in the study. Ten of them dealt with adults' strategies and seven with the students' strategies. They were required to answer two questions: Were all of the strategies got equally effective; and did the different learners (groups and individuals) use these strategies with similar effectiveness? All the judges were given a transcript for each learner's attempts to convey a target item, and they were asked to score out of 10 the strategy or set of strategies ranked best for each item.

## Data Analysis

The results of this study were achieved through a statistical analysis of the data of each part separately. The first phase of the study showed that adults used basically fewer L1 based strategies than the younger students, although they used nearly the same number of main strategies. Besides, there were also individual differences among subjects within the same group, which were obtained through a correlation between the pre-test and the individual's strategy use measured after the task. The number of strategies used had no relationship with proficiency level, but there existed a relationship between the base of the strategy (L1 or L2 based) and the proficiency level.

To sum up, the results of the first phase indicated that target language proficiency biased the learner to select differentially between L1 and L2 based strategies, but did not predict the selection of specific strategies. The second phase resulted in the fact that the specific strategies scored as most effective interacted both with the target item being conveyed and the proficiency of the learner indicated by the two categories of subjects. However, the greater variation of strategies used by adults showed that they were more flexible in adapting the strategy to the target concept.

Moreover, the role of proficiency level was regarded as an intervening rather than a determining variable because there were few differences between adults and students and between individuals in each group in terms of their selection of strategies. Hence, Bialystok deduced that a specific level of proficiency in the target language was necessary for appropriate selection of strategies, and that all her independent variables (that, which, and what) interacted to determine the success in selecting appropriate strategies.

**Zeeman** (1982) presented a work on 'Production and foreign language' that investigated the communication strategies used by Dutch school learners while communicating in English under communicative or correctness conditions, and their manner of reduction if reduction strategies existed. The hypothesis of the study was that learners would use more reduction strategies under a correctness condition than under a communicative one. Thus, they would produce fewer errors



under the first condition than under the second one. Even this investigation had negative results we believe that it would be a good example of what to avoid in future research designs; therefore, we provide a summary of this study in the actual work as a model of unsuccessful researches that any investigator may face.

### Methodology

Zeeman (1982) provided a 'communicative game' that included twelve pictures that were to be reordered. The task involved two subjects to permit feedback. Subjects were asked to sit with their backs towards each other to avoid non-linguistic communication. One of them played the role of an instructor and the other of a student. The instructor had twelve pictures in the correct order, and the student had twelve blanks and twelve disordered pictures. The role of the instructor was to help the student ordering the pictures correctly. The second half of the experiment had to be done under the correctness conditions, which was achieved by selecting pictures that included similar pairs either in function or in form to make subjects be more selective in their words to show which of the two similar pictures they were referring to. The research was carried out by means of the repeated measures design, in which subjects fulfilled the task under both communicative and correctness conditions respectively. This order of conditions was a result of a pilot study where subjects had been made to communicate under correctness conditions before communicative ones and vice versa. The collected data proved that the second order had been fruitful because in the first order subjects were not motivated to speak when they were asked to focus on communication after correctness. Moreover, they protested that in the first condition they had also been focusing on the message, and that for them it was impossible to emphasize correctness without emphasizing the message.

The researcher used more instruments, like what she called the immediate retrospection method. This was the act of tape recording the communication during the picture task and making subjects listen to it to ask them about the reasons behind their use of a specific strategy, or what had been going through their minds during a period of silence.

Another instrument was the questionnaire that was designed to get information about both the linguistic background and the degree of language proficiency of the subjects. It had been delivered before starting this experiment, first to investigate the variables that could have influenced the subjects' language performance, and second to test the relationship between motivation and the preference of strategies.

### Data Analysis

A t-test analysis of the data obtained from the first instrument (picture task) showed that the first hypothesis was not confirmed and had to be rejected because subjects did not use more reduction strategies in the correctness condition than they did in the communicative condition. And the result was that they used more achievement strategies than reduction ones in both conditions.

An error analysis was carried out afterwards to test the second hypothesis that subjects would make fewer errors in the correctness condition than in the communicative one. The conclusion was that the correctness condition did not help to decrease the number of errors. Hence, the second hypothesis was also unconfirmed. The amount of time the subjects used under each condition was also regarded to compare the effect of both conditions on the time needed for problem solving, but there was no significant difference. The researcher's explanation to these results was that the time limit that the instructors imposed indirectly on their instructed did not allow them to use their monitor which forced them to focus on form rather than correctness.

Moreover, the instructions that were given before the task did not clarify the difference between communicative and correctness conditions, and the correctness task was not formal enough to make subjects change their behaviors and pay attention to the correctness of their language. To sum up, the instructions did not affect the subjects' behavior, and the subjects did not use less reduction strategies under the correctness condition because they focused more on the message in both conditions. Furthermore, a certain degree of mastery of language rules was needed for correctness (or monitoring), and it might be the case that

subjects did not master these rules, or did not have a proficiency level that could allow them to use reduction strategies to avoid incorrect utterances.

To conclude, the researcher admitted that it was nearly impossible to provide a reliable definition of reduction and achievement strategies. She quoted Faerch and Kasper's declaration that "No such clear-cut distinction between a stage of reduction and a stage of compensation exists in actual communication" (1980: 47)

Zeeman (1982) ended her research with a call for further research on the relationship between the level of proficiency and the effective use of reduction strategies, including both oral and written data. She also gave the limitations of her study in terms of two recommendations. First, it is necessary to divide the subjects into two groups to have one group start with the communicative condition and another with correctness condition. Second, it is crucial to do the correctness phase of the task to inform the subjects that their performance would affect their classroom assessment.

**Wagner** (1983), in his article "An analysis of IL communication in instructions", attempted to investigate CSs used by SL learners in a 'genuine' verbal interaction. He took into consideration that the individual's step in a plan of communicative situation was not completely pre-established, but it was an action that developed through interaction.

## Methodology

The subjects were nine adults of Danish origin who took night school classes in German. Two tasks were used: building a house from Lego blocks and making a clay pot. One subject was instructed by the researcher in a non-verbal action, and he was required to instruct another subject verbally to allow an assessment of comprehension. Moreover, subjects were free to provide feedback and ask for clarification.

The researcher provided a model of communication where he showed that the IL speaker followed different steps to reach his goal using four types of knowledge:

- (a) Knowledge about co-participants

(b) Shared perceptual universe between speaker and hearer

(c) The task to be conveyed (building a house out of Lego)

(d) Respecting three Maxims:

1- Work co-operatively

2- Speak, do not demonstrate

3- Speak German

### Data Analysis

The CSs used in a specific situation served the function of adjusting the plan to the situation since the plan had been re-established and its execution necessitated a certain level of IL proficiency. Thus subjects adapted their plans to their linguistic abilities through their CSs. Consequently, this notion emphasized the interrelationship of all CSs, and the similarities as well as the differences in the CSs of SL learners and native speakers. Similarities were exemplified by the difficulties that both native speakers and SL learners face in communicating some concepts, and differences were exemplified by the necessity for SL Learners to improvise and create solutions especially in the area of vocabulary. To solve these problems the researcher proposed that the speaker had a number of strategies at his disposal to execute the plans of his action:

- The production of a complete syntactic chain in IL or SL.
- The production of a reduced chain, a fragmentary utterance, while anticipating possible inferences by the hearer on the basis of available information from a, b, c, and d.
- The production of an alternative (possibly reduced) syntactic chain in IL or SL in terms of semantic paraphrase.
- The production of an alternative (possibly reduced) syntactic chain in IL or SL in terms of a pragmatic paraphrase.
- The use L1 or L2.
- Shift to an alternative plan, possibly to linguistically make habit of using alternative plans like asking questions.

- Handing over the verbalizing to the hearer (which resulted in a change of discourse, and hence of the task itself).

The analysis of the data illustrated through the task resulted in an emphasis of mutual comprehension. This assured that subjects changed strategies frequently in connection with their plans and changed their discourse as a result of their knowledge about their interlocutors.

Hitherto, the stated studies do not represent an advanced level of SLA on CSs and they were criticized afterwards for having a narrow scope of investigation by focusing on description. Thus, research on CSs was to be developed by using a larger variety of tasks with different items, and also by going beyond description to interpretation, prediction, and explanation of data.

Moreover, with this view of developing CSs research there came the notion of controlling some factors that may affect the use of CSs by SL learners, and taking them into consideration while analyzing the collected data. As Kellerman (1979) explained, “to achieve generalizability we would then have to determine the range and nature of contextual variables that also play a role in the ultimate linguistic encoding of strategies” (47).

### **15.2. Current Issues in Recent Studies of Communication Strategies**

Recent studies in communication strategies have tackled new issues related to CSs pedagogy and learning like: types of CSs and their level of effectiveness in maintaining the communication (Littlemore, 2003; Stewart and Pearson, 1995); The teachability of CSs (Dörnyei, 1995; Lewis, 2011; Nakatani, 2005); The differences between native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) in the use of CSs (Stewart and Pearson, 1995); the effect of individual characteristics on the use of CSs (Kocoglu, 1997); Types of activities for teaching CSs (Ansarin and Syal, 2000; Nakatani, 2010); the effect of proficiency level on the use of CSs (Chen, 1990; Wannaruk, 2003; Yoshida-Morise, 1998). In the following paragraphs we include a summary of the most potential investigations by focusing on the topics, motivations and results of each research. Methodology is not going to be tackled in this section since they all conducted their studies using the same methodological principles mentioned in detail in the earlier studies introduced previously.

**Chen** (1990) conducted her investigation in Guangzhou of the Mainland People's Republic of China, with the aim of discovering whether learners of English with different proficiency level applied CSs with the same level of frequency. After training twelve English majors at a foreign language institute, Chen found that the "high-proficiency learners were equipped with more knowledge of the target language and had relatively richer resources to draw upon in communication; therefore, they applied less to communication strategies" (171).

**Stewart and Pearson** (1995) directed their experiment with eight native speakers and eight non-native speakers of Spanish in Louisiana State University, with the aim of comparing the native and non-native CSs behavior. The result of their study was a list of strategies used by each group of speakers. Non-native speakers used the skills of 'appeal for assistance', 'appreciation', 'literal translation', and 'self-repair'. However; the native speakers used more skills of 'repetition', 'clarification', 'confirmation', and 'language switch'. Their conclusion has to do with the teaching of CSs since they found that "certain types of communication strategies can be a valuable aid to communication" (117).

In the same year, 1995, **Dörnyei** (in a previously mentioned study) tackled the teachability of CSs through his quantitative-empirical study in which six teachers taught six strategies to 53 participants during six weeks. This group was later on compared to a control group of 56 participants who were taught using a regular EFL curriculum. The finding of the study was that "in the treatment group, the post-training results showed improvement in measures related to both the quality and quantity of strategy use" (Dörnyei, 1995: 79).

In 1997 **Kocoglu** studied the relationship between the hearer's gender and the use of CSs by the speaker. In the investigation he paired 10 Turkish learners with 10 English native speakers to form 20 EFL conversations, based on the usage of communication strategies. Kocoglu concluded that "All Turkish EFL students used more communicative strategies with female rather than male native speakers of English because the former were more cooperative and more encouraging in conversation than the latter" (11).

**Yoshida-Morise** (1998) directed a quantitative-empirical study that investigated the effect of proficiency level on the applying frequency of CSs by Japanese adult English learners. The results showed that the high proficient subjects used more CSs to compensate for their IL deficiencies than the low proficient ones.

In 2000 **Ansarin and Syal** directed a quantitative-empirical study in which they implied that storytelling tasks (picture-based storytelling and retelling stories in English) were very suitable for teaching CSs.

**Wannaruk** (2003) conducted an investigation on the type and level of frequency of CSs in relation to the level of proficiency. The results proved that both frequency and types of CSs were governed by the students' proficiency level.

**Littlemore's** study (2003) with 82 French University English learners had the aim of investigating the effectiveness of CSs in avoiding communication breakdowns. The finding of the study was that "reconceptualization strategies were likely to be the most effective in this experiment, and within this category, componential analysis was the most likely to guarantee successful communication" (Littlemore, 2003: 331).

**Nakatani** (2005) studied the teachability of oral CSs and the effect of the teaching on the improvement of the learners' communicative competence. The training group of the study was formed of 62 English students who received a metacognitive strategy training to be, later on, compare with a group of students who received a normal communicative course. The findings revealed that the training improved the students' oral communicative ability and increased their awareness about the importance of the use of CSs to negotiate meaning and to overcome communicative problems.

For more information about previous empirical researches conducted in the field (see Appendix 3) which provides a table (quoted from Faerch and Kasper, 1983) summarizing twenty-two studies dating from the last thirty years.

For the design of any study to be complete it should be supported by the data collection, as an inevitable path to follow, for the research questions and the hypotheses to be realized and to achieve reliable results. The next section includes

the research design, the research instruments (their descriptions and implementation), and the criteria for subjects selection, and it ends with a presentation of the statistical method used to analyze the collected data.



# Chapter 2

## Research Methodology

The present work aims at investigating the effect of teaching CSs on the subject's fluency in written and oral productions. It has the concrete objective of investigating the teachability of CSs, and the impact of the training on the use of CSs by Spanish high-school students. The present study also delves to probe the influence of strategy-training on the subjects' self-confidence in using English for spoken and written communication. More precisely, this investigation offers a concrete comparison between oral and written CSs and the possibility to improve the subjects' competences in both forms through the teaching of CSs.

It is worth explaining that the proficiency level of the subjects was measured through a proficiency test to avoid any wrong overgeneralization. The paper and pen version of the Oxford Quick Placement Test (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate: UCLES, 2004) especially designed for speakers of other languages was used. It was applied to ensure the homogeneity of the subjects in terms of proficiency level. The test was applied because it does not seem reliable to group the subjects according to their study level or to take for granted that all the students within the same class have the same level of proficiency.

### 1. Research Description

The UCLES (see Appendix 4) Test takes 30 minutes and is composed of 60 multiple-choice test items. It measures grammatical and lexical competence and the questions are sequenced from easy to difficult. The first part of the test, from question 1 to question 40 qualifies the test taker as an intermediate user of English. The second part, from question 41 to 60, results in higher levels, from advanced to proficient, depending on the number of the correct answers. The scores obtained can be interpreted in terms of ALTE levels (The Association of Language Testers in Europe: description range from breakthrough to very advanced), UCLES levels (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate: examination range from KET [Key English Test] to CPE [Cambridge Proficiency in

English]), or CEFR Levels (that were used in this research to describe the subjects' level of proficiency (see Appendix 5).

The actual study started with intensive piloting of the data collection instruments and training activities to achieve a good level of reliability and validity of the designed tasks. Once the first piloting study had been finished, all the necessary changes were applied to get final satisfactory instruments. After that, the main research was conducted.

The pilot study was conducted with a sample of 10 high proficient (P2) and ten low proficient (P1) students, who were regarded as a representative sample of each level following their results in the UCLES. The sample groups had to fulfill the tasks and answer a questionnaire immediately after. The questionnaire was concerned with the clarity of the instructions of each task and the level of difficulty of the topics tackled in each one of the tasks. The results of the questionnaire were the main part of the pilot study, which were backed by the researcher's own observations.

The independent variable of the study was the strategy training that was the same for all the subjects, regardless of their level of proficiency. The dependent variables were the use of communication strategies in oral and written performance, the subjects' self-confidence, and fluency. It is a within groups factor because two groups of high and low proficient students will be compared to analyze the possible relationship between the effect of the strategy training and the subjects level of proficiency. It was also designed to compare the results of the training on the use of communication strategies in written and oral mediums. There was also a consideration of the effect of the strategy training on the subjects' fluency and self-confidence while using oral and written English.

All the data was collected using tasks that the subjects had to fulfill at the end of the experiment to investigate the effect of the training on the use of the CSs dealt with during the training phase of the study. At the end of the training we dedicated two sessions for each group to make use of all the introduced strategies in oral communication and in written production (before the post-test which was used to collect the data for this investigation). The aim of the last two sessions was to give

the students the opportunity to put the results of the training to use. It was also used to provide a concise amount of data that was compared to the previously collected data (after each session) to have a complete idea about the use of each strategy not only when it was still fresh in mind, but also after a certain time. This helped the researcher to be sure of the results of the study and controlled one of the most important intervening variables that might affect the training, which is forgetfulness. The effect of the strategy training on the subjects' self-confidence was controlled through a questionnaire that was submitted before the training and again after the training. The questionnaires showed to what extent the teaching of communication strategies could have an effect on the students' self-confidence in the use of English both in written and oral communication. The results of the subjects' fluency in oral and written tasks were measured by calculating the number of words produced per minute by each subject at each individual task before and after the training.

This research can be described as an experimental quantitative research because it includes all the components of this type of study: a treatment or the strategy training that the subjects will receive; two experimental groups with different levels of proficiency; and two control groups, randomly assigned to be so, which share the same characteristics with the experimental groups.

The design of the research can also be qualified as cross-sectional because the data of the study was collected from subjects with different levels of proficiency. The data was gathered in three occasions rather than in one shot (the two final tasks used to investigate the effect of the strategy training on the use of communication strategies by the experimental groups, and the questionnaire applied to investigate the impact of the training on the subjects' self-confidence in the use of English in both oral and written communication). Evidently, as Brown and Dowing (1998) explained, there is no best design, and the choice of the latter depends on the type of target data and the conclusions that the investigator aims to reach. Therefore, we consider the cross-sectional design, also known as the horizontal study, to be the most appropriate design for this research since it is presently considered by many researchers as Dulay, Burt and Krashen to be good at reflecting "the features of the language system developing over a period of time"

(1982: 258) in a less time consuming environment in terms of the time dedicated to either collecting or analyzing the data.

In fact, the investigator opted for the cross-sectional design since it allows a wide view of the strategic behavior of the students. Besides, the horizontal study involves a much more significant number of subjects which permits the generalization of findings, unlike the results yielded from vertical studies that are often characterized as *atypical* (Dulay et al., 1982: 258) as they normally study small samples.

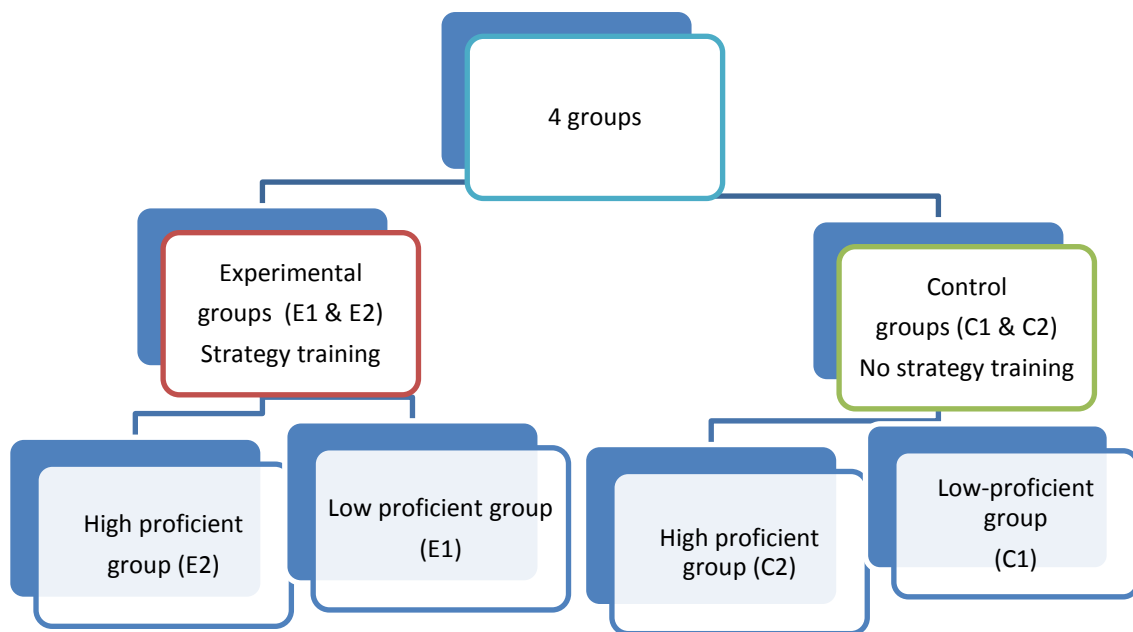
## **2. Subjects**

Being an experimental study entails that this investigation has two types of participants: the control groups that did not receive any type of training and the experimental groups that received the strategy training. The members of the two control groups (high and low proficient groups) are 60 Spanish high school students, who have been selected after doing the Oxford Quick Placement-Test. They did the oral and the written pre and post-tests and were concerned to be control groups who were oblivious to CSs in general and to the actual investigation, as a specific case. This was done with the aim of avoiding any possible effect of what Brown called *subject expectancy*:

. . . which occurs when the subjects think they have figured out what a study is about and try to “help” the researcher to achieve the apparent aims . . . the problem was that by guessing this fact, they might form expectancies about the results of the investigation and try to help . . . achieve those results by performing poorly on the pretest and well on the posttest. They would, thereby, introduce a new variable (1988: 34).

The experimental groups were also formed by 60 students (30 low proficient and 30 high proficient students). These groups did the pre-test, and after receiving the strategy training they had to do the post-tests. Their homogeneity, both as members of the same group and as a whole group, when compared to the control group, was assured through the placement-test. Their ages range from 13 to 20 years. They obtained their primary education in public schools and they all received English classes with an average of 3 hours a week. In the actual study

neither gender nor age were considered as an influencing criterion for subject selection. It is worth mentioning that there were problems with some subjects of the high proficient group who could not assist 1 of our strategy training sessions which we considered to be an intervening variable that could affect the results of the research. Consequently, as a result of their non-assistance to one of the sessions, the data of two of our subjects (high proficient group) was ruled out, which reduced the high-proficient group to 28 instead of 30 subjects. The graphic below represents the four groups that participated in this research and the way they were classified.



### 3. Research Design

The actual study has three major parts which are *the pre-training*, *during the training* and *the post-training* (conducted respectively). The first phase (The pre-training) had a dual aim: first it was used to administer the pre-self-confidence questionnaire and the pre-tests to collect the data that would be compared to the post-test; and, second, it was the stage of the experiment in which the researcher introduced crucial information and practice to raise the subjects' self-confidence and willingness to participate in the investigation. To be able to judge the effect of the training on the use of communication strategies by the subjects of the

experimental groups, the instruments used in both parts were similar in form and requirements. These instruments consisted of:

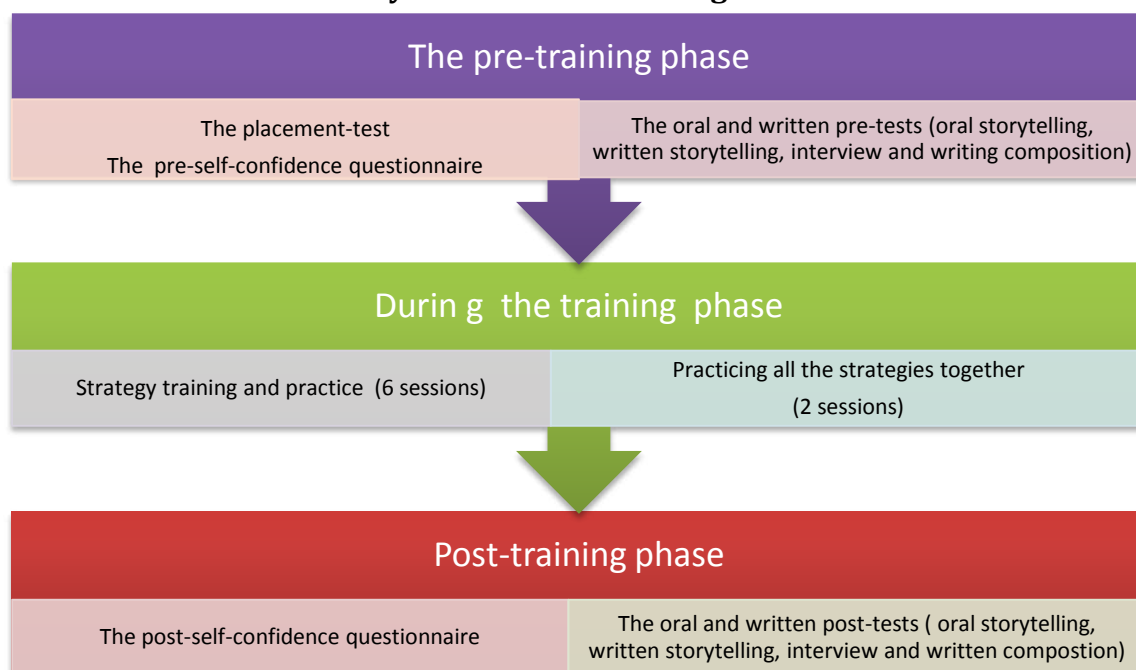
- A self-confidence questionnaire task.
- Storytelling task (oral and written).
- Interview task (oral).
- Writing composition task.

As far as the strategy training is concerned, two different types of instruments were used and it was divided into two phases:

- The training phase: authentic listening and reading related to the target strategy, as well as the practice phase of each strategy in both mediums (communicative oral and written tasks to practice the taught strategy).

All the parts of the research are interrelated and the results of the investigation are the accumulation of each and every stage. This is what the following chart shows concisely:

### 3.1. A Summary of the Research Design



The instruments mentioned above were designed following Seliger and Shohamy's criteria of good research in which they emphasized the notion of *conformability*. This term was defined in their work as the ability of the researcher to confirm the findings by means of different sources, and was also considered as "an aspect of validation in research that is closely related to representativeness and retrievability" (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 105). In other words, the collected data should be representative for second language behavior and retrievable for continued examination or use. This entails that triangulation of the means used to collect any data is required for it to be considered reliable.

For Seliger and Shohamy it is essential to make use of more than two means of data collection to have "the same pattern or example of behavior . . . sought in different sources" (1989: 123). These criteria have the aim of enriching the research, making the results more reliable and the data more representative. They also offer the researcher a wide range of variety to compare the aspects of the target language in different contexts to be able to form somewhat general conclusions.

### **3.2. The Pre-training**

In this stage both the experimental and the control groups first had to do a proficiency test to avoid any possible variation in the level of proficiency (within the same group) which might interfere in the results of the study. The written UCLES test was administered, and the students had to complete multiple choice and fill-in-the gap test items. The test was administered using the student answer version (Appendix 4) and later graded using automated test scoring. Consequently, in the results of the proficiency tests some students proved to have a very low level of proficiency that did not coincide with the group. As previously mentioned, the researcher decided to exclude the data produced by those two subjects from the final analysis of the current study. This decision was supported by the belief that the differences in levels and the lack of homogeneity of the groups may influence to a great extent the results of the training which might create serious limitations for the implications and the results of the actual investigation.

Later on, the subjects of the control groups and the ones of the experimental groups had, first, to answer a self-confidence questionnaire, and, then, to fulfill four

different oral and written communicative tasks (writing composition, oral storytelling, written storytelling and an interview). The data obtained will be compared to the data produced by the subjects of the experimental groups after the training.

### **3.3. The Training Phase**

The teachability of communication strategies has been controversial for many decades; therefore many researchers have opted for strategy training as a substitution of the teaching act. The proponents of the notion that CSs are not teachable or unworthy to be taught hold the fact that all the learners of a second or foreign language (SL/FL) do already have their strategic competence built. That is, the cognitive mechanisms are already available in the repertoire of the CSs, and what students need is the language to shape them. For Kellerman, if a student shows that s/he is not a good strategy user, this is due to his/her poor linguistic means that hinder his/her strategic behavior. Accordingly, he insists that “there is no justification for providing training in compensatory strategies in the classroom . . . Teach the learner more language and make the strategies look after themselves” (1991: 158).

Others researchers consider that the strategy training is essential not with the aim of making the students use CSs, but with that of making them *better users of these strategies* (Chen, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Haastруп and Philipson, 1983; Tarone, 1984). Faerch and Kasper (1983), for example, suggested teaching the learners CSs as a way of making them aware of their already existing strategies and guiding them towards the correct use of these communicative strategies. This idea introduced by Faerch and Kasper proved to be effective in many investigations conducted by different researchers in the field (Cohen, 1998; Nakatani, 2005, 2010; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990; Wenden, 1999).

Therefore, many researchers, like Cohen (1998), support the notion of raising the learners’ consciousness of the nature and the communicative potential of CSs, as well as familiarizing the students with the CSs through illustrative examples that enable them to be more receptive and to make a better use of CSs. The strategy training as Cohen (1998) explained is:



. . . predicated on the assumption that if learners are conscious about and become responsible for the selection, use, and evaluation of their learning strategies, they will become more successful language learners by . . . taking more responsibility for their own language learning, and enhancing their use of the target language out of class. In other words, the ultimate goal of strategy training is to empower students by allowing them to take control of the language learning process (Cohen, 1998: 70).

Thus, since it is impossible to teach learners all the linguistic tools they might need in the future, it is essential to teach them how to deal with CSs to help them overcome, as McDonough stated, “the possible breakdowns in communication and therefore keeping the channel of communication open. Their use should not be seen as an admission of failure but rather as an achievement” (1995: 82). Following the same stream, the current research involves the two experimental groups into the strategy training with the aim of improving their use of these strategies and granting them a sense of security in using the TL in both oral and written forms.

However, before starting the strategy training, as previously mentioned, subjects had to respond to a questionnaire dealing with self-confidence. This is an essential instrument in the actual study that was designed to measure the participants’ self-confidence in oral and written English both before and after the training (Appendix 6).

#### **4. Research Instruments and Tasks Administration**

The research instruments are divided into those used in the pre-training phase, the training and the post-training phase. Each stage of the research used the appropriate instruments that were designed either to collect data or to achieve the goal of the training.

During the pre-training stage we made use of four types of instruments to elicit pre-experimental data meant to be compared with the data collected after the strategy training. The three basic instruments were the self-confidence questionnaire, used to get information about the subjects’ level of self-confidence

while writing or speaking in English; the interview, designed to get information about the use of communication strategies by the subjects in oral conversations; writing composition task, used to elicit data about the use of communication strategies by the subjects in the written form; and the storytelling task that is done in both written and oral form to enrich the collected data and to make the research more reliable.

#### **4.1. Self-Confidence Questionnaires**

Questionnaires have become essential in second language research since they offer the possibility of answering the questions of most types of studies in a systematic way. Dörnyei states that questionnaires "... are certainly the most often employed data collection devices in statistical work" (2010: 1). However, although questionnaires are believed to be a good instrument of eliciting data in a comfortable way saving both time and energy, they have various weak points that can be summed up in the difficulties of constructing a valid and reliable questionnaire. That is, as Dörnyei holds:

The main strength of questionnaires is the ease of their construction . . . Ironically, the strength of questionnaires is at the same time also their main weakness. People appear to take it for granted that everybody with reasonable intelligence can put together a questionnaire that works. Unfortunately, this is not true: Just like in everyday life, where not every question elicits the right answer, it is all too common in scientific investigations to come across questionnaires that fail (2010: 1).

Although questionnaires are not easy to construct, they can be a very good data-gathering instrument if constructed appropriately. Consequently, *creative* questionnaires that have the aim of motivating people to participate in the investigation without neglecting the principle objective of the study are strongly needed to get *truthful* and *thoughtful* data that can be processed in a scientifically sound manner (Dörnyei, 2010). That is, a good questionnaire should fulfill some criteria that make it easy to understand, to answer and to analyze. According to Dörnyei (2010) constructing a good questionnaire requires taking into consideration different aspects and procedures including:

- Deciding on the general features of the questionnaire, such as the length, the format, and the main parts.
- Writing effective items/questions and drawing up an item pool.
- Selecting and sequencing the items.
- Writing appropriate instructions and examples.
- Translating the questionnaire into a target language if it was not originally written in that language.
- Piloting the questionnaire and conducting item analysis.

In fact, questionnaires, as Gillham holds, “are so easy to do quickly and badly that, in a way, they invite carelessness” (2008: 11). Hence, to avoid making the questionnaires dull or useless for the research, the two self-confidence questionnaires used before and after the training phase were designed following the construction guidelines mentioned above that appeared in Dörnyei (2010). That is, the questionnaires involved a short number of clear questions, understandable instructions, and parallel items to check whether the answers were constant. The questionnaires, in this study, were used as an instrument to measure the students’ self-confidence before and after the training, and were planned to be the main data-gathering instrument to analyze the effect of the strategy training on the students’ self-confidence in written and spoken medium. They were both administered in the students’ native language (Spanish), and they were piloted before using them as a source of data for the actual study. The fact that these questionnaires included multiple-choice questions made them easy to respond to. Hence, the possible responses were limited and the study of the data was done in an objective manner since the respondents had definite possibilities to choose from, and, consequently, one admitted answer for the basic items of the questionnaires.

After the self-confidence questionnaire the subjects of the two experimental groups had to complete the tasks of the pre-test.

#### **4.2. Interview and Written Composition (20 min each subject)**

Interviews have become an essential instrument of data collection in second language acquisition research that is used with an increasing frequency, especially when the target information is specified. Interviews have the aim of eliciting data

by engaging the subjects in an interactive situation in which s/he receives questions or comments and produces verbal and non-verbal responses. Interviews are considered to be a practical instrument that can take many directions depending on the objectives of the investigator and the data s/he intends to obtain. This research instrument is “personalized and therefore permit a level of in-depth information-gathering free-response, and flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedures” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 166).

In SLA research three types of interviews were distinguished as instruments used for different research purposes: the open, the semi-open (or semi-structured) and the structured interview. The open interview is described as an informal, free conversation in which interviewees elaborate extensively and expand on the topic. The type of data collected using this kind of interview is usually more than what the interviewer aims for. However, the structured interview includes pre-determined questions along with their potential answers that the respondents are supposed to give. In this type of interview neither questions nor answers can bear any elaboration. This kind of interview is used when the researcher probes for “. . . uniform and . . . specific information” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 167). In between comes the third type of interview, or the semi-open interview, which is the one used in this research to create a real, engaging task with actual active interlocutor and immediate feedback. The semi-open interview includes properties of both previously defined types of interviews. That is, it consists of well-defined questions, but it allows, at the same time, for elaboration of the questions and responses. Seliger and Shohamy explained the way this type of interview functions by stating that “ in semi-open interviews, there are specific core questions determined in advance from which the interviewer branches off to explore in-depth information, probing according to the way the interview proceeds, and allowing elaboration, within limits” (1989: 167).

Similar to the structured interview, the semi-open serves as a practical tool of data collection from a large number of subjects on an equal basis (to obtain more or less the same type of information). Consequently, to administer a semi-structured interview, the interviewer comes up with an interview schedule that lists the questions to be asked or the topics to be discussed (Seliger and Shohamy,

1989). Semi-opened interviews are usually used in SLA research to elicit data about strategies that language learners use in their process of acquisition and production of the target language within different contexts. This kind of interview includes the advantages of both the open-interview and the structured one since they offer the possibility of gathering elaborated data that is strictly shaped by a pre-planned agenda. This helps to restrict the flow of information and to control the respondents' answers.

To form an idea about the students' communicative difficulties and to have a general overview of the skill and the CSs that they needed to practice most, they were interviewed by the researcher (10 min) on one topic that they had to choose from a given list: the new educational system, job opportunities in Spain, the sufficiency of the scholarships offered, etc. After that, subjects were given 10 minutes to write on another topic from the same list (see Appendix 6). They were recorded to have a complete view of their use of communication strategies to be compared later on with their performance after the training stage. This same recording was utilized to give them an opportunity to listen to themselves. Their writing was also corrected and handed back to them so they could recognize their difficulties in the use of the target language.

In this way, the semi-structured interview was designed to engage the subjects into a communicative situation in which they were required to express their opinions and to defend their ideas (see Appendix 6). The main role of the interviewer was to maintain a conversation with the subjects by provoking or coaxing them to avoid communication breakdowns. It was also an important aim to make them use as many communication strategies as possible to get a complete data that inform about the use of CSs by the subjects.

The written composition was also a limited task in terms of time and concepts. This task was accomplished by the subjects in 10 minutes, and it included different questions that worked as a guideline to help them elaborate the information and to limit the scope of elaboration to the objectives of the actual research. This third task (after the self-confidence questionnaire and the interview), an opinion-writing task, is considered by many researchers to be more motivating and easier

to deal with than writing a synthesis. That is, identifying relevant information is usually carried out by students when studying;

Expressing a personal view is more similar to argumentative text whereas writing a synthesis asks a writer not only to select information, as in outlining relevant information, but also to organise it . . . writing a text from sources would have a greater effect on interest when the reader's involvement was stimulated by the expression of personal ideas, rather than in a more "academic" writing task, such as writing a synthesis or underlining the most important ideas in the sources (Boscolo, Del Favero and Borghetto, 2007: 79).

### **4.3. Storytelling Task (10 min)**

In this task, the subjects were made to face a more complicated activity that presented itself to be demanding in terms of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Consequently, this task was a more challenging one in which the subjects were expected to provide a complete view about their use of communication strategies. Similar to all the previously mentioned tasks (self-confidence questionnaire, interview and writing composition), this data collection instrument was used to get pre-experimental data that formed the basic information to analyze the effect of the strategy training on the subjects' self-confidence, their oral and written fluency and the use of communication strategies in spoken and written performance.

As the name of the task entails, this task included a set of pictures that the subjects had to describe in English. Subjects were asked to tell a story based on a cartoon sequence of 6 pictures in chronological order, and to write another one based on another sequence of 6 related pictures (see Appendix 6). Subjects had to tell the story to their interlocutor (another subject) without showing him/her the pictures. The pictures used were selected to provide a visual context that was expected to trigger the use of communication strategies. This task was designed bearing in mind that the provided context would serve, as a great help in encouraging the subjects to tell the story. As for the medium of production, the oral condition was administered first, based "on the principle that adverse order effects are less likely where a more spontaneous or informal language task precedes a more formal one, rather than the reverse" (Gillham, 2008: 5).

Storytelling, or what other researchers call the picture description task, is an instrument of data collection that has been widely used by researchers in the field of SLA (Bialystok, 1990; Littlemore, 2001; Palmberg, 1979; Poulisse and Schills, 1989; Váradi, 1973). The storytelling activity includes the advantages of both written/oral assignments and communicative tasks. However, like all the other types of instruments used to collect data for CSs research, the problem with this task lies not only in the administration or the analysis of the elicited data, but also in designing the task that is best suited to the goals of the study. Bialystok stated the three main criteria that the picture description task should meet to be a good research instrument:

First it has to simulate real communication exchange in which one of the interlocutors was a monolingual speaker of the target language. Second, the task has to provide an incentive for the learner to attempt to convey difficult information; and third, it is necessary to have control over the items for which the communicative strategies were to be examined (1983: 103).

Respecting these criteria, the storytelling task was designed to trigger the use of special target vocabulary items that the subjects were expected to express by making use of their CSs. The storytelling task also provided authentic situations that link the task requirements to the subjects' real life to give them a meaningful and contextualized starting point for their performance. However, the task was still meant to be demanding and challenging to the subjects as far as the use of the target language is concerned.

#### **4.4. The Pre-training Phase**

##### *i. Confidence Building*

Based on previous research in the field of SLA, which provided many theories on the importance of building the students' self-confidence, Dweck (1996) defined implicit theory (IPT) of intelligence as one's perspective about his or her intelligence being a fixed uncontrollable trait (entity theory) that could not be changed through effort, or a malleable controllable quality that could be increased and improved through effort and investment (incremental theory). The IPT of one's own intelligence might not be an explicit knowledge, but rather implicit. This

means that people might not be conscious of whether they were more likely to rate human attributes as being stable or modifiable entities (Dweck and Elliott, 1983).

In a key study, Dweck and her colleagues reported that about equal numbers of people (i.e., 45%) held one of the two theories (Entity vs. incremental). The remaining 10% could not be definitely classified (Dweck, Hong and Chiu, 1993). They all agree that the teachers have to apply different strategies to help the students become more confident. Since as Dweck explains the IPT of one's own intelligence directly affects his performance since the incremental theorists tend to take risks and to show their ability; whereas, entity theorists are likely to avoid difficult tasks and to be more silent and non-participative. This was also valid for persons with a low level of confidence in themselves (Dweck & Elliott, 1983). Moreover, according to Krashen (1981), the affective filter, which includes among other factors the sense of self-confidence, really affects the ability of the student to learn a second or foreign language and determines his/her level of success or failure in either acquiring or learning the SL/FL.

Therefore, raising our subjects' self-confidence seemed to be an essential first step. The confidence building was designed with the aim of making the students develop a positive attitude towards the training that can direct their performance towards revealing aspects of their knowledge and ability. Confidence-building was very important to reduce the subjects' reluctance to participate in English conversations or to complete written-tasks. The students were too worried about their grammatical and phonological mistakes, so the basic objective of this stage was to make them feel more relaxed and more confident by introducing various pieces of natural English during the first two sessions (2 hours each group). Subjects were asked to listen to interviews with famous football and tennis players (see Appendix 7). After listening, we attempted to raise their consciousness about the imperfect English used by the interviewees by asking them the following questions:

1. How do the interviewees express their feelings /point of views/plans?  
Which words give you the information?
2. Listen again and pay attention to the following gap-fillers: ... er ... , you know ... , I mean ... , I was ... , I am ... , this is ... , it is ...



3. What is the function of these expressions?
4. What is the reason behind the use of these words?

The next part of the lesson was dedicated to answer the previous questions as a means to explain that even if the spoken English is not grammatically correct, there is always the possibility to understand the message of the speaker. Moreover, during this session the teacher called the subjects' attention to the fact that all the interviewees used repetitions and some sounds or gap-fillers to gain time for more thinking while speaking. To conclude, the subjects were told to be as confident as possible to involve their listeners more in the message, than in the mistakes they may make in their conversations. So, the first tips given to the subjects in the pre-training phase were as following:

- To think of their message rather than of the grammar rules.
- To rehearse what they want to say.
- To have some expectations of their interlocutors.
- To have possible responses.
- To prepare some answers or spoken reactions.
- To practice often.

#### Practice1: (5min each subject)

Students were asked to put all the above mentioned tips into practice in a short presentation introducing themselves to the group and asking questions about the others. This task had the principle of developing the subjects' confidence while speaking in English which facilitated the implementation of the following tasks. It is based on the notion of creating a positive atmosphere inside the classroom and makes the students feel supported by their classmates. It was a clear decision to expose the students to their fear to practice what they feel they cannot do correctly. They were obliged, by the situation, to face their own communicative problems, and make their own conscious decisions on how to avoid

communicative breakdowns. They did this by feeling confident enough to control their message and formulate it depending on their communicative competence.

The role of the teacher (investigator) during the previously mentioned stage of practice was to monitor and to prompt the students to continue speaking when they face a problematic moment. The teacher's availability to back them up when things go wrong in the classroom helped them feel at ease. The main pedagogical aim of this task was to build the students' self-confidence.

#### *i.i. Fluency or Accuracy?*

The most common measures used to capture the differences in the quality of performance in written and oral mediums are those of fluency, accuracy and complexity (Jamshidnejad, 2011; Mora and Valls-Ferrer, 2012). This special issue addresses a general question that is at the heart of much research in applied linguistics and second language acquisition: what makes a second or a foreign language user a more or less proficient language user? Fluency is the aim of many English learners since it has been always regarded as the most important characteristic of native speakers. This basic term was defined in SLA as the ability to get across communicative intent without too much hesitation and too many pauses to cause barriers or a breakdown in communication (Nation, 1991). Fluency and accuracy have been first used in the field of L2 pedagogy where in the 1980s a distinction was made between fluent versus accurate L2 usage to investigate the development of oral L2 proficiency in classroom contexts. One of the first researchers to use this dichotomy was Brumfit (1984), who distinguished between fluency-oriented activities, which foster spontaneous oral L2 production, and accuracy-oriented activities, which focus on linguistic form and on the controlled production of grammatically correct linguistic structures in the L2. Since then, these have been used widely, as performance descriptors for the oral and written assessment of language learners as well as indicators of learners' proficiency underlying their performance. They have also been used for measuring progress in language learning. Spoken or written fluency means being able to communicate ideas without having to break the flow of the speech to formulate a message (Elola, 2006; Rosenthal, 2007; Skehan, 2009). By contrast, spoken or written accuracy refers to the correct use of forms where utterances do not

contain errors affecting the phonological, syntactic, and semantic or discourse features of a language.

To make our subjects aware of those two markers of a good or bad use of SL/FL, this pre-training phase included a detailed explanation of the differences between fluency and accuracy and the importance of both in communication. However, our subjects were made to recognize that in the process of interlanguage development it is not feasible to work on both at the same time. The context of learning, the objectives of the teacher and the needs of the language user are believed to be influential in determining the point of focus in a teaching/learning process that might be either fluency or accuracy or both. Nevertheless, even though when fluency and accuracy are both essential in the performance of the SL/FL users, which is the most dominant case, it is not possible to focus on both at the same time, and the process of teaching/learning should be organized to give clues and practice of each skill at a time. The subjects in this part of the research were made to contemplate their target (Fluency or accuracy or both) by listening to different English learners explaining the problems they have with spoken English. Students were asked to listen carefully and answer two questions:

1. What does she think is the cause of the problem?
2. Do you have the same problem?

Practice 2: (10 min the whole group)

➤ Identify your style:

As a follow-up activity, subjects were given the opportunity to identify their style in terms of accuracy or fluency by answering the following questions:

1. Is being correct the most important thing for you?
2. Do you always take risks trying new vocabulary even though it might not be correct?

Hence, the aim of this second stage of the pre-training phase was to help the subjects recognize what is easy for them, and to have them realize the necessity to

face what presents itself as a difficult goal to them. Although there was a tendency to make them focus on each area (fluency or accuracy) at a time, subjects knew that it was for the sake of good practice, expected to lead to mastery, and development of both skills at the end of the training. That is, the research is not stating any degree of priority for any of the two skills. We believe that it is essential to have a dual emphasis on both accuracy and fluency at any stage of teaching. Consequently, this study does not support the fluency-oriented approach, which emphasizes two points that stem from the Natural Approach suggested by Krashen and Terrell (1983). One is that meaningful communication is the key to develop spoken skills. The other is that the least amount of correction should be given, otherwise communication itself is hampered. Those who believe in the fluency-oriented approach value the natural acquisition of languages. Errors are regarded as inevitable by-products observed in the natural process of development rather than simply avoidable mistakes. However, it is not the case that we are defending the accuracy-oriented approach that places more emphasis on accuracy by pursuing mainly grammatical correctness. Yet, in this second part of the pre-training stage the researcher aimed at emphasizing the fact that:

A steady stream of speech which is highly inaccurate in vocabulary, syntax, or pronunciation could be so hard to understand as to violate an essential aspect of fluency being comprehensible. On the other hand, it is possible for the speaker to be halting but accurate . . . Sentence level grammatical accuracy that violates principles of discourse and appropriateness is also possible, but such language would not be truly accurate in following the communicative rules of the target language (Ebsworth, 1998: 24).

Summing up, the pre-training stage was divided into two main parts: confidence building and defining the subjects' preferences in terms of fluency or accuracy. Then, the second part of the research was conducted to teach the subjects the CSs selected to form the taxonomy of this investigation.

#### **4.5. The training Phase**

Proponents of strategy training, who included instructions of CSs in their studies (Dörnyei, 1995; Faerch and Kasper, 1986; Nakatani, 2010; Tarone, 1984; Willems, 1987), clearly suggest a two-phase training scheme that includes both instruction and practice.

During the instruction stage subjects should be aware of:

- 1- The existence of communication strategies.
- 2- Their important role in solving communicative problems.
- 3- The communicative efficacy of each CS.

Raising awareness can be done either by giving direct and explicit explanation (deductively) (Dörnyei, 1995) or through making the subjects work out the strategies by themselves via performance or observation (inductive teaching) (Faerch and Kasper, 1986; Nakatani, 2010; Tarone, 1984). The instruction stage, then, can be defined as a metacognitive stage in which input is given or elicited from the subjects to inform them about the types of communication strategies that they might use to solve their communicative problems, and about the when and how to use these strategies.

The second phase of the strategy training is the practice stage. After giving the subjects the necessary information about the existing CSs and their use and usage, there should be a period of practice. The practice is to give the subjects the opportunity to assimilate the input by experiencing it. It is crucial to create tasks or activities in which the subjects would feel obliged to use the newly introduced CSs. However, the practice of the introduced CSs is done either separately; that is, after each session of instruction, which normally includes one new CS, or at the end of all the sessions to consolidate all the information and to have a complete practice of all the CSs together. The present study combined both forms of practice since it gave the subjects time to practice after each session. It also provided two practice sessions to put the whole input of this strategy training together in different tasks, which are going to be tackled in the following paragraphs describing the strategy training experiment.

The types of tasks designed to practice CSs have been a crucial topic that raises different proposals. Some researchers like Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) stand for tasks that present specific problems to be solved by the trainees to trigger the use of CSs. These activities include object description tasks, information gap tasks, and direction giving tasks that create problems derived from lack of vocabulary (Clennell, 1995; Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1991; Paribakht, 1986; Tarone, 1984; Willems, 1987). Others like Faerch and Kasper (1986) suggest that the tasks in a more general term should give the subjects the opportunity to set the communicative goal to be achieved by the task. The tasks are also expected to include a problem-solving situation that challenges the trainees, who should explicitly accept to fulfill the task.

To sum up, this second stage of the experiment is the most important one in terms of the expected effect on the subjects' output. This strategy training stage is divided into instruction and practice.

The different conceptualizations and categorizations of CSs that researchers make use of in their investigations vary from one study to the other. In this investigation we developed our own taxonomy for the training stage and for the data analysis based on Faerch and Kasper's taxonomy (1983), since it is considered to be "the most carefully set up taxonomy" (Kellerman, Poulisse and Amerlaan, 1997: 165).

However, this taxonomy has been altered to fit the objectives and the methodological framework of the study. Since the experiment aims at enhancing the subjects' fluency and self-confidence in using English, we considered it trivial to deal with reduction strategies that cannot serve the aims of the actual study. Such was also the case of some compensatory strategies through which speakers/writers of SL/FL make use of their L1 to solve their communicative problems. That is, this study includes only the following part of what Faerch and Kasper defined as achievement strategies: IL based strategies (paraphrasing, restructuring), and cooperative strategies (appeal for authority, asking for repetition). The latter were not taken into consideration while practicing written CSs; consequently these CSs were ruled out in the analysis of the written data since those are oral CSs that should not appear in written production. Moreover, to serve the aims of the current investigation the taxonomy of this study included two more

general types of strategies, which were further subcategorized into two groupings, based on previous representative studies (Bialystok, 1983; Dörnyei and Scott, 1997; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Nakatani, 2010; Tarone, 1983). These two main strategies are time-gaining strategies (gap-fillers), and maintenance strategies (providing active response and shadowing). This taxonomy also included the use of *chunks*, as a new element, as far as CSs are concerned, because we believe it to be a good tool for non-native speakers to solve their communicative problems and sound more fluent. According to Erman and Warren's (2000), the prefabricated chunks are utilized as a sign of fluent performance, which largely depends on automatic processing of stored units.

As previously mentioned, some researchers like Dörnyei supported the fact that some CSs are not worth teaching “. . . as some strategies (such as message abandonment) are clearly not desirable to teach, whereas some others (circumlocution or appeal for help) are not only useful and desirable, but also involve certain core words and structures, which lend themselves readily to classroom instruction” (1995: 62). Others like Brooks explained the importance of teaching some CSs and held that we should be selective in designing our strategy training “Strategies such as circumlocution need to be developed to make unknown lexical items understood . . . More importantly, students need to be encouraged to request clarification of information . . .” (1992: 66).

Therefore, the training stage of the actual investigation was divided into 8 sessions, the first 6 of which were dedicated to explicit strategy instruction after a warm-up listening activity meant to elicit data and to make the subjects deduce the CSs used in the listening. The aim of the whole training was to help the learners become aware of their own learning processes, and to develop their metacognitive skills. This was done by introducing specific oral/written communication strategies that might enhance skills for managing interaction actively during oral or written spontaneous communication. In addition to the first part of the training, there was another equally important part to which we dedicated 2 complete sessions. In this second part, the subjects of the two experimental groups who participated in the strategy training (the 6 sessions mentioned previously and detailed below) were all given the opportunity to consolidate what they had learnt

and to put together all the CSs that they have been practicing separately during the first part of the training. That is, subjects of the high and low proficiency groups were made to practice during two sessions with oral and written communicative tasks in which they were required to use all the CSs they had learnt during the training. The whole strategy training experiment was structured as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> session: modified output strategies (paraphrasing)

2<sup>nd</sup> session: modified output strategies (restructuring)

3<sup>rd</sup> Session: energy and time saving strategies (Chunks)

4<sup>th</sup> session: help seeking strategies (appeal for authority and asking for repetition)

5<sup>th</sup> session: time-gaining strategies (gap-fillers)

6<sup>th</sup> session: maintenance strategies (providing active response and shadowing)

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> sessions: practice of all the previous CSs (paraphrasing, restructuring, chunks, appeal for authority, asking for repetition, gap-fillers, providing active response and shadowing).

The teaching method adopted for this training was an inductive one. The subjects were provided with a recording and its transcription at the beginning of each lesson. The listening worked as a *warm-up activity* which the trainees had to analyze, with the help of the researcher, in order to work out the CSs used by the speaker. After the warm-up activity students were made to *write down the new CS* and were asked to *give oral and written examples* using the introduced CS. As a follow up activity the subjects were given *one oral and one written task* to be fulfilled. The sequencing of the tasks was always from oral to written ones following the previously mentioned principle of Gillham (2008) that insists on the fact that the *adverse effect order* is lower when an informal task precedes a formal one.

It is common for English learners to find difficulties with vocabulary and to feel that they do not have enough words to express their ideas. Our subjects were sensitized that they are not the only ones to have this weakness in spoken English. This was done by bringing into the classroom examples of other people from



different parts of the world. In these examples the speakers identify the problem of vocabulary as the biggest hindrances they face in spoken English. In this way, the subjects were made aware of the importance of improving their CSs to cope with their problems in communication.

The modified interaction strategy is the process whereby language users signal for negotiation in order to overcome communication difficulties. This process includes two types of strategies that were introduced in two different sessions since we believe that due to the high degree of similarity between these two CSs it might be confusing for the subjects to work on them in the same strategy training session. The two CSs included under this category of CSs are *paraphrasing* and *restructuring* defined as following:

➤ Session 1: paraphrasing

Paraphrasing as used by Faerch and Kasper (1983) is defined as the act of explaining what one means by giving a description or a definition (circumlocution) of the target item in the language user's own words. It usually results in an elaboration of the speech. This strategy has three sub-classifications:

- a. General physical properties: refer to universal features of objects (color, size, material, and special dimensions).
- b. Specific features: are usually marked by the surface structure "has".
- c. Functional description: indicates the function of an object, and the actions that can be performed with it.

➤ Session 2: restructuring

Restructuring is a communicative strategy used whenever the learner is unable to complete a sentence, which s/he has already started performing, because of lexical or syntactical problems. Therefore, the language user stops to develop an alternative structure that may facilitate conveying the intended message without any type of reduction. That is, to gain time to think of synonyms or a specific

description, language users can start again from the beginning to reconstruct their sentences (Faerch and Kasper, 1983).

➤ Session 3: chunks

Chunks: It is the use of already learnt expressions to solve a communicative problem or just to sound fluent. Chunks are different from other sentences in three specific characteristics:

- Institutionalization: degree to which a word is conventionalized in the language: does it reoccur as a unit?
- Fixedness: degree to which it is frozen as a sequence of words. Does it inflect in predictable ways? *They rocked the boat* not *they rocked the boats*, *on the other hand* not *on another hand* or *a different hand*.
- Non-compositionality: degree to which it cannot be interpreted on a word-by-word basis, but has a specialized unitary meaning: *kicks the bucket*, *of course*.

This entails that knowing the meaning of the words is useful, but knowing their collocations is necessary. Since words do not appear in isolation, our experimental groups were taught to learn them in phrases or groups of words which go together all the time, and to use them together to make their speech or writing sound fluent and natural. This is basically learnt through listening out for fixed phrases, recording collocations and idioms and introducing them into their daily conversations. This repertoire could be helpful to gain time for more thinking and to express a lot of information with short and concentrated sentences, saving energy. This is what Peters explained: “if I find an especially felicitous way of expressing an idea, I may store up that turn of phrase so that the next time I need it. It will come forth as a prefabricated chunk, even though to my hearer it may not be distinguishable from newly generated speech” (1983: 3).

➤ Session 4: appeal for authority and asking for repetition

Since the use of the Help Seeking Strategies has proved to be more common in IL and easier to assimilate by SL/FL learners (Nakatani, 2005), the two subcategories of this CSs were introduced in one single training session.

Appeal for authority: Asking the interlocutor to supply a lexical item, or asking about its correctness, to be used only in case the speaker gets stuck and cannot produce the needed word (Faerch and Kasper, 1983).

Asking for repetition: It is a communicative strategy that the language user turns to when s/he does not hear or understand the message of his/her interlocutor (Faerch and Kasper, 1983).

➤ Session 5: gap-fillers

Gap-fillers are words or gambits to fill pauses and to gain time to think. When the speakers have difficulties expressing an idea, they use these strategies to give themselves time to think and to keep the communication channel open.

➤ Session 6: providing active response and shadowing

In this session we included two types of CSs which were *providing active response* and *shadowing*. The former entailed being an effective listener by making positive comments or using other conversation gambits that show interest in the speech. The latter type presented exact, partial or expanded repetitions of the interlocutor's preceding utterance in order to show the listener's comprehension of important issues.

➤ Sessions 7 and 8: practice of all the Previous CSs

During these two last sessions we did not introduce any new CSs. They were meant to be review session in which the subjects had to fulfill written and oral

tasks to practice the seven CSs that were introduced. It was the time to put all the strategies into practice and produce written and oral output using all the strategies together.

To introduce these CSs to the high and low proficient experimental groups all the first six sessions were divided into first a warm-up activity (that includes a review of the previous pre-training phase), a listening exercise from which the subjects were helped to extract the used CSs, and a performance stage in which the subjects had to practice in pairs. This was the way in which the first 6 strategy training sessions were managed to make the subjects discover the communicative strategies by themselves since we believed that it would be more effective for them to discover the CSs than to be explicitly informed about these CSs (Appendix 8). Many neurological and psychological researchers such as Bransford, Cocking and Brown (2000) provided strong support for inductive teaching methods. Research also demonstrated that inductive methods encourage students to adopt a deep approach to learning (Coles, 1985; Norman and Schmidt, 1992; Ramsden, 2003) and that the challenges provided by inductive methods serve as precursors to intellectual development that raises the students motivation to learn (Felder and Brent, 2004).

The following table explains the framework of the first six strategy training sessions in an attempt to summarize and clarify the way in which the training was conducted.

#### 4.5.1. A Framework of the First 6 Strategy Training Sessions

Time	Stage	Procedures	Aim
10 min	Warm-up	<p>The researcher will ask questions about the previous stage of the strategy training and the students will have to summarize what they have learnt.</p> <p>The students will be involved in the next stage by linking what they have learnt to what they will learn later. Explanation that the following listening exercises will introduce a new CS that they should work out.</p>	<p>To link the new information with the already existing knowledge.</p> <p>To help them feel involved in the training.</p> <p>To encourage them to participate in the next activity.</p>
15 min	Listening	<p>The subjects will listen to a native or non-native speaker talking about various themes. Then they will be given a written paragraph including the same CS.</p> <p>The oral/written input includes a demonstration of the CS to be learnt.</p> <p>The subjects will be asked to</p>	<p>To introduce the new CS and to give a clear example of the use of this communicative strategy.</p>

<p><b>15 min</b></p>	<p>Oral practice: In all the sessions</p> <p>Written practice:</p>	<p>explain how the speaker/writer managed to explain his ideas, and which CS they can identify in the speech.</p> <p>The researcher will write on all the new words introduced by the subjects on the board, and will explain the new CS.</p> <p>The use of the new CS is also explained in detail by giving examples.</p> <p>Subjects will be asked to provide examples and they will be stimulated through the use of realia.</p>	<p>To encourage inductive learning.</p> <p>To give the subjects the opportunity to practice the CSs</p>
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	<p>During all the sessions except for the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> (detailed information about the tasks used and oral/written activities is provided in Appendix 8)</p>		<p>To put the subjects in a problematic situation in which they will feel obliged to use the new CS.</p>
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Before starting with the analysis of the data, there are some points that should be clarified, as far as the classification of CSs is concerned. First, as previously explained, the objectives of the research and the nature of each task lead us to make slight changes to Faerch and Kasper's taxonomy (1983) that consisted of eliminations and additions of some CSs. That is, while analyzing data from the written tasks (composition and storytelling), two types that are more concerned with speech, namely Time Gaining Strategies and Maintenance Strategies were overruled and one more strategy was added (chunks) to enrich the students' repertoire of CSs and to update the investigation to recent research trends in the field of CSs. It is worth saying that the oral tasks yielded data representing the full range of the CSs existing in the taxonomy of the actual research.

Secondly, CSs in the analyzed data were categorized according to what their surface linguistic realization can reveal to the researcher. In other words, what was taken into consideration was the successfulness of the strategy and not its accuracy.

Thirdly, the same CS can be interpreted in different ways depending on the hearer/reader. For the categorization of the produced strategies, especially the

ones belonging to the same category, the researcher designed what is called a *strategy categorizing sheet* that was used to take note of all the CSs used by the subjects. The *strategy categorizing sheet* was a good tool to reduce subjectivity of the classification process since it was shared with other researchers to collect different points of view about each strategy before categorizing it. It was also used to evaluate the effectiveness of the used CSs. Two copies of the *strategy categorizing sheet* were administered to two researchers working in the field of SLA. The two analysts were required to fill in the sheets with their own categorization of the CSs, and the communicative effectiveness of each CS (only effective CSs were taken into consideration and were interpreted numerically to be reflected afterwards in data analysis). After receiving the classifications and judgments of CSs effectiveness done by the other two analysts, we contrasted and compared the results. Only CSs that were labeled similarly by two analysts were admitted. This multiplicity in the viewpoints can represent a strong argument for the nature of the CSs used in this research.

## **5. Piloting**

Before starting the data analysis procedures, it was necessary to verify the feasibility of the study. To this end, a small-scale inquiry was conducted to check the validity and reliability of the research instruments. That is, the content of the tasks, the clarity of instructions to administer to the subjects and the extent to which the tasks will elicit the required type of data was verified. The procedures of data collection, especially concerning the video-recording of the participants as they performed their tasks and the sequencing of the tasks were also tested.

The pilot study was conducted using a sample of 10 high proficient and 10 low proficient students all of whom met the requirement of the representative sample. The subjects were asked to perform all the tasks gradually but all in one meeting. The researcher administered each task to each student individually. She explained in the subjects' mother tongue the requirements of each task. Each activity was done immediately after the explanation. They were all told to perform using only English. There were no time limits imposed initially so as to make the students act in an anxiety free context. Generally, they completed the whole tasks in about one



hour including neither the time of explanation, nor that assigned to their self-visualization.

This pilot study had interesting results in many aspects. Results yielded were useful to have a preliminary account of the CSs that the students use which emphasizes the utility of the adopted taxonomy. In other words, the types of CSs that were reported in the pilot study did not match with the types of CSs that figure in the adopted taxonomy for the strategy training which entailed that the strategy training will be useful and that the included taxonomy was adequate. The second aspect that proved to require no change concerned the instructions given for performing the tasks. Actually, the pilot study showed that providing the instructions of the tasks in the subjects' mother tongue ascertained a full understanding of the task and how it should be performed. It also made the students feel more comfortable with the task and relieved from the extra burden of assuring a correct deciphering and understanding of the instructions before engaging in the assignment.

The pilot test also considered other relevant elements such as the video-recording of the subjects and their visualization session. In fact, it was burdensome to convince the students to be videotaped during their performance. Many students refused though they were assured that such records would be only used for research purposes. Therefore, this factor was ruled out since it showed itself as an element that would have negative influence on data collection. Keeping in mind that the subjects will not be at ease if they are videotaped which may reduce or change their performance level, the researcher decided not to video tape the oral tasks to avoid any possible interference in the elicited data.

One last thing that the piloting study proved was that the sequencing of the tasks was adequate but it seemed necessary to split the task load to be fulfilled on three occasions rather than in one shot. This was because subjects demonstrated a slight carelessness after the first two tasks, probably due to fatigue. This was not exclusive to subjects; the examiner also could not carry on with the same energy after examining a couple of students.

## 6. Data Collection

Data collection took place in the subjects' usual classroom and during class time. Consequently, the high-proficient groups of the control and the experimental groups took the pre-tests and the post-tests before the low proficient ones because their English class was scheduled to be previous to that of the low proficient subjects. Data collection was conducted over twelve sessions (six pre-tests and six post-tests sessions) divided as follows:

- *The experimental groups: Pre-tests ( see Appendix 6)*

1<sup>st</sup> session: self-confidence questionnaire before the pre-training phase.

2<sup>nd</sup> session: before the pre-training phase (interview and writing composition task).

3<sup>rd</sup> session: before the pre-training phase storytelling (oral and written).

- *The control groups: Pre-tests (see Appendix 6)*

1<sup>st</sup> session: self-confidence questionnaire.

2<sup>nd</sup> session: the interview and writing composition task.

3<sup>rd</sup> session: storytelling task (oral and written).

The subjects of the experimental groups completed the self-confidence questionnaire in 2 minutes before they started the pre-training phase. The students did the pre-test tasks in three different sessions as previously explained, and then they started the designed session named the pre-training phase that had as an objective raising the subjects' self-confidence and willingness to participate in the study. As far as the control groups are concerned they were asked to fill in the questionnaire and to do the tasks at the beginning of their usual English class. Although there were no time limits imposed, subjects of the four groups (experimental and control groups) generally completed the interview and the written composition task in about 30 minutes (10 minutes for the interview and 20 minutes for the written task). As for the storytelling task, it took them 10 minutes to do the oral version and about 15 minutes to do the written one. All the oral tasks were recorded and transcribed to obtain textual data. As far as the post-

tests are concerned, they were done in the same conditions and they had more or less the same length as the pre-tests.

Before the subjects started performing the tasks, they were given clear rubrics on how to proceed in each task to guarantee error free performance. It was also necessary to ensure comparable performance conditions for all the subjects. Therefore, students were informed that they were not allowed to use dictionaries, notebooks, laptops, mobile phones or any other resources in order to allow a fair comparison. In addition, research conditions were the same for everyone. The tests were administered in the same setting (the classroom) and with the same teacher.

- The experimental groups: Pre-test (see Appendix 6)

1<sup>st</sup> session: self-confidence questionnaire before the pre-training phase.

2<sup>nd</sup> session: before the pre-training phase (Interview and writing composition).

3<sup>rd</sup> session: before the pre-training phase storytelling (Oral and written).

- The control groups: Post-test (see Appendix 9)

1<sup>st</sup> session: self-confidence questionnaire.

2<sup>nd</sup> session: the interview and writing composition task.

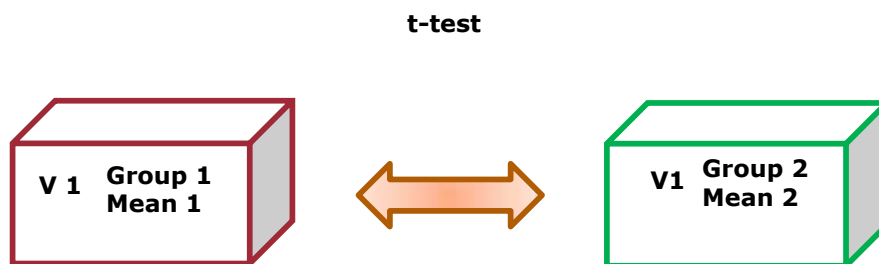
3<sup>rd</sup> session: oral and written storytelling.

Generally, all the conditions of the pre-test, including the timing and the sequencing of the tasks, were strictly respected in the process of collecting data for the post-test. That is, subjects had to do similar tasks in similar conditions during different sessions to make the comparison reliable and valid. Consequently, the tasks of the post-test were collected following the same scheme used in the pre-test data collection.

## 7. Statistical Analysis

### 7.1. Basic Statistical Concepts Used in Data Analysis

To clarify the basic concepts used in the analysis of the data we consider it necessary to represent and explain each method alone. The following graphics are believed to be helpful in distinguishing between tests in requirements and usage. Since not all tests can be applied to all data there is always a need to select the adequate one and in most times no single test can give a complete view of all the groups and variables.



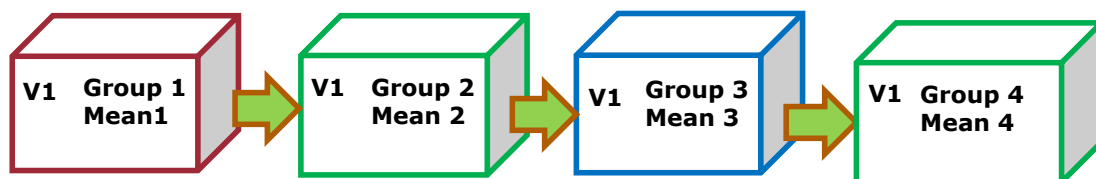
To compare the two groups 1 and 2 in one variable (V1) we set two hypotheses suggesting that:

**H0:  $M1 = M2$**

**H1:  $M1 \neq M2$**

And we set a  $p$  value with error possibility not more than 0.05:  $p < 0.05$  (the results are significant) and  $p > 0.05$  (the results are not significant). In other words, if  $p < 0.05$  then H0 is null but when  $p > 0.05$  H0 is proved. This test allow us to measure the significance of 1 variable (V1) in the 2 groups.

### The One-way ANOVA-test



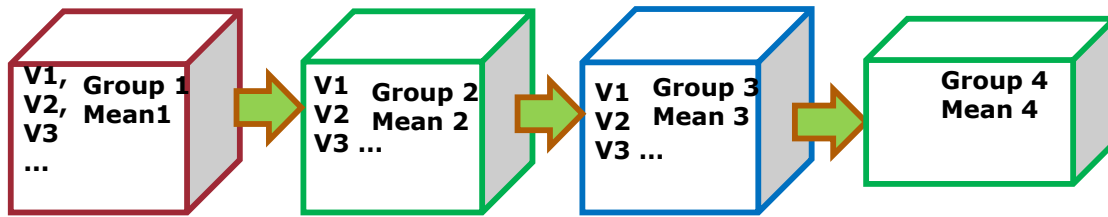
To compare the four groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 in one variable we set two hypotheses suggesting that:

**H0:  $M1 = M2 = M3 = M4$ .**

**H1:  $M1 \neq M2 \neq M3 \neq M4$ .**

And we get f-Snedecor that measures the significance of 1 variable (V1) in the four groups.

### The MANOVA-test



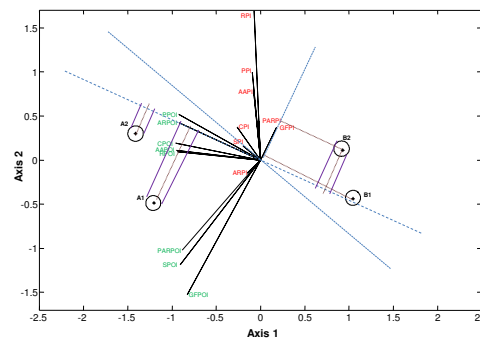
To compare the four groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 in more than one variable we set two hypotheses suggesting that:

**H0:  $M1V1 = M2V1 = M3V1 \dots$**

**H1:  $M1V1 \neq M2V1 \neq M3V1 \dots$**

And we get Wilks' Lambda that measures the significance of more than one variable (V1, V2, V3 . . .) in the four groups.

### The Canonical Biplot Analysis plan



Based on Wilks' Lambda shown in the chart above the Canonical-Biplot generates a plan that represents all the groups and all the variables even the non-significant ones.

In the actual investigation, the data was analyzed primarily for the identification and categorization of CSs; then, the elicited strategies were statistically analyzed and interpreted numerically to answer the research questions and to prove or falsify the research hypotheses. Therefore, in addition to the descriptive statistics used for the analysis of the frequency distribution of CSs per proficiency level, per task and per communication medium, inferential statistical (the one-way ANOVA-

tests, Wilks' Lambda and the Canonical Biplot Analysis) analyses were also used to analyze the possible relationships and differences between the different variables involved in the study. These analyses were of great use in gathering, organizing, analyzing and interpreting the numerical data.

In this research, the frequencies of CSs and the number of words produced per minute were manually calculated by counting the number of CSs and words used by each subject per task. However, all the other analyses were run using the free Biplot program available on the page of the statistics department of Universidad de Salamanca. This method by (Galindo, 1986; Gower and Hand, 1996) has recently become one of the most popular techniques for analyzing multivariate data. Biplot methods are techniques for the simultaneous representation of the (n) rows and (p) columns of a data matrix (X). This data is presented in reduced dimensions, where the rows represent individuals, objects or samples and the columns the variables measured on them. Classical Biplot methods are a graphical representation of a principal components analysis (PCA) that is used to obtain linear combinations that successively maximize the total. However, PCA is not considered an appropriate approach for this research that has a prior known group structure in the data. The most general methodology for discrimination among groups, using multiple observed variables, is Canonical Variate Analysis (CVA). CVA allows us to derive linear combinations that successively maximize the ratio of 'between-groups' to 'pooled within-groups' sample variance.

Several authors propose a Biplot representation for CVA called Canonical Biplot (CB) (Gower and Hand, 1996) which is oriented towards the discrimination between groups or MANOVA-Biplot with the aim of studying the variables responsible for the discrimination between groups. The main advantage of the Canonical Biplot version that uses this technique (CVA) is that it gives not only the possibility of establishing the differences between groups but also that of characterizing the specific variables that cause those differences. This statistical method is not yet widely used, mainly because it is still not available in the major statistical packages. Generally, the Biplot method includes t-test based on Wilks' Lambda distribution named for Samuel Wilks, which is a probability distribution used in multivariate hypothesis testing. It is a multivariate generalization of the

univariate F-distribution similar to Student's t-distribution, ANOVA and MANOVA tests in one numerical table that can be easily analyzed following the graphic representation of the results. Following the Biplot CVA the data was analyzed using t-test and ANOVA test including the confidence circles proposed by Amaro, Vicente-Villardón and Galindo-Villardón (2004). These were developed specifically for two-way designs research based on univariate Student t-Tests to perform post-hoc analysis of each variable.

### **7.2. The t-test**

It is designed to see the differences between two means “it helps determine how confident the researcher can be that the differences found between two groups are not due to chance” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 231). In this study, we might have used t-test to test the students’ use of CSs in the two different media and to see whether a relationship exists between the level of proficiency and the types of strategies employed by the subjects in the four tasks it could have also been used to study the effect of the training on the students’ fluency. However, the Canonical Biplot goes beyond the level of the t-test and used the One-Way ANOVA-test and the MANOVA-test based on Wilks’ Lambad that offer a complete analysis of the data to show whether the differences or similarities recorded in the number of times each single CS is used by the subjects in both mediums are an indicator of a significant difference, or can be merely attributed to sample variation. Each time, the scores resulting from the previously mentioned tests application are then matched against the critical  $p$ -value for significance at the  $p < 0.05$  per cent level of confidence.

### **7.3. The One-Way ANOVA-Test**

The analysis of variance was done through the One-Way ANOVA-test that is used to test the significance of differences between means. It proceeds through dividing the variation observed in two or more sets of data into different parts, assign the parts to different causes and then see whether the variation is greater than the predicted. “The t-test and ANOVA are based on the same theory and assumptions, when we compare two means, both tests yield exactly the same value of  $p$  and, hence, lead to the same conclusion regarding significance. So for two means, both tests are equivalent” (Pattens, 2002: 115). ANOVA differs from the t-test in that it allows testing of more than two variables in relation to sets of subjects. In the

present study, ANOVA tests are performed on the number of CSs used by the subjects from both proficiency groups to see whether the observed differences are of any significance in each of the four tasks. When the degree of significant signals is  $p < 0.05$ , this suggests the existence of a significant difference somewhere in the analyzed variables.

#### **7.4. The MANOVA-Test**

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is a statistical test procedure for comparing multivariate (population) means of several groups in more than two variables. Unlike ANOVA, it uses the variance-covariance between variables in testing the statistical significance of the mean differences. It is a generalized form of univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). This test is used when there are two or more dependent variables. It helps to answer: do changes in the independent variables have significant effects on the dependent variables; what are the interactions among the dependent variables and among the independent variables. Essentially, MANOVA takes scores from the multiple dependent variables and creates a single dependent variable giving the ability to test for the above effects.

As previously explained, all these tests are generated by the Canonical Biplot program and are represented in tables and plans with the possibility of multivariate interpretations of the data to compare and contrast the groups and the variables.

This chapter was devoted to the research methodology. It included detailed information about the research design, the participants, the research instruments, the used tasks, data collection procedures, and the different statistical measures used to analyze the collected data through the application of the Canonical Biplot Analysis.



# Chapter 3

## Results

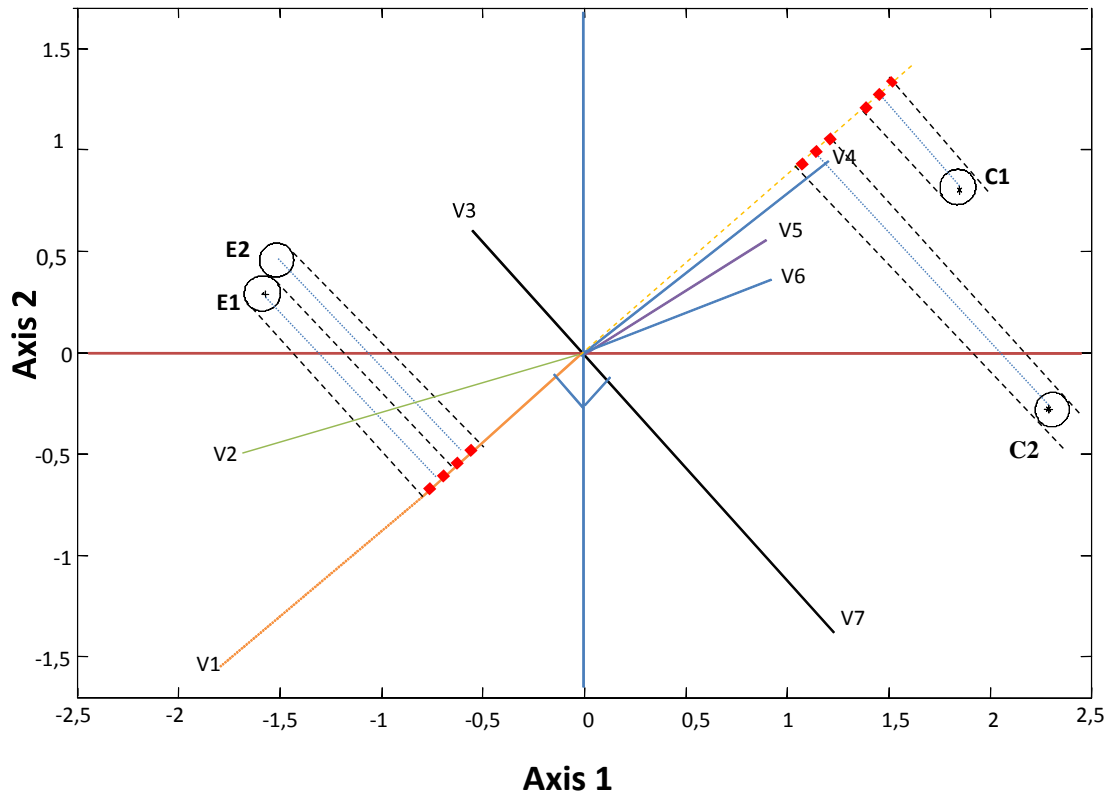
This chapter is concerned with the results of the research and their discussion by trying to answer each and every research question and research hypothesis. Therefore, the results are presented in two related sections; the first one is concerned with answering the five research questions and the eight hypotheses. The last one is a discussion of the results obtained and a report of the main findings.

The fact that the Canonical Biplot Analysis, used in this study, is a new method that has recently been used and adapted to language research makes the interpretation of its plans a tricky area. Therefore, we consider it useful to start with an unreal example (in point 8.1. below) to explain the basic rules to follow and the main facts that guide any possible interpretation of the results before introducing the authentic results of the current investigation obtained from analyzing the gathered data before and after the strategy training.

## 8. Data Analysis

### 8.1. Four Unreal Groups Designed to Explain the Basic Points in Interpreting the Canonical Biplot Plans

Plan1



V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, V6 and V7: Variables
E1: Low experimental group.
E2: High experimental group.
C1: Low control group.
C2: High control group.
.....: Projecting the results of the means of each group on every variable.
- - -: Projecting to compare the groups (t-test).
- . - . -: Overlapping groups (no significant differences between the groups).
: Axis 1.
— : Axis 2.

As shown in the figure above the Canonical Biplot plan provides different types of analysis in one single plan:

- **First:** by projecting the center of the circles in a perpendicular form on the variables we are getting the results of the means of the groups in a determined variable. In this way, the Canonical Biplot plan can show the variables responsible for the differences between groups. The projection of the centers of the circles gives the order of the means in a specific variable. In other words, we can specify the groups with high level of use and those with low level of use within the same variable. To give an example of this type of comparison between groups from the figure above we can see that E1 presents a higher level of use of V1 than E2 because the projection of E1 on V1 results at a longer distance from the center than the one of E2. However, if we want to establish a comparison between the four groups in the same variable (V1) by ordering them from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> we can see that the group with the highest level of use of V1 is E1, E2 comes after then C2 and the last one with the lowest level of all the groups is C1 (Groups C1 and C2 are projected on the opposite direction of the variable V1 which means that their level of use of this variable is very low). This analysis allows us to have a comparison between each pair of groups in each and every variable. Similar to what a t-test can offer.
- **Second:** we have also the possibility of comparing the variables and deciding on the type of correlation between them. To make the comparison it is indispensable to compare the angles of the lines presenting the variables in the plan. That is, the smaller the angle is the bigger the linear correlation can be and the other way around. To explain this type of positive and negative correlation between the variables we refer to the plan above from which we can conclude that there is a high level of independence or opposition between V3 and V7 because they form a continuous line and that no correlation can be established between V7 and V1 because they form a 90 degree angle. However, the linear correlation between V4, V5 and V6 is highly positive because they form small angles as they appear next to each other.

- **Third:** As far as the comparison between groups is concerned, the differences between each couple of groups are reflected by projecting the sides of the circles. The plan provides a global idea about the differences between groups in all and every variable. It allows contrasting and comparing two or more groups to each other. In this way we can see if there are any significant differences between the control and the experimental groups and between the high and the low groups. To conclude, the farther the projected lines of the circles of two groups are the more different they are in all the variables (C1 and C2). However, if two groups overlap in one projected line of their circles this means that there are no significant differences between them in all the variables (E1 and E2).

In this way we can conclude that the Canonical Biplot Analysis offers different tests in one plan and that the interpretations can be directed to answer the questions of the study by comparing and contrasting both groups and variables and focusing on the outstanding differences and similarities.

## **8.2. The Results of the Oral Production in the Interview Task in the Pre and Post-tests**

The analyzed data includes 232 protocols for the interview task in both pre and post-tests (60 of each low proficient group and 56 of each high proficient group). The produced CSs were classified following the taxonomy specifically developed for the actual study including productive communication strategies divided into 8 CSs: paraphrasing (P), restructuring (R), appeal for authority (AA), asking for repetition (AR), gap-fillers (GF), providing active response (PAR), shadowing (S), and chunks (C). As previously explained the data was described numerically by counting the total percentage of use of CSs by every individual subject to get the total amount of the CSs employed by each group in every category. The data was then statistically analyzed by using the Canonical Biplot that allows the discrimination and comparison between groups and specifies the variables responsible for those differences by first applying a One-Way ANOVA-test shown in table 1 bellow.

**Table 1**

Variable	Total	Explained	Residual	F	sign.
CPI	116	9.356	105.644	3.306	0.02285
RPI	116	43.727	71.273	22.904	0
PPI	116	10.52	104.48	3.759	0.0129
AAPI	116	6.95	108.05	2.401	0.07151
ARPI	116	4.405	110.595	1.487	0.22193
GFPI	116	6.203	108.797	2.128	0.10061
SPI	116	5.747	109.253	1.964	0.12348
PARPI	116	3.303	111.697	1.104	0.35069
CPOI	116	104.564	10.436	374.076	0
RPOI	116	100.497	14.503	258.698	0
PPOI	116	100.137	14.863	251.521	0
AAPOI	116	102.311	12.689	301.017	0
ARPOI	116	98.17	16.83	217.766	0
GFPOI	116	100.094	14.906	250.688	0
SPOI	116	106.209	8.791	451.047	0
PARPOI	116	99.176	15.824	233.989	0

<b>PI:</b> pre-test interview.
<b>POI:</b> post-test interview.
<b>P:</b> paraphrasing.
<b>R:</b> restructuring.
<b>S:</b> shadowing.
<b>AA:</b> appeal for authority.
<b>AR:</b> asking for repetition.
<b>GF:</b> gap-fillers.
<b>PAR:</b> providing active response.
<b>C:</b> chunks.
<b>F:</b> F-Snedecor.
<b>Sign:</b> Significance $p < 0.05$ .

The figures in the table above represent the results of the One-Way ANOVA-test that demonstrates the differences in the number of CSs used in the interview task in the pre and post-tests. It is clearly shown that there are significant differences in the use of most CSs (appeal for authority, asking for repetition, gap-fillers, shadowing and providing active response) between the pre and the post-test employed in a  $p < 0.05$  level. That is, in the pre-test the four groups showed no significant use of the previously mentioned CSs; whereas in the post-test these variables resulted significant. At this stage, if we use only the One-Way ANOVA-test the non-significant variables should be neglected and consequently could not be analyzed. Moreover, the ones that resulted significant in both pre and post-tests may be regarded as strategies that did not benefit from the training (which is not true). Thus, the Canonical Biplot Analysis based on Wilks' Lambda solves this problem by comparing all the groups in all the variables and establishing a global  $p$  value that represents the significance of all the groups in all the variables. In this

way even the variables that resulted non-significant in the One-Way ANOVA-test can be represented in the Canonical Biplot plan.

### 8.2.1. Comparing the Variables between Groups

The Canonical Biplot Analysis applied to the data collected from the interview task in the pre and post-tests also offers a global contrast of the four groups in all the variables based on Wilks' Lambda which is the equivalent of a t-test represented in a general form. The results are reflected in the table below that shows a very high level of interpretation of the data gathered from the interview task in the pre and post-tests.

**Table 2**

Dimension	Eigenv.	% Expl.	Cumm.	TSS	ESS	F	p-val
1	7.469	91.613	91.613	56.79	55.79	2082.827	0
2	2.183	7.828	99.442	5.767	4.767	177.979	0
3	0.583	0.558	100	1.34	0.34	12.689	0

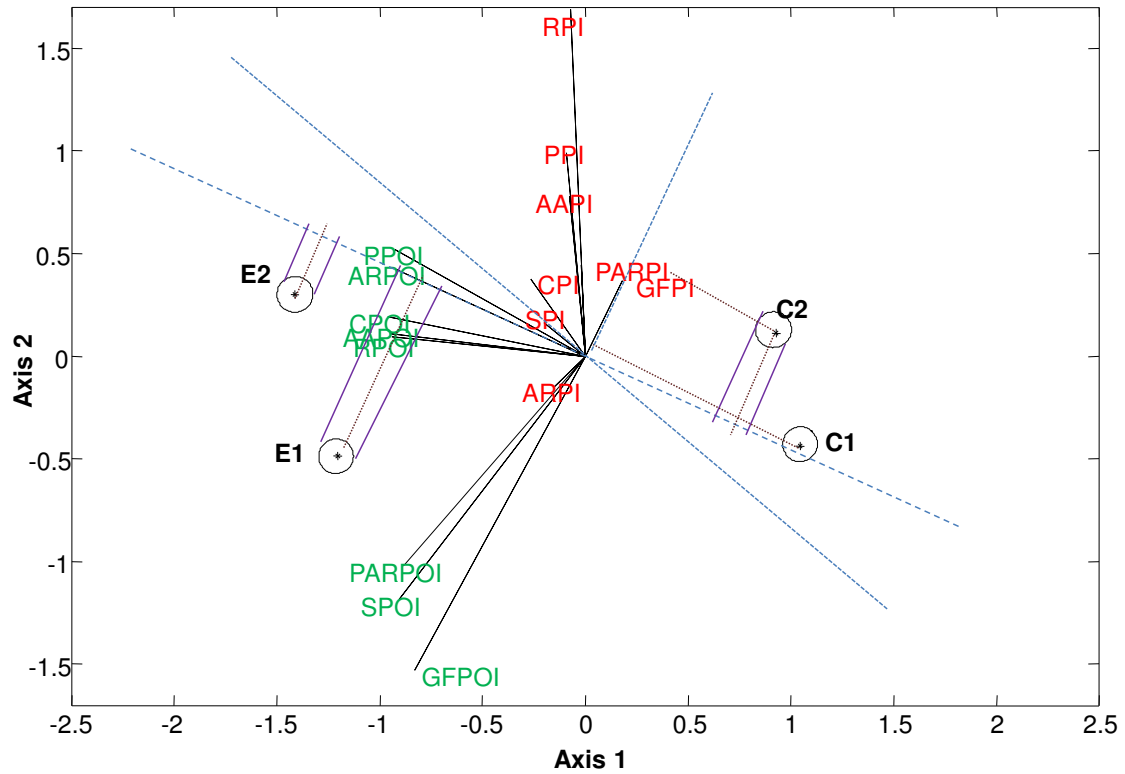
Global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda.  
p-value:1.7853e-102

As highlighted in the table above both axes 1 and 2 show an elevated degree of representation (91.613 and 99.442) with a global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda with a  $p$  of 1.7853e-102 in a level of  $p < 0.05$ . In other words, this global t-test assures that all the groups and variables (even the ones that resulted non-significant in the One-Way ANOVA-test shown in table 1) are highly interpretable and, therefore, the projection of those variables and groups in the plan designed by the Canonical Biplot Analysis projects and reflects all the data compiled in the pre and post-tests of the interview task.

All the results represented and discussed in the One-Way ANOVA-test, including the ones with a low level of significance that appeared especially in the pre-test results, are represented in the plan generated by the Canonical Biplot Analysis. This availed the analysis of all the variables used in the taxonomy. In the Canonical Biplot plan shown bellow we can see the differences between groups in every and each variable. This plan, as previously explained, offers the same analysis as a

t-test an ANOVA and a MANOVA-test at the same time giving the researcher the possibility of comparing and contrasting the points of interest of his/her research.

## Plan 2



<b>PI:</b> pre-test interview.
<b>POI:</b> post-test interview.
<b>P:</b> paraphrasing.
<b>R:</b> restructuring.
<b>S:</b> shadowing.
<b>AA:</b> appeal for authority.
<b>AR:</b> asking for repetition.
<b>GF:</b> gap-fillers.
<b>PAR:</b> providing active response.
<b>C:</b> chunks.
<b>E1:</b> low proficient experimental group.
<b>E2:</b> high proficient experimental group.
<b>C1:</b> low proficient control group.
<b>C2:</b> high proficient control group.

The graphic above shows the use of oral CSs in the oral interview in both pre and post-tests of the low and the high experimental and control groups (E1, E2, C1 and C2). The possibility of having a general representation of all the CSs used by the four groups in all the tasks both in pre and post-tests is an advantage of the Canonical Biplot that allows to have a general overview on the results and to make

general conclusions comparing the four groups in the use of each category of CSs and contrasting the results of the frequency of employing every specific strategy in the pre and post-tests.

As reflected in the plan above the two low proficient groups (E1 and C1) demonstrate a very low level of CSs production. The four groups show a slight difference in use of CSs in which the low proficient group (E1 and C1) used less CSs than the high proficient one (E2 and C2): the projection of the centers of the circles of C2 results farther from the center of the axes than that of C1 as seen on the projection of the two groups on gap-fillers and providing active response in the pre-test. The projection of the centers of the circles of E2 results farther from the center of the axes than that of E1 on asking for repetition and paraphrasing in the post-test. These differences in the frequency distribution of the CSs used by the high and the low proficient groups confirm the first hypothesis of this study expecting the low proficient students to use less CSs than the high proficient ones. Moreover, it is also reflected in the plan that the number of CSs increases with the level of proficiency. Another important remark is the difference between the types of oral CSs employed by the high and low proficient groups: the low proficient groups (E1 and C1) use more help seeking strategies than the high-proficient groups (E2 and C2), which goes hand in hand with the second hypothesis of the current investigation suggesting that the Spanish low proficient EFL students will use help seeking strategies more than the high proficient EFL ones.

Generally, there is an over-reliance on some strategies (paraphrasing, restructuring and appeal for authority) in the pre-tests and a great development of the use of all the strategies by the experimental groups in the post-tests (gap-fillers, paraphrasing and shadowing that appear as the longest lines in the post-test plan) since we can see that the variables of the pre-test form a continuous line (GFPI and GFPOI) or a very open angle between  $60^{\circ}$  and  $160^{\circ}$  (PARPI, PAROI; SPI and SPOI). Moreover, the four groups show a relatively very low level of use of the modified output strategies (restructuring and paraphrasing) and energy and time saving strategies (chunks) when compared to their production in the post-test.



The results of this test go hand in hand with the third hypothesis which assumes that the strategy training will improve the use of oral CSs of both high and low proficient learners. To form a general idea about the oral CSs that benefited most from the strategy training at this stage we can conclude that shadowing, chunks and appeal for authority were better developed than the rest of the strategies. These results show that the training on oral communication strategies in the interview task improved the use of those strategies by both the high and low proficient groups with a slight difference that marks the high proficient students as relatively better users of oral CSs than the low proficient groups (this can be seen by projecting the circles of the groups on every oral CS).

### 8.3. Results Obtained From the Oral Storytelling Task

**Table 3**

Variable	Total	Explained	Residual	F	sign.
CPSO	116	12.908	102.092	4.72	0.00386
RPSO	116	8.126	106.874	2.838	0.04124
PPSO	116	8.147	106.853	2.846	0.04083
AAPSO	116	39.007	75.993	19.163	0
ARPSO	116	10.882	104.118	3.902	0.01078
GFPSO	116	3.746	111.254	1.257	0.29266
SPSO	116	5.399	109.601	1.839	0.14419
PARPSO	116	6.045	108.955	2.071	0.10803
CPOSO	116	106.868	8.132	490.633	0
RPOSO	116	101.431	13.569	279.067	0
PPOSO	116	107.426	7.574	529.542	0
AAPOSO	116	99.124	15.876	233.104	0
ARPOSO	116	104.492	10.508	371.25	0
GFPOSO	116	105.643	9.357	421.504	0
SPOSO	116	107.825	7.175	561.02	0
PARPOSO	116	107.486	7.514	534.025	0

PSO: pre-test storytelling oral task.
POSO: post-test storytelling oral task.
P: paraphrasing.
R: restructuring.
S: shadowing.
AA: appeal for authority.
AR: asking for repetition.
GF: gap-fillers.
PAR: providing active response.
C: chunks.
F: f-Snedecor.
Sign: significance $p < 0.05$

In this set of data, as in the interview task, a total number of 232 oral storytelling productions were analyzed. The results of the One-Way ANOVA-test shown in table 3 above reflect the use of CSs by the four groups in the pre and post-tests. Again, some CSs (restructuring, paraphrasing, gap-fillers, shadowing and providing active response) resulted non-significant in the pre-test. However, in the post-test all the strategies were significant. Once more, the One-Way ANOVA-test is not enough to represent all the variables and the Canonical Biplot Analysis will be a good solution to represent and analyze each and every variable.

### 8.3.1. Comparing the Variables between Groups

As previously explained, applying the Canonical Biplot Analysis to the data provides a global comparison of the four groups in all the variables based on Wilks' Lambda that is similar to a t-test employed globally. The results of the oral storytelling task are shown in table 4 below. Again there is a high level of interpretation of the data which expresses the degree of *goodness* of both variables and groups. As marked in the table below both axes 1 and 2 demonstrate an eminent level of representation (96.118 and 99.722) with a global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda that gives a *p* of 3.1035e-098. Generally, the Wilks' Lambda (as a general t-test) asserts the interpretability of all the groups and variables including the ones resulted non-significant in the One-Way ANOVA-test shown in table 3 (this means that they are well represented in the plan and can be compared and contrasted). Consequently, all the variables and groups are well represented and completely reflected in plan 3 generated by the Canonical Biplot Analysis to interpret the results of the oral storytelling tasks in the pre and post-tests.

**Table 4**

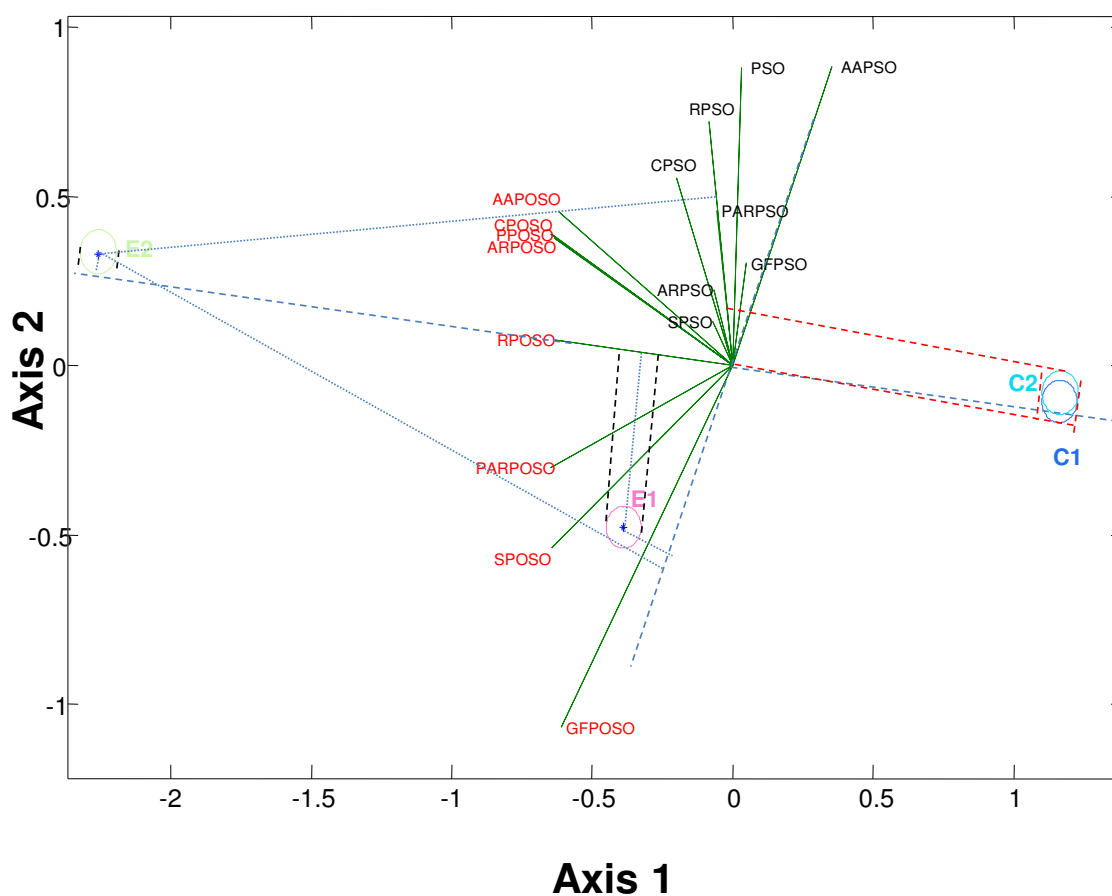
Dimension	Eigenv.	%Expl.	Cumm.	TSS	ESS	F	p-val
1	8.69	96.118	96.118	76.512	75.512	2819.109	0
2	1.683	3.604	99.722	3.831	2.831	105.703	0
3	0.467	0.278	100	1.218	0.218	8.154	0

Global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda  
p-value:3.1035e-098.

On the whole, we can state that all the results of the One-Way ANOVA-test on table 3, are represented in the plan that the Canonical Biplot Analysis provides (even the ones that resulted non-significant). From all the previous analysis of the

collected data in the pre and post-tests of the oral storytelling task, we can conclude that the Canonical Biplot Analysis produces a thorough diagnostic of all the available numerical information, unlike the other statistical tests that ignore the non-significant variables and limit the representation of the data to the most developed ones making the scope of interpretation restricted. All in all, in the following Canonical Biplot plan representing oral storytelling task we can clearly see the differences between groups in each and every variable.

### Plan 3



<b>PSO:</b> pre-test storytelling oral task.
<b>POSO:</b> post-test storytelling oral task.
<b>P:</b> paraphrasing.
<b>R:</b> restructuring.
<b>S:</b> shadowing.
<b>AA:</b> appeal for authority.
<b>AR:</b> asking for repetition.
<b>GF:</b> gap-fillers.
<b>PAR:</b> providing active response.
<b>C:</b> chunks.
<b>E1:</b> low proficient experimental group.
<b>E2:</b> high proficient experimental group.
<b>C1:</b> low proficient control group.
<b>C2:</b> high proficient control group.

Once more, the analyzed data includes 232 protocols in both pre and post-tests (60 of each low proficient group and 56 of each high proficient group). The collected data was, as previously mentioned, analyzed following the taxonomy of the actual investigation. As seen from plan 3 above the control groups C1 and C2 are overlapping when projected on restructuring in the post-test (highly negative level of use of restructuring because the projection results in the opposite direction of the variables). This projection on one variable can be generalized on all the variables and can be interpreted as a high level of similarity between the two control groups in both pre and post-tests. Thus, both the control low proficient group (C1) and the control high proficient group (C2) demonstrate a very low level of use of oral CSs in the pre and post-tests in the oral storytelling task.

As far as the experimental groups are concerned, we can realize that the projection of the circles standing for the groups in the plan (E1 and E2) show important differences between the groups in both the pre and the post-tests. Generally, the high proficient group E2 produced more oral CSs in the pre-test and eventually their level of development of the use of oral CSs was higher in the post-test (see the projections in plan 3). To be more specific the high proficient groups used a higher total number of oral CSs than the low proficient in the post-tests. Whereas, the experimental low proficient group used a higher number of help seeking strategies in the pre-test than the experimental high proficient group (see plan 3 above: projecting the center of the circles of E1 and E2 on appeal for authority can show a lower production of E2 than E1 in that variable).

These differences in the types and number of the CSs used by the high and the low proficient groups confirm once again the first and the second hypotheses of this study expecting the low proficient students to use less CSs than the high proficient ones and suggesting that the low proficient groups will use help seeking strategies more than the high proficient EFL ones. Although the experimental high proficient group (E2) used more oral CSs than the experimental low proficient group (E1) in the post-tests, this does not disesteem the development in the frequency of use of oral CSs by that group because as we can see on the plan there are considerable differences between the results of the pre and post-tests produced by the

experimental low proficient group. An example of this evolution is seen on the plan in the projection of the center of the circle of E2 on the variable restructuring in both pre and post-tests. In this projection the line of the projection on the variable is longer in the post-test than in the pre-test which assures the improvement of use of oral CSs by this group.

All in all, the plan gives evidence that the overall number of CSs increases after the training and that the frequency of use of CSs in the post-test was higher than the pre-test and reveals that the use of help seeking strategies (appeal for authority and asking for repetition) and energy and time-saving strategies (chunks) was relatively higher than the use of the rest of the oral CSs. Summing up, in the pre-test there is an over-reliance on some strategies (paraphrasing, restructuring and appeal for authority); whereas in the post-test there is a global development of all the oral CSs which confirms the third hypothesis of the actual study and assures that the training on oral communication strategies in the oral storytelling task improved the use of those strategies by both the high and low proficient groups (reflected in the projection of the circles on every oral CS in the pre and post-tests).

To have a closer look at the oral CSs that improved in the post-test in the oral storytelling task we can assert that the mostly developed strategies are providing active response, shadowing and paraphrasing. The general remark that presents itself at this level is that in the oral tasks (interview and storytelling) all the strategies profited from the strategy-training and that the use of oral CSs in the oral post-tests was considerably elevated if compared to the oral pre-tests.

## 8.4. Results of the Writing Composition Task

**Table 5**

Variable	Total	Explained	Residual	F	sign.
CPTWC	116	54.545	60.455	33.683	0
PPTWC	116	10.524	104.476	3.761	0.01288
CPOWC	116	108.012	6.988	577.075	0
PPOWC	116	102.947	12.053	318.875	0

<b>PTWC:</b> pre-test writing composition task.
<b>POWC:</b> post-test writing composition task.
<b>C:</b> chunks.
<b>P:</b> paraphrasing.
<b>F:</b> f-Snedecor.
<b>Sign:</b> significance $p < 0.05$ .

The written data included the same number of protocols mentioned in the oral task analysis stated above (a total of 232 written composition tasks were analyzed). As shown by the One-Way ANOVA-test in table 5 the two written communication strategies included in the taxonomy of this investigation resulted non-significant in the pre-tests of the four groups. Thus, there is a strong need to apply the Canonical Biplot Analysis to go a step further in analyzing and representing these variables in the pre-tests.

### 8.4.1. Comparing the Variable between Groups

**Table 6**

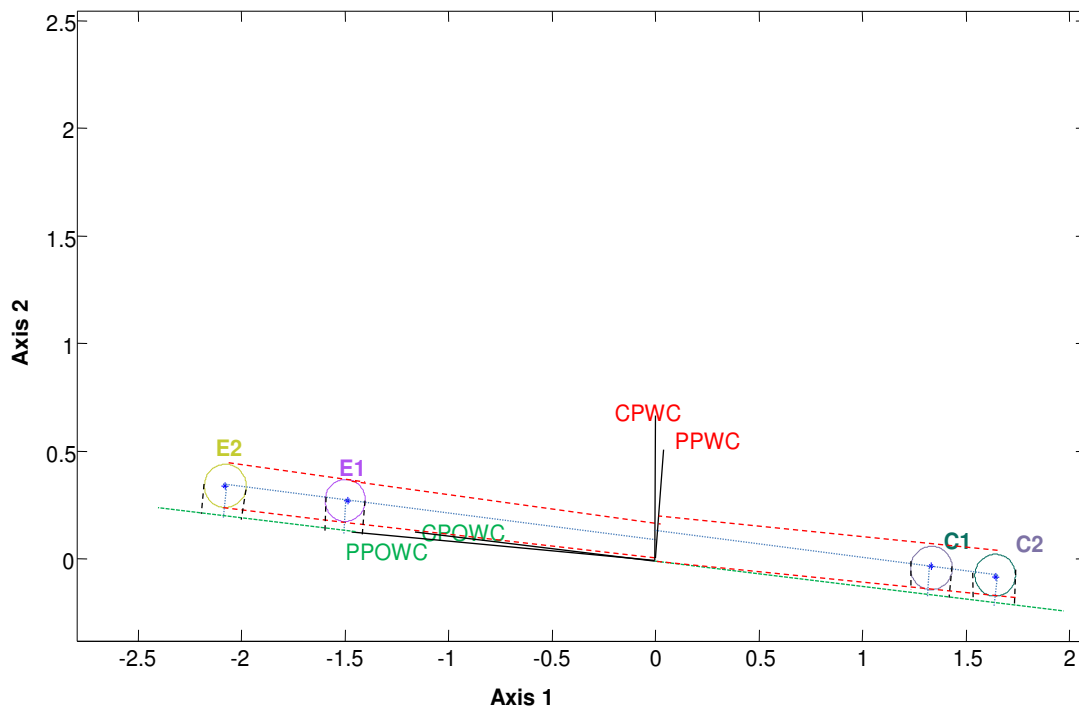
Dimension	Eigenv.	%Expl.	Cumm.	TSS	ESS	F	p-val
1	5.391	97.442	97.442	30.065	29.065	1085.109	0
2	0.872	2.547	99.989	1.76	0.76	28.358	0
3	0.057	0.011	100	1.003	0.003	0.122	0.947

Global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda  
p-value: 1.1708e-086.

The Canonical Biplot Analysis provides a global comparison of the four groups in all variables based on Wilks' Lambda as a general t-test. The results of the writing composition task reflected in table 6 above demonstrate once again that both the variables and the groups are prominently interpretable (97.442 in axis 1 and 99.989 in axis 2) with a global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda that results in a  $p$

of  $1.1708e-086$  in a level of  $p < 0.05$ . To sum up, the Wilks' Lambda assures that all the variables and groups are going to be represented in the next plan (4) designed by the Canonical Biplot Analysis using the introduced data interpreted numerically from the writing composition tasks in the pre and the post-tests by the four groups.

#### Plan 4



<b>PWC:</b> pre-test writing composition task.
<b>POWC:</b> post-test writing composition task.
<b>P:</b> paraphrasing.
<b>C:</b> chunks.
<b>E1:</b> low proficient experimental group.
<b>E2:</b> high proficient experimental group.
<b>C1:</b> low proficient control group.
<b>C2:</b> high proficient control group.

The plan above represents all 232 protocols collected from the writing composition tasks in the pre and post-tests. The data was once more analyzed following the taxonomy of the current study. We can observe that the overall number of CSs increases after the strategy training. To provide a detailed analysis of the results of the pre and post-tests of the four groups in the writing composition task, we can say that both chunks and paraphrasing benefited from

the strategy training and that there is a higher level of use of chunks in the pre and post-tests than that of paraphrasing. Furthermore, in the plan we can allude to the fact that the control groups C1 and C2 are overlapping when projected on chunks and paraphrasing in the pre-test (they both show a very low level of use of the two written communication strategies). The fact that both groups overlap is to be interpreted as no significant difference between the two control groups in the pre-test. Moreover, the short distance between the center point and the projection point shows the low level of use of those variables by both groups. In the post-test the two control groups do not overlap, but they show a very negative level of use of the written CSs since the projection of the groups appears on the opposite side of the variables direction. When it comes to the experimental groups, we can realize that they also overlap in the pre-test and they differ slightly in the post-test. Generally, the high proficient group E2 produced a higher number of written CSs in the post-test but the evolution of the two experimental groups after the training was remarkable and the frequency of use of both CSs was considerable which confirms the fourth hypothesis about the effectiveness of the strategy training in enhancing the subjects' use of written CSs.

## 8.5. Results of the Written Storytelling Tasks

**Table 7**

Variable	Total	Explained	Residual	F	sign.
CPWS	116	22.631	92.369	9.147	0.19416
PPWS	116	5.353	109.647	1.823	0.14713
CPOWS	116	109.376	5.624	726.002	0
PPOWS	116	108.15	6.85	589.409	0

<b>PWS:</b> pre-test written storytelling task.
<b>POWS:</b> post-test written storytelling task.
<b>C:</b> chunks.
<b>P:</b> paraphrasing.
<b>F:</b> f-Snedecor.
<b>Sign:</b> significance $p < 0.05$ .



In the One-Way ANOVA-test of the second written task shown in table 7 above, the two written CSs introduced in the strategy training resulted significant in the post-test and the results of the written storytelling task are interpretable and represent a good source of analysis. Besides, this type of tests is not complete and does not answer the questions of this research because it does not allow us to compare the four groups in the two variables in the pre and the post-tests. Thus, the use of the Canonical Biplot Analysis in this case has the advantage of representing all the groups and variables in one single plan. In this way, we will be able to compare and contrast the control groups and the experimental groups and see the variables responsible for the differences between them in the pre and the post-tests.

### 8.5.1. Comparing Variables between Groups

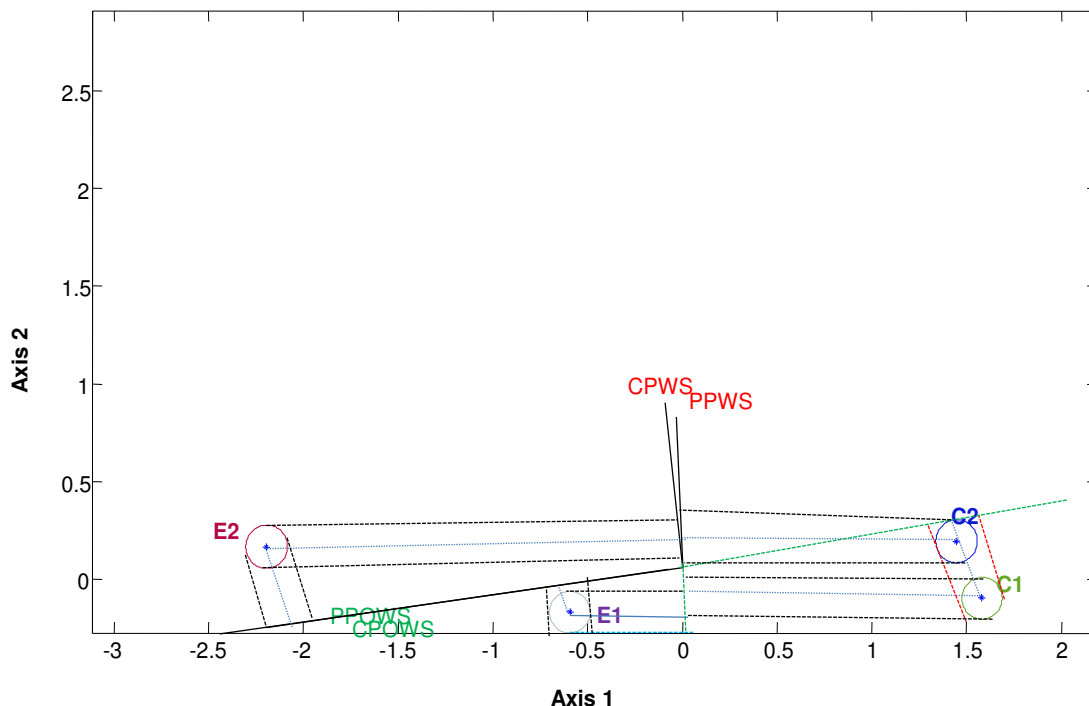
**Table 8**

Dimension	Eigenv.	%Expl.	Cumm.	TSS	ESS	F	p-val
1	5.739	99.241	99.241	33.932	32.932	1229.473	0
2	0.499	0.751	99.992	1.249	0.249	9.306	0
3	0.05	0.008	100	1.003	0.003	0.094	0.963

Global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda  
p-value:1.9258e-081

As explained in the earlier analyses, the Canonical Biplot offers a global comparison between the groups in each and every variable based on Wilks' Lambda that equals a global t-test. In this way we can compare the four groups in the two tests and variables. By analyzing table 8 above we can deduce that again both the variables and the groups are highly interpretable (which means that they can be analyzed, compared and contrasted: 99.241% in axis 1 and 99.992% in axis 2) with a global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda that gives a p of 1.9258e-081 in a level of  $p < 0.05$ . Summing up, the Wilks' Lambda demonstrates that all the variables and groups are well represented in the following plan generated by the Canonical Biplot Analysis based on the introduced data collected from the written storytelling task in the pre and the post-tests.

## Plan 5



<b>PWS:</b> pre-test written storytelling task.
<b>POWS:</b> post-test written storytelling task.
<b>P:</b> paraphrasing.
<b>C:</b> chunks.
<b>E1:</b> low proficient experimental group.
<b>E2:</b> high proficient experimental group.
<b>C1:</b> low proficient control group.
<b>C2:</b> high proficient control group.

This plan includes the 232 protocols interpreted numerically from the data of the written storytelling tasks in the pre and post-tests. This data was again analyzed following the taxonomy of the actual research. From the plan above we can notice that the control groups C2 shows a higher level of use of both chunks and paraphrasing than the other control group C1 although they both show a very low level of use of the two written communication strategies in the pre-test. The same results are reflected in the experimental groups' projection. To conclude, unlike the writing composition task in the written storytelling task, the two high proficient groups used more written CSs than the two low proficient groups in the pre-test. However, still there is a general low level of use of the two written CSs in

the pre-test demonstrated in the short distance between the center point and the projection point of the four groups on the variables of the pre-test. As far as the post-test is concerned, the two control groups appear as overlapping and the projection of both results on the opposite direction of the two variables. Consequently, the two control groups' written communication strategies did not develop and the differences between them are non-significant. Hitherto, when comparing the two experimental groups in the post-test we can clearly see that the projection of the center of the circles is on the positive direction of the variables. This can be interpreted as a difference in the frequency distribution of the use of variables between the control and the experimental groups in the post-test. Another important remark is that the high proficient experimental group (E2) shows a higher level of use of the two written CSs than the low proficient experimental group (E1), which maintains the differences between the two groups appearing in the pre-test, but which does not lessen the importance of improvement achieved by the low proficient group who moved from being projected on the opposite (negative) side of the variables in the pre-test to being projected on the positive direction of the variables in the post-test. Hence, once again we can say that the results of the written storytelling task confirm the 4<sup>th</sup> hypothesis about the effectiveness of the strategy training in developing the subjects' use of written CSs.

### **8.6. The Effect of the Strategy Training on the Subjects' Fluency in the Pre and Post-tests**

**Table 9**

Variable	Total	Explained	Residual	F	sign.
PIO	116	63.366	51.634	45.817	0
POIO	116	104.343	10.657	365.526	0
PSO	116	33.098	81.902	15.087	0
POSO	116	106.686	8.314	479.075	0
PWS	116	20.233	94.767	7.971	7e-005
POWS	116	85.223	29.777	106.848	0
PWC	116	33.306	81.694	15.221	0
POWC	116	83.983	31.017	101.087	0

<b>PIO:</b> pre-test interview oral task.
<b>POIO:</b> post-test interview oral task.
<b>PSO:</b> pre-test storytelling oral task.
<b>POSO:</b> post-test storytelling oral task.
<b>PWS:</b> pre-test written storytelling task.
<b>POWS:</b> post-test written storytelling task.
<b>PWC:</b> pre-test writing composition task.
<b>POWC:</b> post-test writing composition task.
<b>F:</b> f-Snedecor.
<b>Sign:</b> significance.

The figures above show the results of the One-Way ANOVA-test that demonstrates the effect of the strategy training on the subjects' fluency in the pre and the post-tests. The subjects' fluency was measured by counting the number of words per minute produced by each subject in each task. In this case, we are confronted with another difficulty in interpreting the results since almost all the tasks (variables on table 9 above) are shown as significant (except for the pre-test of the oral storytelling task). The question will be how to see the differences between the variables and how to analyze them having in mind that all what we have in the One-Way ANOVA-test is that the variables are significant. Hence, it was necessary to use the Canonical Biplot Analysis to see the differences between the groups in all the variables.

#### **8.6.1. Comparing the Subjects' Fluency between Groups**

The Canonical Biplot Analysis applied to the data compiled by counting the number of words produced per minute by each subject in each task supplies a general contrast of the four groups in all the oral and the written tasks based on Wilks' Lambda (the equivalent of a t-test represented in a global form). The table below reflects the results of this exhaustive test and shows a very high level of interpretation of all the data.

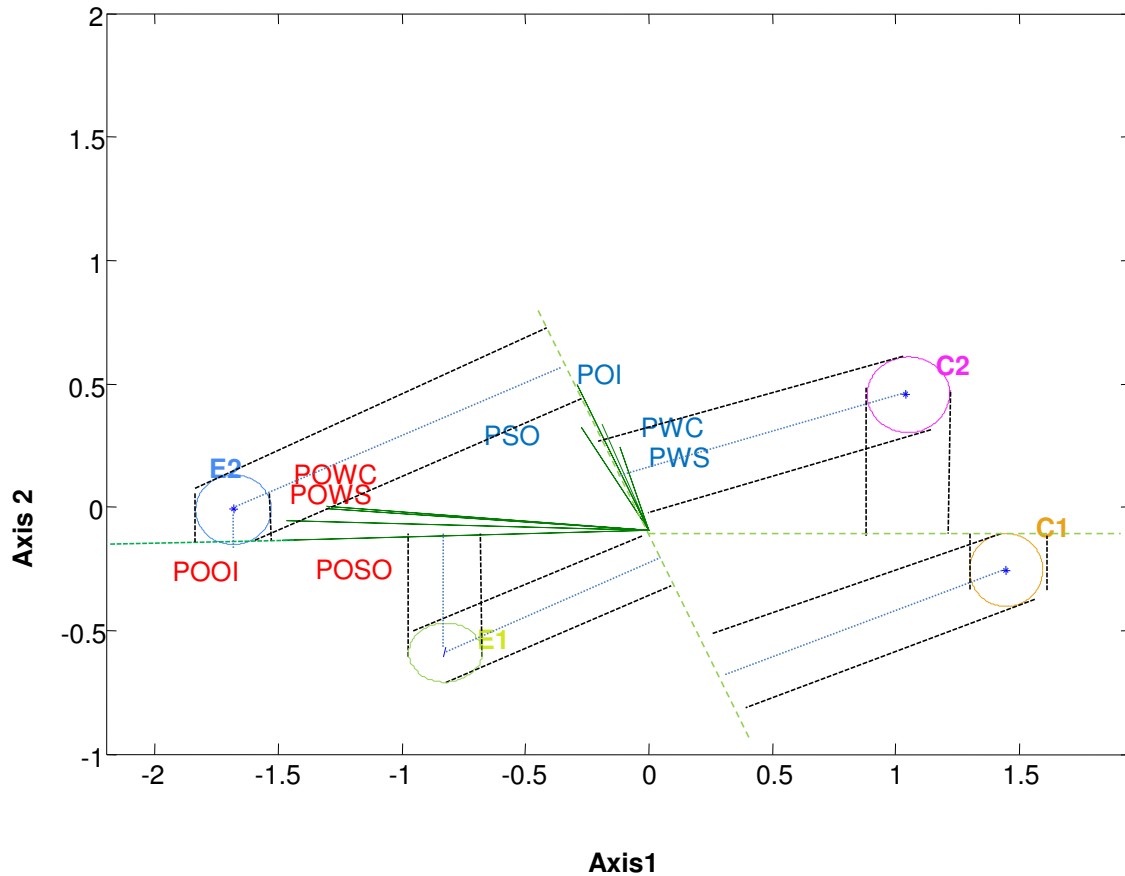
**Table 10**

Dimension	Eigenv.	% Expl.	Cumm.	TSS	ESS	F	p-val
1	5.258	92.285	92.285	28.641	27.641	1031.948	0
2	1.471	7.227	99.512	3.165	2.165	80.812	0
3	0.382	0.488	100	1.146	0.146	5.457	0.002

Global contrast based on Wilks' Lambda  
 p-value:2.9843e-091

To conclude, all the results demonstrated in the One-Way ANOVA-test (table 9) are highly interpretable and represented in the following plan produced by the Canonical Biplot Analysis. On the whole, again this program offers a complete diagnostic of all the numerical data and does not ignore any variable. Consequently, the generated plan is vast and includes all the words produced by all the subjects in each and every task.

**Plan 6**



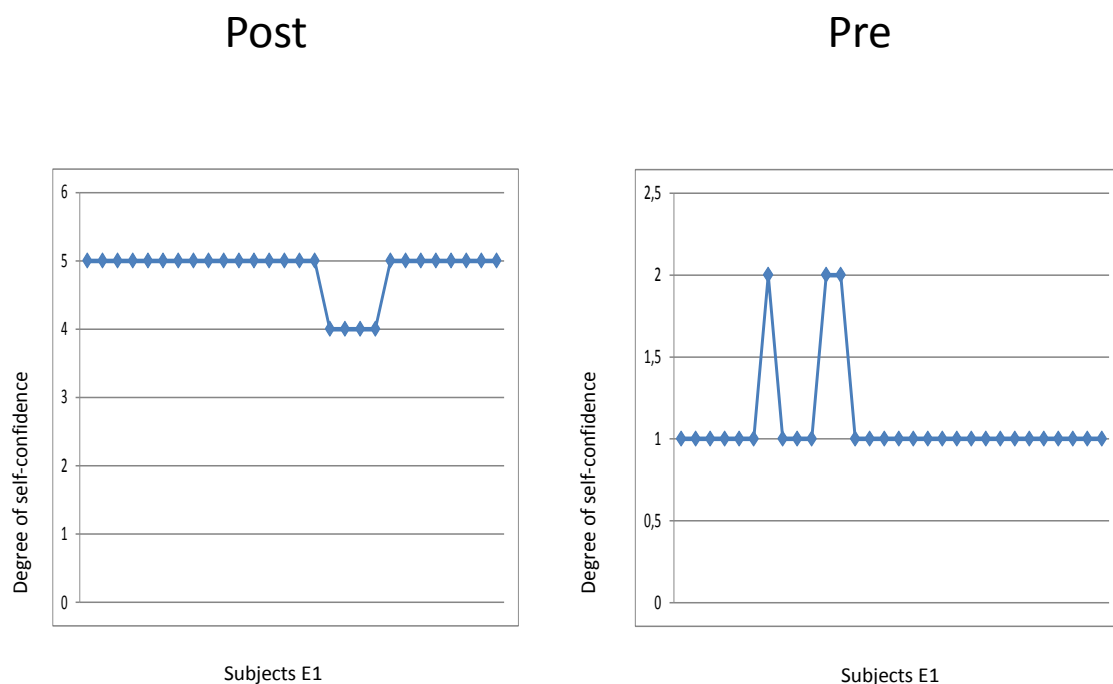
<b>E1:</b> Low proficient experimental group.
<b>E2:</b> High proficient experimental group.
<b>C1:</b> Low proficient control group.
<b>C2:</b> High proficient control group.
<b>PIO:</b> pre-test interview oral task.
<b>POIO:</b> post-test interview oral task.
<b>PSO:</b> pre-test storytelling oral task.
<b>POSO:</b> post-test storytelling oral task.
<b>PWS:</b> pre-test written storytelling task.
<b>POWS:</b> post-test written storytelling task.
<b>PWC:</b> pre-test writing composition task.
<b>POWC:</b> post-test writing composition task.

The plan above represents all 464 protocols collected from the written and the oral tasks in the pre and the post-tests. The data was calculated and represented numerically. From the plan we can notice the differences between the high and the low proficient groups (E1/C1 and E2/C2). In the pre-test the projections of the center of the low proficient groups E1 and C1 appear on the opposite direction of the tasks which demonstrate the low level of fluency of these groups in the pre-tests; however, the high proficient groups E2 and C2 show a relatively higher level of fluency than the low proficient groups (the projection of the center of the circles results on the positive direction of the variables). In the post-tests the two control groups had a very low level of fluency and their production was poor when compared to the experimental groups. Another important remark is that the experimental high proficient group E2 appears to be more fluent than the low proficient group E1. As a result of this we can again conclude that the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> hypotheses were confirmed and that the strategy training improved the subjects' fluency in oral and written production.

## 8.7. Results of the Self-confidence Questionnaires

### 8.7.1. The Effect of the Strategy Training on the Low-proficient Experimental Groups' Self-confidence in Oral Performance

#### Graphics 1 & 2



- 1: Not confident at all.
- 2: A bit confident.
- 3: Confident.
- 4: Quite confident.
- 5: Very confident.

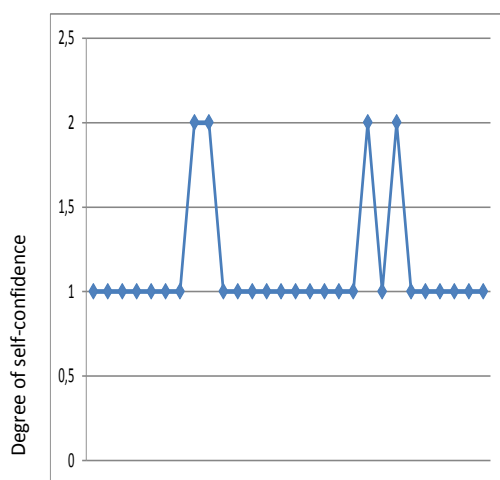
The results of the 232 self-confidence questionnaires (see Appendixes 6 and 9) were calculated and transcribed numerically to generate descriptive graphics. By comparing the results of the pre and the post-questionnaires about oral performance we can thoroughly analyze the effect of the strategy training on the subjects' self-confidence. As shown in the graphics above the low experimental group E1 had a very low level of self-confidence in the pre-questionnaire (27 subjects selected the answer not confident at all and 3 subjects marked the option a bit confident) whereas in the post-questionnaire there is a remarkable increase of the subjects' self-confidence (26 subjects showed themselves to be very confident and 4 subjects chose number 4 standing for quite confident). The results

of graphics 1 and 2 included above confirm the 7<sup>th</sup> hypothesis supposing the improvement of the subjects' self-confidence in oral performance after the strategy training.

### 8.7.2. Results of the Low-proficient Control Groups' Self-confidence in Oral Performance

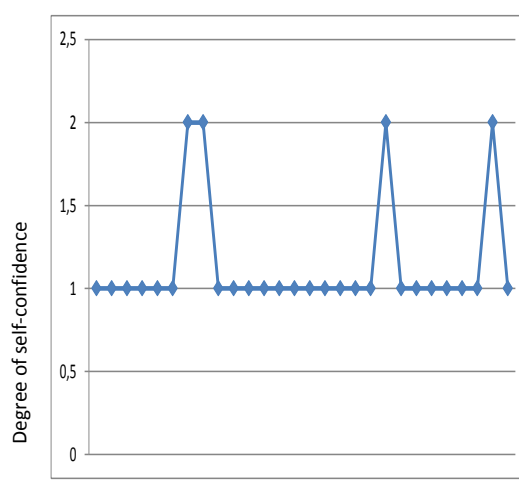
#### Graphics 3 & 4

##### Post



Subjects C1

##### Pre



Subjects C1

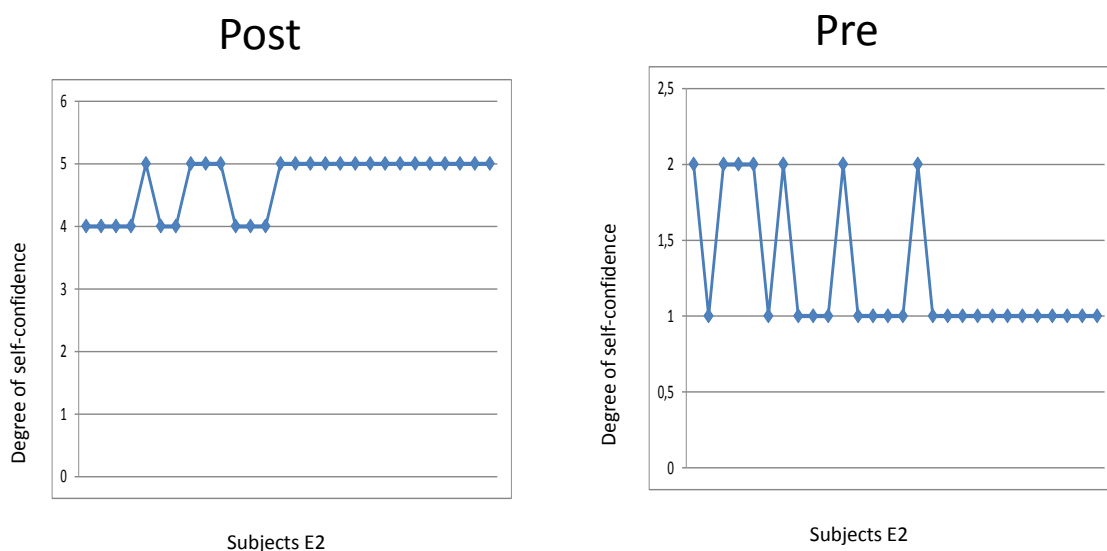
- 1: Not confident at all.
- 2: A bit confident.
- 3: Confident.
- 4: Quite confident.
- 5: Very confident.

The results of the low proficient control group's questionnaires support the fact that the strategy training has been effective in raising the subjects' self-confidence in oral production. In other words, the low proficient control group's degree of self-confidence has not improved. In both the pre and post-questionnaires the answers of the subjects has swung between not confident at all and a bit confident (24 subjects selected the option not confident at all and 4 subjects answered using a bit confident). All in all, the results of the questionnaires completed by the low proficient control group about oral performance assure the reliability of the inferences based on the graphics representing the evolution of the experimental low proficient subjects' self-confidence concerning the oral medium.



### 8.7.3. The Effect of the Strategy Training on the High-proficient Experimental Groups' Self-confidence in Oral Performance

Graphics 5 & 6

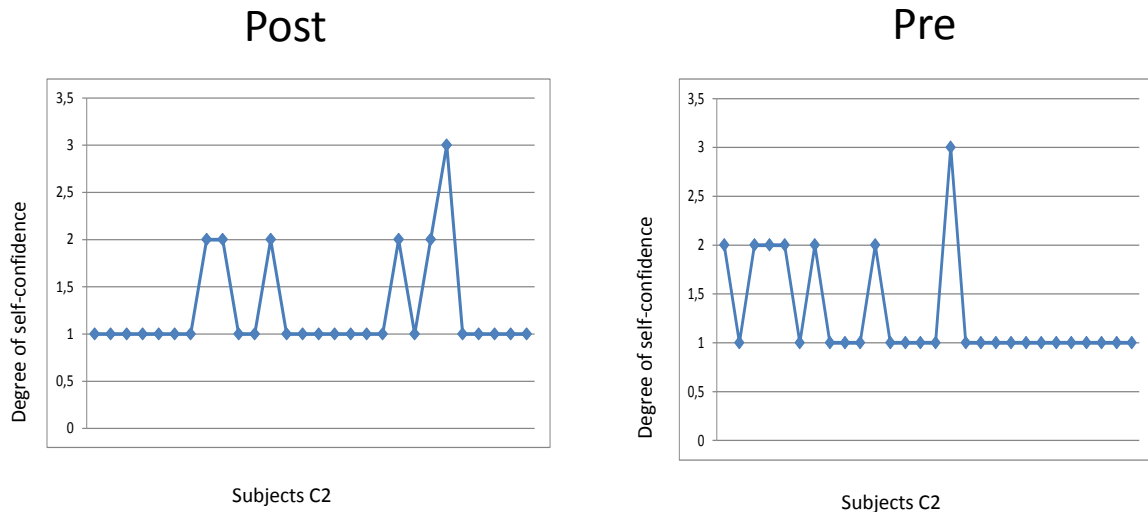


- 1: Not confident at all.
- 2: A bit confident.
- 3: Confident.
- 4: Quite confident.
- 5: Very confident.

The answers of the high proficient group E2 about their level of self-confidence in oral performance also confirm the 7<sup>th</sup> hypothesis showing that the subjects' self-confidence increased after the training. In the pre-questionnaire only 7 subjects showed themselves to be a bit confident and the rest (21) were not confident at all. Notwithstanding, in the post-questionnaire 9 students were confident and 19 resulted to be very confident. In this way, the strategy training has been successful and beneficial for the experimental groups. Becoming more self-confident in oral production was demonstrated after the training and the subjects expressed it clearly in the questionnaires as seen in the descriptive graphics above (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6).

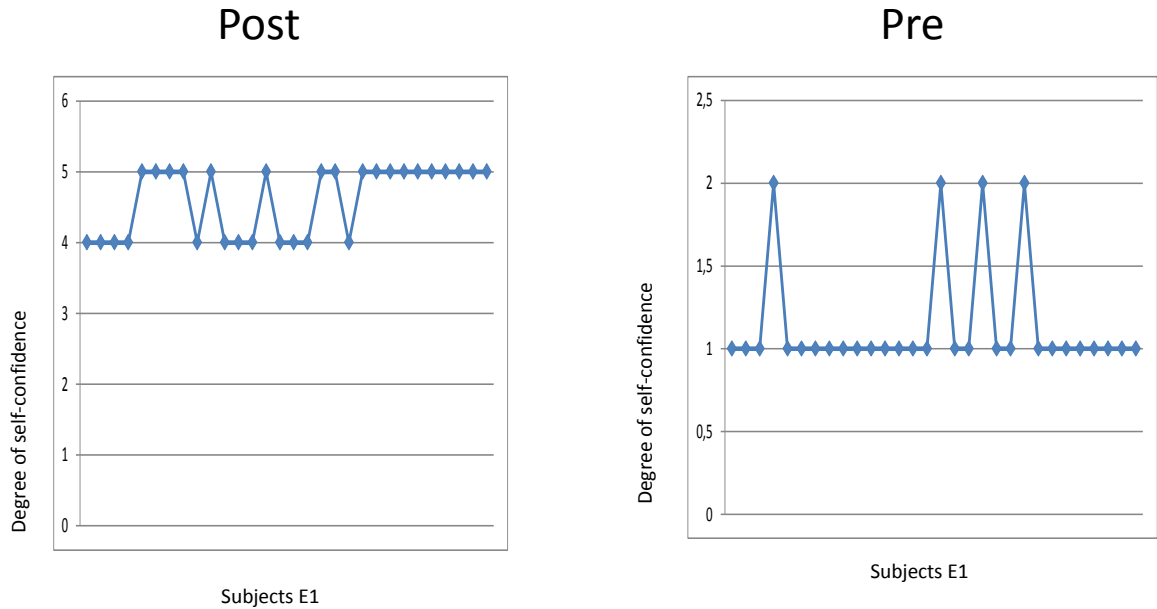
### 8.7.4. Results of the High-proficient Control Groups' Self-confidence in Oral Performance

Graphics 7 & 8



### 8.7.5. The Effect of the Strategy Training on the Low-proficient Experimental Groups' Self-confidence in Written Performance

Graphics 9 & 10

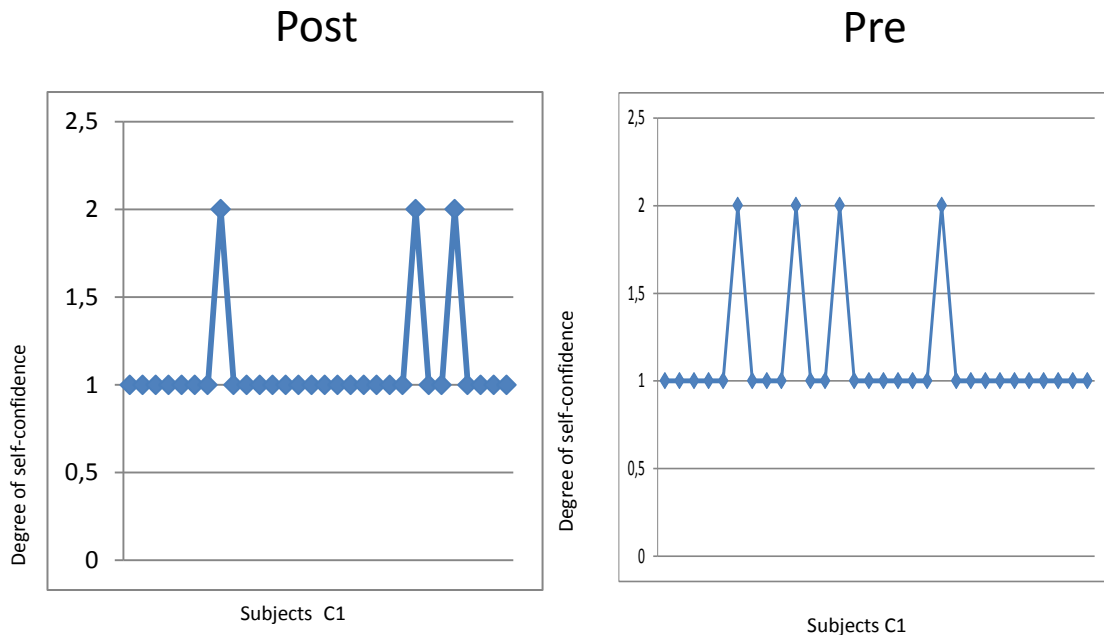


- 1: Not confident at all.
- 2: A bit confident.
- 3: Confident.
- 4: Quite confident.
- 5: Very confident.

The experimental low proficient group marked significant gains in self-confidence as seen above in graphics 9 and 10. In the pre-questionnaire just 4 subjects were a bit confident whereas 23 of them revealed their lack of self-confidence in written communication by marking the first option (not confident at all). Hitherto, the post-questionnaire indicates that the strategy training is influential in raising the participants' degree of self-confidence in the written medium. Accordingly, the 8<sup>th</sup> hypothesis about the effectiveness of the strategy training in enhancing the participants' self-confidence is again confirmed and the experimental low proficient group gained self-confidence in written performance after the strategy training.

### 8.7.6. Results of the Low-proficient Control Groups' Self-confidence in Written Performance

Graphics 11 & 12



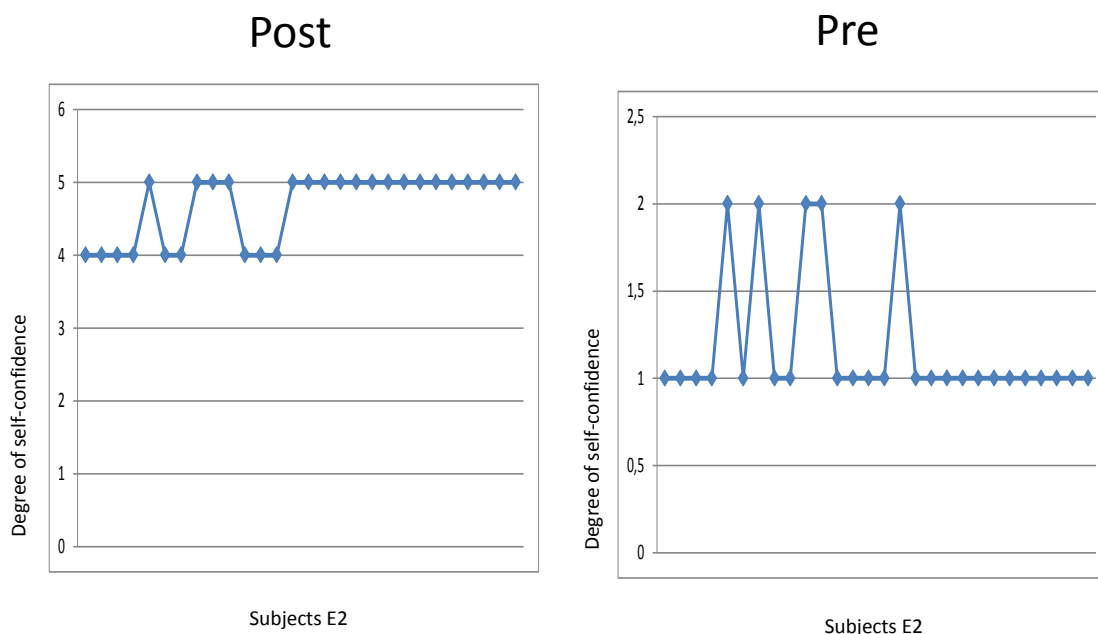
- 1: Not confident at all.
- 2: A bit confident.
- 3: Confident.
- 4: Quite confident.
- 5: Very confident.

For this investigation, the results of the pre and post self-confidence questionnaires about written production completed by the low proficient control group are as interesting as those of the low proficient experimental groups. Conclusively, as previously explained, the fact that the control group does not gain more self-confidence longitudinally can confirm the efficacy of the strategy training in improving the participants' self-confidence in written performance. All in all, the low proficient control group's results in the pre and post-questionnaires (graphic 11 and 12) demonstrate the low degree of the subjects' self-confidence in written communication (pre-questionnaire: 4 subjects were a bit confident and 26 subjects were not confident at all; post-questionnaire: 3 subjects were a bit confident and 27 were not confident at all). So far, this fact confirms the 8<sup>th</sup> hypothesis standing

for the importance of the strategy training in improving the participants' self-confidence in written performance.

### 8.7.7. The Effect of the Strategy Training on the High-proficient Experimental Groups' Self-confidence in Written Performance

Graphics 13 & 14

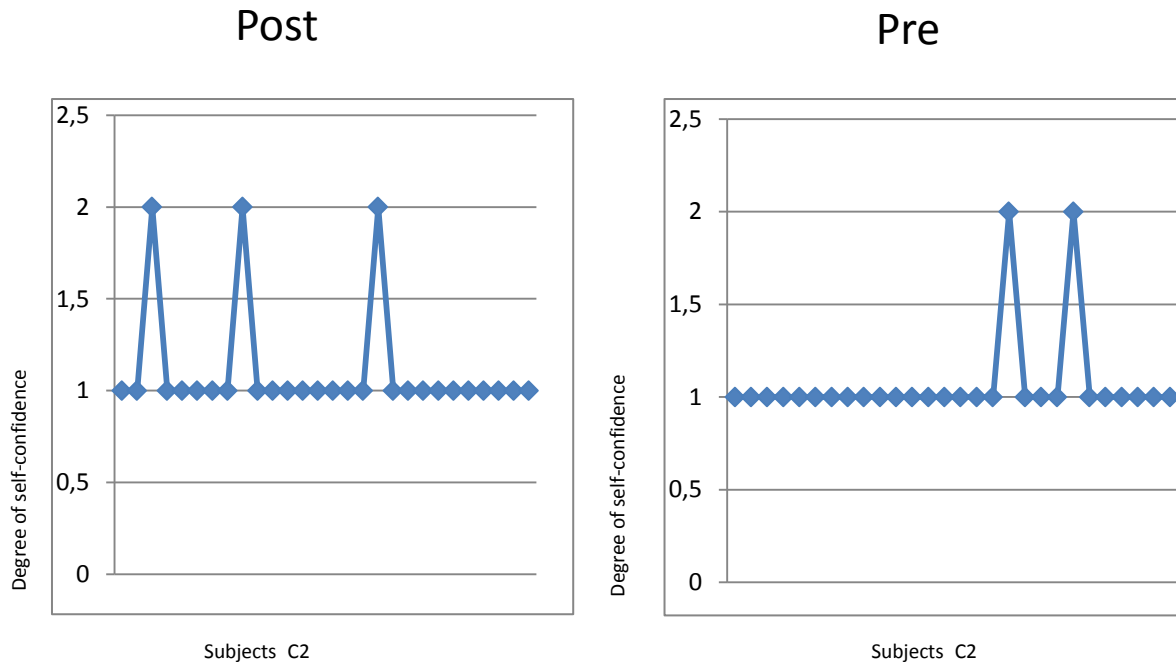


- 1: Not confident at all.
- 2: A bit confident.
- 3: Confident.
- 4: Quite confident.
- 5: Very confident.

Recurrantly, the subjects of the experimental groups prove the usefulness of the strategy training in ameliorating the participants' self-confidence in writing. Here again, in graphics 13 and 14 the participants of the experimental high proficient group show the level of development of their self-confidence by selecting answers: quite confident (9 subjects) or very confident (19 subjects) in the post-questionnaire. Therefore, they confirm the 8<sup>th</sup> hypothesis of the actual study suggesting that strategy training has a positive effect on the subjects' self-confidence in written production.

### 8.7.8. Results of the High-proficient Control Groups' Self-confidence in Written Performance

Graphics 15 & 16



- 1: Not confident at all.
- 2: A bit confident.
- 3: Confident.
- 4: Quite confident
- 5: Very confident.

The high proficient control group C2 did not demonstrate any improvement in self-confidence in the post-questionnaire. In the same way that the negative results of the post self-confidence questionnaire of this group in oral production were very important in contrasting the high experimental group's results; the results of the same group about self-confidence in written production (represented in graphics 15 and 16 above) highlighted the efficacy of the training in enhancing the subjects' self-confidence in this medium of communication. Once more, the high proficient control group indirectly contributes to confirm the 8<sup>th</sup> hypothesis of the current investigation about the efficacy of the strategy training in developing the subjects' self-confidence in writing.

# Chapter 4

## Conclusions and Discussion

### 1. Summary of Findings

In the light of the results of this investigation, this chapter draws conclusions from the multiple findings, introduces discussions of the basic points and acknowledges the limitations. Some implications for learning and teaching in the EFL context are put forward and suggestions are made for future research within the same field.

The basic aim of this research was to investigate the effect of the strategy training on the subjects' fluency and self-confidence. To study the possible effect of the strategy training on the subjects, the experimental groups had to participate in 6 training sessions after the four pre-tests and then to complete other four post-tests. As previously explained, the results of the tasks were numerically transcribed and statistically analyzed to answer the main questions that motivated the actual investigation. The major findings obtained from the data reported and analyzed in the previous chapter can be summarized in what follows according to the research hypotheses formulated for the actual study (introduced in section 5): In brief these were:

- 1 Spanish EFL low proficient students will use fewer CSs than high proficient ones.
- 2 Spanish low proficient EFL students will use oral help seeking strategies more than the high proficient EFL students.
- 3 The strategy-training will improve the use of oral CSs of both low/high proficient EFL students.
- 4 The strategy-training will enhance the use of written CSs by the low and the high proficient EFL students.
- 5 The strategy-training will upgrade the low/high proficient EFL students' oral fluency.
- 6 The strategy-training will augment the low/high proficient EFL students' written fluency.
- 7 The strategy-training will improve the low/high proficient EFL students' self-confidence in oral communication.

- 8 The strategy-training will enhance the low/high EFL students' self-confidence in writing.

Hence, the conclusions drawn from this study are represented in relation to each of the above research questions:

1. Statistically, it is found that the low proficient subjects used less CSs in the pre-test than the high proficient ones. This finding shows that the study level variable has a significant effect on the subjects' use of CSs. This puts in doubt the idea of the inverse relationship between the subjects' level of proficiency and the number of CSs employed.
2. The subjects' level of proficiency is shown to exert a strong effect on their strategy preference in the pre-tests. In other words, as suggested in the research hypotheses, the low proficient groups tended to favor oral help-seeking strategies in the pre-tests; however, in the post-test the participants demonstrated a high degree of use of all the introduced oral CSs.
3. Although both groups benefited from the training significantly, the high proficient group had better results than the low proficient group in both oral and written tasks.
4. The strategy training improves the degree of fluency of the subjects in oral and written production.
5. The strategy training enhances the subjects' self-confidence.
6. The variable of communication medium has a considerable effect on the students' strategy preference regardless of their proficiency level. That is, there was a higher level of use of chunks and paraphrasing (the two CSs introduced in written and oral training) in the written form than in the oral one (see tables 1, 3, 5 and 7 in chapter 3).

Although many of the results of the actual study have already been reported by previous researchers (Al-Haj, 2011; Cohen and Macaro, 2007; Mariani, 2007; Nakatani, 2006 and 2010; Jamshidnejad, 2011 and Jidong, 2011), what distinguishes these findings from others is that they include both written and oral communications strategies and they measure oral and written fluency as far as self-confidence. This makes of this investigation a completely new study that



examines different aspects related to CSs in oral and written production in one sample population, giving the possibility of observing how the improvement of the number of the used CSs can improve the subjects' fluency and self-confidence in the oral and written mediums. Moreover, it includes a strategy training that raises the participants' awareness of a set of productive CSs with practice of each strategy alone and then of all the CSs together. The study also relates the use of these strategies to real contexts and shows their usage in the situations of non-exact communication, which is perhaps the real nature of all communication. In this way, the strategy training helps to bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside reality, between formal and informal learning. Hence, this study provides a unique contribution to research in this field and brings new evidences that support the importance of the strategy training in the EFL context. Furthermore, the investigation included different types of tasks that eventually had different demands and contexts, and, consequently, generated heterogeneous data. The research made use of descriptive and narrative writing styles and implies an informal interview task as well as a storytelling task that emphasized the descriptive abilities and created some difficulties to oblige the subjects to use CSs.

## **2. Limitations of the Study**

As any other research the actual study has its own limitations which are mainly related to the difficulties of the research for its nature in general; the limited number of participants and the need to amplify the list of the selected communication strategies especially in written tasks. The first limitation is a common problem that most researchers in the field of CSs have acknowledged due to the fact that CSs are difficult to detect, categorize and to teach, even if this last word was put in doubt by some specialists in the area (Ataollah, 2010; Kellerman and Bialystok, 1997; Lewis, 2011). Despite the great number of offered taxonomies, the creation of a specific taxonomy for the current investigation was one of the tricky starting points that required a lot of contemplation and reasoning to select what may be productive, adequate to the type of tasks and that can bring new results to the field.

Another limitation lies in the nature of the tasks that the participants had to perform. Some of the tasks like the interview and the storytelling tasks were more

encouraging than others since they were contextualized and had certain aspects like pictures or interlocutors that made the performance less demanding. The lack of use of CSs in other tasks can be explained as the need to save face, frustration that may be caused by negotiating meaning and learner's empathy for each other. All in all, the nature of the oral tasks may have affected the results of the study but it also contributed to show the possible difficulties in teaching oral CSs in EFL classrooms.

Finally, another limitation concerns the students' individual differences in personality or learning strategies, which may have governed the way they benefited from the strategy training. This may open a new scope of investigation to study the possible relationship between language learning strategies and the teaching of CSs.

### **3. Pedagogical Implications**

This study gives several evidences of the teachability of CSs and provides teachers and syllabus designers with results that can lift the EFL syllabuses out of the traced route to prevent learners from running into any problems. That is, EFL book designers should avoid providing lists of translated words or definitions, and making the books communicative by including unauthentic communicative situations. Thus, EFL syllabus should enhance the learners' communicative competence and even include strategy training on productive CSs. In this case, the expression strategy "training" means focusing the students' attention on specific strategies, making them aware of why they are important, how they work and when they may come in useful, and also having them practice the strategies in guided activities.

As mentioned in other chapters, not all CSs are worth mentioning in a classroom context; therefore, being eclectic is very important in designing a real communicative EFL syllabus. Focusing on productive strategies can favor hypothesis formation and therefore learning. However, not all productive strategies can be dealt with in the same way. The used tasks should be adapted to the target strategy for the learning to occur. Consequently, as Oxford (1990)

arguments heightening awareness to strategies focuses learners' attention on the process of language learning and their stage in L2 acquisition, improving comprehension, storage, retrieval and use of the learning material and ultimately improving language learning.

For this reason, strategy training may be fruitful, by making learners more aware of why they are doing a particular learning task. Another argument in favor of strategy training is that it gives learners the tools to be more self-directed or autonomous and less dependent on the teacher. Researchers in this field (Benson & Voller, 1997; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981) assert that learners who are responsible for their own language learning, take control of how, where and when they learn the language, they are more aware of their language learning goals and are consequently more effective at attaining them, independently of a teacher. Moreover, the tasks are to be challenging with various degrees of formality and difficulty to make learners stretch their resources to their fullest potential in order to reach their goals. Learners should be put to the test of real performance that bridges the gap between formal and informal learning.

We stand for introducing oral and written CSs in EFL syllabus because we believe that those strategies may lead to better performance that can get stored easily in the memory. They can also help students to maintain communication making them more productive and helping them to have better control over their use of the language by promoting self-monitoring. Furthermore, CSs encourage risk-taking and offer the learners the opportunity to cope with communicative difficulties and to avoid communication breakdowns. They generally help learners to be more autonomous and better users of the language in terms of fluency measures. At this stage what may come to one's mind is that introducing a list of CSs in the EFL classroom may limit the students' creativity, spontaneity and originality in language use. Due to this possible negative effect of introducing CSs in FL contexts, we focused on the importance of introducing CSs in contextualized input that helps the students discover the target CS and then make them apply it to different communicative situations. Giving the learners the opportunity to extract the CSs from authentic inputs, helping them to discuss and adapt those strategies to different types of communicative difficulties may be a good method to encourage

the learners' creativity. In other words, the adapted methodology draws from the principles of the inductive approach in foreign language teaching to make the participants active learners who analyze the input to create their individual intake. In this way, learners' are not shown what to produce but how, when and why to use a certain strategy rather than another. To become better users of English it is necessary to conserve one's own personal characteristics and learning strategies, which perhaps enrich the learning experience of the whole group.

#### **4. Implication for Further Research**

The actual investigation gave answers to the basic questions that motivated the study but some findings have even given rise to further questions. Therefore, more studies are required in the field of strategy training, especially in the Spanish EFL context. Firstly, more research could be conducted to investigate the effect of tasks on the type and frequency of CSs in oral and written performance. Another interesting question to answer may be the differences between the outcomes of strategy training carried out in the formal setting of the classroom and that implied in a constraint-free setting outside the classroom.

Apart from continuing to work on the comparison between high and low proficiency levels new studies can be done to compare the use of CSs by non-native subjects with that of native speakers before and after the training. In this way we can get an idea of the developments of the subjects' use of CSs measured from a different perspective.

An important question which arose by analyzing the subjects' fluency is the possible effect of the strategy training on the participants' accuracy and complexity as essential components of communicative competence. Following the same stream of the current study, researchers can analyze the subjects' accuracy and complexity after the training to decide on the relationship between strategy training and those variables.

Furthermore, another question to address in future research would be the differences between the types of CSs in the students' L1 and L2 and the use of these strategies in each language context. Taking into consideration that many researchers still ignore the importance of strategy training considering that

strategies in L1 and L2 are similar and that L2 learners do already possess their CSs which they unconsciously transfer to their interlanguage to cope with vocabulary scarcity (Rees-Miller's, 1993; Ridgway, 2000).

Finally, longitudinal studies to investigate the effect of the strategy training after a long period of time are required to see whether the training has a long-lasting effect or it is a learning that fades with time. This may help to know the need or not of introducing the strategy training in the EFL teaching syllabus along the different years of learning. Finding answers to all the posed questions is believed to enrich the fields of communication strategies and strategy training and to clarify the complex interaction between communication strategies, tasks, proficiency level and the medium of communication.

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## Appendix 1: **European Educational Policies and Projects**

**The Erasmus program:** European Region Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. It is a European Union student exchange program established in 1987. It forms a major part of the EU Lifelong Learning Program 2007-2013.

**The European Language Portfolio:** Is a personal document (ELP) in which learners of languages can record and reflect their language learning and cultural experiences. It is composed of three major parts: Language Passport, Language Biography, and Dossier)

**The Bologna Accords:** An educational policy with the purpose of creating the European Higher Education Area by making academic degree standard and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe.

**Comenius:** Is a European Union educational project which concerns School-Level education. It is part of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Program 2007-2013. It aims to develop young people's and educational staff's understanding of the range of European cultures, languages and values.

**Socrates:** European educational program with an emphasis on Language Learning.

## Appendix 2: Definitions of Communication Strategies

Tarone, Cohen & Dumas (1983: V): “systematic attempt by the learner to express meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate target language rules have not been formed”.

Tarone, Cohen & Dumas (1983: V): “systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed”.

Dörnyei & Scott (1997:174): “The mismatch between L2 speakers’ linguistic resources and communicative intentions leads to a number of systematic language phenomenon whose main function is to handle difficulties or breakdowns in communication”.

Tarone (1980:420): “mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on meaning in situations where the requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared”.

Feerch and kasper (1983:36): “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal”.

Stern (1983:411): “techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language”.

Poulisse (1990:88): “strategies which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising through the planning phase of an utterance due to (his own) linguistic shortcomings”.

Bialystock (1990:138): “the dynamic interaction of the components of language processing that balances each other in their level of involvement to meet task demands”.

### Appendix 3: Review of Empirical Studies

Researchers	Data		Type of task	Subject		Formal instruction	Proficiency level
	Spoken	Written		L1	L2		
Varadi (1973)	-	+	Picture description Translation	Hungarian	English	+	intermediate
Tarone (1977)	+	-	Picture story telling in L1 and L2	Spanish Turkish Mandarin	English	+	intermediate
Blum and Levenston (1978)	-	+	Sentence completion	Various	Hebrew	+/-	?
Ditmar and Rieck (1979)	+	-	Translation Discussion	Spanish	German	-	Adult beginners
Palmberg (1979)	+	-	Story retell	Finnish	English	+	Intermediate
Dechert (1980)	+	-	Narration of Picture story	German	English	+	Advanced
Wagner (1983)	+	-	Giving instruction	Danish	English	+	Beginners
Zeeman (1982)	+	-	Story retell	Dutch	English	+	Beginners
Paribakht (1985)	+	-	Description of concepts	Persian/ English	English	+/-	Various
Poulisse and Schills (1989)	+	-	Picture description Story retell Interview	Dutch	English	+	Intermediate Advanced
Bialystok (1990)	+	-	Picture description Translation	Hungarian	English	+	Intermediate



Chen (1990)	+	-	Concept description  Interview	Chinese	English	+	Various
Kellerman et al. (1997)	+	-	Description of abstract shape	Dutch	English	+	Advanced
Flyman (1997)	+	-	Silence translation  Story retell  Topic discussion	Swedish	French	+	intermediate
Ansarin and Syal (2000)	+	+	Picture description  Story telling  Interview  Text writing	Iranian	English	+	Intermediate
Littlemore (2001)	+	-	Picture description	Flemish	English	+	Advanced
Inuzuka (2001)	+	-	Interview	Japanese	English	+	Intermediate
Wannaruk (2003)	+	-	interview	Thai	English	+	Various

## Appendix 4: Placement-test



University of Cambridge  
Local Examination Syndicate

**OXFORD**  
University Press

Name:

Date:

Address:

eMail:

Phone:

# Quick placement test

Version 2

**The test is divided into two parts:**

**Part 1 (Questions 1- 40) – All students**

**Part 2 (Questions 41 – 60) – start this part only if you finished part 1 without problems**

**Time: 30 - 45 minutes**

# QuickPlacementTest

## Part 1

### Question 1 – 5

- ❖ Where can you see these notices?
- ❖ For questions 1 to 5, mark one letter **A**, **B** or **C** on your **Answer Sheet**.

<b>1. YOU CAN LOOK, BUT DON'T TOUCH THE PICTURES</b>			<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> in an office	<b>B▶</b> in a cinema	<b>C▶</b> in a museum			
<b>2. PLEASE GIVE THE RIGHT MONEY TO THE DRIVER</b>			<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> in a bank	<b>B▶</b> on a bus	<b>C▶</b> in a cinema			
<b>3. NO PARKING PLEASE</b>			<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> in a street	<b>B▶</b> on a book	<b>C▶</b> on a table			
<b>4. CROSS BRIDGE FOR TRAINS TO EDINBURGH</b>			<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> in a bank	<b>B▶</b> in a garage	<b>C▶</b> in a station			
<b>5. KEEP IN A COLD PLACE</b>			<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> on clothes	<b>B▶</b> on furniture	<b>C▶</b> on food			

**Question 6 –10**

- ❖ In this section you must choose the word which best fits each space in the text below.
- ❖ For questions 6 to 10, mark **one** letter **A**, **B**, or **C** on your Answer Sheet

**THE STARS**

There are millions of stars in the sky. If you look **(6)**.....the sky on a clear night, it is possible to see about 3000 stars. They look small, but they are really **(7)**.....big hot balls of burning gas. Some of them are huge, but others are much smaller, like our planet Earth. The biggest stars are very bright, but they only live for a short time. Every day new stars **(8)**.....born and old stars die. All the stars are very far away. The light from the nearest star takes more **(9)**.....four years to reach Earth. Hundreds of years ago, people **(10)**.....stars, like the North Star, to know which direction to travel in. Today you can still see that star.

<b>6.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> at	<b>B▶</b> up	<b>C▶</b> on	
<b>7.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> very	<b>B▶</b> too	<b>C▶</b> much	
<b>8.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> is	<b>B▶</b> be	<b>C▶</b> are	
<b>9.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> that	<b>B▶</b> of	<b>C▶</b> than	
<b>10.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>A▶</b> use	<b>B▶</b> used	<b>C▶</b> using	

**Question 11 - 15**

	❖	In this section you must choose the word which best fits each space in the texts.
	❖	For questions <b>11</b> to <b>20</b> , mark one letter <b>A</b> , <b>B</b> , <b>C</b> or <b>D</b> on your Answer Sheet.

**Good smiles ahead for young teeth**

Older Britons are the worst in Europe when it comes to keeping their teeth. But British youngsters **(11)**.....more to smile about because **(12)**.....teeth are among the best. Almost 80% of Britons over 65 have lost all or some **(13)**.....their teeth according to a World Health Organisation survey. Eating too **(14)**.....sugar is part of the problem. Among **(15)**....., 12-year-olds have on average only three missing, decayed or filled teeth.

<b>11.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> getting	<b>B▶</b> got	<b>C▶</b> have	<b>D▶</b> having				
<b>12.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> their	<b>B▶</b> his	<b>C▶</b> them	<b>D▶</b> theirs				
<b>13.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> from	<b>B▶</b> of	<b>C▶</b> among	<b>D▶</b> between				
<b>14.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> much	<b>B▶</b> lot	<b>C▶</b> many	<b>D▶</b> deal				
<b>15.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> person	<b>B▶</b> people	<b>C▶</b> children	<b>D▶</b> family				

**Question 16 - 20**

**Christopher Columbus and the New World**

On August 3, 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain to find a new route to India, China and Japan. At this time most people thought you would fall off the edge of the world if you sailed too far. Yet sailors such as Columbus had seen how a ship appeared to get lower and lower on the horizon as it sailed away. For Columbus this **(16)**.....that the world was round. He **(17)**.....to his men about the distance travelled each day. He did not want them to think that he did not **(18)**.....exactly where they were going. **(19)**....., on October 12, 1492, Columbus and his men landed on a small island he named San Salvador. Columbus believed he was in Asia, **(20)**.....he was actually in the Caribbean.

<b>16.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> made	<b>B▶</b> pointed	<b>C▶</b> was	<b>D▶</b> proved				
<b>17.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> lied	<b>B▶</b> told	<b>C▶</b> cheated	<b>D▶</b> asked				
<b>18.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> find	<b>B▶</b> know	<b>C▶</b> think	<b>D▶</b> expect				
<b>19.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> Next	<b>B▶</b> Secoundly	<b>C▶</b> Finally	<b>D▶</b> Once				
<b>20.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> as	<b>B▶</b> but	<b>C▶</b> because	<b>D▶</b> if				

## Question 21 - 30

- ❖ In this section you must choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence.
- ❖ For questions 21 to 40, mark one letter A, B, C or D on your Answer Sheet.

<b>21. The children won't go to sleep.....we leave a light on outside their bedroom.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> except	<b>B▶</b> otherwise	<b>C▶</b> unless	<b>D▶</b> but				
<b>22. I'll give you my spare keys in case you.....home before me.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> would get	<b>B▶</b> got	<b>C▶</b> will get	<b>D▶</b> get				
<b>23. My holiday in Paris gave me a great.....to improve my French accent.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> occasion	<b>B▶</b> chance	<b>C▶</b> hope	<b>D▶</b> possibility				
<b>24. The singer ended the concert.....her most popular song.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> by	<b>B▶</b> with	<b>C▶</b> in	<b>D▶</b> as				
<b>25. Because it had not rained for several months, there was a.....of water.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> shortage	<b>B▶</b> drop	<b>C▶</b> scare	<b>D▶</b> waste				
<b>26. I've always.....you as my best friend.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> regarded	<b>B▶</b> thought	<b>C▶</b> meant	<b>D▶</b> supposed				
<b>27. She came to live her.....a month ago.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> quite	<b>B▶</b> beyond	<b>C▶</b> already	<b>D▶</b> almost				
<b>28. Don't make such a.....! The dentist is only going to look at your teeth.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> fuss	<b>B▶</b> trouble	<b>C▶</b> worry	<b>D▶</b> reaction				
<b>29. He spent a long time looking for a tie which.....with his new shirt.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> fixed	<b>B▶</b> made	<b>C▶</b> went	<b>D▶</b> wore				
<b>30. Fortunately,.....from a bump on the head, she suffered no serious injuries from her fall.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> other	<b>B▶</b> except	<b>C▶</b> besides	<b>D▶</b> apart				

Question 31 – 40

<b>31. She had changed so much that.....anyone recognised her.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ almost</b>	<b>B▶ hardly</b>	<b>C▶ not</b>	<b>D▶ nearly</b>				
<b>32. ....teaching English, she also writes children´s books.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ Moreover</b>	<b>B▶ As well as</b>	<b>C▶ In addition</b>	<b>D▶ Apart</b>				
<b>33. It was clear that the young couple were.....of taking charge of the restaurant.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ responsible</b>	<b>B▶ reliable</b>	<b>C▶ capable</b>	<b>D▶ able</b>				
<b>34. The book.....of ten chapters, each one covering a different topic.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ comprises</b>	<b>B▶ includes</b>	<b>C▶ consists</b>	<b>D▶ contains</b>				
<b>35. Mary was disappointed with her new shirt as the colour.....very quickly.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ bleached</b>	<b>B▶ died</b>	<b>C▶ vanished</b>	<b>D▶ faded</b>				
<b>36. National leaders from all over the world are expected o attend the.....meeting.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ peak</b>	<b>B▶ summit</b>	<b>C▶ top</b>	<b>D▶ apex</b>				
<b>37. Jane remained calm when she won the lottery and.....about her business as if nothing had happened.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ came</b>	<b>B▶ brought</b>	<b>C▶ went</b>	<b>D▶ moved</b>				
<b>38. I suggest we.....outside the stadium tomorrow at 8.30.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ meeting</b>	<b>B▶ meet</b>	<b>C▶ met</b>	<b>D▶ will meet</b>				
<b>39. My remarks were.....as a joke, but she was offended by them.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ pretended</b>	<b>B▶ thought</b>	<b>C▶ meant</b>	<b>D▶ supposed</b>				
<b>40. You ought to take up swimming for the.....of your health.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ concern</b>	<b>B▶ relief</b>	<b>C▶ sake</b>	<b>D▶ cause</b>				



## Part 2

**Do not start this part unless told to do so by your test supervisor**

### Questions 41 – 45

❖	In this section you must choose the word which best fits each
.	space in the texts.
❖	For questions <b>41</b> to <b>45</b> , mark one letter <b>A</b> , <b>B</b> , <b>C</b> or <b>D</b> on your Answer Sheet.

## CLOCKS

The clock was the first complex mechanical machinery to enter the home, **(41)**.....it was too expensive for the **(42)**.....person until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when **(43)**.....production techniques lowered the price. Watches were also developed, but they **(44)**.....luxury items until 1868, When the first cheap pocket watch was designed in Switzerland. Watches later became **(45)**.....available, and Switzerland became the world's leading watch manufacturing centre for the next 100 years.

<b>41.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> despite	<b>B▶</b> although	<b>C▶</b> otherwise	<b>D▶</b> average	
<b>42.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> average	<b>B▶</b> medium	<b>C▶</b> general	<b>D▶</b> common	
<b>43.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> vast	<b>B▶</b> large	<b>C▶</b> wide	<b>D▶</b> mass	
<b>44.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> lasted	<b>B▶</b> endured	<b>C▶</b> kept	<b>D▶</b> remained	
<b>45.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶</b> mostly	<b>B▶</b> chiefly	<b>C▶</b> greatly	<b>D▶</b> widely	

Questions 46 - 50

### Dublin City Walks

What better way of getting to know a new city than by walking around it? Whether you choose the Medieval Walk, which will (46).....you to the 1000 year ago, find out about the more (47).....history of the city on the Eighteenth Century Walk, or meet the ghosts of Dublin's many writers on The Literary Walk, we know you will enjoy the experience.

Dublin City Walks (48).....twice daily. Meet your guide at 10.30 a.m. or 2.30 p.m. at the Tourist Information Office. No advance (49).....is necessary. Special (50).....are available for families, children and parties of more than ten people.

46.				A	B	C	D
A▶ introduce	B▶ present	C▶ move	D▶ show				
47.				A	B	C	D
A▶ near	B▶ late	C▶ recent	D▶ close				
48.				A	B	C	D
A▶ take place	B▶ occur	C▶ work	D▶ function				
49.				A	B	C	D
A▶ paying	B▶ reserving	C▶ warning	D▶ booking				
50.				A	B	C	D
A▶ funds	B▶ costs	C▶ fees	D▶ rates				

**Question 51– 60**

- ❖ In this section you must choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence.
- ❖ For questions **51** to **60**, mark one letter **A**, **B**, **C** or **D** on your Answer Sheet.

<b>51. If you're not too tired we could have a.....of tennis after lunch.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ match</b>	<b>B▶ play</b>	<b>C▶ game</b>	<b>D▶ party</b>				
<b>52. Don't you get tired.....watching TV every nigh?</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ with</b>	<b>B▶ by</b>	<b>C▶ of</b>	<b>D▶ at</b>				
<b>53. Go on, finish the dessert. It needs.....up because it won't stay fresh until.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ eat</b>	<b>B▶ eating</b>	<b>C▶ to eat</b>	<b>D▶ eaten</b>				
<b>54. We're not used to.....invited to very formal occasions.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ be</b>	<b>B▶ have</b>	<b>C▶ being</b>	<b>D▶ having</b>				
<b>55. I'd rather we.....meet this evening, because I'm very tired.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ wouldn't</b>	<b>B▶ shouldn't</b>	<b>C▶ hadn't</b>	<b>D▶ didn't</b>				
<b>56. She obviously didn't want to discuss the matter so I didn't.....the point.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ maintain</b>	<b>B▶ chase</b>	<b>C▶ follow</b>	<b>D▶ pursue</b>				
<b>57. Anyone.....after the start of the play is not allowed in until the interval.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ arrives</b>	<b>B▶ has arrived</b>	<b>C▶ arriving</b>	<b>D▶ arrived</b>				
<b>58. This new magazine is .....with interesting stories and useful information.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ full</b>	<b>B▶ packed</b>	<b>C▶ thick</b>	<b>D▶ compiled</b>				
<b>59. The restaurant was far too noisy to be.....to relaxed conversation.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ conducive</b>	<b>B▶ suitable</b>	<b>C▶ practical</b>	<b>D▶ fruitful</b>				
<b>60. In this branch of medicine, it is vital to .....open to new ideas.</b>				<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A▶ stand</b>	<b>B▶ continue</b>	<b>C▶ hold</b>	<b>D▶ remain</b>				

## Appendix 5: CEFR Levels

Level	Description
<b>A1</b>	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
<b>A2</b>	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
<b>B1</b>	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
<b>B2</b>	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
<b>C1</b>	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

<b>C2</b>	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
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## Appendix 6: Pre-test Tasks

Self-confidence questionnaire:

1- ¿Te sientes seguro a la hora de hablar en inglés?

- 5- Totalmente de acuerdo      4- De acuerdo      3- Ni a favor ni en contra  
2- En desacuerdo      1- Totalmente en desacuerdo

2- ¿Qué aspecto del inglés crees que te hace falta trabajar más?

- Vocabulario     Gramática     oral     escrito

3- ¿Porque crees que te hace falta trabajar este aspecto del idioma?

- No se ha enseñado  
 Se ha enseñado pero no se ha practicado  
 Se ha practicado pero no suficientemente

Interview:

Your interlocutor is going to ask you some questions about yourself. Please answer with complete sentences and give as much information as you can.

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. How would others describe you?
3. Do you consider yourself successful?
4. What was your greatest success?
5. How did you achieve it?
6. What has been your biggest failure?
7. How could you improve yourself?
8. How do you handle criticism?

9. What motivates you to study?
10. Do you know how to motivate other people? Explain.
11. What do you dislike doing?
12. What interests do you have outside of school?

Written task:

Write 10 lines about a topic of your choice from the following list:

1. Gender roles.
2. The new educational system in Europe BOLONIA.
3. Do domestic animals really exist?
4. Gossip and rumors.
5. Unemployment in Spain.

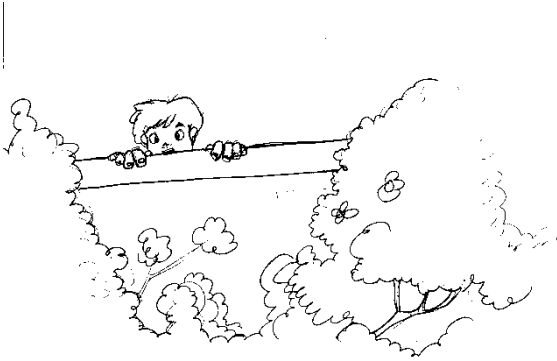
Storytelling task:

Subjects will be given a picture and they will have to tell their partner a story based on this picture.

Student A:



Student B:



Written task:

Students will have to write a story based on the given pictures:

Student A:





Student B:



## Appendix 7: The Pre-training Tasks

Short natural conversations used in the two phases of the investigation:

Confidence building:

“This was my dream, all my life and . . . er . . . you know . . . to serve for the match, suddenly I have a match point out of nowhere, you know . . . I came here, nobody even talked about me and now I’m holding this trophy. And it’s, it’s just . . . this support today is like . . . er . . . I mean . . . I was . . . er . . . three times in the final but this, this is just unbelievable, this is too good . . .”

Listen to this piece of real English- taken from an interview with the tennis star Goran Ivanisevic just after he had won the Wimbledon tennis championship.

1. How does the interviewee express his feelings?
2. Listen again and pay attention to the following words, sounds or phrases: er . . . you know . . . this is . . . it’s . . . why do you think he repeats these words?

The speaker used many expressions which are grammatically incorrect, repeated words and also used gap fillers to give him time to think. Although there were some grammatical mistakes we managed to understand the message that the speaker wanted to convey. If the message is given confidently, the listener will not worry about any mistakes.

To sound more confident:

1. Practice often.
2. Relax and think about the message.
3. Rehearse what you want to say.

Fluency or Accuracy?

Listen to Sophie Sheldon a French student of English talking about her difficulties.

“Well, I have always studied English as a foreign language at school, and I think I have enough grammar and vocabulary knowledge that help me understand written texts in English, but the problem is that I can’t understand people speaking in English , and I can’t express myself in a good way. I would try anything to help me achieve that because I feel unhappy . . . at school they just focus on grammar and vocabulary . . .”

1. What does she think is the reason of her problem?
2. Do you have the same problem?
3. Do you agree with her?

To improve your spoken English you should first decide what is important for you, “fluency or accuracy”, then focus on one area at a time and vary your practice if you are interested in improving both.

## Appendix 8: Oral and Written Tasks for Practice during the Training-phase

Paraphrasing:

Role Play: At the doctor

Work in pairs and imagine that one of you is a doctor and the other one is the patient. Use the list of words that you have to explain your patient's illness to him. Do not use the exact word (use paraphrasing to explain the illness). When you finish exchange roles and do the same again.

<u>Student A</u> Catarro Miopía Inflamación de garganta	<u>Student B</u> Rubiola Fiebre Dermatitis
--	---

Written practice:

Write down a 10 line paragraph to tell your teacher about the accident you suffered on your way to school. Tell him/her how you fell and why you are not going to come to school this week.

Restructuring:

You phone your friend to tell him about your plan, but during your conversation you get the idea to do something else. Use restructuring to change your plan that you haven't finished explaining and explain your new plan. When you finish, exchange roles and do the same again.

Student A

You decided to have a party at home, but, suddenly, you remember that you can't. Your parents are going to paint the house. So, you restructure and you explain your new plan.

Student B

You decided to buy an MP4 for your best friend because it is his/her birthday. Suddenly, you realize that it will be better to give him a gift card since you will be sure that s/he will get what he really wants. Restructure and explain your new plan.

Written practice:

Write an e-mail to your best friend telling him/her that you are not going to go to his/her birthday party (joking); then you restructure to tell him/her that you were joking and that you will be there to celebrate it with him/her. (No more than 10 lines)

Chunks:

Talk about any topic you would like to discuss with your partner. Remember to use of at least 15 expressions from the following list:

“By the way”

“And another thing is”

“Before I forget”

“I see what you mean”

“And all that sort of things”

“And all that stuff”

“I will do my best”

“You can take it for granted”

“There is no such thing”

“I can’t believe this”

“For a number of reasons”

“Back then”

“You know how to...”

“You know!”

“I really have to thank ...”

“It is a great way to ...”

“Needless to say”

“When I was growing up”

“I can’t waste time on something like this”

Written practice:

Write about a dream that you had, and will never forget because it made you very happy. (Not more than 10 lines).

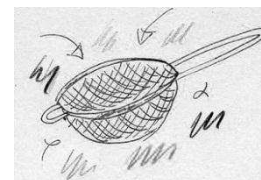
Appeal for authority:

Each student will be given a set of pictures that s/he will have to explain to his/her partner. They have to make their partner participate by using expressions like "What do you think of this?" "How do you say this in English?" "Do you see what I mean?" "Have you got it?" The listener will have to use expressions to ask for repetition. Then, they will have to exchange roles.

Student A



Student B



Gap-fillers:

Use this list of gap fillers in a conversation about how much you like or dislike football. Explain your ideas clearly and do not stop talking. You have to fill the gaps so that there are no moments of silence.

Um ...

Well ...

I mean ...

I was ...

This is ...

It is ...

... er

Ok ...



## Appendix 9: Post-test tasks

Self-confidence questionnaire:

- 1- ¿Te sientes más seguro hablando en inglés después de las clases de estrategias de comunicación?  
  
5- Totalmente de acuerdo      4- De acuerdo    3- Ni a favor ni en contra  
2- En desacuerdo      1- Totalmente en desacuerdo
- 2- ¿Crees que puedes hablar en inglés mejor que antes?
- 3- ¿En qué aspectos crees que tu competencia comunicativa ha mejorado?
- 4- ¿Por qué tienes más seguridad ahora que antes hablando en inglés?

Interview:

Your interviewer is a tourist who visits Spain for the first time he will ask you some questions to know more things.

What would you advise me to visit in Spain?

What about food? What are the typical dishes?

What is it made of?

Do you know how to cook it?

What does it taste like?

In your opinion, which is the best supermarket in Salamanca?

Where can I get some souvenirs?

What things should I buy (typical of Spain)?

How can I get a taxi in Spain?

Written task:

Write 10 lines about a topic of your choice from the following list:

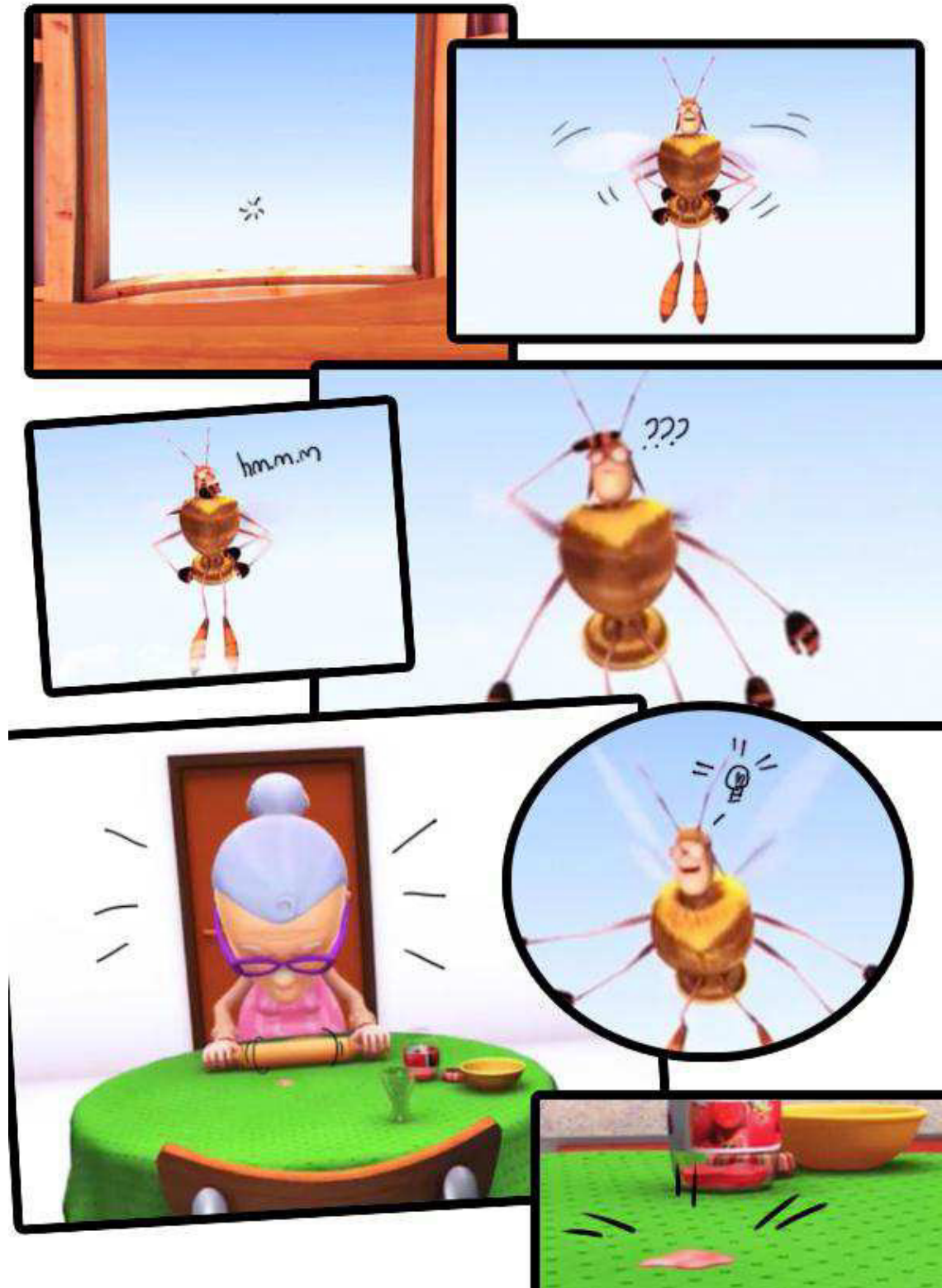
1. Drugs.
2. Unhealthy diets.
3. Generation gaps.
4. Annoying things.
5. Prejudices.

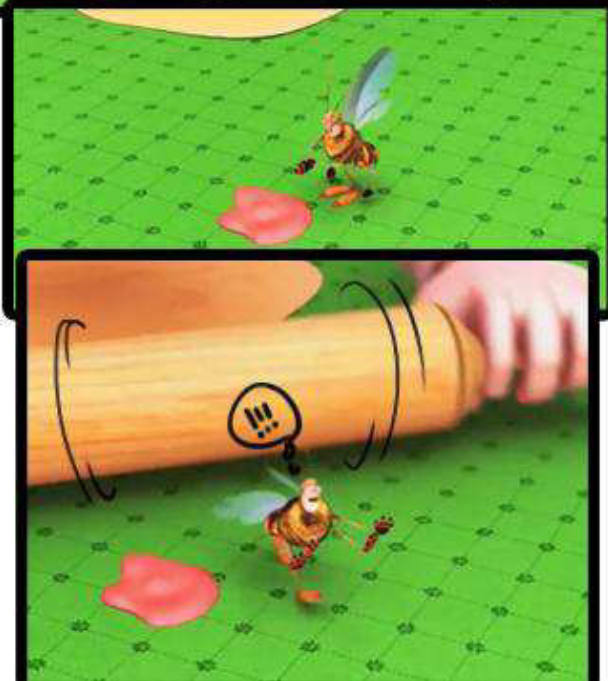
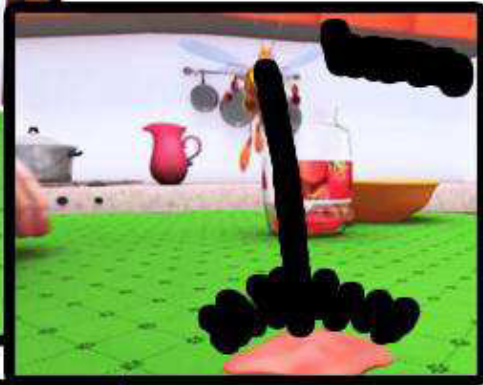
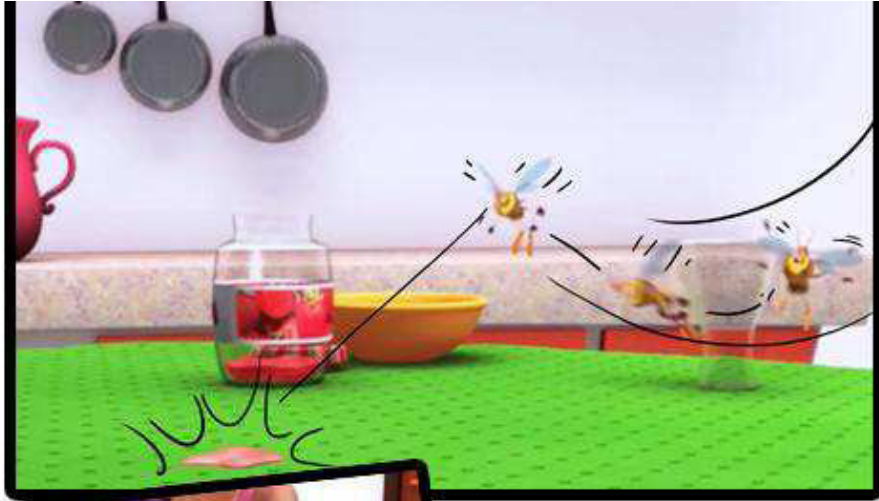
Storytelling task:

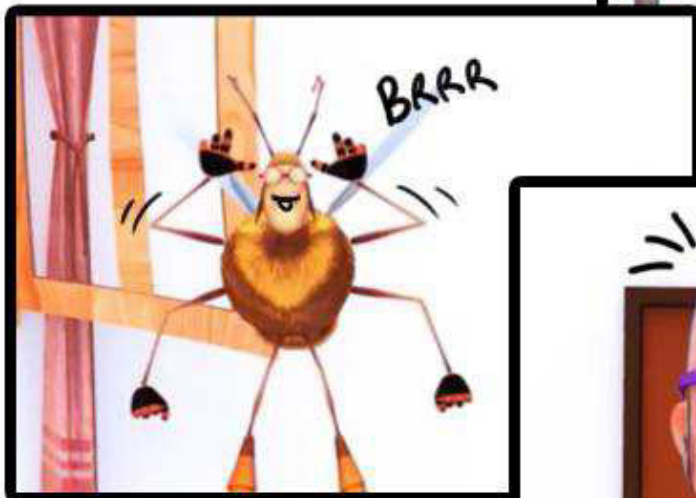
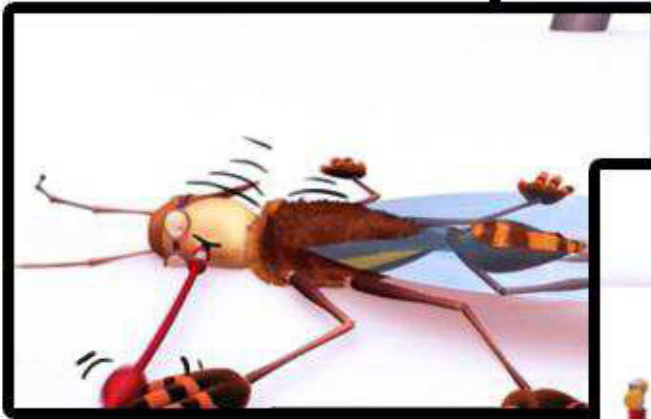
Tell the story to your partner and then listen to his/her story. Draw things while listening to have a record that explains your friend's story.

Written task: Write a short story following the sequence of the pictures.

Student A:







Student B:

