



**Communication Strategies: A Study of Students with High and Low English Proficiency  
in the M.3 English Program at Attarkiah Islamiah School**

**Thipakorn Binhayearong**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of**

**Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics**

**Prince of Songkla University**

**2009**

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ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์	กลวิธีการสื่อสาร: กรณีศึกษานักเรียน โปรแกรมภาษาอังกฤษ ชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 3 โรงเรียนอัสสัมชัญ อีสลามียะห์ ที่มีความสามารถ ด้านภาษาอังกฤษสูงและต่ำ
ผู้เขียน	นางสาวทิพากร บินหะฮืออรัง
สาขาวิชา	ภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์
ปีการศึกษา	2552

### บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อค้นหาวิธีการสื่อสารของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 3 โปรแกรมภาษาอังกฤษ โรงเรียนอัสสัมชัญ อีสลามียะห์ และศึกษาว่า การใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารของนักเรียนมีความแตกต่างกันตามความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษและประเภทกิจกรรมหรือไม่ กลุ่มตัวอย่างมีจำนวน 20 คน ใช้เกรดเฉลี่ยวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ 4 วิชาที่เรียนในชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 1 และ 2 เป็นเกณฑ์ในการแบ่งนักเรียนเป็นกลุ่มที่มีความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษสูงและต่ำ ใช้การแสดงผลตามบทบาทสมมติ และการอธิบายคำศัพท์เป็นเครื่องมือในการค้นหาวิธีการสื่อสารของนักเรียนแต่ละคน กรอบการวิเคราะห์กลวิธีการสื่อสารในการศึกษานี้เลือกและรวบรวมมาจากกรอบการวิเคราะห์กลวิธีการสื่อสารจากผลงานวิจัยหลายชิ้น ข้อมูลที่ได้นำมาวิเคราะห์โดยหาค่าร้อยละและเปรียบเทียบค่าเฉลี่ย (T- test)

### ผลการวิจัยสรุปได้ดังนี้

1. นักเรียนทุกคนใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบทดแทน (compensatory strategies) มากกว่ากลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบหลีกเลี่ยง (avoidance strategies) ซึ่งแสดงให้เห็นว่านักเรียนพยายามอย่างดีที่สุดในการดำเนินการสื่อสารต่อไปโดยพยายามสื่อสารและชดเชยความขาดแคลนทางภาษา แทนการทิ้งจุดมุ่งหมายในการสื่อสาร โดยหลีกเลี่ยงการพูดในหัวข้อที่ไม่รู้หรือหยุดพูดกลางคันเพราะมีปัญหาด้านภาษา นักเรียนใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบไม่มีปฏิสัมพันธ์ (intra-actional strategies) บ่อยกว่ากลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับผู้อื่น (interactional strategies) ซึ่งบ่งบอกได้ว่าในขณะที่สื่อสาร นักเรียนพยายามพึ่งพาตนเองมากกว่าที่จะให้หรือขอความช่วยเหลือจากผู้อื่น

2. มีความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญระหว่างการใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารของนักเรียนที่มีความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษสูงและต่ำและในการแสดงตามบทบาทสมมุติ และการอธิบายคำศัพท์ นักเรียนที่มีความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษสูงใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบหลีกเลี่ยง (avoidance strategies) น้อยกว่านักเรียนที่มีความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษต่ำอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ และใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบไม่มีปฏิสัมพันธ์ (intra-actional strategies) และกลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับผู้อื่น (interactional strategies) มากกว่านักเรียนที่มีความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษต่ำอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ นอกจากนี้ การอธิบายคำศัพท์ เป็นกิจกรรมที่ยากกว่าการแสดงบทบาทสมมุติ เพราะนักเรียนใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบหลีกเลี่ยง (avoidance strategies) เพื่อหลีกเลี่ยงประเด็นที่ต้องการสื่อสาร และเนื่องจากนักเรียนไม่มีคู่สนทนา จึงพยายามแก้ปัญหาในการสื่อสารโดยใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบไม่มีปฏิสัมพันธ์ (intra-actional strategies) มากกว่าอย่างมีนัยสำคัญเมื่อทำกิจกรรมนี้ ต่างจากการแสดงบทบาทสมมุติที่นักเรียนสามารถสนทนากับเพื่อนอย่างเป็นธรรมชาติและมีโอกาสใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารแบบมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับผู้อื่น (interactional strategies) มากกว่าอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ

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**Major Program**        Applied Linguistics

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study attempted to investigate communication strategies used by M.3 English Program students in Attarkiah Islamiah School and whether their use differs significantly according to their English language proficiency and task. The subjects were 20 students whose average grades of four English subjects over two years from M.1 to M.2 were used as a criterion to divide them into high and low proficiency groups. Role play and definition formulation tasks were used to elicit communication strategies employed by each student which were calculated as percentages and the results were compared by t-tests. The analysis of the data was guided by a taxonomy of communication strategies selected and compiled based on several taxonomies from previous literature. The findings were as follows:

1. All students used compensatory strategies more frequently than avoidance strategies. This shows that the students tried their best to keep their communication going by expanding their communicative resources and compensating for their language deficiencies rather than renouncing their target goal by avoiding unknown topics or leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty. The students also used intra-actional strategies more frequently than interactional strategies. This indicates that most students preferred using their own resources, rather than appealing for or giving assistance.

2. There were significant differences between the use of communication strategies by the high and low proficiency students and between the students' use of communication strategies in the role play and definition formulation tasks. The high

proficiency students used significantly fewer avoidance strategies and used both intra-actional strategies and interactional strategies significantly more frequently than the low proficiency students. In terms of tasks, the findings revealed that the definition formulation task was more difficult than the role play task because the students used avoidance strategies to renounce their original message more often. As they could not look for assistance, they tried their best to solve their communication problems based on their own ability by using intra-actional strategies significantly more frequently when they performed the definition formulation task unlike when they performed the role play task in which they could talk to their friend in a more natural way and had a chance to employ interactional strategies significantly more frequently.

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Thipakorn Binhayearong

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the rationale of the study, the purpose of the study and the research questions, the scope and limitations of the study, followed by the significance of the study and finally definition of terms.

#### **1. 1 Rationale of the Study**

Nowadays, English is an important international language and a needed language for every country. In Thailand, English has been regarded as the language which will lead Thailand into the world arena through the process of internationalization. For this reason, English plays a great role in education and it is recommended that English education should start as early as possible. Based on this recommendation, in 1996 the Education Ministry decided that English education starts from the first grade, rather than the fifth grade. This major curriculum change was implemented in 1996 for public schools that were ready to do so, with all schools given the deadline of 2002 to comply. The purpose of the curriculum is to provide students with an opportunity to get more English education and to facilitate life-long learning. It is also to develop students' language proficiency and to fulfill a number of purposes: communication, acquisition of knowledge, academic studies, career advancement and appreciation of the English language (Ministry of Education, 1996). Currently, Thailand is beginning to play a more prominent role internationally and learners of languages are beginning to realize the benefits open to those who can speak foreign languages, in particular English. Those who know English better seem to attain a greater success in study and in their career and have more options in life. For these reasons, the number of international schools and schools which offer English program curriculums, in which English is used as the medium of instruction, has increased in many countries as well as in Thailand (British Council, 2000).

English is very important for students in English Programs because it is used as a medium of teaching and learning. Even though Thai students in English Programs have been taught English for many years, they mostly start studying English in the normal curriculum, in which Thai is used as the medium of instruction. Many Thai students have not encountered a native English speaking teacher before they enter an English Program. Although most of those who study in English Programs have more chance to use English in the classroom, they are still unable to communicate effectively in the target language and their insufficient English language background affects their academic performance.

It is difficult for Thai students to develop English speaking ability because of the absence of natural input in the environment outside the classroom. Their exposure to English is intermittent and mostly in the classroom setting, making the acquisition of the language more artificial (Janicki, 1985). Thai students are mostly not exposed to English in a natural way since English texts have almost always been translated into Thai and they also have little chance to use English in everyday life in Thailand. As a result, most students are still unable to use the knowledge that they have learned in the classroom in real situations outside the classroom.

English proficiency is one of the factors that influence the students' communicative abilities. Students who have high English proficiency seem to be better in second/foreign language communication. On the contrary, students with low English proficiency seem to have more communication problems than high proficiency ones (Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Chen, 1990). Besides the apparent differences in proficiency level, it seems that problems in communication may result from the students' lack of appropriate communication strategies, the systematic techniques or tools employed by a speaker to express his/her meaning when facing difficulties in the communication process (Oxford, 1990) which can help them develop their communicative language abilities. The use of communication strategies occurs naturally when a person learns his/her first language, but learners of a second language may not necessarily be able to transfer these strategies to second-language communication due to linguistic and affective constraints (Paribakht, 1985).

Different learners may use different strategies to solve their communication problems. For instance, some may use circumlocution and approximation to explain something while others may not. In the context of the English Program in this study, some students may turn to native English speaking teachers to seek clarification while others may try to avoid talking with the native English speaking teachers and ask Thai teachers for help instead. Many researchers such as Tarone (1977), Ellis (1984), Chen (1990), Chatupote (1990), and Al-Humaidi (2002) have found that type and frequency of communication strategies used vary according to the learners' language proficiency. Their studies have shown that the more able learners more often resorted to paraphrasing, while the less able ones preferred avoidance strategies. Communication problems may occur anytime and communication strategies are essential tools to help the learners when they are faced with these difficulties and to avoid communication breakdowns.

In previous studies about communication strategies, a large number of procedures have been used to elicit the data upon which analyses of communication strategies have been based. The elicitation methods include picture description (Bialystok and Frohlich, 1980; Varadi, 1980), picture reconstruction (Bialystok, 1983), interview (Raupach, 1983), translation (Varadi, 1980; Flyman, 1997), jigsaw and decision-making tasks (Smith, 2003). These methodological differences may influence a language learner's selection of a specific communication strategy (Bialystok, 1990). Hence, this study intends to find out whether or not students use communication strategies and what strategies they use as well as whether the students' use of communication strategies differ according to their level of English proficiency and task. It is very important for learners to be made aware of what communication strategies are available for use in their communication process and for linguists and English teachers to study learners' use of communication strategies because the knowledge gained will provide useful pedagogical opportunities for enhancing students' communicative abilities.



## 1.2 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the use of communication strategies by high and low English proficiency students in Matayomsuksa 3 (M.3) of the English Program at Attarkiah Islamiah School. It attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the communication strategies used by M.3 English Program students at Attarkiah Islamiah School?
2. In what way does the students' use of communication strategies differ according to their level of English proficiency and task?

## 1.3 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study investigated the use of communication strategies by high and low English proficiency students in M.3 of the English Program at Attarkiah Islamiah School. Some limitations of the study are listed below.

1. The sample size was limited because there was only one small class of M.3 students in the English Program. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be conclusive.
2. Controlled conditions were imposed on students to communicate in English by asking them to do two tasks: *role play* and *definition formulation*. The tasks were used as a trigger for eliciting communication strategies. However, although the two tasks do not cover all situations in real-life communication and the students were obliged to communicate in controlled and unnatural conditions, their attempts at achieving a goal in their communication were nevertheless genuine.

3. The subjects did not have a chance to employ interactional strategies when they performed the definition formulation task because this task involved one-way communication. This was done purposely to investigate whether the type of task had an influence upon the choice of communication strategy. Hence, the overall frequency of the use of this communication strategy might not represent use in actual communication which allows for all types of communication strategies

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Communication in English is essential for students who are studying in English Programs, in which English is used as the medium of instruction in the classroom. The findings of this research could be beneficial for both students and English teachers. It could provide guidance for students in choosing appropriate types of communication strategies in various situations inside and outside the classroom, especially when they face some difficulties. Moreover, it will provide teachers with ideas to design a suitable syllabus which could include the specific teaching of communication strategies and to develop their teaching methodology to maximize opportunities for students to communicate in authentic situations so that students can learn about how to cope with communication problems and be motivated to use communication strategies when problems arise in their communication. When students know how to use communication strategies appropriately, their communication will consequently be more effective.

#### **1.5 Definition of Terms**

##### **Communication Strategies**

In the context of this study, communication strategies are defined as techniques employed by the students to overcome foreign language communication problems by using verbal or non-verbal devices based on their own ability and/or

appeals for their interlocutors' help in order to keep his/her communication going. The problems may be due to their linguistic deficiency and/or a lack of content knowledge on certain topics.

### **English Language Proficiency**

This refers to the students' English language proficiency as measured by their average grades in four English subjects over two years from M.1 to M.2 which are Eng.31101, Eng.31201, Eng. 32101 and Eng.32201.

### **High Proficiency Students**

The term refers to those students who had average grades in the four English subjects ranging from 3.88 to 4.00.

### **Low Proficiency Students**

The term refers to those students who had average grades in the four English subjects ranging from 0.00 to 2.50.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews previous literature under five headings: communication strategies, communication strategies and the development of communicative abilities, factors affecting the choice of communication strategies, taxonomies of communication strategies and related studies.

#### **2.1 Communication Strategies**

Since communication breakdowns can occur anytime in both L1 and L2 communication and must be overcome, communication strategies are useful for both L1 users and L2 learners. However, second language learners who have linguistic constraints probably face communication problems and breakdowns more often than first language users who have a better control of their native language while communicating with others.

Definitions of communication strategies used by second language learners have been reviewed in Bialystok (1990: p.3). For example, Corder (1977) defined communication strategies as “a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty” while Tarone (1980) presented a definition of communication strategies as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared”. Faerch and Kasper (1983a) defined communication strategies as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” and Stern (1983) defined them as “techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language.”

Chen (1990: p. 157) defined communication strategies as “devices employed by L2 learners when they encounter communication problems in L2 communication

because their communicative ends have outrun their communicative means.” Dornyei and Scott (1997: p. 179) noted that communication strategies are “potentially intentional attempts to cope with any language-related problems of which the speaker is aware during the course of communication.”

According to Littlemore (2003: p. 331), communication strategies are “the steps taken by language learners in order to enhance the effectiveness of their communication”. There are two principal categories of communication strategies which are compensation strategies and interactional strategies. Littlemore defined compensation strategies based on Faerch and Kasper (1983) and Poulisse (1993) as “the attempts that language learners make to compensate for gaps in their knowledge of the target language”. On the other hand, interactional strategies are defined based on Bialystok (1990) and McNamara (1995) as “strategies which are used to manipulate the conversation and to negotiate shared meaning”. Moreover, Smith (2003: p.35) defined communication strategies as “discourse management tools and devices of conversation maintenance employed to avoid communication breakdown”.

Although the aforementioned definitions of communication strategies are different in detail, the definitions converge on three similar features, namely problematicity, consciousness, and intentionality (Bialystok, 1990). Problematicity is the idea that strategies are used only when a speaker perceives that there is a problem which may interrupt communication. Consciousness is one characteristic identified in definitions of communication strategies. Speakers are aware when they employ communication strategies in their communication process. They select various communication strategies to interpret and convey a meaningful and comprehensive message. Intentionality is the last criterion in defining communication strategies. It refers to the learner’s control over a repertoire of strategies so that particular ones may be selected from the range of options and deliberately applied to achieve certain effects. Bialystok (1990, p.5) mentioned that “this aspect of the definition is conveyed by the assumption that the speaker has control over the strategy that is selected and that the choice is responsive to the perceived problem.”

However, it can be seen that the most basic and prevalent feature cited in the definitions of communication strategies is problemat�city. Most definitions suggest that when speakers face problems in their communication, they use communication strategies to solve and overcome difficulties.

The definition of communication strategies in this study, hence, focused on “problemat�city”. Communication strategies refer to techniques employed by the students to overcome foreign language communication problems by using verbal or non-verbal devices based on their own ability and/or appeals for their interlocutors in order to keep his/her communication going. The problems may be due to their linguistic deficiency and/or a lack of content knowledge on certain topics. Thus, communication strategies are used by the students when communication problems occur.

## **2.2 Communication Strategies and the Development of Communicative Abilities**

The development of learners’ communicative abilities is one of the most important goals of English language study. However, in most EFL situations, learners have few opportunities to communicate in the target language. Moreover, most EFL curricula emphasize accuracy rather than fluency (Brown, 2001). The curriculum focuses on the teaching of grammar and to some extent ignores the teaching of functional usage of the language because it mainly attempts to encourage students to pass examinations. Consequently, students may know the rules of language structure well, but are unable to use the language appropriately and effectively. In other words, what the students lack is communicative competence which is defined by Savignon (1983: p.22) as “the learner’s ability to function in a truly communicative setting that is in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total information, both linguistic and paralinguistic of one or more interlocutors.”

According to the Foreign Language Curriculum Framework (2000), communication strategies are essential techniques for L2 learners because when they face difficulties in their communication or when breakdowns in communication occur, learners can call on these communication strategies in order to gain access to

further relevant and comprehensible information and learn from mistakes and try again. Moreover, the learners can call on those strategies in order to practice and use various communication skills and learn how to compensate for shortcomings in communication so that they can become confident and successful in second language use.

Freeman (1991) points out that communication strategies are helpful for L2 acquisition because they enable learners to keep the conversation going and thereby provide more opportunities for input in the target language.

According to Stern (1992), L2 learners can better improve their communicative skills if they are able to use a wide variety of communication strategies appropriately. Communication strategies such as circumlocution, gestures, paraphrasing or asking for clarifications are techniques used by L2 learners to maintain a conversation. The purpose of using these techniques is to avoid interrupting the flow of communication. Similarly, Young (1997) states that when loss of meaning negatively affects the conversation or task at hand, there are two options available to the learners and their interlocutors: negotiation of meaning through conversational modifications or by means of communication strategies. Clouston (1997) states that communication strategies contribute to the development of the communicative competence of L2 learners. In its broad concept, communication strategies refer to strategies that foreign language learners use for communication in the target language. Therefore, language teachers aiming at developing the communicative competence of learners should be familiar with communication strategies.

Once learners have developed communicative competence in a language, they will be able to interact more successfully in conversations. Consequently, the communicative approach to language teaching has been welcomed and adopted in many countries throughout the world to allow students to develop their communicative competence. According to the widely accepted ideas of Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence as a whole can be explained in terms of four major components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Karaki (1991) maintains that

grammatical competence relates to the degree to which learners can handle the linguistic code in terms of their knowledge of vocabulary and rules of grammar. Grammatical competence involves knowledge of the language code (grammar rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, etc.) which has been almost the sole emphasis in language teaching in the past. However, Dornyei and Thurrell (1991) noted that more and more materials in modern course books are designed to develop sociolinguistic competence in the learner, and current language tests also often involve the measurement of this competence. In doing so, the teaching of a language has to expand itself to the discourse level and eventually helps develop discourse competence in the learners.

On the other hand, strategic competence, the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action either to enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for breakdowns in communication, is mostly untouched by language teachers. It is the ability to convey information effectively to an interlocutor including the skill to use communication strategies to solve problems that arise in the communication process. Canale and Swain (1980) suggested that this type of competence is demonstrated through communication strategies. So, one way to develop students' communicative competence is to include the teaching of communication strategies in the classroom. Communication strategies are helpful for learners in overcoming communication problems. They help learners to use the target language in meaningful situations. The more learners use the target language in meaningful situations, the more rapidly they develop their communicative competence. Chen (1990) also pointed out that the communicative competence of learners can be developed when the frequency of communication strategies employed by learners is increased. Dornyei and Thurrell (1991, 1994), Faerch and Kasper (1983, 1986), Tarone and Yule (1989) and Willems (1987) advocated communication strategy instruction and recommended pedagogical guidelines and proposed that communication strategy teaching was conducive to the development of strategic competence.

In addition, Faucette (2001) believed that communication strategies would serve as an excellent means for less proficient learners to maintain the conversation,



resulting in the opportunity to receive more language input and improve their language ability. This is supported by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) who made the following statement:

...a NNS's ability to keep a conversation going is a very valuable skill because by maintaining the conversation, the NNS can presumably benefit from receiving additional modified input. Indeed, conversational maintenance is a major objective for language learners who regularly invoke communication strategies (p.126).

For learners, failure in conversation is equal to failure in developing their conversational ability (Maleki, 2007). Using communication strategies, they can keep the conversation channel open, stay in it, and develop the ability to use the foreign language. In short, communication strategies are useful for learners in their language learning.

Oxford (1990) used the term "compensation strategies" and focused on strategies in language learning. In her taxonomy of language learning strategies, she included compensation strategies such as using linguistic clues, using mime or gestures, switching to the mother tongue, avoiding communication partially or totally and using a circumlocution or synonym as one of the six main classes of language learning strategies. L2 learners lack language ability, so they need to compensate for their language deficiency. Oxford stated that compensation strategies were important because they enabled L2 learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in their knowledge. Moreover, second language learners (L2) must learn how interpersonal relations are maintained in the culture in which the target language is spoken, how individuals use language effectively to achieve different purposes, how discourses are structured, and how the language systems operate. L2 learners must combine this knowledge in the process of transmitting and receiving meaningful messages. A great deal of language attainment takes place through taking an active part in actual communication, and communication strategies help learners to do this, which can also serve learning purposes (Tarone, 1980, cited in Dornyei, 1995). Therefore, the use of

communication strategies by L2 learners has been the concern of many researchers who are aware of learners' lack of appropriate strategies which is one of the factors that causes communication problems for L2 learners and many studies have been carried out by many researchers (e.g., Bialystok, 1990; Chen 1990; Poullise, 1993, Dornyei, 1995; Faerch and Kasper, etc.) in order to investigate the best ways to solve these problems.

### **2.3 Factors Affecting the Choice of Communication Strategies**

Although communication strategies are useful in solving problems in the communication process, it is not easy to use them effectively because there are factors affecting their use such as first language, language proficiency level, gender, task, and the cultural background. This study will focus mainly on two aspects: the influence of language proficiency level and task.

#### **2.3.1 Influence of Language Proficiency Level on the Choice of Communication Strategies**

A factor that may be expected to strongly influence the use of specific categories of communication strategies is language proficiency, as suggested by Bialystock (1997):

“The first factor that may be expected to predict the choice of a specific communication strategy is the proficiency level of the speaker. The strategies make different linguistic demands, and some may be too sophisticated for less advanced language learners” (p.48)

The relationship between language proficiency and communication strategies is the issue that most studies investigating the use of communication strategies have tackled. These studies have provided quantitative and qualitative results relating to communication strategies. Most, if not all of the studies, agree that the use of communication strategies is related to language proficiency. High proficiency

learners tend to employ fewer communication strategies than low proficiency learners. Moreover, the frequency and the types of strategy used are also different. Tarone (1977) and Ellis (1984) found that the type and frequency of communication strategies used varies according to the learners' language proficiency. Learners with high proficiency tended to use fewer avoidance strategies but more compensatory strategies than low proficiency ones. Chen (1990) showed that high proficiency learners resorted more to language-based strategies e.g. describing the words or concepts by the use of paraphrase, approximation and generalization, whereas, low proficiency learners depended more on knowledge-based strategies (i.e. depending on knowledge about the concept/word such as telling a story or using a proverb). Additionally, Chatupote (1990) found that the choice of strategy type is associated with levels of language competence. The high proficiency group was able to use L2-based strategies more frequently than L1-based strategies, while other semiotic system-based strategies were rarely employed by any group. Thus, the language proficiency level of L2 learners is one of the factors influencing the use of communication strategies in the communication process.

### **2.3.2. Influence of the Task on the Choice of Communication Strategies**

Tasks are very important instruments for eliciting the learners' use of communication strategies and they are also essential in determining the strategies that will be used. It is clear that learners will adjust the way in which they approach a problem according to their perception of what is relevant. Communication with a teacher in a language classroom will lead to different uses of the language than will a conversation with a friend (Bialystok, 1990). Task type is generally accepted as one of the factors affecting the nature of the selection of learners' communication strategies. Tasks have been designed and used to elicit the data upon which analyses of communication strategies have been conducted. The common ones are picture description, picture construction, narration and conversation. One main criterion for choosing the tasks is how authentic they are in providing a situation for the learners that encourages the use of different communication strategies to convey meanings

and solve problems. Tasks should be appropriate to create communication challenges for the learners and therefore, elicit communication strategies (Al-Humaidi, 2003). Bialystok (1981) found that students respond to different task requirements with different communication strategies. She found that some strategies were useful only for certain kinds of tasks. There are some studies attempting to investigate the influence of differently designed tasks on the students' use of communication strategies include, for example, Flyman (1997) who suggested that different experimental tasks call for varied strategy use which leads to language acquisition in different ways. However, Khanji (1993) criticized the use of tasks as elicitation techniques as artificial and the elicited data as structured, often restricting the subjects' use of language structures in a predictable way.

However, despite all the differences in opinions and findings, it can be said that differences in tasks definitely influence learners' choice of specific communication strategies.

## **2.4 Taxonomies of Communication Strategies**

One of the earliest typologies that assembled communication strategies in an organized fashion was that of Tarone (1977). The scheme was built out of earlier work on interlanguage production (Tarone et al., 1976) which included nine subjects from three different backgrounds, who were at an intermediate level of proficiency. These subjects were each shown two simple drawings and a complex illustration and asked to describe all three in both their native language and English. Tarone's taxonomy includes five major categories as follows:

### **Tarone's Taxonomy (1977)**

#### 1. Avoidance

Topic avoidance : Not talking about concepts for which the vocabulary or other meaning structure is not known

- Message abandonment : Beginning to talk about a concept but being unable to continue due to lack of knowledge in meaning, and stopping in mid-utterance
2. Paraphrase
- Approximation : Using a single target language vocabulary item or structure, which the learner knows is incorrect, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker
- Word coinage : Making up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept
- Circumlocution : Describing characteristics or elements of an object or action instead of using the appropriate target language (TL) structure
3. Conscious Transfer
- Literal translation : Translating word for word from the native language
- Language switch : Using the native language term without bothering to translate
4. Appeal for assistance : Asking for the correct term or structure
5. Mime : Using non-verbal strategies in place of a meaning structure

Tarone (1980) followed this with a definition of communication strategies as “mutual attempt(s) of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (p.419). As these strategies

reflect learners' attempts to make themselves understood to their interlocutors, they are considered interactional in nature.

### **Bialystok's Taxonomy (1983)**

Bialystok's taxonomy is organized around the source of information that is the basis of the strategies. Accordingly, Bialystok's taxonomy is structured into three categories as follows:

#### 1. L1- based strategies

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Language switch | : Inserting a word or phrase from another language                      |
| Foreignizing    | : Applying target language modification to the first language (L1) term |
| Transliteration | : Using some literal translation of a phrase                            |

#### 2. L2-based strategies

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Semantic contiguity | : Using an L2 word which shares the essential feature of the target word                                       |
| Description         | : Using an L2 phrase to describe the property, function, characteristic, duty, its purpose or an example of it |
| Word coinage        | : Making up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept   |

#### 3. Paralinguistic strategies

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Gesture | : Using facial expressions or head shaking if the partner does not understand |
|---------|---|

Mime : Using gestures as well as verbal output to convey meaning

### **Poulisse's Taxonomy (1993)**

Poulisse's taxonomy is one of the most well known among those addressing the compensatory approach. It is based on Levelt's (1989) psycholinguistic model of speech production, which draws a distinction between conceptual and linguistic levels of language production. The taxonomy results from a wide-ranging, empirical communication strategy research project, the so-called "Nijmegen Project". The taxonomy consists of the following three "strategy families":

1. Substitution strategies
  - Original analogical/ Metaphoric comparison : Comparing the target item to another object in analogical way or a metaphorical way
  - Conventional analogical/ Metaphoric comparison : Comparing the target item to another object in an analogical or metaphorical way which is conventional either in the L1 or the target language. The comparison is deemed to be metaphorical, rather than literal, as the two components are not from the same immediate semantic domain.
  - Literal comparison : Comparing the target item to another object in a non-metaphorical way
  - Word transfer : Using an English word that resembles the L2 with L2 word
  - Super-ordinate : Giving the name of the word family to which the target item belongs
  - Simple word transfer : Using an L2 word without attempting to anglicize it

2. Substitution plus strategies

Morphological creativity : Making up an English word that is similar to the target item

3. Reconceptualization strategies

Componential analysis : Describing the individual features of the target item

Function : Stating what the target item can be used for

Activity : Describing something that the target item does

Place : Saying where the target item can be found

Emotion : Mentioning emotion which is often inspired by the target item

4. Functional reduction strategies:

Word abandonment : Getting half way through a description, and then giving up

Word avoidance : Not even attempting to describe the item

**Dornyei and Scott's Taxonomy (1995a, 1995b)**

Dornyei and Scott (1997) classified communication strategies according to the manner of problem management, that is, how communication strategies contribute to resolving conflicts and achieving mutual understanding. They identified three basic categories, namely, direct, indirect and interactional strategies (Dornyei & Scott, 1997)



1. Direct strategies: Providing an alternative, manageable and self-contained means of getting the meaning across, like circumlocution compensating for the lack of a word

Message abandonment	: Leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty
Message reduction	: Reducing the message by avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic languagewise or by leaving out some intended elements for lack of linguistic resources
Message replacement	: Substituting the original message with a new one because of inability to execute it
Circumlocution	: Exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action
Approximation	: Using a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate or a related term, which shares semantic features with the target word or structure
Use of all-purpose words	: Extending a general, “empty” lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking
Word coinage	: Creating a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word
Restructuring	: Abandoning the execution of a verbal plan because of language difficulties, leaving the utterance unfinished, and communicating the intended message according to an alternative plan
Literal translation	: Translating literally a lexical item, idiom, a compound word or structure from L1 to L2

Foreignizing	: Using L1 words by adjusting them to L2 phonology or morphology
Code-switching	: Including L1 words with L1 pronunciation in L2 speech
Use of similar sounding word	: Compensating for a lexical item whose form the speaker is unsure of, with a word which sounds more or less like the target item
Mumbling	: Swallowing or muttering inaudibly a word whose correct form the speaker is uncertain about
Omission	: Leaving a gap when not knowing a word and carrying on as if it had been said
Retrieval	: Saying a series of incomplete or wrong forms or structures before reaching the optimal form
Self-repair	: Making self-initiated corrections in one's own speech
Other-repair	: Correcting something in the interlocutor's speech
Self-rephrasing	: Repeating a term, but not quite as it is, by adding something or using paraphrase
Mime	: Describing a whole concept non-verbally; accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration

2. Indirect strategies: Strategies which are not strictly problem-solving devices, but facilitate the conveyance of meaning indirectly by creating the conditions for achieving mutual understanding

Use of fillers	: Using gambits to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty
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- Self-repetition : Repeating a word or a string of words immediately after they were said
- Other-repetition : Repeating something the interlocutor said to gain time
- Feigning understanding : Making an attempt to carry on the conversation in spite of not understanding something by pretending to understand
- Verbal strategies : Using verbal marking phrases before or after a strategy to signal that the word or structure does not carry the intended meaning perfectly in the L2 code
3. Interactional or modification device strategies: An approach, whereby the participants carry out a trouble-shooting exchange cooperatively
- Direct appeal for help : Turning to the interlocutor for assistance by asking an explicit question concerning a gap in one's L2 knowledge
- Indirect appeal for help : Trying to elicit help from the interlocutor indirectly by expressing lack of a needed L2 item either verbally or non-verbally
- Asking for repetition : Requesting repetition when not hearing or understanding something properly
- Asking for clarification : Requesting an explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure
- Asking for confirmation : Requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly
- Guessing : Guessing is similar to a confirmation request but the latter implies a greater degree of certainty regarding the key word, whereas guessing involves real indecision.

Expressing non-understanding	: Expressing that one did not understand something properly either verbally or nonverbally
Interpretive summary	: Extending paraphrase of the interlocutor's message to check that the speaker has understood correctly
Comprehension check	: Asking questions to check that the interlocutor can follow you
Own-accuracy check	: Checking that what you said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question intonation
Response repeat	: Repeating the original trigger or the suggested correct form after an other-repair
Response repair	: Providing other-initiated self-repair
Response rephrase	: Rephrasing the trigger
Response expand	: Putting the problem word/issue into a larger context
Response confirm	: Confirming what the interlocutor has said or suggested
Response reject	: Rejecting what the interlocutor has said or suggested without offering an alternative solution

As shown above, Dornyei and Scott's taxonomy separated communication strategies into 3 basic categories: direct, indirect, and interactional strategies. Direct strategies provide an alternative, manageable, and self-contained means of getting the meaning across, like circumlocution compensating for the lack of a word. Most traditionally identified communication strategies fall within this category. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, are not strictly problem-solving devices. They do not help a speaker to make alternative meaning structures but rather assist him or her to convey the meaning indirectly by creating conditions for achieving mutual

understanding and avoiding breakdowns as well as keeping the communication going (e.g. using fillers).

Although indirect strategies are not meaning-related, they play a significant role in problem-management. Interactional strategies involve the participants carrying out trouble-shooting exchanges cooperatively (e.g., appealing for help, or requesting for clarification), and therefore mutual understanding is a function of the successful execution of interlocutors in their communication.

In essence, the review of aforementioned taxonomies is relevant to this particular study because they provide frameworks for classifications of the communication strategies employed by L2 learners to make communication continue smoothly and to overcome some communication problems. However, some of these taxonomies overlap and some better classify and define communication strategies. Moreover, some communication strategies may not occur in certain situations. Hence, the taxonomy of communication strategies used for analysis of communication strategies in this study was selected and compiled based on Tarone (1977), Bialystok (1983), Poulisse (1993) and Dornyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b) to make it more relevant to the research context. The taxonomy and its sources are presented in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Taxonomy and Its Sources**

<b>Types of communication strategies</b>	<b>Sources</b>
<b>1. Avoidance strategies</b>	<b>Tarone (1977)</b>
1.1 Topic avoidance	} Tarone (1977)
1.2 Message abandonment	}
1.3 Message replacement	Dornyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)
<b>2. Compensatory strategies</b>	<b>Poulisse (1993)</b>
<b>2.1 Intra-actional strategies</b>	
2.1.1 Approximation	Tarone (1997)
2.1.2 Use of fillers	Dornyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)
2.1.3 Word-coinage	Tarone (1997), Bialystok (1983)
2.1.4 Circumlocution	Tarone (1977)
2.1.5 Metaphoric comparison	Poulisse (1993)
2.1.6 Code-switching	Dornyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)
2.1.7 Foreignizing	Bialystok (1983)
2.1.8 Literal translation	Tarone (1977), Bialystok (1983)
2.1.9 Self-repair	} Dornyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)
2.1.10 Self-repetition	}
2.1.11 Mime	Tarone (1977), Bialystok (1983)
2.1.12 Omission	} Dornyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)
2.1.13 Mumbling	}
<b>2.2 Interactional strategies</b>	<b>Dornyei &amp; Scott (1995a, 1995b)</b>
2.2.1 Asking for repetition	}
2.2.2 Asking for clarification	}
2.2.3 Asking for confirmation	}
2.2.4 Other-repair	}
2.2.5 Other-repetition	}
2.2.6 Comprehension check	} Dornyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)

(See definitions in Appendix II)

This taxonomy is mainly divided into 2 overarching categories: avoidance strategies and compensatory strategies. These concepts appear frequently in the related literature on the topic of communication strategies. They also occur naturally in communication and if problems occur, the speaker can either try delivering the message despite any lack of language or content or drop it altogether. Bygate (1986) provided some explanation for these general types of strategies, asserting that compensatory strategies are used to compensate for a language gap by improvising a substitute. Accordingly, the message is not lost or altered. Avoidance strategies, on the other hand, result in reducing the message. That is, the learner fails to communicate the intended message; therefore, only a partial solution may be managed or no solution at all is found (i.e. the learner abandons the message and perhaps tries to communicate something else that he or she can manage). Furthermore, Tarone (1977), in explaining avoidance strategies, asserted that learners sometimes make a deliberate decision not to speak because they expect communication problems to arise or because some aspect of vocabulary or grammar is not known. There are two subtypes under compensatory strategies: intra-actional strategies and interactional strategies. One of the reasons that these subtypes are included under compensatory strategies is that when students try to maintain their original message, there are two ways for them to deal with communication problems. They can either attempt to compensate for their language deficiency themselves or appeal for or give assistance from their interlocutors.

In short, this taxonomy views communication management as having two choices at each layer—to pursue or drop the message when problems occur and if the decision is to pursue it, there are two ways available: to use their own resources or to involve other interlocutors in an attempt to understand the message.

## **2.5 Related Studies**

Many studies in non-Thai and Thai contexts have been carried out to investigate communication strategies employed by students with different levels of English proficiency in certain communicative tasks.

### **2.5.1 Related Studies in Non-Thai Context**

Poulisse and Schils (1989) investigated the influence of task and proficiency related factors on the use of communication strategies. The study involved three groups of Dutch learners of English with three different proficiency levels characterized as advanced, intermediate, and beginning learners of English. There were 15 students in each group. The subjects were tested on three different tasks: a picture naming/ description task, a story retelling task, an oral interview with a native speaker of English. Their findings revealed that “proficiency level” is inversely related to the number of compensatory strategies used by the subjects: the least proficient subjects used more compensatory strategies than did the most advanced ones. Contrary to their expectations, however, the type of compensatory strategy chosen by the subjects was not to any large extent related to their proficiency level. This was perhaps because even the learners with less ability were linguistically competent enough to use communication strategies. Rather, the data indicated that task-related factors played a large role. Whereas the subjects predominantly used analytic strategies in the picture naming/description task, they frequently resorted to holistic strategies and transfer strategies in the story retelling task and the oral interview.

Chen (1990) attempted to explore the relationship between Chinese EFL learners’ target language proficiency and their strategic competence. The subjects of this study were L2 students majoring in English at the Guangzhou Foreign Language Institute. They were divided into two groups according to their general English proficiency (high-proficiency and low-proficiency). A concept-identification task consisting of 24 concepts, 12 concrete and 12 abstract words, was designed as a communicative task. The findings indicated that the frequency at which the Chinese EFL learners selected different types of communication strategies in their communication varied according to their proficiency level. He found that high-proficiency learners employed fewer communication strategies than low-proficiency learners. Moreover, linguistics-based communication strategies were more frequently employed by high-proficiency learners, whereas knowledge-based and repetition



communication strategies were more extensively used by low-proficiency learners. Based on the findings, Chen stated that learners' communicative competence could probably be increased by the development of their strategic competence or their use of communication strategies which are helpful in overcoming communication problems.

Flyman (1997) examined the role that communication strategies played in the maintenance of communication in a Swedish foreign language classroom. In this study, 20 Swedish students from a class with approximately 4 years of studying French as a foreign language were put to work in pairs. The purpose of this study was to determine the role of communication strategies in three different tasks (translation, story-telling and discussion). In the translation task, the subjects were given five Swedish sentences to translate into French. The second task was to tell a story that was presented in a series of pictures. In the last task, the subjects needed to choose two from five topics to discuss. It appeared that the translation task resulted in a large number of conceptual strategies and consequently a majority of inefficient strategies (e.g. lexical avoidance), whereas the story-telling task and the discussion task involved a high number of efficient strategies, mainly due to the frequent use of transfer strategies and appeal for assistance strategies. A majority of communication strategies in the discussion task were code strategies.

Al-Humaidi (2002) investigated communication strategies in oral discourse in a context where English was spoken as a foreign language by Omani EFL learners with their teachers who were either Omani EFL teachers, native speakers of English, or had English as a second language. The study addressed the type and frequency of communication strategies used by 82 students and 7 teachers, the impact of students' L2 proficiency (instructional) level on the use of communication strategies, and the ways in which students and teachers achieved mutual understanding and negotiated meaning using communication strategies. For purposes of analysis, students were divided into a high proficiency group and a low proficiency group. The data for the study consisted of transcripts from regular advising sessions addressing course-related

issues such as course difficulties as well as feedback on exams and course projects. The findings were as follows:

(a) The strategies were used by the students and teachers to significantly varying degrees. Students used approximations (semantic and syntactic) and code switching most commonly while instructors used reformulations and confirmation checks more often.

(b) There were significant differences between the high proficiency group and low proficiency group in their use of certain communication strategies. The low proficiency group used semantic approximation, clarification requests, message alteration, and code switching more often, whereas the high proficiency group used confirmation checks more often. Despite these differences, both groups resorted to the same types of strategies. The low proficiency group, however, resorted to strategies more frequently than the high proficiency group.

(c) There were significant differences among the teacher groups in their use of five communication strategies. Teachers with English as a foreign language who met with the low proficiency group were significantly more likely to use code switching, approximations (syntactic and semantic), and code-based confirmation checks.

The results indicated that these learners solved problems in their communication with their teachers with the types of strategies that reflected their poor linguistic resources and could be regarded as not very effective strategies. On the other hand, the high proficiency learners' rich linguistic resources enabled them to use different types of strategies in the process of their communication with their teachers. The students' low proficiency also influenced the use of communication strategies by the teachers because they had to use whatever means they could to make their students understand. Hence, if they shared the code, they code switched. They also used approximations and confirmation checks with their low proficiency students.

Smith (2003) examined communication strategy use among adult learners of English in a computer-mediated environment. Eighteen low-intermediate level ESL students studying at an American university took part in this study. Specifically, communication strategies employed during problem-free discourse as well as

compensatory strategy use during task-based computer-mediated communication were explored. Compensatory strategy use was also examined relative to communicative task type (jigsaw and decision-making). The four most frequently used communication strategies were substitution, framing, fillers and politeness. The data suggested that there were no significant differences among the four most frequently used communication strategies but task type might indeed have affected compensatory strategy use among learners. The decision-making task seemed to elicit many more compensatory strategies than the jigsaw task.

#### **2.4.1 Related Studies in Thai Context**

Namuagrak (1999) investigated the learning and communicative strategies of three groups of M.4 Benjamarachalai School students in English conversation to determine what types of strategies and how many strategies they used to obtain their level of achievement. The sample population of 60 students was divided into 3 proficiency level groups based on their achievement in English with 20 students in each group. The results showed that the subjects used 15 types of communicative strategies: risk-taking, transfer, avoidance, message adjustment, overgeneralization, reduplication, repetition, incorrect word selection, self-repair, simplification, prefabricated pattern, cooperative, parallel structure, over elaboration, and imitation. The communicative strategy most frequently used in English conversation was transfer, the second most frequently used was simplification and the least used was imitation. The students with high grades in English used simplification the most. The second most frequently used strategy in this group of students was transfer, and the least frequently used was avoidance. The students with medium grades in English used transfer the most, followed by simplification as the second, and avoidance was used the least. The students with low grades in English used transfer the most. The second most frequently used were simplification and prefabricated pattern, whereas the least used was self-repair.

Sasanapradit (2000) studied the use of speaking strategies by English language learners in a Thai context. The subjects of this study were 33 undergraduate students who were then studying at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus from the Faculty of Science, Management Sciences and Engineering who had just finished the Conversation Course (335-103). She divided the students into two groups: ineffective and effective English language learners based on the criteria adapted from Heaton's oral proficiency scales (1988).

Ineffective English language learners refer to three major levels of learners:

1) Those who have extreme difficulties in communication on any subject and fail to make themselves understood. 2) Those whose language skills cause difficulties for native speakers unaccustomed to 'foreign' English. Communication on everyday topics is possible but there are a large number of errors in phonology, grammar and lexis. 3) Those whose use of verbal communication is fairly satisfactory. A native speaker may occasionally experience some difficulty in understanding people at this level. Repetition, rephrasing and re-patterning are sometimes necessary. Ordinary native speakers might find the conversation difficult to understand.

Effective English language learners refer to the following three groups of learners:

1) Learners who show satisfactory verbal communication, causing little difficulty for native speakers in understanding them. They make a limited number of errors in grammar, lexis and pronunciation, and they are at ease in communicating on everyday subjects. They may have to correct themselves and change their speech pattern on occasions, but the listener has little difficulty in understanding them. 2) Those who are very proficient, although they may not be mistaken for a native speaker; they express themselves quite clearly, 3) Those who are excellent; their ability to communicate in English is on a par with an educated native speaker. They are completely at ease in their use of English on all topics.

The subjects were asked to do two tasks: firstly, explaining eight individual lexical items comprising 4 concrete as well as 4 abstract concepts to the interlocutor who was the researcher herself; and secondly, describing two pictures. She found that the ineffective group used more types of strategy than the effective group. The

effective group was found to use L2-based strategies and the clarify function strategies more often than the ineffective. Moreover, the findings suggested that the use of more strategies was related, to a certain degree, to the level of proficiency. The strategy types such as those which are L2-based at syntactic level and the use of the clarify function appeared to contribute to more effective communication.

Wannaruk (2003) aimed to investigate the use of communication strategies of students at Suranaree University of Technology who were learning English for Science and Technology (EST). Data collected from interviews of students by native English teachers were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. It was found that the most frequently used communication strategy was the use of ‘modification devices’. The other strategies used in order of frequency were ‘nonlinguistic strategies’, ‘L1-based strategies’, ‘target language-based strategies’, and ‘avoidance strategies’. The results showed that students used different communication strategies to varying degrees depending on their language levels. The group with a low level of oral proficiency employed significantly more communication strategies than did the ones with middle and high levels of oral proficiency. In addition, the middle group used communication strategies significantly more than the high proficiency group. She noted that the learners with a high level of oral proficiency were equipped with more knowledge of the target language; therefore, they resorted less to communication strategies. In contrast, the learners with a low level of oral proficiency not only had limited knowledge of the second language, but also resorted more frequently to the use of communication strategies.

The above review of related studies in non-Thai context and Thai context is summarized in the following table.

### Related Studies in Non-Thai Context

Researchers	Investigation	Tasks	Results
Poulisse and Schils (1989)	The influence of task and proficiency related factors on the use of communication strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A picture naming/description task</li> <li>• A story retelling task</li> <li>• An oral interview with a native speaker of English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The least proficient subjects used more compensatory strategies than did the most advanced ones.</li> <li>• Task-related factors played a large role.</li> </ul>
Chen (1990)	The relationship between Chinese EFL learners' target language proficiency and their strategic competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept-identification task consisting of 24 concepts, 12 concrete and 12 abstract words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high proficiency learners employed fewer communication strategies than low-proficiency learners.</li> <li>• High proficiency learners: Linguistics-based strategies</li> <li>• Low proficiency learners: Knowledge-based and repetition strategies</li> </ul>
Flyman (1997)	The role of communication strategies played in the maintenance of communication in a Swedish foreign language classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation</li> <li>• Story-telling</li> <li>• Discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The translation task: conceptual strategies and a majority of inefficient strategies</li> <li>• The story-telling task and the discussion task: transfer strategies and appeal for assistance strategies</li> <li>• Discussion task: code strategies</li> </ul>
Al-Humaidi (2002)	Communication strategies in oral discourse in the context where English was spoken as a foreign language by Omani EF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking with their teachers in advising sessions addressing course-related issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The low proficiency group resorted to strategies more frequently than the high proficiency group.</li> </ul>

Researchers	Investigation	Tasks	Results
Smith (2003)	Communication strategies in a computer-mediated environment among low-intermediate level ESL learners at an American university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jigsaw</li> <li>• Decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task type might affect compensatory strategy use among learners.</li> <li>• Decision-making task seemed to elicit many more compensatory strategies than the jigsaw task.</li> </ul>

### Related Studies in Thai Context

Researchers	Investigation	Tasks	Results
Namuagrak (1999)	Communicative strategies of three groups of M.4 Benjamarachalai School students in English conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most and the least frequently used communication strategies by the students with high grades: simplification and transfer.</li> <li>• The most and the least frequently used communication strategies by the students with medium grades: transfer and avoidance.</li> <li>• The most and the least frequently used communication strategies by the students with low grades: transfer and self-repair.</li> </ul>
Sasanapradit (2000)	The use of speaking strategies of English language learners in the Thai context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining eight individual lexical items</li> <li>• Describing two pictures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ineffective group used more types of strategy than the effective group.</li> <li>• The effective group used L2-based strategies and the clarify function strategies more often than the ineffective group.</li> </ul>

Researchers	Investigation	Tasks	Results
Wannaruk (2003)	The use of communication strategies by students at Suranaree University of Technology learning English for Science and Technology (EST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview by native English teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group with a low level of oral proficiency employed significantly more communication strategies than did the ones with middle and high levels of oral proficiency.</li> </ul>

Interestingly, many studies in both non-Thai and Thai contexts such as Poulisse and Schils (1989), Chen (1999), Sasanapradit (2000) and Wannaruk (2003) which investigated the use of communication strategies by learners with different levels of English proficiency had similar results. That is, students with low proficiency employed more communication strategies than those with high proficiency. Some noted that students with high proficiency were equipped with more knowledge of the target language; therefore, they resorted less to communication strategies.

Moreover, most studies also found that the high proficiency students used more efficient strategies (e.g. L2-based strategies and linguistics-based strategies). On the other hand, the low proficiency students employed more inefficient strategies (e.g. avoidance strategies) because of their limited knowledge of the target language.

Additionally, Flyman (1997) and Smith (2003) found that task types might affect the students' use of communication strategies. The instruments of all the studies mentioned above are all similar in that the researchers conducted the tasks and put the subject in controlled conditions in which the subjects' communication strategies were elicited. The most frequently used tasks were story-telling, definition formulation and oral interviews.

It can be observed from the literature that the subjects were mostly required to perform in two main types of tasks. Story-telling and definition formulation were one-way communication tasks in which the students needed to perform the tasks



individually. Examples of two-way communication tasks were oral interview and discussion in which the students were involved with other interlocutors. Therefore, this study also conducted two tasks in which the students were put into both one-way communication (definition formulation) and two-way communication (role play).

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology and procedure used in the study. It is divided into five main sections: subjects, research instruments, data collection procedures, pilot study, and data analysis.

#### 3.1 Subjects

The subjects in this study were 20 students sampled from the total population of 33 students who were in the M.3 English Program in Attarkiah Islamiah School. The students' average grades of four English subjects: Eng.31101, Eng.31201, Eng.32101 and Eng.32201 over two years from M.1 to M.2 were used as a criterion to place students into high and low proficiency group. All students' average grades were ranked in order from the highest to the lowest. The top 30% and the bottom 30% of the students were respectively put into the high proficiency group and the low proficiency group. Thus, there were 10 students in the high proficiency group and 10 students in the low proficiency group as detailed in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Details of the Subjects**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Average grade</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
High proficiency (Top 30%)	3.88 - 4.00	10
Low proficiency (Bottom 30%)	0.00 – 2.50	10

## **3.2 Research Instruments**

The designing of tasks to elicit communication strategies employed by the students was based on the belief that they would use communication strategies in order to get across the intended message when they had communication problems due to linguistic constraints. Therefore, the students in this study were assigned to perform two communication tasks: One was a role play task which involved two-way communication and the other was definition formulation which was a one-way communication task.

### **3.2.1 Role Play**

The first source of data was from a communication task in the form of role play; that is, an activity in which foreign language learners adopt and act out the roles of characters in a situation. The subjects were asked to perform a communication task in which they communicated in English on a given topic chosen after discussion with an English teacher from the school and after consulting the M.1 and M.2 English books. The topic “Asking and giving recommendations on how to study and live in Narathiwat happily” was chosen because students were familiar with it. One student acted as an exchange student from Singapore and another one acted as a Thai student in Attarkiah Islamiah School. The student who acted as an exchange student needed to ask the Thai student for some recommendations on how to live and study in Narathiwat happily. He or she could ask about study, food, tradition and attractions in Narathiwat so that he or she could study and live in Narathiwat happily. The Thai student, on the other hand, had to give recommendations about study, food, tradition, and attractions in Narathiwat to the exchange student.

All students were put into pairs formed from within the same group (high or low proficiency) so that the low proficiency students were not placed under stress by having to hold a conversation with a friend of higher ability. The students were allowed to choose their own partners and decide by themselves which role they

wanted to play. Then, they prepared for the experiment by studying instructions given to them on role play cards and then played out their roles giving or finding out the required information.

**Task 1: Role Play**

**Topic: Asking and giving recommendations on how to study and live in Narathiwat happily**

**Student A**

You are an exchange student from Singapore who has just come to study in Attarkiah Islamiah School. You need some recommendations from a Thai student in this school on how to study and live in Narathiwat happily. You can ask him or her about the study, food, tradition and attractions in Narathiwat so that you can study and live in Narathiwat happily. You also have to answer what the Thai student asks you about your life in Thailand.

**Student B**

You are a Thai student in Attarkiah Islamiah School. An exchange student comes to ask you for some recommendations on how to study and live in Narthiwat happily. He or she may ask you about the study, food, tradition and attractions in Narathiwat. Give him/her recommendations so that he/she can study and live in Narathiwat happily. You have to ask him/her about two things that you want to know about his/her life in Thailand.

### 3.2.2 Definition Formulation

All students were asked to describe or explain lexical items comprising 3 concrete and 3 abstract concepts as follows:

<b>Concrete lexical items</b>	<b>Abstract lexical items</b>
Birthday card (การ์ดวันเกิด)	Love (ความรัก)
Ice-cream (ไอศกรีม)	Poor (ยากจน)
Computer (คอมพิวเตอร์)	Travel (ท่องเที่ยว)

This task was performed after the subjects finished the role play. Each lexical item was written on a separate card with a Thai translation in brackets to make sure that all the students knew its meaning. The researcher who acted as an audience or a listener showed the cards one by one to each student and asked them to firstly describe or explain the concrete lexical items and then the abstract lexical items. The students had to describe and explain each item using at least three sentences. The researcher did not assist students even though they kept silent because her assistance could have influenced the students' use of communication strategies.

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected during the first semester of the 2007 academic year. Students were required to do two tasks: role play and definition formulation. All high proficiency students were firstly taken from the classroom to the waiting room. In administering the tasks, the researcher made sure that the instructions were clear and the students understood and knew what they had to do. Students were asked to do the role play task first and then the definition formulation task. Each pair was asked to perform the task in another room. When students had finished each task, they were not allowed to go back to the waiting room or to the classroom so they could not tell

the other students what the tasks were. When all the high proficiency students had finished the task, they had to wait until the group of low proficiency students were called to the room, and then they were allowed to go back to the classroom. All of the students' performances were recorded on videotape and then transcribed.

### **3.4 Pilot Study**

There were four purposes for the pilot study. The first was to make sure that the topic used for the role play task and the lexical items in the definition formulation task were not too difficult for this level of students. The second purpose was to make sure that the instructions given to the subjects were clear and that the students understood what they had to do. The third was to discover any problems and difficulties which might arise from the data collection procedure so those problems and difficulties could be avoided when conducting the main study. The last purpose was to try out the taxonomy of communication strategies that would be used for identifying communication strategies in the main study.

#### **Research Instruments for Pilot Study**

##### **Task 1: Role Play**

**Topic: Asking and giving recommendations on how to study and live in Hat Yai happily**

##### **Student A**

You are an exchange student from Singapore who has just come to study in Hatyaiwittayalai School. You need some recommendations from a Thai student in this school on how to study and live in Hat Yai happily. You can ask him or her about study, food, tradition and attractions in Hat Yai so that you can study and live in Hat Yai happily.

**Student B**

You are a Thai student in Hatyaiwittayalai School. An exchange student comes to ask you for some recommendations on how to study and live in Hat Yai happily. He or she may ask you about study, food, tradition, attractions in Hat Yai. Give him/her recommendations so that he/she can study and live in Hat Yai happily.

**Concrete lexical items**

Ice-cream (ไอศกรีม)

Computer (คอมพิวเตอร์)

Card (การ์ด)

**Abstract lexical items**

Love (ความรัก)

Poor (ยากจน)

Travel (ท่องเที่ยว)

The research instruments were piloted with M.3 English Program students in Hatyaiwittayalai School on 3<sup>rd</sup>, June, 2007. Eight students, four high proficiency students and four low proficiency students participated in this piloting process. These students were selected by using the same criteria as those in the main study. The researcher had chosen to pilot with Hatyaiwittayalai school students because there was no English Program in other Islamic schools in southern Thailand.

All the students were asked to perform the role play task first and then the definition formulation task following the procedures of the main study. However, since this school is located in Hat Yai and most students lived in Songkhla province, they might not have known much about Narathiwat. The setting in the role play task therefore had to be changed from Narathiwat to Hat Yai and the two students acted respectively as an exchange student from Singapore and as a Thai student in Hatyaiwittayalai School in this communication task.

After the students had finished the tasks, they were interviewed on how difficult the tasks were, so that the researcher could get useful information on how to

improve the research instruments. The students' performances were recorded on videotape.

Based on the students' performances and the information from the interviews, the topic for the role play task was established as not being too difficult for the students to perform and most of the students seemed to enjoy talking about the topic. However, one problem which was noted was that the student who took the role of the exchange student would ask only a few questions and thus allow the other student to answer only those questions. One way to solve this problem was to add more details to the instructions on the cards requiring the Thai student to ask the exchange student about his or her life in Thailand and the exchange student to answer those questions as well.

For the second task, definition formulation, all six words were found not to be too difficult for the students to describe. However, the word "card" was too broad and needed to be changed to "birthday card" to make sure that the students in the main study would understand it in the same way and did not interpret "card" in other ways such as a credit card, a game card or an ATM card. However, some students' descriptions were too short. So, the average number of sentences from the groups of high and low proficiency was calculated and more instructions were added. The students were asked to describe or explain each given item using at least three sentences.

As for the taxonomy of communication strategies, two more strategies were included: the "omission" and "mumbling" strategies which were placed under the heading of intra-actional strategies because the subjects used them. The definitions of these strategies are given below:

- Omission strategy: Leaving a gap when not knowing a word and carrying on as if it had been said (Dornyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b)
- Mumbling strategy: Swallowing or muttering inaudibly a word (or part of a word) whose correct form the speaker is uncertain about (Dornyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b)



### 3.5 Data Analysis

To interpret the data, the transcriptions of the students' performances in the two tasks were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The analysis of the data was divided into two main parts according to the purposes of the study.

1. To find out the communication strategies used by the M.3 students in the English Program in Attarkiah Islamiah School, the communication strategies used by each student were identified based on the taxonomy of communication strategies selected and compiled from Tarone (1977), Bialystok (1983), Poulisse (1993) and Dornyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b), (See Appendix I). The definitions and examples of communication strategies are presented in Appendix II.

After the communication strategies used by the students in their conversation were identified, quantitative analysis was conducted in order to find out the frequency of communication strategies use. For the discussion of the findings, the number of occurrences of each strategy was calculated as percentages. The frequencies of strategy use were also ranked.

2. In order to find out whether the students' use of communication strategies differed according to their level of English proficiency and the task, *t*-tests were used to find out whether there were significant differences between the high and low proficiency groups in their use of communication strategies in the role play task and in the definition formulation task.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study. To answer the first question intended to investigate the types of communication strategies employed by the students, the communication strategies used by the students will be reported and discussed. In doing this, excerpts extracted from the students' performances will be used for illustration. To tackle the second question aimed at finding out ways in which the students' use of communication strategies differs according to their English language proficiency and task, differences in the students' use of communication strategies according to their level of English proficiency and task will be discussed.

#### 4.1 Communication Strategies Used by the Students

Table 4.1 presents the overall use of communication strategies by the students in this study in terms of their frequency and percentage. The communication strategies were divided into two main types: avoidance strategies and compensatory strategies which were further divided into intra-actional strategies and interactional strategies.

**Table 4.1 The Overall Frequency of Communication Strategy Use**

Type of communication strategies	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Avoidance strategies	97	10.87
2. Compensatory strategies	795	89.13
2.1 <i>Intra-actional strategies</i>	740	82.96
2.2 <i>Interactional strategies</i>	55	6.17
<b>Total</b>	892	100

Table 4.1 shows that a total of 892 communication strategies were used in this study. It was found that compensatory strategies (89.13%) were more frequently used than avoidance strategies (10.87%). This indicated that most students attempted to maintain their original aim by developing an alternative plan and to solve problems in communication by expanding their communicative resources, rather than avoiding their message or renouncing their original communication goal. This might be because the students have been studying in the English program for almost two and a half years. They were probably able to speak English regardless of their grammatical errors. Most of them attempted to speak as much and as best as they could to convey their message to their interlocutor.

It should be noted that under compensatory strategies, intra-actional strategies (82.96%) were more frequently used than interactional strategies (6.17%). This indicates that most students preferred using their own resources, rather than appealing for assistance when they had communication problems. Most of them tried to use their own ability to understand and convey their message. Nevertheless, it is also probable that the lower frequency of the students' use of interactional strategies was influenced by the task they performed which affected their chance to ask for more help from their interlocutors; they had opportunities to employ interactional strategies only in the role play task but in the definition formulation task they did not. So, the opportunities for interactional strategies use were greatly reduced.

Table 4.2 presents the distribution of communication strategies used by all the students in this study in terms of their frequency, percentage and rank order. The students' use of each communication strategy will be discussed in detail under two main types of communication strategies.

**Table 4.2 The Distribution of Communication Strategies**

Types of communication strategies		Communication strategy	n	%	Rank
<b>1. Avoidance strategies</b>		Topic avoidance	7	0.78	17
		Message abandonment	69	7.74	4
		Message replacement	21	2.35	12
<b>2. Compensatory strategies</b>	2.1 Intra-actional strategies	Approximation	25	2.80	10
		Use of fillers	176	19.73	1
		Word-coinage	17	1.91	13
		Circumlocution	131	14.69	3
		Metaphoric comparison	15	1.68	14
		Code-switching	46	5.16	7
		Foreignizing	5	0.56	18
		Literal translation	3	0.34	20
		Self-repair	50	5.61	6
		Self-repetition	152	17.04	2
		Mime	31	3.48	9
		Omission	56	6.28	5
		Mumbling	33	3.70	8
	2.2 Interactional strategies	Asking for repetition	2	0.22	22
		Asking for clarification	11	1.23	16
		Asking for confirmation	23	2.58	11
		Other-repair	3	0.34	20
		Other-repetition	12	1.35	15
		Comprehension check	4	0.45	19
		<b>Total</b>	892	100	

In order to have a clear picture of the students' use of communication strategies, 4 excerpts extracted from students' performances in the role play and definition formulation tasks will be used to illustrate their use and each communication strategy used by the students will be identified and discussed. In the interest of space, those communication strategies that have previously been discussed but reappear in another excerpt will not be discussed again.

Excerpt 1 which was extracted from one of the role-play performances is provided below to illustrate the use of communication strategies including "literal translation", "self-repair", "use of fillers", "asking for confirmation", "code-switching", "foreignizing", "metaphoric comparison", "circumlocution", "self-repetition", "comprehension check", "mime", "message abandonment", "approximation", "message replacement" and "mumbling". In this excerpt, two high proficiency students performed; one acting as an exchange student from Singapore and the other acting as a Thai student in Attarkiah Islamiah School.

### Excerpt 1

Turn/Speaker	Utterances	Communication strategies
1/HS1	I'm from Singapore, (1) <i>student exchange</i> , this is my first time in Thailand, can you tell me about food, tradition, attraction (2) <i>and and</i> study in Thailand?	(1) <b>Literal translation</b> (2) <b>Self-repetition</b>
2/HS2	Yes, I can	
3/HS1	Sure?	
4/HS2	Sure!	
5/HS1	(3) <i>emm</i> .....can you tell me about food in Thailand?	(3) <b>Use of fillers</b>
6/HS2	(4) <i>Food?</i>	(4) <b>Asking for confirmation</b>
7/HS1	Yeah	
8/HS2	(5) <i>Staw</i> , .....you know Staw?	(5) <b>Foreignizing, Code-switching</b>
9/HS1	(6) <i>Staw is like</i> .(7) <i>emm..strawberry?</i>	(6) <b>Metaphoric comparison</b> (7) <b>Use of fillers</b>
10/HS2	(8) <i>No, it's smaller than strawberry and very bad smell</i>	(8) <b>Circumlocution</b>
11/HS1	if I found Staw, I will know Staw, yeah..and.. (9) <i>emm</i> ..(10) <i>can you ..can you</i> tell me about tradition?	(9) <b>Use of fillers</b> (10) <b>Self-repetition</b>

12/HS2	(11) <u>Tradition?</u>	(11) Asking for confirmation
13/HS1	Yeah	
14/HS2	(12) <u>Emm..that's Benjahsilah,</u>	(12) Use of fillers
	(13) <u>you know Benjahsilah, right?</u>	(13) Comprehension check
	(14) <u>(Gestures: doing actions of Benjahsilah)</u>	(14) Mime
	(15) <u>it's not....it's not</u> (16) <u>ahhh..ahh...</u> (17)_____	(15) Self-repetition, Use of fillers
		(16) Use of fillers
		(17) Message abandonment
15/HS1	(18) <u>It's not like</u> (19) <u>emm boxing?</u>	(18) Metaphoric comparison
		(19) Use of fillers
16/HS2	No	
17/HS1	Can you tell me what..ahh..very (20) <u>favorite place</u> or very(21) <u>famous place</u> in Narathiwat?	(20),(21) Approximation
		(21) Self-repair
18/HS2	Oh!! Bantorn Beach, Beautiful!	
19/HS1	and?	
20/HS2	Beach?	
21/HS1	Yeah, what's another?	
22/HS2	(22) <u>ahh</u> ...Narathat...(23) <u>ahhh</u> ..Pajo waterfall	(22),(23) Use of fillers
23/HS1	Oh yes, How do Narathiwat people live?	
	(24) Live <u>like..like</u> in Singapore or not?	(24) Metaphoric comparison, Self-repetition
24/HS2:	No	
25/HS1:	Ok, and..can you tell me about your study in Attarkiah School or in Thailand school?	
26/HS2:	Oh!! I'm studying in Attarkiah, English program, (25) <u>Do you know English program?</u>	(25) Comprehension check
27/HS1:	Yes, Yes	
28/HS2:	I'm in grade 9	
29/HS1:	you study in only English or (26) <u>Islamic?</u>	(26) Message replacement
30/HS2:	Ohh, All.	
31/HS1:	(27) <u>All ??</u>	(27) Asking for confirmation
32/HS2:	All together, what do you think about.uhhh.. Thailand or Narathiwat?	
33/HS1:	I think Thailand is very beautiful (28) <u>province</u> one, (29) <u>but but</u> I think people in Narathiwat are very friendly. but..I think Narathiwat is not so good (30) <u>xxxxx</u> , yeah, what do you think about that?	(28) Message replacement (29) Self-repetition (30) Mumbling

- 34/HS2: It's normal!
- 35/HS1: Normal?, Do you think normal? Bomb like that?
- 36/HS2: (31)Bomb..Bomb..(32) do you..are you afraid? (31) Self-repetition  
(32) Self-repair
- 37/HS1: No, I think if I don't (32)stay stay in trouble place, (32) Self-repetition  
if I stay in city, it's not problem , thank you.
- 38/HS2: Thank you.

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HS1 (High proficiency student 1) = An exchange student from Singapore

HS2 (High proficiency student 2) = A Thai student in Attarkiah Islamiah School

It can be seen from Excerpt 1 in turn 1 that HS1 started to introduce himself as an exchange student from Singapore. He employed the “literal translation” strategy here as he used “student exchange” instead of “exchange student”. This is caused by first language interference. HS1 translated his L1 word into English because he was familiar with L1 vocabulary. Students employ this strategy when they literally translate an expression or sentence from their first language to English. However, the finding shows only 3 (0.34%) instances of “literal translation” use by the students. In fact, it may be said that the students preferred not to literally translate their L1 expression or sentence into English because they might have realized that English and Thai rules are different.

In this turn, HS1 also employed the “self-repetition” strategy to gain time when he tried to think about the next issue he had to ask HS2. Excerpt 1 also illustrated that both students used the “self-repetition” strategy many times in their conversation. The students also used this strategy at the beginning of new sentences (see turn 11 and 33). Hence, it can be noticed that this strategy might have been used as “filler”. There were 152 (17.04%) instances of “self-repetition” found in this study. “Self-repetition” was a popular strategy because it enabled the students to hold the turn. When a communication gap occurred in actual conversation because of a loss of ideas or limited linguistic knowledge even while students were thinking of the next word or expression, they immediately repeated what they had said. Moreover, “self-repetition” saved learners from being embarrassed and stressed when communication

difficulties occurred. Instead of resorting to silence, they had something to say, so they could maintain the conversation.

In turn 5, it was evident that HS1 employed “fillers” to gain time before starting a new sentence. HS1 needed time to think about the next issue he had to ask. Moreover, In turn 15, when HS1 asked HS2 “It’s not like *emm* boxing?” HS1 also needed time to think about the next word he wanted to say. The data shown in table 4.2 shows that the most frequently used communication strategy was “use of fillers” which was employed by the students 176 times (19.73%). It can be noticed that the students needed some time to think when they wanted to say the next word or to start a new sentence. In addition, they did not want any silence to interrupt their communication. Surprisingly, it was found that all the students in this study used only “emm”, “err”, or “ahh” to fill the time which shows that they did not know other “fillers” that can be used.

In turn 6 and 12, HS2 repeated the main word of HS1’s statement in order to check or confirm his own understanding. HS2 asked HS1 for confirmation that HS1 really asked him about food and tradition. In this study, there were times where the students employed “asking for confirmation” (2.58%) when they did not understand clearly what their interlocutor had said. In order to avoid this, they checked their own understanding by asking the other to confirm whether they had understood their interlocutor. Moreover, as HS1 asked HS2 about food, HS2 in turn 8 employed the “code-switching” strategy (5.16%) when he did not know how to say “staw” in English. It can be noticed in turn 8-11 that they both switched back to the first language automatically because of their language constraints. They tended to use their first language in stead of staying silent. This strategy is possible only when they both share the same L1. Interestingly, HS1 utilized the “foreignizing” strategy as he pronounced the word “staw” as “sə’tɔr” with an English accent. However, the findings hardly show the use of “foreignizing” (0.56%) because it is unusual for students to say L1 words with an English accent. Actually, for some words such as names of places or food, the L1 and L2 versions do not differ much in pronunciation, so the students did not have any problems in pronouncing them. As HS1 did not know what “staw” is, he used “metaphoric comparison” in order to compare “staw” to



In turn 14, HS2 told HS1 about “Benjasila” but he was not sure whether HS1 knew about “Benjasila” or not, he tried to ask HS1 by inserting a short utterance “right?” to check the listener’s understanding. Likewise in turn 26, HS2 checked whether HS1 understood “English program” by asking HS1 “Do you know English program?” There were 4 (0.45%) instances of “comprehension check” found in this study. The rare use of “comprehension checks” indicates that most students tried to make themselves understood only. Excerpt 1 also shows that HS2 employed “mime” (3.48%) when he wanted to show what Benjasilah really was. He was afraid that HS1 might not know about Benjasilah, so he tried to use gestures to illustrate the target word so that HS1 would have a clearer picture about Benjasilah. When the students described whole concepts non-verbally by using mime, gestures, facial expressions, or accompanied a verbal strategy with a visual illustration, there was some sort of linguistic limitation to their explaining the target vocabulary or sentences. Interestingly, the use of mime was found useful to help create mutual comprehension when the students confronted difficult words. It can be seen that HS2 tried to illustrate Benjasilah by using gestures first and later he tried to explain in words but finally he could not maintain the original goal and used the “message abandonment” strategy. He cut off the sentence by pausing and smiling which resulted in the abandonment of the turn. There were 69 (7.74%) instances of “message abandonment” used by the students in this study.

In turn 17, HS1 used the “approximation” strategy when he used “favorite place” and “famous place” in stead of “attractions and “traveling place”. From this study, 25 (2.80%) instances of “approximation” were used. In students’ conversation and explanation, there were situations where they had the concept of what they wanted to say but did not know the exact word. Therefore, they tried to indicate the concept of the intended word by elaborating on that word based on the concept they had or creating a new word that meant the same thing.

In turn 29 and 33, HS1 employed the “message replacement” strategy when he substituted “Arabic” with “Islamic” and “country” with “province”. Twenty-one (2.35%) instances of the “message replacement” strategy were used. Excerpt 1 also illustrated that HS1 used “mumbling” strategy in turn 33 when he wanted to say something after the word “good”, but he mumbled and muttered a word silently as if he were talking to himself. This might have been because he was not sure about the correct word he wanted to say. Instead of leaving the message unfinished, he muttered a word or pronounced it quietly, so that the listener could not hear the word clearly but might have been able to guess what it was. The speaker might have been afraid that the mistakes would make him feel embarrassed. So, he muttered the word silently and pretended that the interlocutor heard what he said and continued to say the next words. Thirty-three (3.70%) instances of the “mumbling” strategy were used by the students.

The “self-repair” strategy was used by the student when HS2 in turn 36, realizing that he produced an ungrammatical sentence, corrected the mistake himself. He immediately corrected the word because he did not want a misunderstanding to occur. There were 50 (5.61%) instances of “self-repair” used by the students in this study.

Excerpt 2 illustrates the students’ use of “other-repair”, “other-repetition” and “asking for clarification”. In this excerpt, two high proficiency students were performing their role play; one acted as an exchange student from Singapore and the other acted as a Thai student in Attarkiah Islamiah School.

**Excerpt 2**

<b>Turn/speaker</b>	<b>Utterances</b>	<b>Communication strategies</b>
1/HS3	: Oh, I like Qur'an because I (1) <u>low</u> Qur'an, I want to practice and study, and what about food?	(1) Message replacement
2/HS4	:In Narathiwat, we have a lot because this Narathiwat is near the sea, right? A lot of fish, yeah, right? and you know Somtam?	
3/HS3	: Yes, I know	
4/HS4	: very delicious, that is the food that very good in Thailand	
5/HS3	:oh, I want to <u>อยาก</u>	
6/HS4	( 2 ) <u>want to try?</u>	(2) Other-repair
7/HS3	: Yes, what about tradition?	
8/ HS4	: ( 3 ) <u>Tradition</u> ....Tradition of Thailand is a lot and the more important is when you say hello or hi,	(3) Other-repetition
9/HS3	: (4) <u>What do you do when you say hi?</u>	(4) Asking for clarification
10/ HS4	:We don't shake hand, like this (5) <u>(gesture (hold hand))</u> , <u>we do like this (6) (gesture, ʔnʔ)</u>	(5), (6)Mime
11/HS3	: (7) <u>Like this?</u> (8) <u>(gesture) (ʔnʔ)</u>	(7) Asking for confirmation
12/HS4	: yeah	(8) Mime

**HS3 (High proficiency student 3) = An exchange student from Singapore**

**HS4 (High proficiency student 4) = A Thai student in Attarkiah Islamiah School**

Excerpt 2 turn 6 clearly shows that HS 4 employed the “other-repair” strategy when he corrected his interlocutor’s mistake. HS3 did not have the word “อยาก” in English so he switched back to Thai but HS4 repaired the Thai word by supplying its English equivalent. However, the “other-repair” strategy was hardly used by the subjects in this study. The students used this strategy when they repaired the interlocutor’s speech to help the conversation going. One possible reason why it was hardly used by the students, with only 3 (0.34%) instances, was that they were not confident enough to correct their interlocutor when he or she produced some mistakes and just let them go. But if those words made them confused, they probably asked for clarification for better understanding. Moreover, it can be seen in turn 8 that HS4 utilized “other-repetition” by repeating the key word in his interlocutor’s question. As

Excerpt 3 below illustrates two more types of communication strategies used by the students which were “topic avoidance” and “asking for repetition”. In this excerpt, two low proficiency students were performing their role play; one acted as an exchange student from Singapore and the other acted as a Thai student in Attarkiah Islamiah School.

### Excerpt 3

Turn/speaker	Utterances	Communication strategies
1/LS2	:What is tradition in Thailand?	
2/LS1	: ( 1) <u>Tradition? Ohhh Tradition?</u> ohh...about มโนรา ดึกสูงๆ and you?...and you ?... how's in Singapore?	(1) Asking for confirmation
3/LS2	: <u>Singapore?</u> ( 2 ) (Keep silent)	(2) Topic avoidance
4/LS1	: Do you like Narathiwat?	
5/LS2	: Yes, I like	
6/LS1	: Really?	
7/LS2	: Really.	
8/LS1	: (3) <u>When do you come from...when do you come to Narathiwat?</u>	(3) Self-repair (4) Topic avoidance
9/LS2	(4) <u>What? Pardon!</u>	(5) Asking for repetition
10/LS1	: <u>How many brothers and sisters you have?</u>	
11/LS2	:I have three brothers	
12/LS1	:Three brothers, and you?	
13/LS2	:(laughing) (6) <u>and you?</u>	(6) Other-repetition

LS1 (Low proficiency student 1): A Thai student in Attarkiah Islamiah

LS2 (Low proficiency student 2): An exchange student from Singapore

Excerpt 3 clearly shows that LS2 employed the “topic avoidance” strategy in turn 3 when she kept silent and did not know what to say because she lacked the background knowledge about Singapore. In turn 8, LS1 employed “topic avoidance” when she was not sure of her own question as she dropped it and asked another in turn 10. The “topic avoidance” strategy was used by the students in only 7 (0.78%) instances because most students talked on topics they knew about. It can also be seen from Excerpt 3 in turn 9 above that LS2 employed the “asking for repetition” strategy when she did not hear or understand what LS1 asked properly. LS2 wanted LS1 to repeat what she said but LS1 did not feel confident when LS2 did not understand her question, so she decided not to repeat the same question. Nevertheless, the “asking for repetition” strategy was hardly used by the students with only 2 (0.22%) instances in this study. One possible reason that this strategy was hardly used by the students was that most students could catch what their interlocutor had said, so when they did not understand, they tended to ask for confirmation rather than for a repetition.

Excerpt 4 below is taken from a definition formulation performance in order to illustrate the students’ use of the “word-coinage” and “omission” strategies in this study. In this excerpt, a low proficiency student is describing the words “poor” and “ice-cream”.

#### **Excerpt 4**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Communication strategies</b>
<b>LS3</b>	
<b>Poor:</b> (1) <i>People...people</i> don't have money to live in (2) <i>the middle city</i> .	(1) Self-repetition
<b>Ice-cream:</b> It's (3) <i>sweet, sweet sweet</i> taste (4) <i>ahh</i> ..it's made from ice.	(2) Word-coinage
It's many (5)...about ...such as (6) <i>orange, chocolate, coffee</i> ...	(3) Self-repetition
	(4) Use of fillers
	(5) Omission
	(6) Circumlocution
<hr/>	
LS3 (Low proficiency student 3)	

Excerpt 4 illustrates LS3 employing “word coinage”, coining a new word because he did not know the exact word. He used this strategy when he described the word “poor” and used “the middle city” instead of “downtown”. Even though the word he created was non-existent, it could convey an understandable meaning of the intended word. There were 17 (1.91%) instances of “word-coinage” in this study. The students used this strategy on a small number of occasions because they tried to use words they already knew.

Excerpt 4 also illustrates that the student used the “omission” strategy when he described the word “ice-cream” He left a gap and carried on as if the intended word had been said. It can be noticed that LS3 left out the word “flavors” in the statement. One possible reason was that the student did not know the word and might have thought that leaving it out would not affect the main idea of the sentence. Sometimes, the students did not realize that they omitted some words which would affect the listener’s understanding of the whole sentence. Fifty-six (6.28%) instances of the “omission” strategy were used by the students in this study.

## **4.2 The Use of Communication Strategies of the High and Low Proficiency Students**

### **4.2.1 Differences in the Use of Communication Strategies according to Students’ English Proficiency Level**

This study revealed that the students of different levels of proficiency preferred to use different strategies. The frequencies of their overall use of different communication strategies as well as their use of many of the individual strategies were significantly different. Table 4.3 presents the overall communication strategy types used by the high and low proficiency students.

**Table 4.3 Overall Strategy Types Used by the High Proficiency and Low Proficiency Students**

Type of communication strategies	HP students		LP students		T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	n	%	n	%		
1. Avoidance strategies	28	3.14	69	7.62	-5.97	.000*
2. Compensatory strategies	452	50.67	343	38.45	3.97	.002*
2.1 Intra-actional strategies	416	46.64	324	36.32	3.49	.004*
2.2 Interactional strategies	36	4.04	19	2.13	2.36	.002*
All types of communication strategies	480	53.81	412	46.19	2.29	.039*

***P* < 0.05**

Table 4.3 shows an overall picture of the strategies used by the two groups. The statistical analysis shows that there were significant differences between the two groups in their use of communication strategies. The high proficiency students (53.81%) used communication strategies significantly more often than the low proficiency students (46.19%). In this study, it was observed that the high proficiency students used more communication strategies not because they had more language difficulties than those of low proficiency, but because the amount of their communication was larger than that of the low proficiency students, that is the high proficiency students tended to speak for longer and that was why they used more strategies in their communication.

As expected, it was found that the high proficiency students (3.14%) used significantly fewer avoidance strategies than the low proficiency students (7.62%). Avoidance strategies were the strategies that learners used when they tried to avoid, abandon or substitute the original message. The preference for these strategies by the low proficiency students indicates that they probably had more linguistic limitations and when they were faced with a difficulty in conveying meaning or using correct English words, they sometimes chose to renounce part or all of their original communication goal. Moreover, because of their lack of linguistic or content resources, they also tended to avoid certain topics considered problematic language-wise or content-wise by leaving out some of the intended elements.

Moreover, the finding also shows that high proficiency students (50.67%) employed compensatory strategies significantly more often than those of low proficiency (38.45%). It was noticeable that the high proficiency students used this strategy more often because their better language ability allowed them to maintain their original aim by developing an alternative plan or to solve problems in communication by expanding their communicative resources, rather than reducing their communicative goal. The use of compensatory strategies seemed to be an efficient means for the students to seek alternative ways to cope with communication problems and communication breakdowns. Regarding subtypes under this strategy, interestingly the data shows that the high proficiency students tended to use both intra-actional strategies and interactional strategies significantly more frequently (46.64% and 4.04%, respectively) than the low proficiency students (36.32% and 2.13%, respectively). This indicates that the students with high English proficiency attempted to compensate for their language deficiency mostly by relying on themselves and only sometimes by appealing for assistance from their interlocutors (or giving it to them).

The detailed comparison of the use of each communication strategy by the high and low proficiency students is presented in Table 4.4 and a discussion of the communication strategies used significantly more frequently by the high and low proficiency students follows in the next sections.

**Table 4.4 Comparison of the Use of Each Communication Strategy by the High and Low Proficiency Students**

Types of communication strategies	Communication strategy	HP students (N=10)		LP students (N=10)		T-value	Sig- (2-tailed)
		n	%	n	%		
1.Avoidance strategies	Topic avoidance	0	0.00	7	0.78	-4.58	.001*
	Message avoidance	22	2.47	47	5.27	-5.34	.000*
	Message replacement	6	0.67	15	1.68	-1.96	.065



**Table 4.4 Comparison of the Use of Each Communication Strategy by the High and Low Proficiency Students (continued)**

Types of communication strategies	Communication strategy	HP students (N=10)		LP students (N=10)		T-value	Sig- (2-tailed)	
		n	%	n	%			
2. Compensatory strategies	2.1 Intra-actional strategies	Approximation	18	2.02	7	0.78	1.98	.063
		Use of fillers	101	11.32	75	8.41	2.77	.013*
		Word-coinage	13	1.46	3	0.45	3.35	.004*
		Circumlocution	73	8.18	58	6.50	2.15	.045*
		Metaphoric comparison	11	1.23	4	0.45	1.09	.299
		Code-switching	14	1.57	32	3.59	-4.03	.001*
		Foreignizing	5	0.56	0	0.00	1.63	.138
		Literal translation	2	0.22	1	0.11	0.60	.556
		Self-repair	33	3.70	17	1.91	2.28	.044*
		Self-repetition	86	9.64	66	7.40	1.87	.078
		Mime	24	2.69	7	0.78	2.47	.031*
		Omission	24	2.69	32	3.59	-0.95	.355
		Mumbling	12	1.35	21	2.35	-2.10	.050
	2.2 Interactional strategies	Asking for repetition	0	0.00	2	0.22	-1.50	.168
		Asking for clarification	4	0.45	7	0.78	-1.12	.279
		Asking for confirmation	17	1.91	6	0.67	2.31	.033*
		Other-repair	2	0.22	1	0.11	0.60	.556
		Other-repetition	10	1.12	2	0.22	3.20	.005*
		Comprehension check	3	0.34	1	0.11	1.10	.290

\* $P < .05$

Table 4.4 shows that the high proficiency students employed seven strategies significantly more frequently than those of low proficiency. These strategies were “use of fillers”, “word-coinage”, “circumlocution”, “self-repair”, “mime”, “asking for confirmation” and “other-repetition”. It also shows that the high proficiency students employed three strategies significantly less frequently than the low proficiency students: “topic avoidance”, “message avoidance” and “code-switching”.

#### **4.2.1.1 Communication Strategies Used Significantly More Frequently by the High Proficiency Students**

The first strategy used significantly more frequently by the high proficiency students was “use of fillers”. Unexpectedly, all the students in both groups used only “emm”, “err”, or “ahh” as fillers which might not help them become more fluent in English because using those fillers could create discontinuities in the flow of speech. However, it helps students gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty. A possible reason that the high proficiency students used this strategy more often is that they tended to speak longer than the low proficiency students. When they needed time to think about what they want to say next, they also tended to use fillers in order to hold the turn.

The second strategy used significantly more frequently by the high proficiency students was “word-coinage”. Even though the high proficiency students might know more lexical items and were better at English, they sometimes were not sure or did not know the exact words. Therefore, they coined a new word based on the rules and concepts they knew. Even though the word they created was non-existent, it shared similar features with the intended word. The students overgeneralized rules or the structure of their target words, and then created a non-existent word based on their assumptions.

The third strategy used significantly more often by the high proficiency students was “circumlocution” because they were certainly better equipped to cope with their lexical problems by trying to clarify the target words in many other ways such as exemplifying, illustrating or describing its properties. It shows that the high

proficiency students were better at explaining the target words when they tried to make their interlocutors or listeners understand what they wanted to say or what they meant.

The fourth strategy used significantly more often by the high proficiency students was “self-repair”. It is clear that the high proficiency students’ richer linguistic resources enabled them to repair or correct their mistakes in their second language. When they realized that they had made a mistake, they attempted to correct their own speech rather than continue with their communication without correcting it because their mistake might make their listener misunderstand the meaning of their intended message. Using the “self-repair” strategy would help their listener understand more clearly what they wanted to convey or express.

The fifth strategy used significantly more frequently by the high proficiency students was “mime”. Surprisingly, the high proficiency students used non-verbal language strategy more often than those of low proficiency. This was in contrast to the researcher’s expectation. The low proficiency students might have been expected to use this strategy because of their lack of linguistic resources. However, it was noticed that the more frequent use of “mime” was not because of the high proficiency students’ lack of linguistic resources, but was because they mostly used non-verbal devices together with the words they were trying to say to present a clear picture to their listeners or interlocutors.

The sixth strategy used significantly more often by the high proficiency students was “asking for confirmation”. A possible reason was that the high proficiency students attempted to make sure that what they understood was correct when their interlocutor produced unclear sentences.

The seventh and final strategy used significantly more often by the high proficiency students was “other-repetition”. The high proficiency students sometimes repeated their interlocutor’s utterance for gaining time rather than keeping silent. They often repeated the main word in the utterance that their interlocutor had said or asked.

All of these seven communication strategies show the strong intention of the high proficiency students to keep the communication going based on the advantage of their better language resources.

#### **4.2.1.2 Communication Strategies Used Significantly More Frequently by the Low Proficiency Students**

The first strategy used significantly more frequently by the low proficiency students was “topic avoidance”. This finding seems to indicate that the low proficiency students had insufficient linguistic resources and faced more problems whether with their receptive or expressive skills. Therefore, they avoided certain topics in their communication which they did not understand or did not know the meaning of. As they had limited linguistic knowledge, they sometimes could not talk about some topics of which they did not have sufficient background. For example, one of the students who acted as “an exchange student” from Singapore could not talk about Singapore because she may not have known much about that country. She avoided certain topics considered problematic content-wise by leaving out some intended elements due to a lack of linguistic resources.

The second strategy used significantly more frequently by the low proficiency students was “message abandonment”. In a similar way to the first strategy, this provides further evidence that the low proficiency students were deficient in the target language. They had problems in conveying their message; therefore, they tended to leave a message unfinished because of language difficulty.

The third and last strategy used significantly more frequently by the low proficiency students was “code-switching”. The use of the “code-switching” strategy clearly shows that these students faced problems in conveying their meanings to their interlocutors or listeners, and that they resorted to the types of strategies that enabled them to depend on whatever was available in their linguistic repertoire to resolve their problems, even if it meant resorting to their first language. This might have been because even though they have been studying in the English program, they mostly communicate in Thai with their friends in and outside the classroom. As a result, they

automatically use Thai words as they were already familiar with them. Moreover, it shows clearly that they faced a lot of problems in conveying their meaning and that they resorted to the types of strategies that can be considered ineffective in helping them stay in the conversation.

The significantly higher frequency of the use of these three communication strategies by the low proficiency students clearly shows that they were deficient in the target language and probably had insufficient content knowledge.

#### 4.2.2 Differences in the Use of Communication Strategies according to Tasks

##### 4.2.2.1 Differences in Communication Strategies Used by All the Students according to Tasks

The comparison of overall strategy types used by all students in the role play and definition formulation tasks is presented in Table 4.5 and a discussion of communication strategies used significantly more frequently by all students follows in the next section.

**Table 4.5 Comparison of Overall Strategy Types Used by All the Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks**

Type of communication strategies	All students				T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Role play task		Definition formulation task			
	n	%	n	%		
1. Avoidance strategies	40	4.48	57	6.39	-2.193	.046*
2. Compensatory strategies	378	42.38	417	46.75	-1.294	.212
2.1 Intra-actional strategies	323	36.21	417	46.75	-3.226	.005*
2.2 Interactional strategies	55	6.17	0	0.00	6.497	.000*
All types of Communication strategies	418	46.86	474	53.14	-1.708	.105

\*  $P < 0.05$

Table 4.5 reveals that the students used avoidance strategies in the definition formulation task (6.39%) significantly more frequently than in the role play task (4.48%). It shows further evidence that the definition formulation task was more difficult than the role play task for all students as they used avoidance strategies more often by leaving a message unfinished because of some language/content problems or substituting the original message with a new one because of not feeling capable of executing it. Moreover, the students also used intra-actional strategies in the definition formulation task (46.75%) significantly more frequently than in the role play task (36.21%). In the definition formulation task, the students could not look for assistance, so they tried their best to solve their communication problems based on their own ability when they performed this task. In contrast, they were able to ask for help when they encountered difficulties in the communication process as they employed interactional strategies in the role play task (6.17%) significantly more frequently than in the definition formulation task (0.00%).

The detailed comparison of the use of each communication strategy by all students in the role play and definition formulation tasks is presented in Table 4.6 followed by a discussion of communication strategies used significantly more frequently by all students.

**Table 4.6 Comparison of the Use of Each Communication Strategy by All the Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks**

Types of communication strategies	Communication strategy	All students				T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Role play task		Definition formulation task			
		n	%	n	%		
1. Avoidance strategies	Topic avoidance	5	0.56	2	0.22	1.15	.264
	Message abandonment	25	2.80	44	4.93	-3.61	.002*
	Message replacement	10	1.12	11	1.23	-.190	.851

\* $P < 0.05$

**Table 4.6 Comparison of the Use of Each Communication Strategy by All the Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks (continued)**

Types of communication strategies		communication strategy	All students				T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Role play task		Definition formulation task			
			n	%	n	%		
2. Compensatory strategies	2.1 Intra-actional strategies	Approximation	13	1.46	12	1.35	0.23	.824
		Use of fillers	75	8.41	101	11.32	-2.55	.020*
		Word-coinage	9	1.01	7	0.90	.268	.791
		Circumlocution	41	4.60	90	10.09	-3.54	.003*
		Metaphoric comparison	5	0.56	10	1.12	-1.17	.258
		Code-switching	27	3.03	19	2.13	1.36	.190
		Foreignizing	4	0.45	1	0.11	1.24	.239
		Literal translation	2	0.22	1	0.11	0.60	.556
		Self-repair	21	2.35	29	3.25	-1.05	.306
		Self-repetition	61	6.84	91	10.20	-3.23	.005
		Mime	22	2.47	9	1.01	1.94	.068
		Omission	26	2.91	30	3.36	-.52	.607
		Mumbling	17	1.91	16	1.79	0.21	.837
	2.2 Interactional strategies	Asking for repetition	2	0.22	0	0.00	1.50	.168
		Asking for clarification	11	1.23	0	0.00	2.54	.032*
		Asking for confirmation	23	2.58	0	0.00	4.87	.001*
		Other-repair	3	0.34	0	0.00	1.96	.018
		Other-repetition	12	1.35	0	0.00	6.00	.000*
		Comprehension check	4	0.45	0	0.00	2.45	.037*

\* $P < 0.05$

Table 4.6 shows that the students employed three strategies significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task than in the role play task. They were “message abandonment”, “use of fillers” and “circumlocution”. It also shows that the students employed four strategies significantly more frequently in the role play task than in the definition formulation task: “asking for clarification”, “asking for confirmation”, “other-repetition” and “comprehension check”.

The finding that all students used “message abandonment”, “use of fillers” and “circumlocution” significantly more frequently when they performed the definition formulation task indicates that the definition formulation task was more difficult than the role play task as they used the “message abandonment” strategy more in order to renounce their original message. They also appeared to need more time to think when they had to describe the words as they used “fillers” to gain time to think about what to say next. Since they had to describe words to the researcher alone in the definition formulation task, they were put into a more stressful situation because they did not have any assistance and they had to compensate for any language deficiencies or to maintain their original aim based on their own ability. In contrast, in the role play task, the students had an opportunity to appeal for assistance from their interlocutor by “asking for clarification”, “asking for confirmation”, “other-repetition” and “comprehension check”, all of which were classified as interactional strategies. It seemed as if they enjoyed the role play more and felt free to perform because they could talk to their friend in a more natural way about a familiar topic.

It is interesting to see whether the differences in communication strategies used in these two different tasks were the same or similar as between the groups with different levels of proficiency.

#### **4.2.2.2 Differences in Communication Strategies Used by the High Proficiency Students according to Tasks**

Table 4.7 presents the overall strategy types used by the high proficiency students in the role play and definition formulation tasks.



**Table 4.7 Comparison of Overall Strategy Types Used by the High Proficiency Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks**

Type of communication strategies	HP students				T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Role play task		Definition formulation task			
	n	%	n	%		
1. Avoidance strategies	8	1.67	20	4.17	-2.34	.031*
2. Compensatory strategies	213	44.38	239	49.79	-1.84	.082
2.1 Intra-actional strategies	177	36.88	239	49.79	-4.21	.001*
2.2 Interactional strategies	36	7.50	0	0.00	6.00	.000*
All types of communication strategies	221	46.04	259	53.96	-2.41	.027*

\* $P < 0.05$

Table 4.7 shows that the high proficiency students used significantly fewer avoidance strategies in the role play task (1.67%) than in the definition formulation task (4.17%). This shows that the role play activity was easier for the students and they felt free to talk to their friend about a familiar topic. However, in the definition formulation task, in which the students needed to describe 6 lexical items, they used avoidance strategies quite often because they were put in a more demanding situation and it was more difficult for them to spontaneously describe six words using at least three sentences. The high proficiency students also used significantly fewer intra-actional strategies in the role play task (36.88%) than in the definition formulation task (49.79%). One possible reason for this was that the students tried to maintain their original message or to solve their problems based on their own ability because this task involved one-way communication and the students realized that they could not appeal for any assistance from anyone. The students did not have any chance to ask for any help when they performed the definition formulation task. As a result, interactional strategies were only employed in the role play task. In all strategy types, the high proficiency students also used significantly fewer strategies in the role play task (46.04%) than in the definition formulation task (53.96%).

The detailed comparison of the use of each communication strategy by the high proficiency students in the role play and definition formulation tasks is presented in Table 4.8 and communication strategies used significantly more frequently in each task by the high students will be discussed in the following section.

**Table 4.8 Comparison of the Use of Each Communication Strategy by the High Proficiency Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks**

Types of communication strategies	Communication strategy	HP Students				T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Role play task		Definition formulation task				
		n	%	n	%			
1. Avoidance strategies	Topic avoidance	0	0.00	0	0.00	-	-	
	Message abandonment	5	1.04	17	3.54	-2.64	.017*	
	Message replacement	3	0.63	3	0.63	0.00	1.000	
2. Compensatory strategies	2.1 Intra-actional strategies	Approximation	9	1.88	9	1.88	0.00	1.000
		Use of fillers	44	9.17	57	11.88	-2.49	.023*
		Word-coinage	7	1.46	6	1.25	.325	.749
		Circumlocution	27	5.63	46	9.58	-3.98	.001*
		Metaphoric comparison	4	0.83	7	1.46	-.81	.431
		Code-switching	8	1.67	6	1.25	0.47	.641
		Foreignizing	4	0.83	1	0.21	1.24	.239
		Literal translation	1	0.21	1	0.21	0.00	1.000
		Self-repair	16	3.33	17	3.54	-.447	.660
		Self-repetition	24	5.00	62	12.92	-5.44	.000*
		Mime	16	3.33	8	1.67	2.68	.015*
		Omission	11	2.29	13	2.71	-.632	.535
Mumbling	6	1.25	6	1.25	.000	1.000		

(-) = The independent samples table is not produced.

$P < 0.05$

**Table 4.8 Comparison of the Use of Each Communication Strategy by the High Proficiency Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks (continued)**

Types of communication strategies		Communication strategy	HP students				T-value	Sig- (2-tailed)
			Role play task		Definition formulation task			
			n	%	n	%		
2. Compensatory strategies	2.2 Interactional strategies	Asking for repetition	0	0.00	0	0.00	-	-
		Asking for clarification	4	0.83	0	0.00	2.45	.037*
		Asking for confirmation	17	3.54	0	0.00	4.02	.003*
		Other-repair	2	0.42	0	0.00	1.50	.168
		Other-repetition	10	2.08	0	0.00	4.74	.001*
		Comprehension check	3	0.63	0	0.00	1.96	.081

(-) = *The independent samples table is not produced.*  
*P < 0.05*

Table 4.8 shows that the high proficiency students utilized four strategies significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task than in the role play task: “message abandonment”, “use of fillers”, “circumlocution” and “self-repetition”. It also shows that the students employed four strategies significantly more frequently in the role play task than in the definition formulation task: “asking for clarification”, “asking for confirmation”, “other-repetition” and “mime”.

The high proficiency students used the “message abandonment” strategy significantly less frequently in the definition formulation task than in the role play task. One possible reason was that the topic of the role play was familiar to the students. Even though they needed to talk about the given topic, this task allowed

them to talk about what they wanted to because the topic was broader and more general. For example, when they had to talk about attractions, they could choose any place they were able to talk about. In contrast, they used the “message abandonment” strategy more often in the definition formulation task because they could not choose what they wanted to explain and their lexical knowledge was restricted to describing only 6 words. As a result, sometimes they could not find appropriate vocabulary to explain the words, so they avoided their original message. The high proficiency students used “fillers” significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task which shows that they needed more time to think about what to say next and therefore used fillers to gain time in describing words. The use of the “circumlocution” strategy significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task was mainly because this task offered a great opportunity for the students to use the “circumlocution” strategy to exemplify, illustrate and describe the items. The “self-repair” strategy was also used significantly more often in the definition formulation task by the high proficiency students because they monitored their utterances more highly. Because of their better linguistic knowledge, the high proficiency students could correct or repair their lexical or grammatical mistakes when they noticed them. It can be observed that they produced many mistakes in this task and that they used the “message abandonment” strategy many times.

On the other hand, the finding shows that the high proficiency students used four communication strategies in the role play task significantly more frequently than in the definition formulation task: “mime”, “asking for clarification”, “asking for confirmation” and “other-repetition”. In the first task, the students were put in pairs to perform the role plays. The students had to communicate with their interlocutor, which was why they sometimes used gestures or non-verbal language together with verbal language so that their interlocutor could have a clearer picture and a better understanding of what they were talking about. They tried their best to make their interlocutor understand what they said and to keep the communication going. “Asking for clarification”, “asking for confirmation” and “other-repetition” were used when the students needed to involve their interlocutor for successful communication, and they had a chance to use these kinds of strategies only in the role play task.

#### 4.2.2.3 Differences in Communication Strategies Used by the Low Proficiency Students according to Tasks

The comparison of overall strategy types used by the low proficiency students in the role play and definition formulation tasks is presented in Table 4.9 and the communication strategies used significantly in each task will be discussed below.

**Table 4.9 Comparison of Overall Strategy Types Used by the Low Proficiency Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks**

Type of communication Strategies	LP students				T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Role play task		Definition formulation task			
	n	%	n	%		
1. Avoidance strategies	32	7.77	37	8.98	-.74	.472
2. Compensatory strategies	165	40.05	178	43.20	-1.23	.234
2.1 Intra-actional strategies	146	35.44	178	43.20	-3.27	.004*
2.2 Interactional strategies	19	4.61	0	0.00	5.02	.001*
All types of communication Strategies	197	47.82	215	52.18	-1.46	.161

\*  $P < 0.05$

Table 4.9 reveals that the low proficiency students also tried hard to keep the communication going by using compensatory strategies, so there were no significant differences in the use of compensatory strategies in either of the tasks. However, they employed significantly fewer intra-actional strategies in the role play task (35.44%) than in the definition formulation task (43.20%). This was the same as for the high proficiency students as shown in Table 4.7. It seems that the low proficiency students had more problems when they performed the definition formulation task because they used more strategies to compensate for their language deficiencies. However, even though they had lower language proficiency, they also tried their best to compensate for their language deficiencies based on their own ability. Interactional strategies were employed in the role play task (4.61%)

significantly more frequently than in the definition formulation task (0.00%). As the role play task was two-way communication, when the students encountered difficulties in their communication process, they could seek helps from their interlocutor. Unlike when they performed the definition formulation task, in which they needed to use their own ability to solve their problems, they used intra-actional strategies significantly more often in the definition formulation task.

The detailed comparison of the use of each communication strategy by the low proficiency students in the role play and definition formulation tasks is presented in Table 4.10 and communication strategies used significantly more frequently in each task will then be discussed.

**Table 4.10 Comparison of the Use of Each Communication Strategy by the Low Proficiency Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks**

Types of Communication strategies	Communication Strategy	LP Students				T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Role play task		Definition formulation task			
		n	%	n	%		
1. Avoidance strategies	Topic avoidance	5	1.21	2	0.49	1.41	.178
	Message abandonment	20	4.85	27	6.55	-.887	.387
	Message replacement	7	1.70	8	1.94	-.214	.833

\*  $P < 0.05$

(-) = *The independent samples table is not produced.*

**Table 4.10 Comparison of the Use of Each Communication Strategy by the Low Proficiency Students in the Role Play and Definition Formulation Tasks (continued)**

Types of communication strategies	Communication strategy	LP Students				T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Role play task		Definition formulation task				
		n	%	n	%			
2. Compensatory strategies	2.1. Intra-actional strategies	Approximation	4	0.97	3	0.73	.477	.660
		Use of fillers	31	7.52	44	10.68	-1.55	.139
		Word - coinage	2	0.49	2	0.49	0.00	1.000
		Circumlocution	14	3.40	44	10.68	-6.94	.000*
		Metaphoric comparison	1	0.24	3	0.73	-1.10	.290
		Code-switching	19	4.61	13	3.16	1.31	.208
		Foreignizing	0	0.00	0	0.00	-	-
		Literal translation	1	0.24	0	0.00	1.00	.343
		Self-repair	5	1.21	12	2.91	-1.77	.094
		Self-repetition	37	8.98	29	7.04	.814	.426
		Mime	6	1.46	1	0.24	2.06	.061
		Omission	15	3.64	17	4.13	-3.83	.707
		Mumbling	11	2.67	10	2.43	.557	.584
	2.2. Interactional strategies	Asking for repetition	2	0.49	0	0.00	1.50	.168
		Asking for clarification	7	1.70	0	0.00	3.28	.010*
		Asking for confirmation	6	1.46	0	0.00	2.71	.024*
		Other-repair	1	0.24	0	0.00	1.00	.343
		Other-repetition	2	0.49	0	0.00	1.50	.168
		Comprehension Check	1	0.24	0	0.00	1.00	.343

\*  $P < 0.05$ , (-) = The independent samples table is not produced.

Table 4.10 shows that the low proficiency students used only the “circumlocution” strategy significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task than in the role play task, and the students employed two strategies significantly more frequently in the role play task than in the definition formulation task which were “asking for clarification”, and “asking for confirmation”.

The finding that the low proficiency students employed the “circumlocution” strategy in the definition formulation task more significantly than in the role play task provides further evidence that the students have a greater chance to use this strategy when describing the 6 lexical items. One possible reason that the students employed this strategy in the role play task less frequently than in the definition formulation task was that the students could use exact words that they already knew. The low proficiency students also used “asking for clarification” and “asking for confirmation” in the role play task significantly more than in the definition formulation task. It is apparently evident that the students did not have a chance to use this type of strategy in the second task because this task involved one-way communication.

### **4.3 Summary of the Findings**

In answer to the first research question, which sought to investigate the types of communication strategies employed by the students, the students in this study tended to use compensatory strategies more frequently than avoidance strategies. The study shows that most students tried their best to keep their communication going by expanding their communicative resources and compensating for their language deficiency rather than renouncing their target goal by avoiding unknown topics or leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty. The subjects in this study also tended to use intra-actional strategies more frequently than interactional strategies. This indicates that most students preferred using their own resources, rather than appealing for assistance. However, this might be because of the nature of the “definition formulation” task which may have affected the overall use of interactional strategies. Moreover, it is worth noticing that the students in this study needed to gain time to think of what to say next in their communication as they used “fillers” and “self-repetition” most frequently among the communication strategies.



The findings also provide evidence that the students' use of communication strategies differs according to their English language proficiency and task as they were significant differences between the use of communication strategies of the high and low proficiency students and between the students' use of communication strategies in the role play and definition formulation tasks. The findings revealed that the high proficiency group used communication strategies significantly more often than the low proficiency group. This was because the amount of the high proficiency students' communication was larger than that of the low proficiency students. It was also because most communication strategies require greater language resources to execute and the high proficiency students had more resources available for their use which enabled them to hold a longer turn. The high proficiency students employed compensatory strategies significantly more often than those of low proficiency and tended to use both intra-actional strategies and interactional strategies significantly more frequently than the low proficiency students.

Regarding tasks, the findings reveal that the definition formulation task appeared to be more difficult than the role play task because the students used more avoidance strategies to renounce their original message. As they could not look for assistance in this task, they tried their best to solve their communication problems to the best of their ability by using intra-actional strategies. In the role play task, on the other hand, they could talk to their friend in a more natural way about a familiar topic.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter recapitulates the findings and discussions presented in Chapter 4, followed by pedagogical and classroom implications and finally recommendations for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Findings**

The results of this study provide a picture of communication strategies used by M.3 students with high and low English proficiency in the English Program at Attarkiah Islamiah School. This study attempted to answer two research questions: the first about the types and frequency of communication strategies used by the students and the second about whether their choices varied according to the levels of proficiency and tasks and if so in what way.

For the first question, all students employed compensatory strategies (89.13%) more frequently than avoidance strategies (10.87%) indicating that most students attempted to maintain their original aim by developing an alternative plan and to solve problems in communication by expanding their communicative resources, rather than avoiding their message or renouncing their original communication goal. Regarding the subtypes of compensatory strategies, the students preferred to use intra-actional strategies (82.96%) more frequently than interactional strategies (6.17%) indicating that most students preferred using their own resources, rather than appealing for assistance from others when they had communication problems.

The use of communication strategies by all students in this study arranged from the most to the least frequent is as follows:

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) Use of fillers (19.73%)          | 12) Message replacement (2.35%)      |
| 2) Self-repetition (17.04%)         | 13) Word-coinage (1.91%)             |
| 3) Circumlocution (14.69%)          | 14) Metaphoric comparison (1.68%)    |
| 4) Message abandonment (7.74%)      | 15) Other-repetition (1.35%)         |
| 5) Omission (6.28%)                 | 16) Asking for clarification (1.23%) |
| 6) Self-repair (5.61%)              | 17) Topic avoidance (0.78%)          |
| 7) Code-switching (5.16%)           | 18) Foreignizing (0.56%)             |
| 8) Mumbling (3.70%)                 | 19) Comprehension check (0.45%)      |
| 9) Mime (3.48%)                     | 20) Literal translation (0.34%)      |
| 10) Approximation (2.80%)           | 21) Other-repair (0.34%)             |
| 11) Asking for confirmation (2.58%) | 22) Asking for repetition (0.22%)    |

Regarding the differences in the use of communication strategies according to the students' English proficiency level, the statistical analysis shows that there were significant differences between the high and low proficiency students in their use of communication strategies. The high proficiency students (53.81%) used communication strategies significantly more often than the low proficiency students (46.19%). In this study, it was observed that the high proficiency students used more communication strategies not because they had more language difficulties than the low proficiency ones, but because the amount of their communication was larger than that of those of low proficiency. The high proficiency students employed compensatory strategies significantly more often (50.67%) than the low proficiency students (38.45%).

Regarding subtypes under this strategy, interestingly the findings show that the high proficiency students tended to use both intra-actional strategies and interactional strategies significantly more frequently (46.64% and 4.04%, respectively) than the low proficiency students (36.32% and 2.13%, respectively). With better language resources, the high proficiency students showed better ability to keep the communication going than the low proficiency students because they employed "use of fillers", "word-coinage", "circumlocution", "self-repair", "mime",

“asking for confirmation” and “other-repetition” more frequently than the low proficiency students. The findings also clearly show that the low proficiency students faced a lot of problems in conveying their message and that they resorted to the types of strategies that can be considered ineffective in helping them stay in the conversation: “topic avoidance”, “message avoidance” and “code-switching”.

With respect to the differences in the use of communication strategies according to tasks, the findings reveal that all the students used avoidance strategies (“message abandonment”) and intra-actional strategies (“circumlocution”, “use of fillers”) significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task, but used interactional strategies (“asking for clarification”, “asking for confirmation”, “other-repetition” and “comprehension check”) significantly more frequently in the role play task. The findings also show that the high proficiency students employed avoidance strategies (“message abandonment”) and intra-actional strategies (“use of fillers”, “circumlocution”, “self-repetition”) significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task, but used interactional strategies (“asking for clarification”, “asking for confirmation” and “other-repetition”) significantly more frequently in the role play task. What is more, the low proficiency students employed intra-actional strategies (“circumlocution”) significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task and interactional strategies (“asking for clarification” and “asking for confirmation”) significantly more frequently in the role play task.

The fact that the study showed that the students used avoidance strategies and intra-actional strategies significantly more frequently in the definition formulation task and used interactional strategies significantly more frequently in the role play task indicates that the definition formulation task was more difficult than the role play task because the students used more avoidance strategies to renounce their original message. Since they could not look for assistance, they tried their best to solve their communication problems based on their own ability by using intra-actional strategies when they performed this task, unlike when they performed the role play task where they could talk to their friend in a more natural way about a familiar topic.

## 5.2 Pedagogical and Classroom Implications

The results of this study provide the following beneficial implications for foreign language teaching and learning.

Firstly, since the goal of ESL/EFL teaching and learning is to develop communicative competence among students, the development of strategic competence which has rarely been included in language teaching should be included as a goal of an ESL/EFL syllabus. To promote the development of strategic competence, teachers should introduce a wider range of communication strategies for students to use through classroom activities so that students know which strategies are available. The finding that all students used only “emm”, “err”, or “ahh” as a filler shows that they did not know how to use other “fillers”. The students should be taught and encouraged to use more kinds of fillers in their conversation such as “actually”, “well”, or “let’s see” and “so” so that they can gain more time to think in order to keep their conversation going smoothly and effectively. The use of various fillers can also make the speaker appear fluent and natural. Teachers can teach the use of “fillers” by directly giving a list of fillers for students to use in a simulated communication task. Moreover, teachers should provide students with opportunities to communicate socially in genuine situations in which they have to try to use appropriate strategies to solve their communication problems. It is undeniable that in an authentic conversation, communication breakdowns may occur anytime and communication strategies are essential tools to help the students when faced with difficulties. In addition, communication strategies allow them to compensate for inadequacies in a language which they have not yet mastered.

Furthermore, teachers need to consider incorporating authentic texts and real language in real situations, and to consider the classroom as a social situation and a place where genuine interaction can take place and not only a place to introduce and practice language forms. Teachers can also use games and competitions to teach the use of communication strategies. For example, teachers can teach the “circumlocution” strategy by conducting a “20 questions” game in which students

have to describe pictures or words, and have their friends guess what they are. Higgins (2003) mentioned that the best way to teach students things that are going to stick in their heads is to do it through playing games. Games create a sense of competitiveness (Rajan and McKelvie, 1985) and that is what usually keeps the players involved. The use of language becomes natural as they participate according to the rules with an obvious intention to win the game.

Secondly, since the English language proficiency of the students influences the use of communication strategies, it is necessary that teachers should provide strategy instruction which is suitable to the students' level of proficiency so that the students can use the strategies effectively according to their language ability. If teachers give strategy instruction which is not appropriate to the students' proficiency level, the students might find learning how to use communication strategies in their communication stressful. Furthermore, it is also important for teachers to know what types of communication strategies the high and low proficiency students lack because the students should only be taught strategies that they do not know. When the students know more communication strategies and know how to use them appropriately, they will push out more communication. The more they use the language for communication, the more their proficiency level will be increased.

Lastly, students should be made aware of the importance of choosing appropriate communication strategies in their communication because some strategies such as "avoidance strategies", "code-switching", "foreignizing" and "mumbling" may not enhance their communication. Rost (1996) noted that avoidance strategies should not be introduced to the learners because the purpose of communicative instruction is to help learners anticipate and deal with conversation problems, not to prevent or avoid them. However, Chandler (1996) proposed that elimination of certain formal elements of the target language do not always interfere with the transmission of meaning if the learners use them appropriately. To some extent, the learners may benefit from the use of avoidance strategies, particularly the "meaning replacement" strategy, because they do not need to stop the conversation immediately but can remove or replace the problematic word or sentence with a new one. Therefore, the teacher should instruct the students to use avoidance strategies properly according to

the situation. However, teachers should not encourage students to use avoidance strategies. Instead, they should encourage students to try not to avoid their original message but to try to compensate for their language deficiency (e.g. circumlocution, approximation, or mime) or appeal for assistance from their interlocutors (e.g. asking for repetition or asking for clarification) when they face communication difficulties. When students know how to use communication strategies appropriately, their communication will be more effective as a result.

### **5.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

The following recommendations are made in relation to research instruments and areas for further research.

In terms of research instruments, in this study the students were asked to perform two tasks to elicit their actual use of communication strategies without being asked for their opinions about using communication strategies in their communication. Other methods such as questionnaires or interviews should be used to elicit background information about the students such as their attitude towards English, the background to their English study, their use of communication strategies, their opinions regarding the use of communication strategies as well as the effectiveness of using communication strategies in their daily conversation. This information can shed more light on their actual use of communication strategies.

In terms of areas for further research, the background of the students can be a factor affecting the students' choice of communication strategies: this includes their learning and cultural background, attitude, personality traits, and the context of their studies. It would be interesting to find out whether the choice of communication strategies and the success in using them are influenced by or have any relationship to the aforementioned factors. A study of this nature would entail the collection of students' background information as well as the elicitation of their communication strategies in carefully designed tasks.

What is more, further studies might compare the use of communication strategies between native speakers and non-native speakers and look for the most

popular communication strategies among them. It might enhance non-native students' communicative competence if the students were introduced and encouraged to employ the same communication strategies preferred by native speakers. Additionally, further research might compare the use of communication strategies between native students and the low and high proficiency non-native students. It would be interesting to see whether the native students used the same or different strategies as the high and low proficiency students. Besides, it would also be interesting to investigate communication strategies of EFL students and their foreign teachers in order to find out the way in which students and teachers achieve mutual understanding and negotiate meaning using communication strategies.

Moreover, as the students in this study were put into pairs of similar proficiency to perform the role play task, it would also be interesting for further studies to put the students in mixed proficiency pairs for the role play task so that the different communication strategies could be elicited. For example, it would be interesting to find out whether the low proficiency students might employ more interactional strategies to seek assistance from the high proficiency students when they are put into pair to perform the role play task.

Finally, since this study recommends that the teaching of communication strategies should be included in the syllabus, it would be valuable for further studies to investigate the teachability of communication strategies to students of different levels of language proficiency, and different cultural and educational backgrounds.



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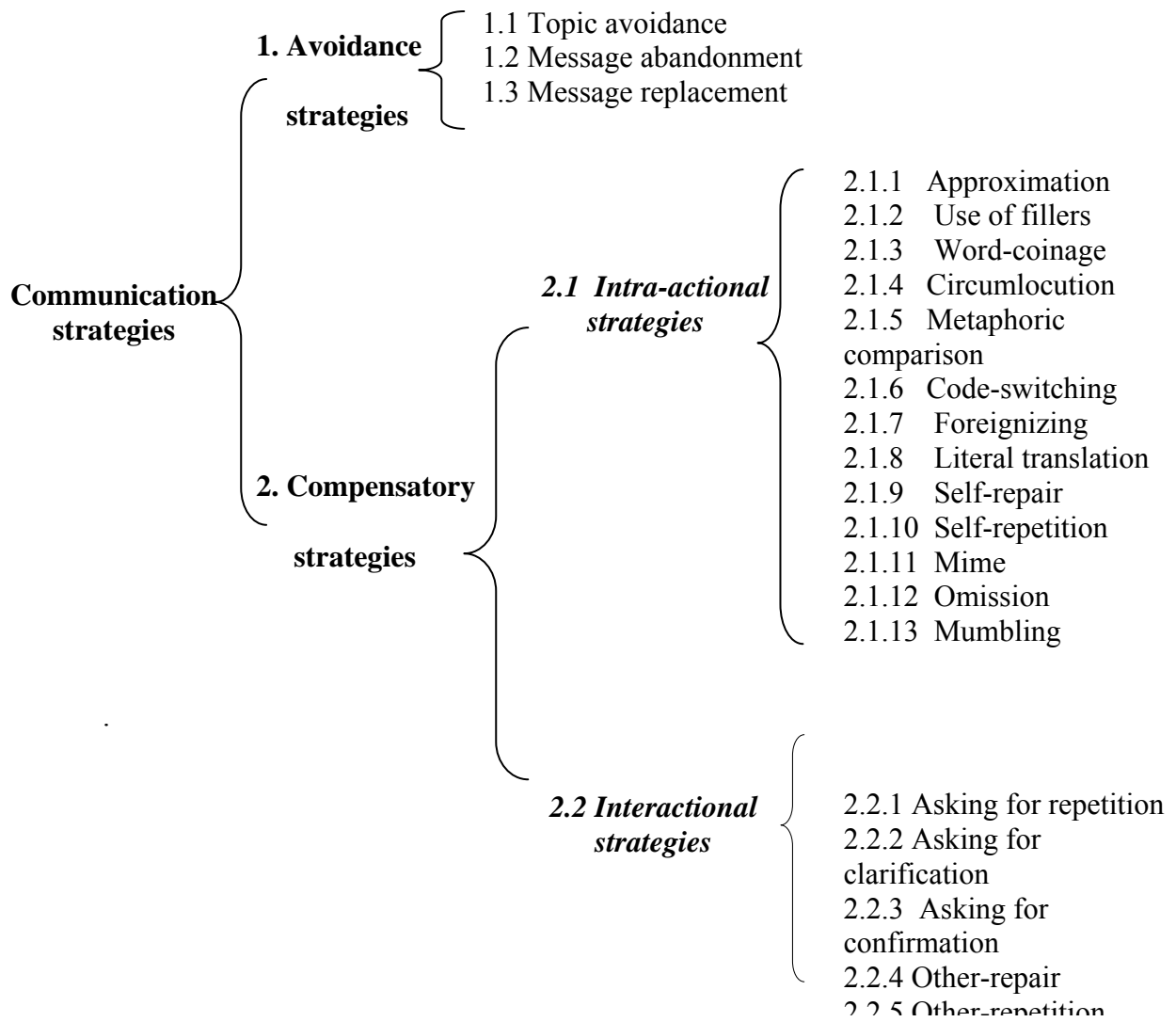
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**APPENDICES**

## **Appendix I**

### **Taxonomy of Communication Strategies**



### **Taxonomy of Communication Strategies**

Selected and compiled from Tarone (1977), Bialystok (1983), Poulisse (1993) and Dornyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)

## **Appendix II**

### **Definitions and Examples of Communication Strategies**



## Definitions and Examples of Communication Strategies

In this study, communication strategies are divided into two main types; avoidance strategies and compensatory strategies which have been selected and compiled from Tarone (1977), Bialystok (1983), Poulisse (1993) and Dornyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b). The following section will define each of the communication strategies and also give some examples to illustrate them.

### 1) Avoidance strategies

Strategies that students use when they try to avoid, abandon or substitute the original message.

#### 1.1. Topic avoidance

Students avoid certain topics considered problematic language-wise by leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources.

#### *First task: Role play*

B: and can I ask you any question? How's your study in Singapore?

A: emm...study in Singapore? emmm...(keep silent)

B: Oh! How do you feel when you study in Attarkiah Islamiah school?

A: Very good, I'm happy

B: Happy?

A: Yes.

B: Really?

A: Really!

#### *Second task: Definition formulation*

**Love:** .....

## 1.2. Message abandonment

The students utilize the strategy of message abandonment in their conversation when they sometimes leave the message unfinished because of some language difficulty and therefore they renounce their original message.

### *First task: Role play*

B: Oh, I'm studying in this school is Attarkiah School, right? In the morning, we are study about math, sciences or something like that and in the afternoon, we are going to study about all of religion like Qur'an or...

A: Oh, I like Qur'an because I low Qur'an, I want to practice and study, and what about food?

B: In Narathiwat we have a lot because this Narathiwat is near the sea, right? A lot of fish, yeah, right? and you know Somtam?

A: Yes, I know but....

### *Second task: Definition formulation*

**Love:** .... . Boy give to girl ahh...if if who take this, happy, yes happy, happy and emm.....emm.....

## 1.3. Message replacement

The students utilize the strategy of message replacement when they need to substitute the original message with a new one because of not feeling capable of executing it.

***First task: Role play***

A: what in, err, what..what food in Narathiwat?

B: Food?

A: Yah

B: Like Tomyam, right? When you go to restaurant, you can tell them, you want to eat Tomyam, Tomyam is good. (delicious)

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Ice-cream:** Ohh..this is I like because ahh many colors, ahh strawberry, ahh lemon, chocolat..emm..very delicious... for me. (flavors)

**2) Compensatory strategies**

Students attempt to maintain their original aim by developing an alternative plan or to solve problems in communication by expanding their communicative resources, rather than reducing their communicative goal.

**2.1 Intra-actional strategies**

Strategies that students use when they attempt to compensate for their language deficiencies themselves and not appeal for any assistance from others.

**2.1.1. Approximation**

The students used this strategy when they use a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate or a related term, which shares semantic features with the target word or structure.

***First task: Role play***

A: Yeah, I want to know about Thai food

B: Thai food, I prefer you to have, if you want to have lunch, you can have Somtam,

A: Somtam

B: And Kaoyam, what else?, uhh, Thai sweet food (Dessert)

***Second task: Definition formulation***

1. **Birthday card:** This is ahhh when you born, example I born in 4<sup>th</sup> March and my friend wants to give something to me that this is that when you want to give the good good word when you when you ahhh... when you born that same day....that is ahhh a paper in uhh in the rectangle. (Wish)

**2.1.2. Use of fillers**

The students use gambits to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty such as “well”, “actually”, “fine” or “emm”, etc.

***First task: Role play***

A: What about ahh ahhh ahh what about ahh environment of Thailand?

B: I think in Narathiwat have many trees..I.. but but now have ahh Contridicty in in three Changwat

A: ah what ahh ahh what about food? emm (asking assistance, giving gestures)

B: food? Famous food.

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Birthday card:** It's a square. It's a white color and it's ahh has err many pictures and it's a I get I get it..emm.we.are.we are very happy...emm..and we..we. should give the..we should give that to your friend on ahhh birthday.

**2.1.3. Word-coinage**

The students create a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word.

***First task: Role play***

A: Who do you live with..... in Narathiwat?

B: emm.. I live alone with my friend....and live uhh live in...I live in ahh a rent house (hostel)

A: Hostel with your friends?

B: Yes

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Travel:**umm go to go to see anything in the world and and to see favorite ..err..go to see interesting or many things in the world....and...emm.. we can know a lot of abroad people. (Foreigners)

**2.1.4. Circumlocution**

The students use circumlocution when they cannot say a particular word to the listener. Circumlocution is a technique to describe, exemplify, spell out or specify characteristic feature of the target words or actions.

***First task: Role play***

A: Umm..Uhh tradition.in Narathiwat?

B: Tradition?

A: Yes,

B: Traditioin, like.ahh .dekehooloo...like sing a song..malayu language..and dance  
(body language)

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Ice-cream:** It's sweet. It's very delicious..umm.. it has many many flavors..ahh..like..ahh..stawberry ice cream, lemon and other

**2.1.5. Metaphoric comparison**

The students compare the target item to another object in an analogical way by employing the word “like”.

***First task: Role play***

A: Oh yes, How do Narathiwat people live? Live like..like in Singapore or not?

B: No

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Computer:** It's something like the television for..... It can connecting internet to find something if you want to find in ..in it.

**2.1.6. Code-switching**

The students insert a word or phrase from their first language into the second or foreign language while engaged in a conversation.

***First task: Role play***

B: ahhh err err are you come...ahh ahh...you come to Thailand นานหรือยัง?

A: ahh ahh three months.

B: Are you...are you เคยชิน in Thailand แล้ว?

A: just a little, a little

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Birthday card:** It's a square...ahh..has a paper, ของ paper ของ paper and many colors..

**Poor:..** And he live at city ..ชนบท อยู่ในชนบท..umm..have between, different between about rich.

**2.1.7. Foreignizing**

The “foreignizing” strategy is the use of a L1 word or phrase by adjusting it to L2 pronunciation.

***First task: Role play***

A: Do you want to know about Thailand or Narathiwat?

B: Yeah, I want to know about Thai food

A: Thai food, I prefer you to have, if you want to have lunch, you can have Somtam,

B: Somtam?

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Travel:** Ohh..this travel...umm...in Narathiwat has many it. Something maybe Narathat beach..maybe Narathat beach...Taksin Rachtamnak beach. Pikon thong..if people go to this. It's very happy. It is give to happy, give to ความสุข yah happy

### 2.1.8. Literal translation

The students literally translate a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from their first language to English. The background knowledge of the first language interferes with the English production.

#### *First task: Role play*

A: Emm.. Uhh tradition in Narathiwat?

B: Tradition?

A: Yes.

B: Tradition like..ahh..dekehooloo...like sing a song..Malayu language ..and have a (body language).

A: exciting?

B: Exciting, very exciting and..you know the boat Kolehah? (the Kolehah boat)

A: No..I..

#### *Second task: Definition formulation*

**Birthday card:** It's made for.... it's something like ahh paper. It make a present for a day special. (a special day)

### 2.1.9. Self-repair

The students realize that they have made a mistake during the conversation. Then, they correct the mistake themselves.

#### *First task: Role play*

A: Can me, can I ask some questions?

B: yah, you can ask me.

A: Umm, how do student in Attar?

B: About study, right? In attarkiah, study is not, is not hard, study..easier..not se..uhh..serious.



***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Ice-cream:** It's It's sweet and cool. Ahh..you can it in ahh summer and you can.. ahh..if you wana bought it, if you want to buy it, you can buy in supermarket, Seven-Eleven.

**2.1.10 Self-repetition**

The students use the “self-repetition” strategy when a communication gap occurs in actual conversation because of a loss of idea due to limited linguistic knowledge, or while they were thinking of the next word or expression, they repeated immediately what they had just said.

***First task: Role play***

A: What what school do you study in Thailand?

B: Ah school Attarkiah Islamiah School, Yah

A: Emm, how do student in Attar?

B: About study, right? In Attarkiah, study is not, is not hard, study....easier...not se...uhh..serious,

A: What in, uhh, what..what food in Narathiwat?

B: Food?

A: Yah

***Task two: Definition formulation***

**Computer:** I like to play it very much. I always in front of it when I go back home. I use it to search..to search many things. I use to chat with my friend all over the world. Uhh..it is ...it is the electronic and there is a desktop, keyboard for type and also have a printer and CPU

### 2.1.11 Mime

The students describe whole concepts non-verbally by using mime, gestures, facial expression, or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration when there was some sort of linguistic limitation to explaining the target vocabulary or sentences.

#### *First task: Role play*

B: tradition of Thailand is a lot and the more important is when you say hello or hi, we don't shake hand, like this (gesture, จับมือ), we.. like this (gesture, ไหว้)

A: Like this? (gesture) (ไหว้)

#### *Second task: Definition formulation*

**Birthday card:** Ahh...It's a square (gesture). It's a white color and it's ahh has a uhh many pictures and it's a I get I get it..uhh.we.uhh.we are very happy....and we..we. should give the..we should give that to your friend on ahhh birthday.

### 2.1.12 Omission

The students leave a gap when not knowing a word and carry on as if it had been said.

#### *First task: Role play*

B: I want to know about...umm can you introduce me about study in Attarkiah?

A: .... in Attarkiah have two... right? In a thai period and Arabic period

B: It's so hard?

A: No, no, it's not hard

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Ice-cream:** I like it very much. My favorite ...emm... is chocolate and and mint..my favorite shop is Seven Sent. It is cold and sweet. I like it.

**2.1.13 Mumbling**

The students swallow or mumble inaudibly when they are not sure about the correct form of a word they want to say. Instead of leaving the message unfinished, they mutter a word or pronounce it quietly, so that the listener could not hear the word clearly.

***First task: Role play***

A: Can I know what about in Narathiwat about food, tradition and study?

B: Study is very good and study xxxxx....food in Thai uhh Tomyam and Somtam and Koayam...tradition is father's day and mother's day

A: Can I know about you xxxxx in Thai?

B: yes, very good and and I think...I'm so happy to study in Attarkiah...yes, very good

***Second task: Definition formulation***

**Travel:** To find to exciting for life..yah..everybody want to..go to...xxxxxx...want to exciting. But sometimes, it's dangerous but I think it's good. It's fun

**2.2 Interactional strategies**

The students try to involve other interlocutors in an attempt to compensate for their language deficiency or to understand the message.

### 2.2.1. Asking for repetition

The students request repetition when they do not hear or understand something properly.

#### *First task: Role play*

A: I want to know about tradition of Thailand

B: Hah...again please

A: Tradition of Thailand.

B: Tradition...., when we want to say hi to people who are older than us, we can Wai like this( ไหว้) Sawaddee,

### 2.2.2. Asking for clarification

The students request clarification, elaboration or explanation of an unfamiliar word.

#### *First task: Role play*

A: And how about Narathiwat food?

B: ahh..Narathiwat food...it's one umm I know it's นะโປ

A: นะโປ, how?

B: It's like snack

A: Snack?

B: Yes, Thai food, there are many umm spicy food

A: How about the test for นะโປ?

B: It's...it's bad smell, I think...and it's delicious too

### 2.2.3. Asking for confirmation

The students request confirmation that they heard or understood something correctly.

#### *First task: Role play*

A: I come from Singapore to study here in Attarkiah school. I don't know how to study in this school if you don't ..don't tell me, so what, uhh how to study in this school?

B: About study in uhh Arab, Arabic, and Malayu, English

A: So, you study 3 languages?

B: No..no..in Thai too.

A: And ah.. what is specific food in Thailand?

B: Tomyam, Somtam

### 2.2.4. Other-repair

The students correct something in the interlocutor's speech to check their understanding.

#### *First task: Role play*

A: Hey! You, I want to know about stud..about study in Attarkiah?

B: Emm in Attarkiah, they have many language, many languages for take in this school, there are many English program, M.1, M1. M.2, and M.3 and Arabic program

A: Arabic program?

B: Yes. M1. to M.3 too but for Matayom 4 to matayom 6 , we have uhh อุดมศึกษ  
program. It's for uhh.....

A: ม. ปลาย?

B: Yes, it's for high...high school

A: Oh! Yaa..high school

### 2.2.5. Other-repetition

The students repeat something the interlocutor said to gain time.

#### *First task: Role play*

A: oh!! And attraction in Thailand?

B: In Thailand or Narathiwat?

A: In Thailand

B: In Thailand, the south of Thailand have a lot of beach, beach

A: Beach?

B: Beach,... beautiful beach.. Andaman

### 2.2.6. Comprehension check

The students ask questions to check that the interlocutor can follow what was said.

#### *First task: Role play*

A: Ok, and..can you tell me about your study in Attarkiah School or in Thailand school?

B: Oh!! I'm studying in Attarkiah, English program, do you know English program?

A: Yes, Yes

B: I'm in grade 9.

A: You study only English or Islamic?

B: Ohh, All.

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