People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in English

Option: Language and Communication

The Effect of Language Proficiency on Learners' Use of Communication Strategies when Speaking English as a Foreign Language

A Case Study: First and Third Year English Language Students at MMUTO

Presented by:

Ms. Kahina Akli

Ms. Yamina Kaci

<u>Board of Examiners</u> :

Ms Feddoul Malika, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou; chair.

Ms Benaissa Amel,MAA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou; supervisor.

Ms Aimeur Rosa,MAB, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi- Ouzou; examiner.

Submitted on September, 2015

Dedication

Dedication

To my dear departed mother,

To all my family,

My beloved father,

All my sisters and brothers,

My binomial Yamina,

All my friends.

Kahina.

I dedicate this simple work:

To my family first

My dear parents, Lounis and Saida

My beloved brothers Salim, Mouloud, Rabah, Md larbi and the youngest one Koussaila

To my best friends Menoune and Kahina

To my cousins, all of them without exceptions

To anyone who helped us

Yamina.

Acknowledgments:

First, we would like to address our sincere thanks to Ms. Amel Benaissa, our supervisor, for the interest she showed in our research. Her advice, guidance as well as her encouragements helped us a lot for the achievement of this dissertation.

We are extremely thankful to Mr. Boualam Ikinin, Ms. Souad Smaili and Ms. Zahra Thafroukhthe, teachers in the department of English, for their valuable help for doing the practical side of the work.

We are grateful to first and third year students of the department of English. Our sample, their conversations were very beneficial to accomplish the purpose of this research. We also express our appreciation for granting us the right to record and hold their dialogues.

We express our deepest thanks to the board of examiners who have accepted to read and to correct our thesis.

We also place on record, our sense of gratitude to one and all who directly or indirectly have contributed in the success of this work.

Abstract

This dissertation deals with the effect of language proficiency on the learners' use of communication strategies when speaking English as a target language. Its aim is to find out whether first and third level EFL learners encounter speaking difficulties while communicating and interacting with each other. In addition, it looks wether Appeal for Assistance, Message Abandonment, Mime, Word Coinage, Approximation and Literal Translation Communication Strategies (CSs) are relied on to overcome speaking problems and succeeding to transmit the intended meaning. Proficiency level is taken into account to know if it interferes in learners' use of CSs. The sample of this investigation is made up of first and third year LMD Algerian students of the English language. The present work is conducted in the department of English at MMUTO. The research tools used in this study are composed of classroom observation and audio-recording. Furthermore, this dissertation is structured following IMRAD method, the two research methodologies (Qualitative and quantitative) are employed to present and analyze the data obtained. Tarone's interactional approach and her typology of conscious communication strategies is adopted to interpret the results. The findings gained show that the two previously mentioned proficiency levels meet speaking difficulties, more precisely lexical gaps. In addition, the six CSs selected in this study are used but in distinct frequencies. Finally, proficiency level has a considerable effect on learners' use of CSs. The conclusion to be drawn from these findings is that despite the speaking problems that first and third year students face, they have succeeded in transmitting the intended meaning with the help of the communication strategies. Moreover, learners possess some linguistic knowledge that allows them to employ the CSs.

Key words: English as a foreign language; Speaking; communication strategies; language proficiency.

List of abbreviations and symbols:

- AA: Appeal for assistance
- Ap: Approximation
- CC: Communicative Competence
- CSs: Communication Strategies
- DC: Discourse Competence
- EFL: English as a Foreign Language
- GC: Grammatical Competence
- L1: First Language
- L2: Second Language
- LP: Language Proficiency
- LT: Literal Translation
- MA: Message Abandonment
- Mm: Mime
- N°: Number
- S: Student
- SC: Sociolinguistic Competence
- SC: Strategic Competence
- TL: Target Language
- WC: Word Coinage

List of Tables:

Table 1: Frequency of Pauses and Repeated Words in First and Third Year Learners' Speech Productions……..28

Table 2: Frequency of CSs used by First Year students when engaged in Pair Discussion……29

Table 3: Amount of CSs used by First Year Students in Group Discussion……..30

Table 4: Total of CSs used by First Year Students……..30

Table 5: Amount of CSs used by Third Year Students while Dealing with Topic1……...31

Table 6: Frequency of CSs used by Third Year Students while Dealing with Topic 2…..32

Table 7: Total of CSs used by Third Year Students…….32

Table 8: Total of CSs used by Both First and Third Year Students…….33

List of Diagrams

Diagram1: Total of CSs used by First Year Students…….....30

Diagram 2: Total of CSs used by Third Year Students……..33

Diagram 3: Total of CSs used by both First and Third Year Students……...33

Content:

General Introduction

- Statement of the Problem……1
- Aims and Significance of the Study……4
- Research Questions and Hypotheses……...5
- Research Techniques and Methodology ……6
- Structure of the Dissertation……6

Chapter I: Review of Literature

Introduction

I.1 Speaking English as a Foreign Language……7

I.1.1 Motor-Perspective and Interaction Skills……8

I.2 Communicative Competence……...9

I.2.1 Defining Grammatical Competence……10

I.2.2 Defining Sociolinguistic Competence……10

I.2.2 Defining Discourse Competence……11

I.2.3 Defining Strategic Competence……...11

I.3 Strategic Competence and the Speaking Skill ……...13

I.4 Communication Strategies……..13

I.4.1 Psycholinguistic Approach to Communication Strategies……15

I.4.2 Interactional Approach to Communication Strategies ……...16

I.4.2.1 Tarone's Criteria for Communication Strategies ……17

I.4.2.1.1 Focus on Lexis……...18

I.5 Communication Strategies Classifications……18

I.6 Oral Communication Strategies and Language Proficiency……..19

Conclusion

Chapter II: Methods and Materials

Introduction

I. Participants and the Setting…….....21

II. Research Instruments…….22

II.1 Classroom Observation and Audio- Recording……...22

III. Task Design……23

III.1 First year Students……23

III.2 Third year Students……..23

IV. Data Analysis Procedure……24

V. The Theoretical Framework……...25

V. Tarone's Typology of Conscious Communication Strategies……25

Conclusion

Chapter III: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

III.1 First and Third Year Learners' Lexical Gaps ……..28

III. 2 Frequency of CSs used by First and Third Year EFL Learners…….29

III.2.1 Frequency of CSs used by First Year Students…….29

III.2.1 Total of CSs used by First Year Students…….30

III.2 Frequency of CSs used by Third Year Students……..31

III.2.1 Total of CSs used by Third Year Students…….32

III.3 First and Third Year Students' Use of CSs……33

Conclusion

Chapter IV: Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

IV.1 First and Third Year EFL Learners Lexical Gaps……..35

IV.2 Discussion of Communication Strategies used by the learners…….40

IV.2.1 Communication Strategies used by First and Third Year Learners……....40

IV.3 Comparing First and Third Year students' Use of Communication Strategies…….43

IV.3.1 Mime……43

IV.3.2 Appeal for assistance……45

IV.3.3 Approximation……..47

IV.3.4 Literal Translation……48

IV.3.5 Word Coinage……...49

IV.3.6 Message Abandonment…….50

Conclusion

General Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendices

General Introduction

General Introduction

▪ Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, English language is of great importance in the world. It has a special place in several countries. In addition, English is the prevalent language in many domains such as, international business, science, politics, and technology…etc. Moreover, it is the language of the more powerful states in the world. All these factors and many others give the English language its global status. As a global language, it becomes the international medium of communication.

The position of the English language in the world leads to the raise of the need to learn and to master it in all parts of the globe. Thus, learning English apart from one's first language or national language is essential or even necessary. To learn a foreign language as it is the case of English in non-native English speaking countries, is to develop the different skills of that language; listening, speaking, reading and writing where the oral skills are given priority in order to improve communication.

The speaking skill or oral proficiency is extremely important in learning foreign languages. It is one of the crucial elements in language education. Speaking is taking precedence in language pedagogy since the 1980's with the implementation of communicative based syllabuses and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to education. CLT's goal is to enable students to communicate in the target language, more precisely; the aim is to develop their communicative competence. Dell Hymes (1972) argued that the knowledge of grammatical rules is not enough for effective communication, unless we know how to use these rules and use language (cited in Canal and Swain, 1980, p.4).

In universities, the aim from teaching English as a foreign language is mainly to enable learners to communicate effectively. Among which, we find the Algerian universities, including Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi- Ouzou (MMUTO).

One of the goals of teaching English in the department of English at MMUTO is to develop student's linguistic skills by creating opportunities to use language in concrete situations, and to achieve effective oral communication. As it helps learners to improve their own academic performance, succeed in formal oral presentations, and be able to interact both with teachers and with other learners. In doing so, the department integrated the oral skill as a module along with other modules that assist speaking abilities.

Despite the fact that the department of English relies on methods that promote communication and support oral proficiency, speaking the English language is still a difficult task for many students. Some learners are not able to speak English even if they have been studying this language for a long period of time, and have a certain EFL input. They face various problems when trying to converse orally.

To overcome these difficulties, learners adopt various strategies that are called Communication Strategies (CSs). The latter are defined as techniques used by learners to surmount the problems faced when communicating. In other words, they are ways or tips employed by the target language user to deal with language breakdown when speaking a foreign language (Stern, 1983, cited in Zhang. Y, 2007, p.44).

In a global context, much study has been carried out concerning oral communication and language proficiency (S. Ting, and G. L Phan 2008), (C. P. Huang 2010), (N. Hamlaoui, N. Haddouche 2013), (Z. Merbouh and M. Melouk 2014) and so many others. Several studies investigated all the possible ways that may help learners to improve their speaking abilities in English and overcome the problems they encounter,

because the main objective behind learning a foreign language is to communicate effectively.

- **Investigations on CSs at the National Level**

Among the researchers who have set the ground for the study of speaking and communication strategies, our interest goes to Merbouh Zouaoui and Melouk Mohamed. As Algerian students (September, 2014), who have studied at Djillali Liabes University of Sidi Bel-Abbes, they have worked on communication strategies used when speaking English as a foreign language.

The sole aim of their study was to explore how to encourage learners to acquire communication strategies. Furthermore, they have suggested conversation training as a way to facilitate the task of communication and they have focused on the learners' performance of the tasks provided. Therefore, the results of this research show that students relied on ineffective communication strategies such as avoidance, hesitation devices and language switch.

Dr. Hamlaoui Naima and Haddouche Najiba (Mars, 2013) are two other Algerian researchers who have investigated the subject. They have conducted a research study on the use of communication strategies by Algerian students in the department of English at Badji-Mokhtar University. They have relied on a self-reported questionnaire based mainly on Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The variables used are gender, years of study, ability and proficiency level. The investigation resulted in the following, the use of communication strategies by students at a medium level, and the most used techniques are code modification, whereas the least used strategies are physical ones and all the chosen variables have an effect on student's use of communication strategies.

▪ Investigations on CSs at the International Level

Even abroad, other studies have been carried out with the oral skill. S. Ting and G. L Phan have conducted a study that focuses on the influence of English students' language proficiency on the use of communication strategies; the sample has been 20 participants in Malaysia University. Their findings indicated that both less and more proficient learners use the same number of communication strategies, more proficient learners center on the L2 CSs, and less proficient learners use strategies that are related to the L1 (language switch).

However, with respect to what we have reviewed, each of those findings was limited only to the settings where the research has been conducted. There is no possibility to generalize the findings to all foreign language learners. In contrast to this restricted view, some other studies need to be embedded into more general research areas. Further explorations on the use of each CS in relation to learners' proficiency level in other settings should be considered.

This dissertation, then, endeavors to analyze the relation between MMUTO learners' English language proficiency level and their use of Message Abandonment (MA), Appeal for assistance (AA), Mime (Mm), Word Coinage (WC), Approximation (Ap) and Literal Translation (LT) CSs to treat and enhance interaction in the target language and negotiate meaning.

▪ Aims and Significance of the Study

The present study aims at looking into the use of the already stated CSs by learners from two different levels in the department of English at MMUTO. That is to say,

it investigates the relationship between the use of the CSs and proficiency level of learners. The principle motive for focusing on the previously stated CSs is our consideration of the importance of speaking in communication, and the wide use of these strategies by learners in an EFL context to remain in connection with interlocutors. The reason behind choosing two distinct levels is to analyze the effect of the learners' proficiency level on the use of CSs.

There is no previous study on Communication strategies and language proficiency at the University of Tizi-Ouzou. In fact, Very little attention was given to the way learners solve their communication problems. The present research will be tackled following the interactional framework and relying on Tarone's typology of communication strategies. The latter includes the six CSs on which the present work is based. Tarone concentrated on the use of CSs between two interlocutors to negotiate the intended meaning and hold the conversation that is the matter of the present study.

▪ Research Questions and Hypotheses

The focus on speaking deficiency and the use of the six CSs mentioned above in relation to the learners' proficiency level raises some important questions:

1- Do first and third year English language students at MMUTO face speaking problems related to vocabulary?

2- Do first and third year English language students use Appeal for Assistance (AA), Message Abandonment (MA), Word Coinage (WC), Approximation (Ap), Literal Translation (LT) and Mime (Mm) when interacting?

3- What is the relationship between the use of the six CSs and the learners' English level of proficiency?

Hypotheses

1. First and third year students of the department of English at MMUTO face some speaking difficulties related to vocabulary.
2. First and third year English language Learners at MMUTO use at different rates the following strategies: AA, MA, WC, Ap, LT and Mm to overcome their speaking problems.
3. Low proficient students use CSs more than high proficient students.

▪ Research Techniques and Methodology

For collecting ample and reliable data, we used a mixed- method research. This method is adopted to facilitate data analysis, as it comprises both quantitative and qualitative research methods. It is carried out in an academic setting, more precisely in the department of English at MMUTO. The needed data is collected from two different levels of English learning proficiency that are, first and third year levels. The purpose behind selecting two different levels is to observe the influence of the proficiency level on the use of AA, MA, WC, Ap, LT and Mm communication strategies. The classes were selected randomly; we used tape-recording and classroom observation as the most appropriate research tools to obtain the necessary data.

▪ Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured following the IMRAD method. It is composed of a general introduction, four sections and a general conclusion. The first section reviews the previous works related to the subject of communication strategies and language Proficiency level when speaking English as a foreign language. The second section describes the materials used and the methodology followed to collect data, which is needed to answer the three questions previously asked in this study. Then, the third part called results comprises the findings of the work. The fourth section is discussion, it analyzes the

findings using Tarone's interactional framework concerning CSs. Finally, a general conclusion summarizes the whole study.

Chapter I

Review of Literature

Introduction

This part presents the theoretical framework connected to the issue of speaking English as a foreign language. Many related concepts are reviewed. They are considered to be necessary to show the right path and get a better understanding of communication breakdowns, oral communication strategies, and consider the relation between the learner's use of these strategies with their English language proficiency level.

The chapter sheds light on the crucial role of the speaking skill while learning a foreign language. Some distinct definitions of CSs according to different scholars from a linguistic and a psychological perspective are presented and explained. In addition, Tarone's theory that is adopted in this work following the interactional approach is explained.

I.1 Speaking English as a Foreign Language

Speaking is a crucial part of people's daily life. Because speech is a basis for communication and helps for the satisfaction of many communicative needs. As John Laver (1994) has explained, "*speech is the prime means of communication and the structure of the society itself would be substantially different if we had failed to develop communication through speech*" (cited in Nadeemkhan, Arshad Ali, 2010, p. 3576). Furthermore, Thornbury (2005) claims that speaking is natural and integral, that we lose interest in the way we achieve this ability until this interest is renewed again while learning how to speak a foreign language. That is to say, learners become more preoccupied with improving their speaking skills in a foreign language context, as it is the case of English language learners in Algerian schools and Universities. Foreign languages have three important criteria (cf. Richards and Schmidt, 2002, cited in T. Prcic, 2013): a) they are not the first language of a country, b) they are not the official language of a country, c) they are

taught as a subject in schools. In this manner, English is given its importance as a school subject in many non-English speaking countries, where the speaking skill is more enhanced in language instruction and in the teaching/ learning process.

These days, teaching and learning English is crucial and the focus becomes more on the oral communication that comprises the speaking skill as an important part. Following Bygate (1987), this skill comprises two other sub-skills:

I.1.1 Motor- Perspective and Interaction Skills

According to Bygate (1987) speaking is a skill for which much more attention is given in both first and foreign language learning, and it is the medium through which much language is learnt. Bygate argued that we speak about a skill only if there is a combination of two important elements that are "Motor-perspective" skills and "interaction skills". The latter are two fundamental constructs that form together what is called a skill (Bygate, 1987, P.5).

I.1.1.1 Motor-Perspective Skills

The first of these elements has to do with the superficial aspect of the oral skill. In Bygate's words *"Motor-perspective skills involve perceiving, recalling and articulating in the correct order sounds and structures of language"* (Bygate 1987, P.5). That is to say, learning and even memorizing how to use the language elements correctly far from producing language in unplanned situations.

I.1.1.2 Interaction Skills

Another basic element of the skill that Bygate (1987) presented is interaction skills. It implies making decisions about what to say and how to say it while communicating with others. *"The skill of using knowledge and basic motor perception*

skills to achieve communication" (Bygate, 1987, p.6). A careful consideration is given to this aspect in this investigation.

The arguments above permit the following statement. To be a skilful English speaker, one must have the ability to use the right language elements learnt in the classroom in real life conversations and interactions. In addition, speaking a foreign language requires from the learner to develop some competences. In the following part, we are going to explain briefly communicative competence, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence since each one of them help students to communicate effectively, and latter the focus will be on the strategic competence, which will be developed more as our subject of study.

I.2 Communicative Competence

Communicative competence (CC) helps learners to use the language accurately and fluently. Learners need to acquire it in order to have the ability to speak and interact using the target language. Some principles that foster this competence should be taught in order to create opportunities to ameliorate the oral skill. Since this phase is worthwhile for the users of the target language, it was integrated in the communicative syllabus to be its main goal.

Tarone and Yule defined CC as follows, "*the ability to use language should be described as communicative competence"* (1989, p.17). In other words, CC means the capacity to perform and act with language for various communicative purposes. To develop learner's communicative abilities and make them achieve speaking as a practical skill, EFL students should be aware of four essential components of communicative competence mainly those which are presented by Michael Canale namely grammatical

competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. (1983, p.6).

I.2.1 Defining Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence (GC) is one essential part that communicative competence comprises. EFL learners should acquire and develop this part of language in order to produce correct sentences when communicating using a foreign language. In the following quotation, Tarone and Yule have explained what grammatical competence (GC) means, "*Grammatical competence involves knowledge about the phonological and grammatical structure, or form of the language, and the ability to produce and understand these forms in speech and writing"* (1989, P.37). In related simple words, GC is the phase that presents knowledge about language. That is, it includes the grammatical, lexical and phonological aspects. It deals with the structure and the linguistic forms of the target language that most of the time are beneficial to prevent the target language user from committing mistakes throughout their use of the foreign language.

I.2.2 Defining Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence (SC) is the second crucial part that provides learners with several opportunities to produce and comprehend language for particular goals. Tarone and Yule claimed, "*Sociolinguistic competence involves the ability to produce and understand the language which is appropriate to specific transactional situations and conforms to the politeness conventions of those situations*" (1989, P.38). To put it more simply, sociolinguistic competence consists of using appropriate and adequate foreign language forms and expressions while engaged in different interactional situations. Moreover, it is more connected to the way the linguistic aspects are employed taking into

account the social dimension. That is, the status of the participants and even the relationship that unifies them are extremely important to succeed in the use of the appropriate linguistic elements while communicating.

I.2.3 Defining Discourse Competence

Discourse competence (DC) is another essential part in language that enhances the oral skill. Michael Canale gave attention to this competence in his work "From Communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy". He has claimed, "*This type of competence concerns mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres*" (1980, p.9). This means, this competence combines between the grammatical rules and semantics. That is, learners would be able to produce accurate and meaningful speech.

I.2.4 Defining Strategic Competence

Strategic competence (SC) is the fourth component of communicative competence. It allows learners to use the foreign language to convey the intended meaning. Many scholars have studied it in depth and they claimed the importance of its mastery. Tarone and Yule defined it as "*The ability to successfully get one's meaning across to particular listeners*" (1989, p.101). In relatively simple terms, it is the ability to transmit and interpret information successfully within an encounter between a speaker and a hearer. Strategic competence also let learners use the target language successfully without impedance.

In fact, any speaker who tries different techniques to treat abnormalities in the three other competencies, and uses different communication strategies to build a successful act of communication is demonstrating strategic competence. As Canale and Swain pointed

out, strategic competence is, "*The compensatory communication strategies to be used when there is a breakdown in one of the other competencies*" (ibid, p.27).

Even Canale and Swain support what is stated by Tarone and Yule. They argued that strategic competence was the one that treats the difficulties that most EFL learners encounter while using a target language due to deficiencies in the three previous competences. In addition, it is claimed that such strategies are not taught through school instruction, rather through real life communicative situations and through people's language experiences (Stern 978, cited in Michael, Canale, 1980, p.31).

Cem Alptekin is another researcher who has devoted attention to strategic competence. He defines it as "*The ability to cope in an authentic communicative situation and to keep the communicative channel open"* (C. Alptekin, 2001, p.2). This means that, strategic competence provides learners with the capacities needed to speak a foreign language confidently; SC makes communication a continuous act. Additionally, it permits learners to produce authentic language in a regular way without interruptions.

He added, "*This requires the knowledge of CSs that one can use to compensate for imperfect knowledge of rules, or for factors such as fatigue, inattention and distraction which limits the application of such rules*" (ibid). In other words, SC is one component which requires the mastery of the communication strategies that can be used by EFL learners to surmount the speaking difficulties in case of having grammatical problems or other factors that can impede them from communication.

In the words of Thornbury, "*The successful use of such strategies in order to communicate in a second language is called strategic competence*" (2005, p.29). That is to say, a learner who succeeds in using efficient communication strategies to solve communication problems is performing a strategic competence.

I.2.4 Strategic Competence and the Speaking Skill

Strategic competence and the oral skill are two interrelated concepts. Learners should be strategically competent in order to be able to speak English as a target language. Strategic competence helps learners to cope with language difficulties when speaking. In other words, EFL learners have to know the two areas that SC comprises; the first area is related to linguistic resources and the second one is tied to the use of communication strategies to handle language breakdown. Speaking a foreign language is a difficult task especially for EFL learners. They can surmount this difficulty by employing the adequate strategies that are the main part in strategic competence.

To conclude, strategic competence is seen as the main component that assists EFL learners to speak a foreign language efficiently. The later includes communication strategies as the second crucial area that will be explained in details in the following part.

I.3 Communication Strategies

Speakers develop strategies to work out solutions to all expected kinds of communication problems that might occur in oral interactions. This is what is called communication strategies. The definition of communication strategies has been subject to discussion by many researchers for several decades like, Canale and Swain (1980), Tarone (1980), Bialystok and Frohlich (1980), Corder (1981), Faerech and Kasper (1983), Dornyei(1995). Therefore, there were many opinions on what makes up communication strategies, and they have been treated from different perspectives.

Among the researchers who gave consideration to the definition of CSs, we name Canale and Swain (1980). They claimed that strategic competence consists of both verbal and non- verbal CSs, which are used to deal with communication lapses. These lapses may result from inadequate competence or inconstant performance. They stated that there are two types of CSs; a) those that concern grammatical competence, as how to

paraphrase unknown linguistic forms, b) and those that concern more sociolinguistic competence, it involves the use of specific techniques to have successful social interactions with others(Canale and Swain, 1980, p, 30).

Bialystok and Frohlich also point out that:

> The distinction between linguistic and communicative competence presupposes a gap between what a learner is technically capable of expressing through a code and what the learner intends to express in terms of communicative needs, these means by which a learner intends to close that gap are Communication Strategies. (1980, p.2)

In other words, CSs play a role of a mediator between the insufficient linguistic resources and learners communicative needs. Learners use CSs to help themselves to express and convey their needs and intentions.

In much the same vein, Zoltan Dornyei stated that CSs comprises both verbal and non- verbal techniques adopted by a learner when communicating to deal with communicative problems. In his words, *"Communication strategies which involve various verbal and non- verbal means of dealing with difficulties and breakdowns that occur in every day communication"* (1995, p.1)

As Corder noted, learners use very organized and well- formed strategies to help them to cope with difficulties within a communicative situation and try to attain their objectives. This is what is shown in the following quotation *"Communication strategies is a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his/ her meaning when faced with some difficulty"* (Corder 1981, p.103, cited in Z. Dornyei, 1995, p.56).

Paribakht also added empirical material to define CSs as *"underlying elements in speakers' attempts to transmit their thoughts to their interlocutors"* (1986, p.56). The learner tries to transmit his message in a clear way to the interlocutor.

All these definitions conceive CSs as systematic techniques used by EFL learners to tackle communication problems they encounter. The difference is related to the theoretical perspectives each author adopted. Other authors were concerned with studying CSs. As it is the case of Faerech and Kasper (1980) who defined CSs from a psychological perspective,

I.1.The Psycholinguistic Approach to Communication Strategies:

Faerech and Kasper (1980) have introduced a psycholinguistic perspective, in which CSs were considered as being verbal plans within a process of speech production. This means, they are mental techniques called for by a speaker to solve a problem while producing speech and facing some inadequacies without reference to the interlocutor's help. Thus, it is an intra-individual psychological view of CSs. It means that everything happens in the individuals' mind. Faerech and Kasper (1980) focus mainly on the thinking processes experienced by learners, in their words "*communication strategies are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal* " (1980, p.36). This statement mirrors the two characteristics attributed to CSs that are, problem- orientedness and consciousness. In this way, the two researchers suggested two criteria to CSs and this is explained in the following:

I.7.1 Problem- Orientedness

The first criterion refers to the fact that learners have some difficulties and problems in attaining a specific communicative objective. Faerech and Kasper (1980) expended this concept by stating that the problem that students face can arise in two phases. Either in the planning- stage, where the learner has a problem in programming the plan to reach a particular aim or in the execution stage, here the problem occurs while the

learner practices and executes the plan attempting to achieve the communicative goal (Faerech and Kasper 1980, p. 58)

I.7.2 Consciousness

Faerech and Kasper (1980) claimed that the criterion of consciousness for CSs is derived from the criterion of problem- orientedness. That is, if the learner meets a problem this implies that he is conscious of the existence of that problem. Hence, the criterion of consciousness means that the learner is conscious and is aware of such problems while attempting to communicate (Faerech and Kasper, 1980, p. 59).

In this perspective, target language users are aware and conscious of the presence of communication problems, and this creates the need to search for psycholinguistic strategies to solve those problems.

I.8 The Interactional Approach to Communication Strategies

Tarone has claimed that, *"Conscious communication strategies are used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual's thought"* (Tarone, 1977, as cited in Dornyei and Scott, 1997, p. 5). In this quotation, Tarone, as other previous scholars, claims that CSs are those strategies that anyone can use to overcome speaking problems.

Latter on, in her work of (1980), she has distinguished between production strategy and communication strategy. The former is related to the learners' efforts to improve their target linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, the latter refers more to the negotiation of meaning between two interlocutors (Tarone, 1980, p. 419).

According to this conceptualization, Tarone (1980) has adopted an inter-individual view regarding CSs as means for the negotiation of meaning within an interaction between interlocutors. Each participant tries to express his intended meaning to the other interlocutors. Likewise, Tarone stresses the importance of involving the

interlocutor's contribution when describing the learners' employment of other languages. According to her, "*communication strategy (CS) - a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared*" Tarone (1980, p. 420). She has precised that both linguistic and sociolinguistic structures are included in meaning structures. Furthermore, "*CSs are seen as tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communication goal"* (ibid, p.4); the interlocutors try to help each other to avoid communication disruptions. This interactional perspective according to Tarone implies not only the correction and filling the missing linguistic forms, but also the clarification of the intended meaning of the speaking situation.

I.8.1 Tarone's Criteria for Communication Strategies

Tarone (1980) has proposed a set of criteria for CSs that are required in order to provide a clear definition of CSs and if one of these criteria is absent, there is no CS.

1. A speaker wants to communicate and send a meaning to a listener; this is related to the speaker's intention to communicate a message.
2. Speaker's belief that the linguistic and sociolinguistic structure wished to communicate meaning is not available or is not shared with the listener.
3. Speaker's choice to either avoid the meaning or use alternative means of expression (1980, p.3).

A crucial feature of Tarone's definition including intent, belief, and choice is the interactive nature of all the three criteria of CSs. That is, they are not separate mental activities. In this way, all what is important is the use of CSs within an interactive situation where the interlocutors believe that there is a communicative problem, and attempt to negotiate an appropriate way to surmount this difficulty to keep in the conversation

without breakdowns. In this perspective, interlocutors negotiate meaning which is the central concept of the interactional perspective.

I.8.2. Focus on Lexis

Our concern is closely related to learners' communicative problems. Lexis is a very important aspect of language that promotes and facilitates the task of communication. In addition, it has a crucial role in conveying meaning as David Wilkins stressed *"Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed"* (cited in Thornbury, 2002, p. 13). However, the learners' lack of vocabulary may impede the use of the target language. Thus, lexical deficiencies have been the focus of many distinct theoretical considerations and assumptions. Among these innovating researches, it is worthy to mention Tarone's work. The latter emphasized vocabulary matters (Paribakht, 1982, p. 53) that learners encounter. To be consistent with Tarone's work on CS, this study will emphasize lexical problems EFL learners encounter while speaking English as a foreign language.

II.4 Communication Strategies Classifications

Considerable interest has been given to communication strategies. Thus, several typologies have been proposed. This study is restricted to mention briefly only two of them, namely, those of Faraech and Kasper (1983) and Bialystok (1983) (cited in Dorney, Z and Scott, M.L. 1997, p.24). In this research, these classifications are used in addition to Tarone's taxonomy in order to demonstrate the interest that many researchers gave to the study of communication strategies with connection to the speaking skill.

Faerech and Kasper (1980) classified CSs into two main categories that consist of, Reduction Strategies along with Achievement Strategies, whereas Bialystok (1980) suggested some strategies that can assist EFL learners in their communication. Her

typology of communication strategies is divided into three types, L1-Based Strategies, L2-Based Strategies and Non-Linguistic Strategies.

I.5 Oral Communication Strategies and Language Proficiency

Oral communication strategies and Language proficiency are two concepts that go hand in hand. Language proficiency has an impact on the use of communication strategies. That is, the strategies that are used by EFL learners to enhance their oral communication need an acquisition of some target language elements such as, lexis and syntax that lead to a successful use of some strategies. Various scholars have conducted research on the relationship between the two concepts, including Bialystok and Frohlich (1980), Paribakht (1986).

Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) have investigated language proficiency in combination with the use of communication strategies. They have pointed out that the formal level of proficiency is one factor that can lead learners to use communication strategies (1980, p.5). In these words, the two scholars agreed on language proficiency to be an essential element that pushes learners to employ CSs when communicating. In addition, language proficiency is one factor that makes learners distinct in the way they select CSs. This means that, the difference of learners' foreign language abilities and competences affect their use of CSs.

The efficient use of communication strategies depends on the learner's level in the target language as Bialystok and Frohlich stated, *"It may be that a consistently effective use of strategies requires a minimal level of proficiency"* (1980, p.25). They added, "*The possibility that proficiency is a precondition for effective use of communication strategies was further examined in terms of the individual subject*" (1980, p.25). The two quotations assert the necessity for learners to reach a certain level of proficiency in a foreign

language, at least to show a success in the use of CSs in the case there is language breakdowns.

The influence of the proficiency level on the foreign language learners' use of CSs has been so far dealt with as an important variable in many studies on oral CSs. Paribakht (1986) has found that the learner's increase in their target language (TL) proficiency level gives them the type of knowledge needed in order to employ any given strategy. In addition, if his TL knowledge is limited or absent, this may reduce or even exclude the capacity to use certain CSs that require that knowledge. In his work, he used the example of semantic knowledge that is required to overcome communication problems (1986, p.59).

The main idea to be inferred from the two investigations is that, the use of CSs depends on the learners' foreign language proficiency. If there is no knowledge, there is no strategic competence, which implies that there are no CSs to employ to surmount the speaking problems.

Conclusion

According to what is reviewed above, all the scholars have the same views concerning the definition of CSs. Though they have followed distinct perspectives and approaches, they agree that CSs are those techniques used by EFL learners to surmount communication difficulties while using a target language. The majority of their definitions consider CSs as problem- solving devices. Research in the field of oral communication strategies has revealed the existence of a variety of taxonomies, and has shown that the learners' use of CSs is related to their level of proficiency.

Chapter II:

Methods and Materials

Introduction

This chapter explains the research design of our study. It aims at describing the procedures followed for data collection, and the research methods applied to present and interpret the relation between learners' language proficiency level and the use of MA, AS, LT, Ap, WC and Mm communication strategies when speaking English as a foreign language.

This chapter consists mainly of three important parts. The first part is concerned with data collection; it deals with the way data are gathered for the aim of answering the research questions of the study, including the description of the research instruments that we rely on to collect the needed data. In addition, it identifies the sample under the investigation. The second part deals mainly with data analysis procedures used to discuss the findings. The third part is devoted to the theoretical framework, explaining Tarone's typology of CSs that will be our framework.

I. The participants and the setting:

Data is collected during the academic year 2014- 2015 at the MMUTO in the department of English. For enhancing the representativeness of our data and the generalizability of our findings, we have chosen to analyze interactions between English language learners with two distinct levels of proficiency.

The participants were 56 students (including both males and females). These students were randomly selected from two distinct groups at different proficiency levels. The first group consists of 28 first year students representing an intermediate level. The second group comprises 28 third year students who represent an advanced level of proficiency. All the participants in the present study are native speakers of Kabyle or Arabic. All of them speak French, as it is the first foreign language of the country. The English language represents the second foreign language learnt as a school subject. Thus, the difference in

the degree of proficiency may affect the learners use of MA, AA, Mm, LT, WC and Ap communication strategies when interacting with others using English as a foreign language

II. Research Instruments

The instruments used for the elicitation of the data were audio recording and classroom observation. It was necessary that the selected instruments should make possible the recognition of lexical gaps and CSs instances with a high degree of reliability. The samples contain participants' oral communication in English when performing the tasks they were asked to do. For the purpose of identifying and checking out whether LT,WC, Ap, AA, MA and Mm were employed by learners, these two instruments seem to be practical and useful.

II.1. Classroom Observation and Recording:

Classroom observation is not an easy task to do, as it seems to be. Different techniques were developed to observe classroom interaction (Chaudron, 1988, cited in Nunan, 1988, p. 96). Developers of these schemes aimed to list out useful procedures for researchers to collect reliable data and permit for precise description of classroom phenomena (Nunan, p, 97). Following Long/ Chaudron analysis, our observation scheme intended to use an audio- recording and it focuses on verbal, paralinguistic and nonlinguistic features of interaction (ibid).

First, the speech production samples were tape-recorded using a tape- recorder and then transcribed and analyzed. This allowed us to identify both lexical gaps and the CSs instances in which they were used, that corresponded to the moments when learners encountered a problem as they were speaking. Second, as we are concerned with the use of MA, AA, LT, Ap, WC and physical CSs to achieve a communicative purpose, we rely on classroom observation to observe the use of non-verbal CS while interacting. This strategy

cannot be perceived and analyzed using an audio- tool like a tape- recorder. It must be observed since it is physical. Thus, classroom observation allowed collecting data regarding the use of the non-verbal CS (mime), and the instances in which it is employed by the speaker to communicate the intended meaning to the interlocutor.

III. Task Design:

The communicative tasks designed for this study aimed at sharing and comparing ideas. Since the sole aim of the present work is to find out whether first and third year students encounter speaking difficulties while interacting. Then, if they use the six selected CSs to convey the intended meaning, such tasks seem to be more suitable because they required the presence of two or more participants who interact and communicate for sharing different opinions and ideas. Similarly, it allowed learners to use English to transmit and receive information that are related to the topics suggested. In addition, it was helpful to discover to which extent learners can use English in transactional situations and even to observe and record their way of speaking.

Since distinct topics have been proposed to the two academic levels previously mentioned, the following procedure is required.

III.1. First Year Students' Task

"*Speaking in a restaurant*" was a subject of discussion designed to first year students. They were asked to take into account the place where they prefer to eat, their favorite meals and drinks as well as make comments on the quality of food. After the attendance of the two oral sessions, some instructions were provided to the learners such as, working in pairs, a written conversation was forbidden, a spontaneous and natural speech was recommended. Moreover, a short period of time was given to students before they start speaking. (see Appendix A)

III.2. Third Year Students' task

Third year students were required to speak about two topics. The first group was asked to talk about the "favorite job". That is, the job that they desire to do in the future. The second one dealt with "preferable modules". This means, the modules that they prefer to learn. Third year students were advised to produce natural speeches, to engage in vivid interactions. Few minutes to think about the subject were given to the learners. (See Appendix A)

Our presence in the classroom was limited to record the first and the third year students' speeches, taking notes and observe whether they relied on the physical strategy for communication.

IV. Data Analysis procedure

IV. 1. Qualitative Vs Quantitative method

The mixed method research was used in this study. It involves the combination of the two research methodologies (quantitative and qualitative).The quantitative method was used to present the tables and diagrams. The later were used to present the results obtained to each research question. In addition, the frequency of CSs used by learners was presented in numbers and in the analysis of the findings. Concerning the qualitative method, it was first used to describe the results obtained. It was basically employed in the discussion part where we interpreted and explained the findings following Tarone's interactional framework.

V. The Theoretical Framework:

Elaine Tarone (1977) was interested in working on successful and efficient communication between interlocutors. In her interactional approach, she focused on the use of the target language by EFL learners and their abilities to convey the intended meaning. Additionally, she was aware of the speaking problems that they encounter. In her typology of CSs (1977), she distinguished ten communication strategies as techniques to be used to surmount the speaking problems that most target language users face. The six CSs selected in this study were extracted from her taxonomy namely Message Abandonment, Appeal for assistance, Word coinage, Approximation, Mime and Literal translation.

V.1. Tarone's Typology of Conscious Communication Strategies:

Tarone (1977, cited in Macdonough 1995; Dornyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b, p. 24) categorized communication strategies in the following taxonomy.

1. Paraphrase:

It is the umbrella of the following strategies.

- ✓ **Approximation:**

The speaker substitutes the desired unknown target language item for another item, which shares semantic features with it.

- ✓ **Word- coinage:**

The learner constitutes a new word to call and communicate an object which correct name is unknown.

- ✓ **Circumlocution:**

The learner describes and illustrates the features and fundamental components of the object rather than say the appropriate target language structure referring to that object.

2.Borrowing:

It consists of:

- ✓ **Literal translation**:

To translate literally a lexical item, idiom, a compound word or any structure from L1, or another language to L2.

- ✓ **Language switch:**

The learner moves directly to the use of the native language without translating, and he uses L1 or another mastered language structure without any change at all. This may involve simple words or whole sentences.

3.Appeal for assistance:

It means to call for help and aid, ask for the correct form or term. When facing a difficulty the learner turns to ask the interlocutor for help and elicit the needed language items either implicitly or explicitly.

4.Avoidance:

- ✓ **Topic avoidance:**

It means avoiding topic areas or concepts that lead to linguistic problems.

- ✓ **Message abandonment:**

The learner gives up and abandons a talk because he does not know how to continue and he is not equipped with the necessary language elements.

5. Mime:

The learner uses non-verbal strategies instead of a meaning structure. He employs non- verbal language like, gestures, facial expressions… etc. Dornyei & Scott defined it as "*Describing whole concepts non- verbally, or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration"* (1995a, 1995b, p. 18).

Conclusion:

To conclude, this section displayed the methodology and research techniques of the study. It demonstrated first the necessary elements that form the data collection part. That is, the useful means used for the elicitation of the data related to learners' speeches and conversations in order to answer the questions advanced in the general introduction, and to confirm the hypotheses suggested in this investigation. Second, it explained how the data analysis part will be organized, it demonstrated the way the findings will be presented and analyzed using the mixed method research. Finally, how they will be interpreted using Tarone's interactional approach along her typology of conscious communication strategies for which a brief explanation was provided.

Chapter III:

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction:

In order to compare the use that the two distinct proficiency level groups make of CSs, the obtained data were submitted to both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Firstly, the learners' speech productions across the communicative tasks are described for both first and third year students in order to look for lexical gaps. Then, identification of CSs in learners' interaction is taken into account for the aim of finding whether EFL learners employ the six selected CSs while interacting and trying to negotiate meaning. Finally, we seek to examine the relation between learners' use of CSs and the proficiency level.

III.1 First and Third Year Learners' Lexical Gaps:

The frequency count of the number of words repeated and the number of pauses experienced by each group of students was carried out. The results found the evidence that EFL learners face some lexical deficiencies at both levels. Problem indicators include very short and limited conversations, pauses and hesitation phenomena such as repetition. Table 1 shows the frequency of word repetition and pauses in EFL learners' speech productions

	First Year Students	Third Year Students
Number of pauses	79	40
Number of words repeated	59	84
Number of words uttered	1780	2676

Table N° 1: Frequency of Pauses and Repeated Words in First and Third Year Learners' Speech Productions

III.2 Frequency of CSs used by First and Third Year EFL Learners:

III.2.1 Frequency of CSs used by First Year Students:

Table 2 and 3 represent the total of CSs used by each student in a pre-intermediate level when speaking English. The tables also show the total number corresponding to each type of CSs employed by all first year English learners. In addition, the total of CSs used by the whole group is counted. We divided the results into two tables to have a clear and a representative diagram.

	Type of communication strategies							
Grouping	**Students**	**AA**	**MA**	**Mm**	**WC**	**Ap**	**LT**	**Total**
pair 1	S1	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
	S2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pair 2	S3	7	0	1	1	0	0	9
	S4	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
pair 3	S5	2	0	3	0	0	0	5
	S6	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
pair4	S7	4	0	2	0	0	0	6
	S8	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
pair5	S9	2	0	5	0	1	1	9
	S10	3	1	4	1	0	0	9
pair6	S11	4	0	3	0	0	1	8
	S12	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
	S13	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
pair7	S14	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
	S15	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
	S16	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	S17	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Total	28	4	34	2	2	2	72

Table N° 2: Frequency of CSs used by First Year Students when Engaged in Pair Discussion

		Type of communication strategies						
grouping	**students**	**AA**	**MA**	**Mm**	**WC**	**Ap**	**LT**	**Total**
group 9	S18	3	1	2	0	0	0	6
	S19	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
	S20	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
group 10	S21	3	0	2	0	0	1	6
	S22	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	S23	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
group 11	S24	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
	S25	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	S26	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
group 12	S27	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
	S28	6	0	3	0	0	0	9
	Total	18	2	21	0	0	1	42

Table N°3: Amount of CSs used by First Year Students in Group Discussion

III.2. Total of CSs used by First Year Student

The following recapitulating table shows the total and rates of each CS used by the whole group, and the overall amount of all CSs used by the same pre- intermediate group. It shows that the highly used CSs by first year students are Mm and AA strategies.

	Types of communication strategies						
Tables	**AA**	**MA**	**Mm**	**WC**	**Ap**	**LT**	**Total**
Table 1	28	4	34	2	2	2	72
table 2	18	2	21	0	0	1	42
total	46	6	55	2	2	3	114

Table N°4: Total of CSs used by First Year Students

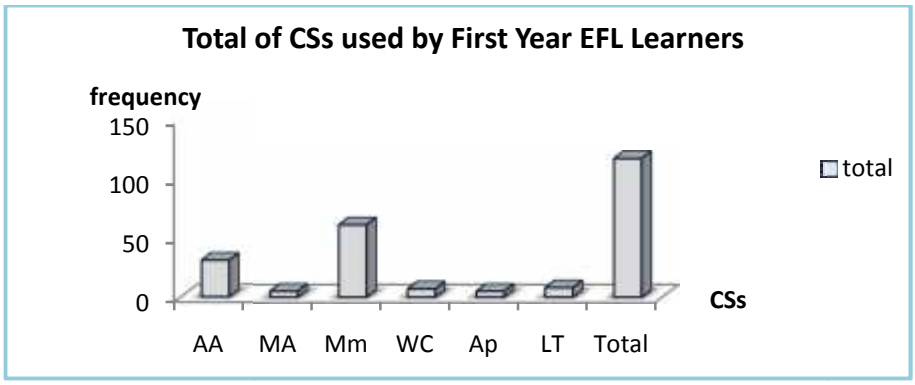


Diagram N°1: Total of CSs used by First Year Students

As highlighted in diagram N°1, pre- intermediate EFL learners use different types of CSs when they are engaged in a discussion in English with others. They show the learners use of Mm and AA communication strategies with a high percentage than any other CS.

III.2.3: Frequency of CSs used by Third Year Students:

This table displays the extent to which third year students use the CSs selected in this study when answering the first topic, which is discussing in a vivid interaction the favorite job they desire to do in the future.

Types of communication strategies								
Pairs	**Students**	**AA**	**MA**	**Mm**	**WC**	**Ap**	**LT**	**Total**
Pair 1	S 1	2	0	2	1	1	0	6
	S 2	4	0	2	1	0	1	8
Pair 2	S 3	0	0	2	0	1	2	5
	S 4	1	0	3	1	0	0	5
Pair 3	S 5	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	S6	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Pair 4	S 7	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
	S 8	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Pair 5	S 9	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
	S10	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Pair 6	S 11	2	0	2	0	1	0	5
	S 12	2	1	2	0	0	0	5
	Total	17	1	18	3	5	3	47

Table N°5: Amount of CSs used by Third Year Students while dealing with Topic 01

The following table shows the extent to which third year learners use the previously stated CSs when sharing their ideas about the favorite modules that they like to learn. (Topic02).

Types of communication strategies								
Pairs	**Students**	**AA**	**MA**	**Mm**	**WC**	**Ap**	**LT**	**Total**
Pair7	S13	2	0	1	1	1	0	6
	S14	2	0	2	0	0	1	5
Pair 8	S15	3	0	0	0	0	1	5
	S16	1	0	2	1	1	1	6
Pair9	S17	2	0	1	2	0	1	6
	S18	1	0	2	1	1	1	6
Pair10	S19	2	0	3	0	1	0	6
	S20	3	0	2	0	0	0	5
Pair11	S21	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	S22	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
Pair12	S23	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	S24	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
Pair13	S25	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	S26	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pair14	S27	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	S28	2	0	1	0	0	1	4
	Total	26	0	15	6	6	6	62

Table N°6: Frequency of CSs used by Third Year Students while Dealing with Topic 2

This table gathers the number of all the CSs used by third year students while communicating using English as a foreign language to their ideas and opinions.

Types of communication strategies							
Tables	**AA**	**MA**	**Mm**	**WC**	**Ap**	**LT**	**Total**
Table 1	17	1	18	3	5	3	47
Table 2	26	0	15	6	6	6	61
Total	43	1	33	9	11	9	108

Table 7: Total of CSs used by Third Year Students

The graph below shows the results presented in table 7 in a more clarified way, it displays visibly the frequency of CSs employed by third year students.

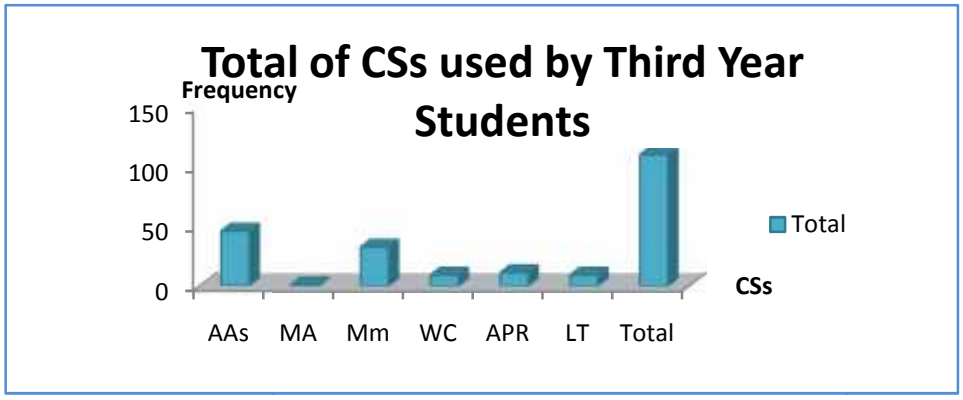


Diagram 2: Total of Communication Strategies used by Third Year Students

III.3 First and third year students' use of CSs:

This table shows the total of CSs used by the first and third year learners.

Types of Communication strategies							
Proficiency Level	AA	MA	Mm	WC	Ap	LT	**TOTAL**
First Year Students	46	6	55	2	2	3	114
Third Year Students	43	1	32	9	11	9	108

Table N° 8: Total of CSs used by First and Third Year EFL Learner

The following graph shows the difference on the use of CSs between first and third year learners.

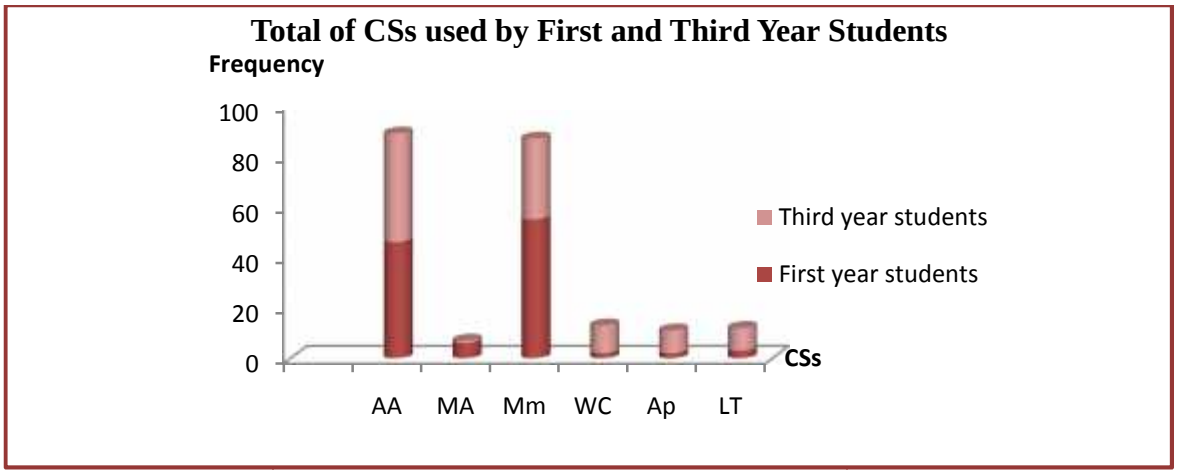


Diagram N°3: Total of CSs Used by Both First and Third Year Students

Conclusion:

This section was devoted to the presentation of the findings gained in this study. The results were organized in statistical and non-statistical data; this means that the answers were arranged in forms of tables, graphs. Some paragraphs were added to the section to provide more explanations and clarifications.

This chapter showed the amount of CSs used by both first and third year EFL learners while performing the tasks. Moreover, the total of CSs employed by the two levels stated above was counted. Finally, this section ended with demonstrating the first and third year students' use of CSs.

Chapter IV:

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the findings related to the use of CSs by MMUTO English language learners when speaking English as a foreign language. The analysis is carried out in accordance with Tarone's interactional theoretical framework adopted in this study. The chapter comprises three main sections, organized according to the three main research questions raised in the present work. In this chapter, the English language learners' lexical deficiencies during interaction will be discussed first. Next, the analysis of CSs use across the communicative tasks between the two distinct proficiency levels (First and Third Year level learners) will be examined. Finally, much consideration will be given to determine the effect of the proficiency level on learners' CSs use.

IV.1 First and Third Year EFL Learners Lexical Problems

The speaking problems EFL learners encounter can be noticed and elicited from the observation of the way they perform the communicative tasks designed for each level, and from the analysis of their oral conversations. Hence, the findings demonstrated that interlocutors faced difficulties when intending to transmit an idea. As it is shown in table 1, students experienced a lot of pauses and word repetition that are indicators of vocabulary troubles and lexical deficiencies. Our aim is to have a look at this kind of problems and how they are treated, following Tarone's approach that concentrates exclusively on speaking problems related to vocabulary. These gaps are one of the major communication problems that EFL learners often meet while producing the target language (Paribakht, 1982, p. 53). Thus, the analysis of EFL learners' speech productions revealed some lexical gaps at different degrees between both proficiency levels.

Providing first and third year EFL learners with elicitation topics to do "speaking in a restaurant", "express your preferences" respectively, uncovered the lexical problems they were confronted to. The learners were engaged in pair or group interactions not in individual oral performances. This means that, we intend to analyze oral communication as a collaborative process mutually constructed by two interlocutors or more. In other words, the problems of vocabulary that learners displayed were related not to the individual learner's command of the English language rather to learner's intention to communicate a message and pass or convey intended meanings to the interlocutor, who tries to establish a mutual understanding to that message and try to reply. In the following excerpts, we will expose some of these lexical breaks in the speech productions of some learners under investigation:

Example: 01

Pair 2

S 3: hmm….mm….what about of the studying and your exams

S 4: I can say that it pass well

S3: I m very hungry, what about having lunch

S4: me too I feel hungry we can ….we can go at…!!

S3: I suggest to go to the two brothers….hmm…. Restaurant, it is not far for here….

(Interruption1) The teacher: where is it situated?

S3: not far for here….

(interuption2) the teacher: give me directions?

S3: hmm….!! It is in front of the back here! (see Appendix B)

The utterances of S3, a pre- intermediate level learner, showed a lot of pauses in her speech and she repeated the same utterances. Her stock of English words was not

enough to hold a rich and effective conversation; she used the same expressions such as, "*what about*" (2 times). In addition, there was a lot of hesitation as she said: *I suggest to go to the brothers….hmm…restaurant.* More than this, she was unable to give the exact location of the restaurant. When she was asked to give the direction, she was completely blocked, no more utterances. After that, she gave a meaningless sentence. The only interpretation we can attribute to this situation is that S3's lexical knowledge is inadequate to the task at hand. She showed a very poor command of the English language vocabulary.

S4 is another intermediate level learner; she was engaged in the conversation with S3. She answered her questions, nevertheless, sometimes she found herself blocked at as she said: *me too, I feel hungry, we can …. We can….go at…!* no more words.

We found the same results concerning the other pairs and groups of EFL learners for example:

Example 2

Pair 4

S7: I propose to go to Tizi lunch, what do you think?

S8: oh….it costs ….it costs expensive, I don't have enough money ….so I don't have enough money in my….!

Contrary to S7, S8 seemed to have some lexical gaps; he lost the word *"Restaurant*" for a moment and he was not able to find the appropriate word that come after *"money in my…"* he stopped communicating. This student would be able to think about any other solution such as synonym to the missing word "pocket", rather he preferred to infer the meaning from the interlocutor with a sharp eye contact.

Example 3

Pair 1

S1: maybe you'll be playing in the team …in the English team

S2: yes of course, I dream about playing in Liverpool or Manchester club

S1: Manchester united

S2: yes, do found it interesting play

S1: Yes, it's interesting, yes

S2: but, you didn't say about your….!

S1: my dream

S2: yes, your dream

S1: my dream job, I would like any job that….ensures me ….that ensures me …. My ….my loved, my wanted life style…..

Because in Algeria there is…. A feeling of …. It is…. There is a pessimistic ….

S2: view

S1: oh yes, yes, a pessimistic view in Algeria…

This is somehow a long conversation between two 3rd year students from which we took an excerpt. The two students felt at ease when speaking and shared their opinions freely. In addition, it seemed that they exchanged ideas because there was a mutual understanding. However, it seemed that they faced a number of gaps. These gaps are of lexical nature as there were some breaks especially in S1's speech such as *"because in Algeria there is…. A feeling of…."*.He missed the word to employ here to produce a complete thought. He experienced a lot of hesitation moments and interruptions. May be

there was no enough lexical resources that would help him avoid such interruption moments.

Example 4

Pair 2

S3: it's an amazing job….eh, this….it will….offer me ….the chance to travel to England too

S4: oh, yes

S3: it' my purpose

S4: it's your own goal

Although S3 had some difficulties in arguing for her job and did not find the words to support her choice with, the talk on the whole was vivid and there was mutual comprehension.

Unlike third year students, first year students did not take advantage of time, which was not limited. They produced very short conversations that did not exceed 3minutes and 40 utterances per conversation. They limited themselves to the same sentences and same ideas; there was repetition of same expressions by almost all the students. The later did not take risks to utter a word if they were not sure about it. This implies that they encountered several lexical shortcomings. This does not mean that third year students' conversations were free from lexical gaps.

Advanced EFL learners seemed to have some speaking problems related to lexis as well. Even so, they have exploited the time they were given and spoke freely and tried to keep up with the interaction. When comparing the two groups, we found that first year conversations were short and full of gaps, and some third year conversations were somehow long but full with pauses, repetition…etc.

Relying on what we have already said these are indicators of lexical deficiencies in learners' oral communication. In addition, table 1 shows that lexical gaps were identified more in first year student speech than in third year ones. First year students' limited conversations reflected their lack of the English vocabulary, as they experienced more pauses, word repetition, and very limited number of utterances.

In sum, following our analysis we found that both first and third year EFL students face speaking problems that go mainly around vocabulary. This goes in line with what Paribakht (1982) found that the most common speaking problem EFL learners encounter is lexical gaps, especially in the early stages of language apprenticeship (1982, p. 53). As for the techniques learners use to surmount all these language breakdowns, a separate section is going to be provided for discussion in an attempt to answer the research question N°2.

IV.2. Discussion of Communication Strategies used by the learners

To carry out the analysis of the interlocutors' use of CSs in learners' speech productions, the typology of CSs proposed by Tarone (1980) was adopted. This classification comprises ten CSs. However, in the present study only six CSs were selected. The aim is to check whether EFL learners employ them or not. These strategies are AA, WC, MA, LT, Ap and Mm. It is worthy to mention that our conceptualization of what constitutes CSs is based on Tarone's definition that CSs are treated as means for negotiation of meaning within an interaction (1980), and the criteria she coined to CSs as we explained it previously were identified in all the strategies presented in the findings.

IV.3. Communication Strategies used by EFL Learners in MMUTO

The findings revealed that in terms of overall strategy use, the students used all the six CSs at different rates. However, the participants in this study used more specifically

Mime and Appeal for Assistance CSs. Mime is the strategy used at more frequent intervals during the speaking session in 55 occasions, and the total employment of AA strategy was 46 for the pre- intermediate learners. Whereas 3rd year students used AA strategy 43 times and the physical strategy with a frequency of 32 instances. Accordingly, 1st and 3rd year English learners in MMUTO used the four remaining strategies that were MA, Ap, LT and WC at very low rates. For instance, intermediate learners used MA with a frequency of 6 and intermediate students employed it in 1 instance. Similarly, for LT, WC and Ap that were used at very low rates. We can illustrate this by extracting some sentences from learners' speeches:

Pair 2

S3: *Hi Linda, how are you?*{ She moved up her hand to greet her and she looked at her with a cheerful face that signifies that she is glad to see her friend Linda, }, she called for Mm communication strategy to surmount the speaking difficulty she faced.

S4: *Hi, how are you?*{ Similarly, S4 greeted her by waving her hand and with a large smile on her face } the two learners agreed upon each other's gesture and there was a mutual understanding that each one was happy to meet the other. Both Mime and Appeal for Assistance CSs were used.

S3: I suggest to that we go to the two brothers…eh…eh two brothers' hes… eh restaurant. It's not far for here {she showed the direction or the place of the restaurant by pointing to the location using her finger}. She relied mainly on AA communication strategy.

Example 2: 1st students

Pair 9

S22: what do you want to eat?

S21: eh…I …no I like …eh; I like…seafood, seafood.

In S21's speech, three pauses occurred while trying to answer to his partner about what he wanted to eat. At the same time, we observed sharp eye contact that may mean, "Help me I do not find the right word to use here". Moreover, this event appeared in several speeches of the learners under investigation. This is what is called Appeal for Assistance

Example 2: Third year students

Pair 1

S1: we can discuss about eh…eh anything so…like job. {A lot of hesitation noticed in his speech, the reason behind it maybe lack of the appropriate words to employ, no ideas in his mind about the subject of discussion, or perhaps there is other problems}.

S2: yes, it's very important subject I was thinking about that …the subject occupy our life. {There exist pauses in what he conversed that may refer to his inability to express the intended meaning. Despite this, he tried to make his partner understand what he intended to say}.

S1: yes, yes ok. Because our future depend on it eh…eh…it's … our future …future life I mean {these gaps in S1's speech are probably related to some vocabulary problems. There was inconsistency in what he said; one reason behind this may be insufficient linguistic resources}.

Drawing on the above analysis, first and third year EFL learners at MMUTO relied specifically on two CSs to fill lexical breakdowns. They used their physical body, gestures, and facial expressions to transmit a message and continue in the interaction process. In addition, learners had a tendency to rely on indirect Appeal for Assistance and help. The aim was to attract the interlocutor's attention to the problem encountered, who is going to assist the speaker and provide the necessary missing vocabulary items. Instead of giving up communication and let the message incomplete, the speaker looked for new words and even refer to other languages for help. This contradicts the findings of K. Hua, M. Nor and N. Jaradat (2012) that UKM (University Kebangsaan Malaysia) learners use avoidance strategies such as MA more than AA and Mm that are used at very low rates or not used at all .

So far, we understand that first and third year EFL learners at MMUTO try to compensate for their lexical gaps and achieve a mutual agreement on meaning relying on request for help, and non-linguistic CSs. However, the motive behind this specification is because Mm and AA are the learners' preferred means to covey messages or it is a matter of limited resources, that is to say, learners are not aware of the existence of other alternatives (LT, MA, WC and Ap). With this idea in mind, we wonder whether EFL learners are instructed on the existence of multiple and efficient ways to deal with language breakdowns.

IV.3 Comparing First and Third Year Learners' use of Communication Strategies

First and third year students' conversations along with the observations revealed that the proficiency level interferes in the learners' use of the Communication strategies. The following part discusses in particular how the learners' proficiency level

influenced their use of the six selected CSs, taking into account the way they transmit and receive meaning through interactions as it is the principle of the Tarone's interactional approach to Communication Strategies.

IV.3.1 Mime

As far as the use of Mime is concerned, the findings revealed that there was a difference between first and third year students. As table8 demonstrates, the two academic levels relied on the physical strategy at distinct rates. That is, third year students employed Mime with a lower frequency in comparison with first year learners. The later used mime with a frequency of 55 whereas third year students employed it 32 times.

The reason behind this distinction was the inability of intermediate learners to deal with the topic provided due to the limited vocabulary. Moreover, some target words and expressions were ignored. For example, in the case of first year students, instead of giving directions in English using terms such as turn right, turn left, go straight and so on, they used their hands along with demonstrative pronouns like here, there to locate the places where they preferred to eat.

During the classroom observation, the students of both levels combined the lexical items with nonverbal strategy. This is in order to reinforce the meaning each addressee wanted to send to the addresser in a turn taking way or both of them felt at ease while employing it. Then, it might be seen as the more suitable and easiest strategy used to surmount the speaking problems.

The frequency use of the non-verbal technique is high in learners' communications; it was almost present in all the observed conversations. This led to wonder whether its application was conscious or not. Because Speakers accompanied a

verbal message with a nonverbal one, we did not notice its use as an alternative to replace a missing item; rather it was always here in addition to verbal utterances. The finding supports what Dornyei and Scott explained as far as concerns Mime as being used when communicating non- verbal ideas, or just presenting a verbal strategy with an observable illustration (Dornyei and Scott, 1995a, 1995b, p. 190). It is worth noting that Mime is a cooperative strategy used along with verbal strategies.

IV.3.2 Appeal for Assistance

First and third year students relied on Appeal for Assistance when speaking. As table 8 and diagram 3 show, the amount of AA Communication Strategy used by the two academic levels was different. Third year students used Appeal for Assistance 43 times while first year students employed it 46 times.

It seems, however that the reason of this difference may also be associated with the type of the topics provided. Third year students' topics of discussion seemed to be more difficult than that of first year students. That is, third year students were required to speak about unplanned situations, which pushed them to make many pauses. Additionally, almost all students had not yet thought about the job that they would like to do in the future. As far as concerns the second suggested topic, the intermediate learners did not find the adequate expressions to justify their reasons for choosing any given module among others. Therefore, they needed help from their partners. Nevertheless, First year students' topic was easy since they were familiar with such topics and they have dealt with them in almost all the oral sessions. Furthermore, the choice of food or even the place where they would like to eat did not require from first year learners to spend lot of time since it is a thing that they usually do in their daily life.

During the interaction, almost all the interlocutors needed help from the other counterparts. This was seen in learners' behaviors such as eye contact and pauses. Therefore, aid was required in order to carry on the conversation and expressing the intended meaning. Two short excerpts were taken from learners recordings that show the use of this communication strategy.

Example 1: 1st year students

Pair 9

S22: what do you want to eat?

S21: eh…I …no I like …eh; I like…seafood, seafood.

Examp2: 3rd year students

Pair 1

S1:we can discuss about ehhh anything so……..like job.

S2: yes, it's very important subject I was thinking about that…….the subject occupy our life.

S1: yes, yes ok.

S1: because our future depend on it ehhhh it's….it's….our future…..future life I mean

Pauses and hesitation were presented with dots, as the two excerpts display. Both levels suffered from the lack of vocabulary, which made them take a lot of time to utter the corresponding item. It was worth noting that, the noticed pauses, hesitation instances and even eye contacts in learners' speeches were not empty of meaning. The speaker and the addressee tried to elicit the partner's intended meaning, and attempted to

establish a mutual understanding of the communicative situation. This supports Dornyei (1995) definition of AA strategy to be a direct or indirect ask for support by rising intonation, pauses, or even eye contact.

IV.3.3 Approximation

The same remark can be made regarding the use of Approximation strategy, a difference on the amount of its use was observed. This communication strategy was used a lot by third year students with the frequency of 11 while first year students employed it just 2 times, as table 8 shows.

This difference was raised between the two levels; this is related to the difficulty of this strategy. In other words, Approximation is more related to the target language. First year students did not focus on it while speaking, this refer to the insufficiency of the formal knowledge in the English language. Such a frequency was found, because learners did not enrich their conversations with a core vocabulary especially the use of synonyms. Third year students employed it in average level, they have substituted the unknown target language items with their synonyms. We can explain this as being related to the knowledge that they have acquired during the previous years of study.

Even though the two language proficiency levels differ in the frequency of the use of the Approximation strategy, both of them used it to convey the intended meaning. When learners attempted to share their ideas, they ignored the exact target language items and used their synonyms to carry on speaking. If we take some third year students we will notice the use of this strategy, S18 for instance, instead of saying *natives* she employed the expressions *English people*, S16 said *subject* instead of *module*. This following excerpt was taken from first learners' conversations to demonstrate the use of Approximation strategy.

Pair 1

S1: what kind of lunch you will eat? {Instead of using the word *"food"*, he employed *"lunch"* which means also food, it is approximately the same, but lunch is too general}.

IV.3.4 Literal Translation

As regards the use of Literal Translation strategy, table 8 shows that there was just a slight difference between the two levels. Third year learners used LT 9 times whereas first year learners employed it with a frequency of 3. In most of their conversations, both language proficiency levels did not focus on its use as a principle strategy that helps them to surmount the speaking difficulties.

It is used with a low frequency; this refers to the ability of learners to master some idioms and expressions in English. In other words, they translate literally from their native language without giving importance to target culture. Moreover, they may also be aware of the inappropriateness of translating other words or expressions to the target language.

Both first and third year learners employed this strategy while speaking. If they did not know how to express anything in English, students still interpret the L2 words or idioms exactly as it is in the L2 due to the lack of appropriate target lexis. This implies that learners translate structures or items from any other language especially L1/ L2 (Kabyle and French). These following excerpts demonstrate this.

Example1: 1st year

Pair 5

Student 9: …*I have a course now*{she borrowed the word *"course"* from the French language which stands for lecture in English. *"Course"* in the English language has a different sense, that is a sequence of lessons carried out for a period of time. The word "*course*" was not the appropriate item in the context in which S9 spoke.

S 10: *oh ok I understand*{she directly confirmed her comprehension of what her partner said, the message was received without ambiguities and this permitted for the interaction to be continued}

Group 9

S22: *do you know a restaurant near our university shall we go there?*

S21: *yes, there are a restaurant eh…called secret jarden*{the latter expression S29 employed is the literal translation for the French common noun *"jardin secret"* into English. He did not know how to say it then he thought about translating it literally to continue taking part in the conversation.

Some examples were extracted from third year learners' conversations. S11 employed the word *enlarge* when she said [*I enlarge my vocabulary by learning many words*] indeed, it was not the suitable term. However, she had rather to use *enrich*, it was the target item that suited more the situation. S17 employed an L2 expression, it was [*general culture*] when she wanted to transmit the idea that the civilization module helped her to discover the general background of many countries in the world.

IV.3.5 Word Coinage

Table 8 and Diagram 3 do not show a great difference on the use of Word Coinage strategy. The two academic levels used it with a low frequency; it was employed 2 times by first year students and 9 times by third year students.

First and third year students avoided to use this strategy with a high frequency while communicating, the two levels did not relied much on it. Because, learners were aware of the inappropriateness of applying the phonological rules of the target language to create the non-existed words.

Word coinage was rarely used by both levels. In case of having difficulties in transmitting the intended meaning, learners invented just some words and expressions that did not exist in the TL vocabulary. Some examples were taken from both levels to show the use of this strategy.

Starting with third year students, S22 used the expression *[I feel easy*] which did not exist in the target language. Moreover, S1 uttered [*future life*] in order to show the importance of finding a job in the future. However, such an expression was meaningless.

Moving up to first year students, S3 used "*in front of the back here"* to refer to the location of the restaurant where to go. However, this manner of expressing directions did not exist in the English language.

IV.3.6 Message Abandonment

Concerning the use of Message Abandonment strategy, a great difference was observed between the two levels. As table 8 and diagram 3 demonstrate, first year students used it 6 times whereas just one third year student employed it.

After analyzing third year students' speeches, it was revealed that message abandonment was the least strategy used, it was almost neglected by third year students except student 12 (pair 6) who used it once. S12 abandoned to answer one question asked by his friend while talking about the favorite job. The following short dialogue exhibits the use of this strategy.

Pair 6

S12: actually, I will be an official in the army, I think it a job of responsibility and strength, it is a duty to protect our country.

S11: interesting

S11: but why exactly did you choose this kind of hard job?

S12: [he abandons]

Other students did not use this strategy even though they did not know the answer but they took some moments to think then answered to the question asked. Moving to first year students, the findings report that learners used this strategy more than third year learners when they attempted to communicate. This underlines that first year learners gave up an idea when they did not have words with which to express it. The excerpts below show this.

Pair 7

S14: *and I feel*[…] *and I'm so starving and I want to go*… she started her speech with an expression "*I feel*" and she moved to another expression "*and I'm so starving*…" letting the first expression incomplete. Because she lacked vocabulary and she had not the item to use in this place.

Pair 8

S18: *how are you doing*[…] *how is your family*. This student uttered a full meaningful sentence but she let it and she changed it with another question maybe the first question was not on S18's repertoire , it was not the one she intended to ask , for this reason she moved to another question.

We inferred from what was explained above that first year learners could not express a complete idea. They always jump from one idea to another. This referred maybe to the lack of core vocabulary that could help them express the intended opinion. The reason behind that was maybe the hesitation of learners to make errors or to utter incorrect sentences.

On the whole, it was deduced that first and third year students showed a difference on the employment of the communication strategies. All the CSs were used but with different frequencies. Sometimes third year students used some strategies with a high frequency such as Appeal for Assistance, Approximation and Literal Translation. Contrary to first year students, who used more Message Abandonment and Mime. The CSs were classified in ranks, AA and Mm are the strategies which are highly used. Moving to the second position, we find Approximation. Then, Word Coinage and Literal Translation come in the third position. Message Abandonment took the last position.

Both levels were in need to use CSs. Since they were EFL learners, they always meet some difficulties to perform and use English as a foreign language. Even if they have reached different levels in English, both first and third year students used the communication strategies selected in this study to surmount the lexical difficulties. That is, the communication strategies were extremely useful and helpful. They allowed the target language users to express their intended meanings.

The findings of Bialystok and Frohlich showed that the grade L2 advanced students used significantly fewer L1 based strategies and they employed more L2 based strategies than did those in the other two groups (adults and grade L2 regular students). They found also that learners who were less proficient in the language were also less efficient in their attempts to convey the intended meanings through appropriate selection and use of strategies (1980, P. 16). In other words, the results of the two researchers revealed that the more proficient learners used code switch and foreignizing, as they were strategies related to the first language acquisition with a small rate. Furthermore, they have employed L2 based strategies with a high rate; such as Semantic contiguity and description.

The results obtained in the present work did not support the findings of the two scholars previously mentioned. This study revealed that there was just a slight difference between first and third year students. That is, the two academic levels focused on the same category of strategies. Learners relied on paralinguistic strategies more precisely the use of mime and appeal for assistance. Despite the impedances that they have encountered while using English, they have succeeded to transmit the intended meaning.

Conclusion

The discussion chapter contained the analysis and the interpretation of data gathered. It explained and discussed the findings relying on Tarone's interactional framework and typology. This section is restricted to answer clearly and precisely the three questions asked in this investigation, it relied on some illustrations and examples from the results and even some other researchers' citations to support the analysis.

This part demonstrated that first and third year students encountered speaking problems while using English to express the intended meaning especially lexical gaps.

Then, learners of both levels employed all the CSs selected in this study in distinct frequencies; this helped us to classify them in ranks. Moreover, the level of proficiency is one variable which interferes in students use of CSs.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The present study sought to investigate the speaking skill or more exactly the lexical gaps of two distinct groups of EFL learners at MMUTO. In addition, it examined the techniques learners employ to fill those gaps. It focused mainly on learners' use of Appeal for Assistance, Mime, Word Coinage, Literal Translation, Approximation and Message Abandonment CSs.

This study aimed to explore the learners' use of the already stated CSs when performing in pairs the oral tasks designed for each level. The findings were examined and compared relying on Tarone's interactional approach to the study of CSs. This was for the principle motive of studying the influence of the proficiency level on the use of CSs when speaking English as a foreign language.

To carry out the investigation, we applied Mixed Methods Research. The oral conversations of 56 EFL learners (28 of pre- intermediate learners and 28 of intermediate learners) were audio- recorded in the classroom, along with the classroom observation. They were analyzed quantitatively and resulted in a series of numerical data presented in tables and diagrams. After that a qualitative interpretation and explanation of those findings was done applying Tarone's theoretical framework.

The qualitative analysis of the obtained data revealed important information as regards EFL learners' oral speech. First, the oral conversations uncovered some communication problems related to lexis almost in every student's pair conversation between the two selected proficiency levels, particularly in first year students' conversations. In addition, the interactions unveiled the presence of the previously stated CSs that are AA, MA, WC, Ap, LT and Mm. Actually, the rate in which they were used is not the same, both levels used AA and Mime strategies more often. We recorded 55

instances of Mime and 46 instances of AA by intermediate learners; as we recorded 32 occasions of Mime and 43 occasions for AA by intermediate level learners. These two strategies were the most used in EFL learners' oral productions. The rate of the other strategies was very low, they did not exceed 11 occasions that are recorded for approximation. Furthermore, the comparison made between the two distinct groups divulged the influence of the learners' proficiency level as we noticed a slight difference between the two groups. The intermediate experienced 114 cases of CSs use, whereas the other intermediate group used CSs 108 times.

Through a detailed examination and discussion which was made on the basis of the two employed research instruments, audio- recording and classroom observation, the research permitted finding answers to the three questions mentioned in the introduction. The investigation found that learners' spoken productions were marked by the presence of an important number of lexical gaps. This was shown in the pauses, the absence of appropriate items to the speaking situation and shortening or even limiting the conversations…etc. The reason behind this is that learners lacked the necessary vocabulary appropriate to the context in which they interacted; they were not able to convey the intended meaning in a proper manner. Therefore, this affirms the first hypothesis we proposed and gave an answer to the question N°1. In other words, EFL learners at MMUTO encounter speaking problems especially with vocabulary on which our interest is pointed.

Moving now to analyzing whether the stated Communication Strategies, AA, Mm, Ap, MA, LT and WC were used by EFL learners at both levels. The study confirmed the second hypothesis that EFL learners use the aforementioned strategies to compensate for their lexical breakdowns due to the lack of required vocabulary items. The usage of those strategies as it was shown differs in terms of type and the number of times each

strategy was used. The pre-intermediate level focused mainly on Mime first, then AA and sometimes there were those who tried the other techniques as an alternative.

As far as the comparison made between the two groups was concerned, it was found that the learners' use of CSs is determined by the learners' proficiency level. This is inferred from the fact that low proficiency level (pre-intermediate students) use CSs more frequently than the high proficiency level which is in turn presented by intermediate learners. We found that the reason behind this is that EFL learners' communicative and strategic competences stimulated and even elicited their use of CSs in oral productions.

We suggest further research on speaking problems and the use of CSs involving different proficiency level learners. This type of study should be able to provide appropriate answers to some questions: to what extent task-type influences CS use? Are EFL learners conscious of CS existence as alternative ways to negotiate meaning while interacting with others? Is there instruction and training on the use of CS in strategic interaction? Future research should be carried out regarding second year and third year learners' awareness of CS use in interaction context and interlocutors' collaboration to solve communication deficits. As a summary, this study showed that EFL learners are in need of CS use when speaking English in a foreign context

Throughout our study, we met some limitations. The first limitation that is worth mentioning is related to the recording research tool we employed. In fact, learners did not act naturally when speaking English in the classroom in front of the others. It was hard and it took us long time to get spontaneous speeches. All the time students tried to plan and prepare in advance what to say, as we could not prevent teachers' interruptions while learners were engaged in conversation with their partners. Despite this, teachers did their best to motivate learners to speak spontaneously.

General Conclusion

We hope that our study has contributed to the field of foreign language teaching/ learning, even to a small extent. We hope that it will be offering new opportunities for further research and new investigations on English language speaking problems and communication strategies. We also hope that it will pave the way for other investigations on communication strategies from other approaches in the department of English at MMUTO. To enhance communication in EFL classroom, learners awareness of the existence of communicative problems, and the existence of other alternatives that consist in communication strategies to overcome those problems.

Bibliography

Bibliography:

- Alpetekin, C. (2002) *Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT*. Oxford: University Press.
- Bialystok, E and Forhlich, M. (1980) *Oral communication strategies for lexical difficulties.* Utrecht state University, Netherlands.
- Bygate, M. (1987) *Speaking* .Oxford University Press.
- Canale, M and Swain, G. (1980) 'Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing'. *Applied linguistics* 1(1), pp. 27. Oxford.
- Canale, M. (1983) From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. C. Richards and R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *language and comunication*, pp.6-9. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Drornyei, Z. (1995) *On the Teachability of communication strategies*. Etovos University, Budapest.
- Dornyei, Z and Scott, M. L. (1997) 'Communication strategies in a second language: Definitions and Taxonomies'. *language Learning*, 47(1), pp 173- 210.
- Faerech, C and Gabriele, K. (1980) 'Processes and strategies in foreign language learning and communication'. *Interlanguages studies bulletin Utrecht* 5(1), pp 47- 118.
- Hamlaoui, N and Haddouche, N. (2013) *An investigation into EFL Algerian students' communication strategies*. Dr. thesis (33). Badji Mohktar University. Annaba. <http://dpubma.uni-annaba.dz/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Dr.Hamlaoui-Naima-Haddouche-Nadjiba 33-17.pdf >.
- Kasper, G. and Kellerman, E (eds). (1997) *Communication strategies: psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives*. London and NewYork: Longman.
- McDonough. S, H. (1995) *Strategy and skill in learning a foreign language*. In Arnold (ed). London.

- Merbouh, Z and Melouk, M. (2014) *Acquiring communication strategies through conversational training: the Case Study 1st Year Students*. Djilalli Lyabes University. Sidi Bel Abbes. <http:// File:///C: /Users/My% 20 Dell/Downloads/4100-16069-1-PB%20(1).pdf>.
- Nadeem, K and Archad, A. (2010) 'Improving speaking ability in English: The students perspective'. *Procedia social and behavioral sciences* 2, pp 3575- 3579. Retrieved December, 2015 from <http//: www.sciencedirect.com>.
- Nunan, D. (1988) *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge University Press: pp 96- 97.
- Paribakht, T. (1986). 'On the pedagogical relevance of strategic competence'. TESL *Canada Journal*, 3 (2).
- Prcic, T. (2013) Building *contact linguistic competence related to English as a foreign language*. System 42, pp 143- 154. Retrieved from <http:// www.elsevi.com/ locate/ system/ pdf >.
- Tarone, E. (1980) 'Communication strategies, foreigner talk, and repair in interlanguage'. *language learning*, 30, pp 419.
- Tarone. E and Yule. G. (1989) *Focus on language learner* .Oxford: OUP University Press.
- Ting. S, Phan. G. (2008) *Adjusting communication strategies to language proficiency*, 23(1). University Malaysia: Sarawak.
- Hua, T. K, MohdNor, N. F, and, Jaradat, M. N. (2012) 'Communication strategies among EFL students: an examination of frequency and types of strategies used. *GEMA Online TM Journal of Language Studies*, 12(3), Special Section . ISSN: 1675- 8021. <http://www.ukm.my/ppbl/Gema/GEMA%20vol:2012%20(3)%20special%20section%20 21/20212/vol_12_3_(831-848).pdf>

- Thornburry, S. (2005) *How to teach vocabulary*. In Jeremy Harmer (ed). Longman: pp13.
- Thornburry, S. (2005) *How to teach speaking*. C Pearson Education pp 1.
- Zhang, Y. (2007) Communication strategies and foreign language learning. *US-China Foreign Language*, 5 (4), pp. 44. <http://citeseerxist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.87.2984&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Appendices

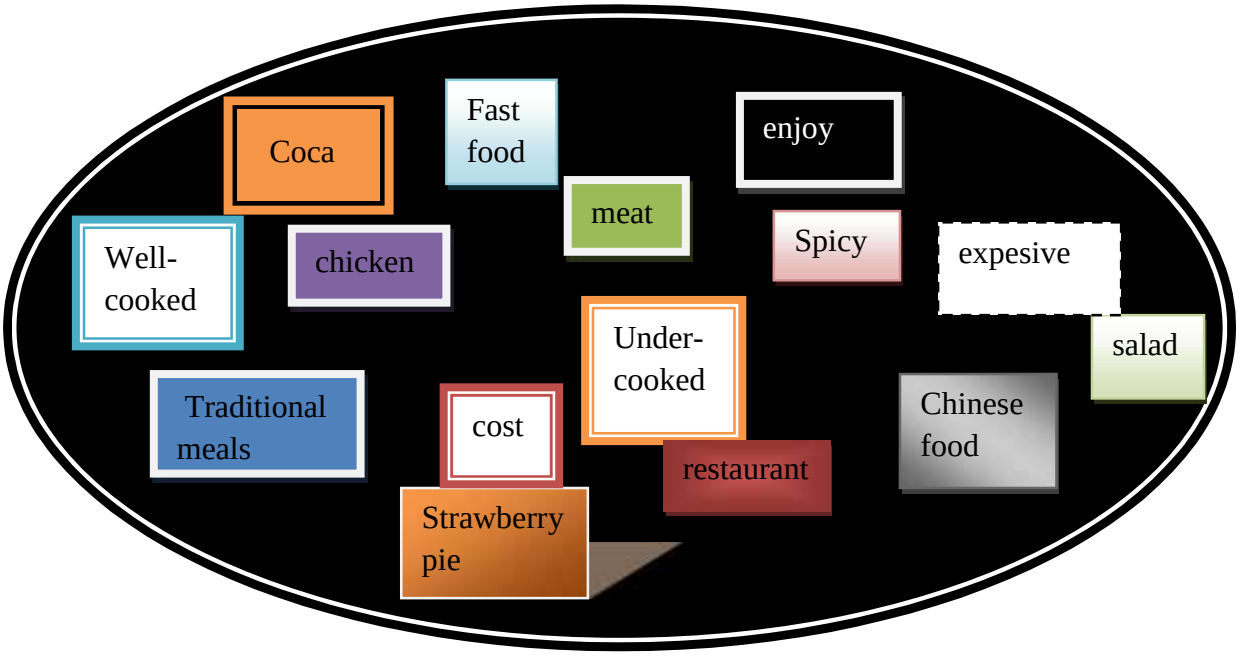
Appendices

Appendix A- Data collection tasks:

Pre-intermediate task

Topic "Speaking in a restaurant"

In a pair work, imagine that you are going to have dinner with your friend, try to imagine the situation by taking into account the place where you prefer to eat, your favorite meals and drinks as well as the quality of food. Try to build up a dialogue full of interaction where you describe the situation to your partner and share your preferences with him. You are allowed to use these words to do so.



Upper-intermediate task

Topic one: “Job interview”

In a pair work, each student will inform his/her partner about the favorite job that he /she desires to do in the future. Try to build a dialogue with your classmate where you share your responses and discuss your preferences in a vivid interaction.

Topic two: “The preferable module"

In a pair work, each student will inform his/her partner about a preferable module that he /she desires to learn. Each one tries to explain his/her choice to his/her classmate in a short dialogue.

Appendix B: Speaking scripts:

First year students’ scripts:

Pair 2:

S3: Hi Linda

S4: Hi, how are you?

S3: Fine and you

S4: Ya, I’m so fine

S3: em…em what about of the studying and your exams

S4: I can say that it pass well

S3: well, I’m very hungry, what about having lunch

S4: me too I feel so hungry, we can we can go …at…

S3: I suggest that we go to the two brothers hes…em…two brothers …em restaurant, it is not far for here.

S4: Ya it ‘s a great idea

(Teacher’s interruption 1): where is it exactly?

S3: not far for here

(Teacher's interruption 2): give me directions

S3: ….it is in front of the back …here

What would you want to eat?

S4: I prefer to eat pizza and some juice

S3: it is…em, it is… em a best idea

S4: so let's go

Group 8:

S18: Hi Shara, how are you?

S19: I'm fine and you Karima

S18: Fine thanks, how are you doing…how is your…family

S19: Good and you

S18: Ef… better than any time other

So how are you doing?

S19: Nothing, I'm free

S18: Free now! Would you like to go with me to have some lunch?

S19: Yes it's a pleasure

S18: Where do you want to go?

Do you know any restaurant?

S19: yes I know one it's H food, it's name is H food

S18: Where exactly?

S19: Just in la tour

S18: Ok let's go

S19: yes

S18: So what do you want to eat?

S19: I want to eat pizza

S18: That's all

S19: Yes that all

S18: Ok you are not extremely hungry.

S19: I'm not extremely hungry (simultaneously)

S18: Me, may be I want some…I don't know may be a dish…is there any one to propose something

(Teacher's interruption): what for example?

S18: Menu or something like this

Ok I will choose chips…eh…or with cheese may be…ok

S19: And what you are going to drink

S18: May be…em…em ef cola I don't know…cola, ok and you

S19: Me too I like cola

S18: Ok, good. So we have to ask for the waiter to give us…

Would you mind to give us some…something to eat please?

S20: Ok. What do you want?

S18: Me I want a dish of chips and cheese please

S20: Ok. And you.

S19: Me I'd like to eat pizza and for drink I want to drink cola.

S18: I want some cola please too.

S18: Thank you.

Third year students' scripts

Pair 5

S9: Hello

S10: Hello, how are you?

S9: Fine thank you, what about you?

S10: I'm fine thank you

S9: so, it has been a while since we haven't seen each other

S10: Yes, actually

S9: so, have you found what job you want to do later?

S10: Actually, I'm thinking about a fly attendant

S9: ahhh, it's interesting

And what's you point from wanting this job

S10: Actually I love traveling

S9: ohhh yes, I think that everybody loves traveling

And what else, I mean what are the countries you want to visit

S10: I want to visit Paris in France and to go to London.

S9: That's good, I hope you will.

S10: I hope so, thank you

What about you

S9: I have not really been thinking seriously till now but I think I will try to pass in Embassy, any Embassy like the USA Embassy or England or any Anglophone country

S10: I hope you get what you want

S9: I hope so, thank you

S10: Thank you too, see you

Pair 11:

S21: Good morning friend, can you tell me about your favorite module?

S22: yes of course. Personally, I like grammar courses.

S21: Great. What are the reasons of your choice?

S22: Well, it is a basic module to master English grammatical rules. Besides, I find it very exciting and useful way to master the language English language

S21: What about the other modules, do you like all of them?

S22: Well, there are other modules I prefer to study. Such as reading and writing, there is also civilization courses and linguistics

But on the other hand I dislike phonetics , I never had good marks in this module

S21: Ok great, what about the oral module, how do you find it?

S22: Well, I find it a very good way to improve our oral skill and ….and …..language

S21: Ok thank you, you are welcome

S22: Thank you.