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**Investigating the Impact of Teaching Oral Communication Strategies to Improve
English as a Foreign Language Learners' Strategic Competence: The Case of
Third-year Students at Biskra University**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Letters and Foreign languages in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of **Master in Sciences of Language**

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Declaration

I, Douâ **KHENAT**, hereby declare that this dissertation presented for the purpose of obtaining a Master degree is the product of my own efforts, and therefore all the content of this dissertation is original except where reference is made. I additionally certify that this work has not been submitted in any university or institution in order to obtain a degree or qualification.

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Dedication

*To the memory of my aunt, Hafidha,
Who loved Adele and perfumes*

*To my mother, the queen of my heart,
Long may she reign*

To my Best friend, Ramzy,
Your support is one of the main reasons I finished
this work

*To young teachers
To those fighting for what everyone else received without
question
To the incalculably intelligent girls enduring the hardest
circumstances for the pursuit of their dreams*

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Abstract

A number of studies on communication strategies have, for some time, been conducted since most foreign language learners' conversational skills were problematic. Owing to this issue, strategy-training emerged as a potential solution. Motivated by an observed inadequacy in the oral performance of third-year students of English at Biskra University, as well as a reluctance in the explicit teaching of strategic competence by teachers in the same context, this small-scale study sought to test the effectiveness of a strategy-training program in developing learners' strategic behavior. In this regard, three communication strategies, namely circumlocution, use of fillers, and comprehension checks were taught to our purposefully chosen sample (n=18). The study also aimed to explore the nature of strategic awareness among teachers of oral expression and language mastery (n= 4) in the said context. To frame this work methodologically, a pragmatist research paradigm concurrent with a Mixed-methods approach were adopted in this project. Subsequently, a convergent parallel design was followed in the data collection process, which was undertaken via a self-report questionnaire, tests, an interview, and an attitudes questionnaire. The analysis of the quantitative data was carried out by means of descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS, while MAXQDA software was employed to conduct a thematic analysis on the qualitative findings. The results of the thematic analysis indicated that both students and teachers lacked awareness on the pivotal role this type of competence bears. In addition, the findings of the quantitative data outlined a significance in the posttest results (\bar{x} = 4.3889) which were configured by the one sample paired t-test (.001) and the Shapiro-wilk test of normality (.244), confirming that the strategy-training program contributed to the integration of effective strategies. It also raised more awareness among the targeted population on the openness towards the teachability of strategic competence.

Keywords: Awareness-raising, communication, communication strategies, explicit instruction, second language acquisition, strategic competence, strategy-training

List of Acronyms

APA: American Psychological Association

CC: Communicative Competence

CSs: Communication Strategies

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

MMR: Mixed-methods Research

OCSI: Oral Communication Strategy Inventory

OCS: Oral communication strategy

OCSs: Oral Communication Strategies

OPT: Oxford Placement Test

SC: Strategic Competence

STT: Student Talk Time

TTT: Teacher Talk Time

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General Introduction

1. The Background of the Study

The need for successful communication in the field of Second Language Acquisition/Learning has become a priority for practicing teachers and students. That is to say, it is deemed necessary nowadays to exchange knowledge and defend one's conventions using proper conversational skills. Drawing on the latter, having the communicative ability to interact with other individuals is a pivotal skill in foreign language setting. From an educational perspective, English as a foreign language (Henceforth EFL) learners are expected to socialize within the dynamic boundaries of communicative competence in order to sustain adequate communion. However, one of the prominent issues in foreign language classrooms is the occurrence of lexical gaps within the target language. As learners often face difficulties in the production of a second language, this results in the hinderance of proper interaction. It has been well-established in the literature that lexical gaps can be overcome using a number of strategies. In the quest of outlining these ways, more focus has been put on a crucial subdivision of communicative competence, that is strategic competence.

Developing a strategic behavior in the target language, that is the English language, necessitates having a firm knowledge over the use of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to handle difficulties occurring in every day conversations. However, it is important to note that the ability to strategically maneuver conversations in English is a challenge itself. EFL learners who are not equipped with the necessary devices cannot maintain conversations whether with their peers, teachers, or counterparts in general. It is believed that the reason behind this issue is that learners lack strategic competence (Henceforth SC), that is an integral part of communicative competence responsible for overcoming communication breakdown through the careful use of CSs. In depth, Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence includes three fundamental components, one of which is strategic competence. The

three main subtypes of communicative competence by Canale and Swain as follows: grammatical competence (the knowledge about language-related syntax and grammatical functions of language), sociolinguistic competence (the knowledge about the dynamic rules of language in relation to the social conventions), and most importantly, strategic competence (knowledge about the use of both verbal and non-verbal CSs).

Bachman (1990) defines strategic competence as the capacity that relates language competence, or knowledge of language, to the language user's knowledge structures and the features of the context in which communication takes place. (p. 107, as cited in Mohammed Alahmed, 2017, p. 25). In language classrooms, most EFL teachers have reported that one of the prevalent problems they faced in language classrooms was learners' refrainment to participate in turn-takings or general communicative tasks. Even though affective factors are deemed to have led to such reluctance, it is still believed that it can also be the inability to use communicative strategies appropriately. For this particular reason, new techniques to language teaching and learning have emerged to expand the teachability of conversational skills.

Adopting a Strategy-training Program (Henceforth STP) to develop communicative skills allows for honing EFL learners' speaking abilities and ameliorating their communicative competence (Henceforth CC) through varied techniques. Strategy-training is based on activities which ensure a flexible learner-centered environment whereby learners actively and effectively communicate in the target language. According to the available literature on CSs and strategy-training, the said method of instruction was found to be primordial to the improvement of strategic competence and strategy use. Although not widely used, it offers learners the opportunity to engage in problem-solving activities and real-life interactions which perfectly match with their needs. The training program renders it rather different from the conventional teaching methods which adopt repetitive tasks and drilling activities which are prone to fail in achieving oral fluency. In strategy-instruction, learners' real-life needs are the driving force of

its application. Besides, the said method substantially fosters the implementation of language skills through authentic materials which mimic a real English-speaking environment in contrast with the traditional teaching methods which teach language skills in isolation and with personalized materials. Thus, this point has been considered revolutionary to the field of language pedagogy.

In the Algerian context, third-year students of English at Biskra University have been spotted to have low strategic competence in the English language. Mastering communication for them has been both a challenge and a priority. Therefore, motivated by observed gap within the proposed sample, as well as the growing interest in strategy-training programs, it is anticipated in this study that the implementation of a strategy-training program to raise awareness on effective strategies is expected to achieve positive results on EFL learners' development of strategic competence in particular, and their oral proficiency in general.

2.Statement of the Problem

Strategic behavior is an interactive process whereby interlocutors make use of both verbal and non-verbal strategies to deliver meaning regardless of lexical gaps. When these strategies are used accordingly, one's communicative competence is optimized, and willingness to communicate is consequently empowered. Learners who are strategically competent are able to maintain and use appropriate language in social, personal, and academic setting effortlessly. A considerable number of learners can easily and effectively maintain formal and informal conversations, as it is not a generalized conception that all EFL learners have a decreased level of strategic competence. However, a number of studies in the literature have been promoting strategy-training programs as a means of teaching oral communication strategies, which helps learners who are unable to bridge the communicative gap autonomously.

Initially, arguments against teaching CSs claimed that the latter innately exists and develops in the speaker's L1 (Henceforth first language), and is easily transferable to their L2

(Henceforth second language). However, opposing arguments insisted that some learners are unable to transfer CSs to their target language because they have not been exposed to the target language at an early age, nor that they engage with an English-speaking community outside the classrooms (Tarone, 1983, p. 122). Therefore, strategy transfer is unlikely to occur, and strategy training was recommended for that purpose. Evidence on this claim will be presented in Chapter One. Since the mastery of CSs is still a challenge for many EFL learners, teachers are on a quotidian task to provide learners with the necessary teaching practices which ensure the proper development of strategic competence.

Third-year students of English at Biskra University are noticed to lack the nuances of strategic competence, provided that they face a great deal of obstacles when communicating in the target language. Fluency among the chosen population is rather underdeveloped on the general scale. Most of them have a relatively acceptable mastery of grammar and vocabulary which was noticed through their understanding of some complex concepts in their specialty. This has clearly indicated the existence of an average repertoire of vocabulary, yet, a difficulty in maneuvering conversations when integrated in communicative events.

When lexical gaps occur, EFL learners cannot bridge them or deliver comprehensible meaning to the recipients. Hence, they are bound to learn then use communicative strategies when needed to patch their conversational skills and sound more native-like. Because CSs are great in number, it is almost impossible to teach all of them over a short time span. There exist nine different CSs taxonomies (Tarone, 1977; Faerch and Kasper, 1983a; Bialystok, 1983; Bialystok, 1990; Paribakht, 1985; Willems, 1987, Poullisse, 1987; Kellerman, 1991, Poullisse, 1993; Dörnyei and Scott, 1995a, 1995b). Therefore, we related to Dörnyei's (1995) communication strategy-training program and have opted for two compensatory strategies and one time-gaining strategy to implement in the strategy training program. The chosen strategies are Circumlocution, Comprehension Checks, and Use of Fillers/Stalling Devices. In the same

stream of thought, it is important to note that strategic competence permits learners to operate only using a limited vocabulary and a scheme of communicative strategies which makes their speech more fluent.

Therefore, we believe that strategy-training can promote learners' strategy use and aid in avoiding language breakdowns. It also seeks to raise learners' awareness on the existence of a wide range of communication strategies which can be used interchangeably to strengthen one's oral interaction. This implies that the nature of the training will provide learners with the necessary knowledge about the chosen CSs and how to use them appropriately in conversations through multiple interactional tasks. The tasks will be carefully selected from numerous teachers' resource books to meet with the learners' needs. Thus, they can develop their strategic competence and eventually learn how to bridge communication breakdowns instantly, and hopefully, on the long term.

3. Research Questions

In this study, four main research questions were proposed as follows:

RQ1: Do EFL teachers at Biskra University explicitly teach communication strategies with regard to strategic competence development?

RQ2: What are the oral communication strategies used by third-year students of English at Biskra University?

RQ3: Does the strategy-training of circumlocution, use of fillers and stalling devices, and Comprehension Checks have any significant effects on the oral performance of third-year students of English?

RQ4: What are the learners' attitudes towards the strategy-training program of circumlocution, use of fillers and hesitation devices, and Comprehension Checks?

4. Research Hypotheses

Building on the aforementioned questions, the following research hypotheses were raised:

RH1: EFL teachers at Biskra University often neglect teaching strategic competence due to the lack of materials alongside the unawareness of its importance and the proper way to teach it.

RH2: Third-year students of English at Biskra University may use few communication strategies that are prominent yet have negative effects when overused, namely, code-switching and literal translation.

RH0: The strategy-training of circumlocution, use of fillers and hesitation devices, and comprehension checks has no significant effect on EFL learners' oral performance.

RH4: EFL learners' may have positive attitudes regarding the strategy-training program given its variation between theory and practice in a collaborative English-speaking environment.

5. Aims of the Study

The general aim of this study is to develop learners' strategic competence through familiarizing them with useful communication strategies, mainly circumlocution, use of fillers and hesitation devices, and comprehension checks, to use in sudden oral breakdowns, and to measure to what degree can these strategies be effectively taught through the strategy-training program.

In depth, this study also aims to:

- explore the nature of teaching strategic competence and communication strategies by teachers of oral expression and language mastery at Biskra University;
- measure teachers' awareness on the importance of strategic competence and their attitudes towards the implementation of strategy-training programs;

- raise awareness on teaching and learning oral communication strategies through explicit strategy-based instruction; and
- reduce the effects of affective factors hindering the natural flow of conversations among third-year students of English at Biskra University.

6.The Research Methodology for this Study

For this research work, the researcher followed a pragmatist research paradigm and adopted a Mixed-methods approach given the twofold nature of the study, that is to both explore and measure. First, the researcher will seek to explore the already used oral communication strategies among third-year students of English at Biskra University, gain insights on teachers' perceptions regarding the teachability of communication strategies at the tertiary level, and collect both learners and teachers' opinions and attitudes towards the strategy-training program. Addedly, the researcher will strive to measure the effectiveness of the strategy-training program in developing third-year students' strategic competence through the automatization of communication strategy use. Under this research approach, we will opt for a convergent parallel mixed-methods design for the case of third-year students of English at Biskra University.

In accordance with the chosen research design, a semi-structured interview, self-report questionnaire, semi-structured attitudes questionnaire, and tests were included as data collection methods for this research work. The semi-structured interview targeted the teachers of oral expression and language mastery at Biskra University to know further about the occurrence of communication breakdowns at the level of Biskra University, their opinions regarding the strategy-training, as well as to collect data about their past experiences with teaching these strategies. The self-report questionnaire, additionally, aimed to gather more specific data for this study by exploring the different strategies used by our sample to mend communication breakdowns. The semi-structured questionnaire is chosen to gain insights on the participants' attitudes regarding the implementation of the strategy training program and its

effects on their strategic behavior, while tests are selected to gauge learners' improvement during and after the strategy-training program. It is crucial to note that conforming to both qualitative and quantitative schemes will provide a holistic view for this research problem, and will culminate in more inductive contextualization fused with a salient categorization of the findings.

As for the data analysis procedures of the quantitative results, measures of descriptive as well as inferential statistics will be used. In the former, the frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and the one sample paired t-test will be used to give more clarity to the data. It allows for the proper presentation of the findings which back up our claims numerically. In the latter, however, the Shapiro-wilk test of normality will be used to ensure that the results are closely centered around the mean, by reacting to the p-value and determining whether the data are well-modelled and normally distributed. The deductive thematic analysis procedure of the qualitative findings, however, will be carried out using MAXQDA software. The latter facilitated the process of transcribing, coding, and generating themes from the interviews, as well as the conduct of a more professional thematic analysis on the generated themes. A more detailed description of the ways in which MAXQDA was used to conduct a theory-driven thematic analysis will be presented in Chapter three.

7. Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

Third-year students of English at Biskra University make the population of this research study. The chosen population has been introduced to the notion of communicative competence in their third year at university and, therefore, hold the required basis for the conduction of this project. The said population is reduced to 18 students which were purposefully chosen as a sample. The participants belonged to different groups and were selected through a purposive sampling technique due to their relatively elementary level in conversational skills. In addition, two teachers of oral expression as well as two of language mastery were selected to answer the

qualitative research questions by means of a semi-structured interview. The chosen teachers were selected based on their experience in teaching oral expression and language mastery, both of which the concept of strategic competence is highly persistent.

8. The Significance of this Study

The current research work strives to familiarize third-year students of English at Biskra University with three communication strategies which hopefully develop their conversational skills. It will also seek to explore the reasons behind the reluctance towards the explicit instruction and awareness-raising attempts regarding strategic competence at Biskra University. This work will be of an ambitious initiative and contribution to the area of socio-pragmatics and language pedagogy, owing to the fact that similar research works have not been yet conducted at the level of Biskra University. It will also provide more data from the Algerian context to the already existing literature.

This work is a replicated study of Dörnyei's (1995) strategy-training program which will engulf a mini syllabus detailing how to teach circumlocution, use of fillers and hesitation devices, and comprehension checks strategies. This training program will culminate in a pack of lessons plans regarding the three strategies possible for adaption and adoption. Besides, this training strives to raise third-year students' and EFL teachers' awareness on the significance of using communication strategies to compensate for lexical gaps. Furthermore, this work will not only facilitate communication strategy teaching in the future, it will also prompt teachers to opt for strategy-training programs by establishing a solid ground of pedagogical implications with varied examples of activities and authentic materials.

9. The Referencing Style for this Dissertation

The referencing style adopted when drafting this dissertation is the 7th Edition of the APA (American Psychological Association) as it was the most convenient mode to the nature of the current study. Therefore, all the requirements proposed by the said association were

utterly respected except for the running head and the “justify” function. Regarding the former, the running head was applied throughout the entirety of the dissertation except for the front page. As for the latter, the alignment of the text in the body of this work was maintained for aesthetic purposes. Both exceptions were made posterior to the agreement between the researcher and the supervisor.

10. Delimitations of the Study

For the delimitations of the problem under investigation, the researcher has primarily focused on the following:

- The strategy-training program included only two compensatory strategies and one time-gaining strategy. The reason for this selection was the promising results of teaching these strategies which were obtained from the reviewed literature.
- The researcher has chosen third-year students of English at Biskra University because the participants at this phase of tertiary level are the middle ground sample, meaning that at this particular level, the students learn about the generalities of communicative competence, which serves the purpose of our study.
- Two sessions per week have been programmed to conduct the treatment to avoid cognitive load on the participants, knowing that they are regularly pursuing their studies at university.
- Teachers’ interviews have been undertaken to prove the unawareness about the relevance of strategic competence, as well as the existing gap in the explicit instruction of strategic competence at Biskra University in particular.
- Self-report questionnaire has been assigned to the participants in accordance with the pre-test for the researcher to cross-check the missing oral strategies in the participants’ discourse.

11. Demystifying Terminology

To contribute to the clarity of this research work, we helped define a host of terminologies used by the researcher in this work:

Strategic Competence: is an integral, and rather neglected, subdivision of communicative competence. Strategic competence reflects learners' ability to express themselves successfully when faced with limited language knowledge. This type of competence is responsible for the fluency and communicative skills of the learners.

Communication Strategies: are first-aid devices used by the speakers to manipulate their speech communicate their minds across when they have limited language in their repertoire. Communication strategies are classified in various ways by a number of researchers according to their function. The most famous division of CSs are: Avoidance strategies, compensatory strategies, and stalling/ time gaining strategies.

Strategy-training: is a direct, informative way carried out by teachers in foreign language classrooms for the sake of teaching a certain strategy to a certain population. Oxford (1990) defines strategy-training as "Research shows that strategy training which fully informs the learner (by indicating why the strategy is useful, how it can be transferred to different tasks, and how learners can evaluate the success of this strategy) is more successful than training that does not" (p. 207, as cited in Dornyei, 1995, p. 65).

Procedural Vocabulary: is a "core" vocabulary with little lexical value and a high contextual ability. It helps in negotiating meaning during difficulties with lexical retrievals. Robinson (1989) defines procedural vocabulary as "Formulaic expressions often used in place of other words for definitions, paraphrasing, or explanations" (p. 530). Examples of core vocabulary are: "It is a type of", "It is similar to", "Almond-shaped", "Top-left", etc.

Circumlocution: Concerns itself with description of object or action properties instead of using the exact word/term. When the target word is lost, learners can resort to circumlocution

to give the listeners a glimpse of the word in mind in ways such as “Um- it’s oval and shiny” for the word “Moon”.

12. Structure of the Dissertation

This research work abides by the following organizational pattern:

Chapter One is dedicated for a selective review of previous works that are closely related to the topic of this research study. It dictates a holistic view regarding the positive effects of strategy-training programs and the available classifications of communication strategies alongside their effects on EFL learners’ oral performance.

Chapter Two reveals a thorough overview on the grounds of strategy-training programs and communication strategies. It also highlights the different typologies of the latter and their contribution to strategy-training programs, mainly to better illustrate their effectiveness and importance of the latter in developing one’s strategic competence. At last, it provides a more detailed introduction to the three strategies included within the training program. Namely, circumlocution, use of fillers/stalling devices, and use of comprehension checks.

Chapter Three begins with a general background on research methodology in educational research and ends with the specifics of the research methodology for this study. Following Creswell’s conceptual framework, this chapter majorly provides a clear outline of the methodology used in this study; and the rationale behind certain choices. It also mentions the ethical considerations taken to contribute to the scrutiny of this research study.

Chapter Four concerns itself with the presentation of the data and synthesis of the findings. It systematically displays, analyzes, and interprets the previously collected data and provides a detailed account for the findings of this work. In doing so, the research questions will be revisited with reference to previous studies.

Chapter Five uncovers the main theoretical, methodological, and practical implications drawn from the findings of the study. It also notes down some pedagogical recommendations for EFL

teachers who are interested in strategy-training programs, students who seek to enhance their strategic behavior, and researchers in the quest of carrying out more research on strategic competence and communication strategies.

Chapter One

Chapter One: A Selective Review of the Literature

Introduction

- 1.1 Taxonomy and Controversy of Communication Strategies**
- 1.2 Communication Strategies and Learners' Performance**
- 1.3 Communication Strategies from a Pedagogical Perspective**
- 1.4 Research Studies on Strategy-training and Awareness-raising**
- 1.5 Synthesis**

Conclusion

Introduction

The present chapter is of a twofold nature. First, it aims to uncover a host of research works closely related to the problem under investigation. Building on that, the available taxonomies of communication strategies will be outlined to familiarize readers with the various classifications of the strategies. Next, the debate on the teachability of the latter in foreign language classrooms will be presented to establish the counterarguments rising against strategy-training, which will be proven mistaken in the coming sections. In addition, research works on the effects of teaching communication strategies (Henceforth CSs) on learners' performance will be presented alongside other studies tackling CSs from a pedagogical perspective, and the prominent outcomes of strategy-training on developing learners' strategic competence. This is done through presenting some of the questions, hypotheses, methods, and results stemming from the reviewed studies, which establish a solid ground for the current research work. Second, the current chapter also strives to synthesize the selected research studies by evaluating the main research findings and their relevance to our current project. By doing so, we may promote the effectiveness of strategy-training programs on enhancing learners' communicative competence on the general scale, and their strategic competence on the specific one.

1.1 Taxonomy and Controversy of Communication Strategies

The notion of communication strategies was first introduced in 1972 in Selinker's paper "Interlanguage" as the newly coined term "Communication Strategy". Selinker viewed communication strategies as one of the most important processes when learning an L2; however, he did not account for a detailed analysis of CSs. Owing to this gap, a host of researchers at the time strived to detangle the new concept and investigate its significance in academia. The rise of communication strategies accounts for the works of Savignon (1972) and Varadi (1973) who contributed to the polishing of the new concept. From then on, a series of research papers were published for the sake of creating more detailed CSs taxonomies (Tarone,

1977; Cohen & Dumas, 1976). Yet, it is important to note that in the 1980s, the notion of communication strategies started to gain popularity as it was first included in Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence as an integral part of its subdivisions, that is strategic competence.

Since then, researchers began to identify and classify CSs, as well as question its teachability. Dörnyei (1995) revealed the traditional taxonomy of communication strategies as illustrated in Figure 1:

Figure 1

The Traditional Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

Avoidance or Reduction Strategies

1. Message abandonment—leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties.
2. Topic avoidance—avoiding topic areas or concepts which pose language difficulties.

Achievement or Compensatory Strategies

3. Circumlocution—describing or exemplifying the target object or action (e.g., *the thing you open bottles with* for *corkscrew*).
4. Approximation—using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible (e.g., *ship* for *sail boat*).
5. Use of all-purpose words—extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., the overuse of *thing*, *stuff*, *make*, *do*, as well as using words like *thingie*, *what-do-you-call-it*).
6. Word-coinage—creating a nonexisting L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g., *vegetarianist* for *vegetarian*).
7. Use of nonlinguistic means—mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation.
8. Literal translation—translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1 to L2.
9. Foreignizing—using a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphologically (e.g., adding to it a L2 suffix).
10. Code switching—using a L1 word with L1 pronunciation or a L3 word with L3 pronunciation in L2.
11. Appeal for help—turning to the conversation partner for help either directly (e.g., *What do you call . . . ?*) or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression).

Stalling or Time-gaining Strategies

12. Use of fillers/hesitation devices—using filling words or gambits to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., *well*, *now let me see*, *as a matter of fact*).
-

As Figure 1 shows, communication strategies are traditionally divided into three main types: avoidance/reduction strategies, achievement/compensatory strategies, and stalling/time-gaining strategies. As the name suggests, learners who resort to avoidance strategies when speaking tend to retreat from the conversation without fulfilling the intended meaning. Researchers, such as Dörnyei, argued that this type of strategies is not suitable to teach for

foreign language learners because they contribute to the reluctance towards communication. However, major research works, which will be presented in the following sections, advocate the training of compensatory and time-gaining strategies because they enhance learners' strategic behavior to maneuver their ways into the discussions and, thus, perform adequately in communicative events. Exclusively in this study, we opted for two compensatory strategies which are circumlocution and using comprehension checks, and one time-gaining strategy that is the use of fillers given the ratio of their effectiveness in previous training programs.

Dörnyei (1995) reported in their review article that researchers rising against teaching CSs argued that strategic competence develops in one's L1. Therefore, instructors cannot teach an inborn technique that already exists within students' repertoire. The opposing arguments entailed that teaching CSs is ineffective because what learners really need is language and not strategy-training. "There is no justification for providing training in compensatory strategies in the classroom... teach the learners more language and let the strategies look after themselves" (Kellerman, 1991, p. 158, as cited in Dörnyei, 1995, p. 60). These opposing arguments were viewed as simplistic by Dörnyei (1995) because they were based on theoretical evidence only. In fact, little to no studies have proven the ineffectiveness of the training programs on developing one's strategic competence.

Addedly, supporters of teaching CSs claim that even though strategic competence develops in one's L1, it remains difficult, for some, to transfer it to their L2, especially those who have not been exposed to real-life setting in the target language, and those who do not have a high-proficiency level. Dörnyei (1995) provided three main observations regarding the opposing arguments of teaching CSs; a) most of the arguments on both sides are based on indirect evidence b) there is variation within CSs with regard to their teachability c) the notion of teaching allows for a variety of interpretation (p. 61). These three observations argue that the teachability of CSs is dependent on the way teachers view teaching; how they choose to deliver

their lessons and how they provide practice afterwards. Another main synthesis is that CSs vary in structure and purpose. Therefore, it is almost impossible to generalize their teachability.

Adjacent to the issue of the teachability of CSs, a more pivotal concept was brought to the forefront by a host of researchers (Schmidt, 1994; Bialystock, 1990; Kasper, 1983, Gass and Selinker, 1994; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a,1995b) that is the notion of consciousness in language attainment. Consciousness refers to learners' tendency to use problem-solving strategies with complete awareness and intentionality. The previously mentioned researchers emphasized that when learners are consciously and constantly using high-frequency elements, such as communication strategies, the latter will eventually be automatized due to their overlearning. "That is, what was originally an intentional strategy may become in certain situations and/or with certain individuals a highly automatized or fossilized- hence not fully conscious- device" (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995, p. 184). The said argument forcibly induces the role of teaching CSs to improve learners' strategic behavior in foreign language classrooms. Although the automatization of CSs is not heavily reliant on the direct teaching of these strategies, but also on the frequent exposure to them in real life situations, it remains doable and promising to the field of communicative language teaching.

1.2 Communication Strategies and Learners' Performance

There exists a considerable number of research experiments in the literature on the validity and importance of learning and teaching CSs to develop learners' strategic competence, and henceforth, communicative competence. More precisely, a growing interest in investigating the effects of CSs on learners' oral performance and the tendency to use these strategies by EFL learners has risen since the 1970s. Corder (1981) defined communicative strategies as a "systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his [or her] meaning when faced with some difficulty" (p. 103). This emphasizes the assumption that the ability to communicate smoothly and effectively does not necessarily require a wide range of vocabulary nor a complex

structure of grammar. However, it can be equally achieved through negotiating meaning through the moderate and varied use of CSs when faced with sudden breakage. The following reviewed studies tend to reinforce the previous statements.

Nakatani (2009) published an article aiming at identifying oral communication strategies to facilitate EFL learners' oral proficiency level. The participants were 62 Japanese college students who joined a 12-week English language course. Each student had studied English for six years prior to joining college. To collect valid data, Nakatani included an oral pre-posttest, and an OCSI (Oral communication strategy inventory), which elicited learners' use of CSs in a self-report questionnaire. The course was based on the communicative approach to language teaching coupled with a meta-cognitive strategy-training program. During the instruction phase, the subjects enrolled in a 90-minute lesson of English per week for 24 lessons a year.

Prior to the training program, the participants were handed an OCS (Oral communication strategy) guide sheet eliciting examples of every communication strategy available for voluntary and handy use in every lesson. Nakatani's strategy-training program was divided into five instructional phases: Review, presentation, rehearsal, performance, and evaluation. In the first and second stages, the subjects reviewed the previously learnt strategies and presented short dialogues with the needed CSs. Then, they rehearsed and planned which CSs to use in certain situations. Finally, the subjects could monitor their performance because they were prompted to use different CSs and reflect on their training. The results indicated that there was a correlation between learners' proficiency level and the type of CS use.

Nakatani reported that low proficiency learners encounter communication difficulties due to cognitive or affective factors. Cognitive problems stem from the inefficiency of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and/or strategic ability, while affective problems arise from the limited setting whereby the English language is used in unrestricted authentic contexts. The

researcher also suggested that teachers should assist learners with tasks that focus on the negotiation of meaning to reduce miscommunication in conversational tasks.

Stepwise, Khenoune (2012) conducted a study on 16 second year students of English at the university of Algiers, Algeria. The study aimed at investigating the types of CSs used by second year Algerian students of English at the tertiary level. This aim was reinforced by willingness to probe the ways in which Algerian learners manage communication breakdowns and what type of CSs they resort to when faced with linguistic inadequacies. To better elicit the existing communicative strategies available for empirical research, Khenoune (2012) adapted and adopted Bialystok's (1983) threefold division of CSs to best fit the participants' linguistic situation. The researcher explained her choice of categories as L1/ L2- based (when participants switched to Arabic or French), IL-based (when the subjects relied solely on English), cooperative strategies (when explicit verbal resorts were made to other participants to remedy communication difficulties) and, finally, non-verbal strategies (when non-verbal communication strategies such as facial expressions and hand gestures were incorporated in the assigned conversational tasks).

In the same line of thought, two types of communicative tasks were carried out to apply strategy-training in this study: free discussion and object description. The findings indicated that the subjects resorted to repetition, restructuring, appeal for assistance and message abandonment as coping strategies in both tasks. However, Khenoune (2012) noted that the use of repetition and restructuring strategies overshadowed the use of the other strategies. The use of these hesitation devices without moderation is what usually distinguishes strategically-competent students from those who are not. The overuse of the said strategies was directly linked to the decreased level of strategic competence of the subjects. Khenoune (2012) lastly suggested that:

Oral expression teachers should raise learners' awareness of the communicative potential of some CSs in different communication tasks. Besides, they need to stimulate the use of the less frequent strategies in this study, namely approximation, circumlocution and appeal for assistance (p. 778).

In an effort to investigate the possibility of developing EFL learners' communicative competence through teaching CSs, Benali Taouis (2015) conducted an empirical study on 24 Spanish students from the department of English at the University of Salamanca, Spain. The sample shared the following criteria: They were full-time university students, non-repeaters, never been to an English-speaking country, never received English private classes, have no native speaker friends or English-speaking family members (Benali Taouis, 2015, pp. 87-111). The participants sat in a pretest consisting of an interview and a pair-conversation to analyze the communicative deficiencies of the participants, and a self-confidence questionnaire to confirm the needs of the targeted corpus.

During the strategy training, the participants received instruction on how to bridge the gap in communication through CSs coupled with varied explanations of each strategy and a practice task regarding the application of the strategies. After the training, the participants sat in a posttest to finalize the findings and confirm or reject the proposed hypotheses entailing that teaching CSs will enhance the learners' communicative competence, boost their confidence by the end of strategy training, and improve their oral fluency. The findings reinforced the assumption that teaching CSs is indeed useful to the development of learners' strategic competence, as it equips learners with the needed strategies to remedy their communication when it collapses. The hypotheses were eventually confirmed as Benali Taouis (2015) concluded that "Teachers should provide learners with opportunities to study CSs and to practice repeatedly what they learn" (p. 103).

1.3 Communication Strategies from a Pedagogical Perspective

Communication strategies have long been subject to criticism for their teachability. Decades ago, various perspectives entailed that strategic competence and strategy use develop inherently in one's L1 and can easily be transferred to their L2. However, thorough research has later proved that teaching communication strategies is indeed effective and successful to strategic behavior development. Correspondingly, more recent arguments retrospectively criticized the availability of teaching materials which facilitate instruction. It was argued that teaching materials aiming at teaching CSs explicitly are scarce, and many researchers insisted that even if teaching CSs may yield in positive results, it is still problematic that teachers cannot access enough direct and specific materials to teach the strategies. The present section carefully discusses the issue of teaching materials and their relation to the success of strategy-training programs.

Dörnyei (1995) published an article discussing the teachability controversy through collecting an amalgam of researchers' defending and opposing perspectives on strategy teaching. According to Dörnyei, the opposing arguments were primarily based on indirect evidence, as there were no constant conclusive studies confirming the invalidity of strategy training (p. 61). Contrastingly, more empirical data have recently been reporting great success in strategy training through the implementation of various methods. Narrowed down, it was deduced that CSs vary in types and use; therefore, it is impossible to generalize their unteachability. Based on the available taxonomies of CSs, some strategies, such as message abandonment, are clearly not desirable to teach. However, some others, such as approximation or circumlocution, are both desirable and beneficial for learners' communicative skills. That is why "the reigning arguments opposing strategy training have long been viewed as generalized simplistic misconceptions which do not reflect on the reality of CSs variation" (Dörnyei, 1995, pp. 62)

Dörnyei believed in the explicit instruction of communicative strategies because it is deemed necessary to raise learners' metacognitive awareness on CSs use and importance. For that reason, he proposed six interrelated strategy training procedures aiming at facilitating the teaching process as follows: (1 raising learners' awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs, (2 Encouraging learners to be willing to take risks and use CSs, (3 Providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs, (4 Highlighting cross-cultural differences in CSs use, (5 Teaching communicative strategies directly, and (6 Providing opportunities for practice in strategy use (pp. 62-64). The said procedures have been adopted in various case studies later (Rabab'ah, 2005; Benali Taouis, 2015), and have proved their success on learners' strategic development.

In foreign language classrooms, developing communicative competence is one of the main objectives to be achieved by the end of the course. This process involves the integration of different communicative tasks designed to target learners' communicative abilities. Tarone (1981) published an article on teaching strategic competence in foreign language classrooms and suggested a myriad of activities to achieve the said goal. She argued that strategic competence, as an integral part of communicative competence, develops along sociolinguistic and linguistic competencies at different rates, meaning that there is no universally-established development rate for the three subtypes of communicative competence (pp. 122). She also reinforced the idea that strategic competence does not automatically, yet successfully, transfer to all learners' L2, because learners have different setting by which their L2 is learnt.

Tarone argued that not all learners develop their strategic competence as a result of its efficiency in their L1, and that the setting plays a major role in determining the success of autonomy in strategy use. The researcher noted that "street learners, on the other hand, often excel in strategic competence, those who have had the opportunity to develop their second-language skills language use *outside* the classroom are typically able to get their message long

before they have developed native-like grammatical competence” (p. 122). In simple terms, learners who have not been exposed to their L2 in real spontaneous setting from an early age cannot possibly use CSs autonomously without strategy training.

Besides, the direct exposure to unedited speech during learners’ critical period allows them to have a solid input of CSs unlike those who receive regular courses with limited input. That being the case, Tarone (1981) suggested that “Students not only need instruction and practice in their overall skill of conveying information using the target language; they also need instruction and practice in the use of communication strategies to solve problems encountered in the process of conveying information” (p. 124). This particular quote aligns with the observed gap in the context under which this study is investigated. As we initially proposed that the notion of strategic competence is not given the importance it bears, we sought to further check the compatibility of this quote with our context. Therefore, we asked the interviewed teachers about their opinions regarding the role of teaching communication strategies as a practical aspect of strategic competence (See chapter three).

In her article, Tarone (1981) explained that in every day speech, even native speakers fall into situations where they cannot recall the name of an object or a person (pp. 125). In this context, Circumlocution, which includes the description of the properties of the lexical gap in terms of material, color, size, shape, texture, etc., and approximation, which involves the use of words which are slightly concomitant with the target word, meaning that it shares some semantic aspects which helps speakers negotiate meaning successfully. Addedly, she proposed a set of variation activities to implement strategy training in EFL classrooms. Some of these suggestions were designing activities, which include procedural features (E.g., assembling objects) in group works and organizing story telling activities whereby learners narrate chosen topics to their peers. These activities can help develop one’s strategic competence through the detailed depiction of the occurring procedures.

In another study, Faucette (2001) introduced a research project whereby she analyzed the tasks promoting communicative strategies found in English Language Teaching (ELT) materials. Adjacent to her research project, she discussed the reigning theoretical perspectives that vote for and against the usefulness of implementing strategy training in EFL syllabi. The rationale behind the project was the pre-existing literature which argued for the lack of ELT materials promoting strategy training. Yule and Tarone (1989) wrote, “There are few, if any, materials available at present which teach learners how to use communicative strategies” (pp, 114-115, as cited in Faucette, 2001, p. 11). Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) also claimed that “Hardly any activities have been developed to include strategy training in actual language teaching” (p. 16, as cited in Faucette, 2001, p. 11). As the extracted quotes proclaimed the inexistence of practical materials which directly target communicative strategies, the aforementioned research project sought to prove that the situation has now changed for the better, and a compilation of various activities and resources for teachers promoting CSs has been presented to support the argument.

Faucette (2001) opted for a descriptive analysis where she targeted a total of 40 teachers’ resource books and textbooks such as: *Mosaic series, nice talking with you, Impact: Words and Phrases, Interchange 3, Breaking the ice: Basic Communication Strategies, Functions of American English, etc.* The targeted communicative strategies were the following: approximation, circumlocution (paraphrasing), word coinage, appeal for assistance, foreignizing, time stalling devices, topic avoidance, message abandonment, message borrowing, non-verbal strategies, and borrowing. The findings displayed that out of 40 books, only 17 (42.5%) were determined to actually include communicative strategies. Rejected texts, 23/40 (57.5%) did not include communicative strategies (Faucette, 2001, p. 14).

Owing to this gap, the researcher claimed that in most of the targeted books, the explicit teaching of CSs was hardly found, and practice opportunities were scarce. That is to say, most

ELT materials may include implicit CSs activities without the direct instruction on the importance and use of such strategies. Strategy-training enthusiasts such as Cohen, Ellis, and Oxford believe in the benefit of such training because it provides the direct exposure to the strategies' importance, use, and practice. Faucette (2001), by the end of her project, argued that "The ideal book on teaching communication strategies would focus on recommended strategies that require L2 production (p. 27). She also explained that the definitive textbook of communication strategies has yet to be written (p.27).

1.4 Research on Strategy-training and Awareness-raising

Ever since the interest in CSs emerged, researchers have been calling for the importance of awareness-raising activities to ensure a better learning environment for EFL learners. This notion stemmed from the belief that if EFL learners face communicative breakdowns that they cannot fix, then this may hint that there exists a serious issue in their awareness of communication strategies in their L2. In support of the argument entailing that CSs already exist in one's L1, teachers are advised to directly incorporate these strategies in EFL classrooms and train learners to use them successfully in their communicative tasks. Many researchers advocated for the effectiveness of strategy-training and awareness-raising programs in L2 learning (Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2010; Nakatani, 2006; Tarone, 1983). Hence, this section is dedicated for research studies advocating strategy-training programs in EFL classrooms.

Striving to measure learners' development of oral performance skills through communicative strategies, Dörnyei (1995) carried out a six-week strategy training program implemented within the official secondary school English course in five different Hungarian schools. The study followed a quasi-experimental design consisting of a treatment group and two types of control group. The subjects were 109 Hungarian pupils whose age ranged between 15 and 18 years old. The strategy training program was organized in three lessons per week, and 20-40 minutes per lesson. The study sought to answer the following five main questions:

Does the training of a specific strategy increase the frequency of the use of this strategy by students? Does the training of a specific strategy improve the quality (efficiency) of this strategy in actual language use? Is the success of strategy training related to the students' initial level of language proficiency? What are the students' attitudes towards strategy training and the usefulness of CSs?

Among the latter, the third and fifth questions are those on which critical focus is drawn. During the training program, Dörnyei (1995) implemented a host of techniques which he had previously designed in a research article prior to his training program (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991). The techniques included the explicit and direct teaching of communicative strategies through awareness raising. According to Dörnyei, the reason behind the irresponsiveness of EFL learners to CSs is because they do not receive explicit instruction coupled with awareness-raising activities which establish a solid ground for practice for EFL learners (p. 65). He also implied that the activities which are normally designed to teach CSs do not reflect on the importance and use of the latter because of their inadequate nature (p. 73).

The findings showed that the procedures followed by Dörnyei led to the improvement of measures related to the quality and quantity of communication strategies taught during the training program. In his view, EFL learners can develop their coping skills through the direct, henceforth explicit, teaching of CSs (p. 65). This suggestion was prompted by the fact that language courses do not equip learners with the necessary skills to maneuver in communicative settings. Besides, the author argued that the success of his pilot study had also proven that developing effective strategy training activities is doable and can achieve positive results on the learners' performance level, as well as their attitudes towards the training program (p. 78).

Seeking to investigate the effects of the explicit teaching of some of the CSs on the speaking performance of EFL learners and test the stability of their teaching, Alibakhshi (2011) conducted a study on 60 male and female Iranian language learners of the English language.

The subjects received a 10-week treatment on CSs, which included a careful arrangement of activities which could best elicit the taught communication strategies for the participants. The chosen communicative strategies were the following: topic avoidance, approximation, restructuring, language switch, word coinage, appeal for assistance, circumlocution, self-repetition, and self-repair. Alibakhshi (2011) relied on inferential and descriptive statistics to analyze the collected data and adopted three exclusive tasks which were: a) group discussion, b) retelling Persian short stories in English, and c) picture description.

Through the aforementioned techniques, it has been reported that the posttest displayed a noticeable improvement in the quantity of CSs used by the participants of the experimental group. Hence, the findings reinforced the argument that CSs instruction may have a positive effect on enhancing learners' performance (Alibakhshi, 2011, p. 945). The explicit teaching of the aforementioned CSs aided in raising learners' awareness against the role of these strategies in communicative events. Moreover, the results of the second question regarding the stability of CSs after a three-months interval was proven to be relatively successful (pp. 945-946). Alibakhshi (2011) wrote that, "four out of seven strategies which were significantly different in control and experimental group were stable" (p. 946).

In a similar study, Tavakoli et al. (2011) investigated the effects of explicit strategy instruction on EFL learners' oral production in terms of complexity, fluency, and accuracy. The subjects were 90, all-male intermediate EFL learners at Isfahan language schools. To accurately gauge their level, the participants took an OPT (Oxford Placement Test) to ensure that they were intermediate learners, and a pre-test interview to confirm the homogeneity of the sample. Sixty-five intermediate learners were preselected after the OPT test then were administered to a pre-test interview to ensure their homogeneity in terms of oral performance. Out of the 65 participants, only 40 homogenous learners were chosen to serve as participants of the experimental study. The span of the latter was eight lessons in which four communication

strategies were selected and taught. They were as follows: Approximation, All-purpose words, Lexicalized fillers, and Circumlocution. For the experimental group, the designed lessons comprised of different communicative activities which were previously recommended by a number of researchers who had conducted similar studies (E.g., Dörnyei, 1995; Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991).

Tavakoli et al. (2011) reported that each strategy was based on the methodological theory of English language teaching suggested by Doff (1990) and Harmer (1990). The said suggestion was illustrated in three stages: Presentation stage (direct explicit instruction of the strategies), Practice stage (Subjects' attempts to practice the use of CSs alongside the teacher's intervention when faced with difficulties), and Production (The autonomous use of CSs by the participants whereby they generate CSs in tasks without the intervention of the instructor). Explicit instruction was carried out whereby the subjects were made aware of the existence of different strategies, which could mend their performance problems. The course was orchestrated in a cyclic manner whereby the strategies were brought up occasionally and reminded of their use and significance along the eight sessions.

However, the control group had no specific materials and were enrolling in their regular course with their teacher, who was the researcher himself. The findings showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity of learners' performance. The researchers detected significant improvement in their subjects' strategic competence; they were strategically competent enough to engage in conversations with a relatively higher degree of complexity, fluency, and accuracy. Therefore, the first null hypothesis predicting that explicit strategy instruction will have no effect on intermediate Iranian EFL learners' oral production in terms of accuracy, complexity, and fluency was rejected (Tavakoli et al. 2011, p. 994). The data

showed that the participants were not even aware that certain communication strategies exist until they had learnt about them (p. 995).

The aforementioned perspective, at last, heavily lends support to the argument entailing that CSs develop in one's L1, and can easily be transferred to their L2. Hence, the explicit instruction of CSs to raise learners' awareness about the availability of different strategies is a pivotal need in English language teaching.

In the same line of research, Salem (2020) investigated the effects of awareness-raising training of CSs on learners' writing performance at the Center of Translation and Language, Cairo University, Egypt. Salem chose two communication strategies to adopt in her strategy training program, which were Approximation and Circumlocution. The researcher opted for a quasi-experimental design whereby 51 intermediate students served as an experimental group and 38 intermediate students served as a control group. The experimental group received strategy-training while the control group did not receive any training along the seven weeks. The subjects received explicit instruction which included four main phases: Introducing CSs, Providing examples to identify CSs, Practice the use of CSs, and Review participants' use of CSs.

During the program, the subjects received direct explanation of the nature of CSs and their significance in writing, as well as clear examples of strategy use. They were encouraged to engage in risk-taking activities and manipulate their knowledge using the chosen CSs. During the training, the participants received different kinds of writing tasks in an attempt to improve their message conveyance abilities, such as object and picture description, abstract nouns and story-telling, etc. The results of the posttest by the end of the program indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in both oral and written tests. It also showed that a noticeable improvement has been made on the participants' level of oral proficiency.

Salem (2020) lastly suggested that “learners who are not aware of their strategic behavior need to consciously use their interlanguage system to control their performance and to maintain communication” (p. 16). This entails that even if learners are equipped with a CSs repertoire in their L1, they may not know how to transfer it to their L2 if they do not make use of their interlanguage system, which naturally develops through the exposure to one’s real-life L2 setting. Therefore, the researcher argued that “The writing tasks showed that the explicit teaching of communication strategies raised participants’ awareness of strategy use and improved the effective use of the taught strategies” (p. 16).

1.5 Synthesis and Discussion of the Literature Review

In this review, we aimed to emphasize the role of communication strategies in enhancing EFL learners’ strategic competence. The said procedure was done through reviewing major works advocating the effectiveness of these strategies in mending communication breakdowns in a more flexible manner. Communication strategies vary in nature and purpose; therefore, both teachers and learners should choose those that are highly effective in foreign language classrooms. Correspondingly, the strategy of Circumlocution was attended the most significant compensatory strategy for communicating even with a limited vocabulary bank. Most of the reviewed research studies have incorporated this strategy as part of their training program. Regardless of its importance, this strategy should be taught after an initial phase, which is providing learners with the basic terms such as shapes, sizes, and so on, given the fact that a great number of EFL learners are false beginners; the knowledge of grammar and basic sentence structures cannot overshadow their unawareness of the basic notions such as shapes, sizes, textures, and so on.

It has also been reviewed in Nakatani’s (2010) article that the lack of CSs use is linked to cognitive and affective factors. This point can be safely criticized implying that cognitive factors outweigh those of the affective ones. Narrowed down, stress, anxiety, and stuttering

are not the result of learners' communicative breakdowns, but rather the cause of the breakdowns themselves. Since learners are primarily unaware of the compensatory strategies as first-aid devices which help them communicate better, they feel helpless when faced with sudden interruptions, and therefore, communicate poorly due to the argued affective factors. Accordingly, teachers are advised to raise their learners' awareness on the said point and encourage them to use effective communication strategies to improve their communication.

Another major point of controversy is the teachability of CSs and the explicit teaching of these strategies. It has been argued that strategic competence is an innate capacity which can be transferred to any L2 regardless of its compatibility. Yet, how can learners transfer strategies without awareness of their existence in their L2? As most of the reviewed works supported awareness-raising activities, it could be deduced that EFL learners view the language as a mere duology of grammar and vocabulary, assuming that the said two notions are sufficient to achieve successful communication. Thus, they needed to be alerted on the availability of facilitative devices. Another turning point can be that strategic competence and communication strategies cannot be ultimately equivalent in EFL learners' L1 and L2. Simply put, CSs in the Arabic language, for instance, are slightly similar but, at the same time, not the same as those in the English language. Even if teachers explain equivalent CSs in English and Arabic, EFL learners would remain incapable of using them in English without strategy-training or direct exposure to real-life contexts where these strategies are employed. Thus, imitation and instruction, in this phase, is a necessity.

Addedly, the availability of teaching materials for CSs is also another barrier that needs to be treated. As teaching materials have been viewed scarce, EFL teachers, or oral expression instructors to be exact, should not solely rely on this claim to refrain from teaching CSs. Authentic and personalized materials are still a very effective option for the conduction of successful strategy-training programs. By the same token, strategy-training programs that are

based on the explicit teaching of CSs through authentic materials (videos, pictures, and YouTube extracts) have been proven successful and just as effective. Teachers may also look for sources which aim at teaching CSs indirectly and personalize them in ways that CSs become more visible to the learners. This allows them to reflect on the similarities and differences between the ways in which strategic competence is personified in both their L1 and L2.

In the Algerian context, the notion of strategy-training to develop EFL learners' strategic competence remains little-known or rather underestimated. This claim was supported by the scarcity of sources in the said context. As most research works are conducted in Europe and the middle-east, Algerian EFL learners are still striving to achieve fluency in communication without the proper assistance from their instructors. Strategy-training programs promote constant practice of CSs in a communication-oriented classrooms, which eventually routinizes the use of these strategies, because what started as an intentional use of CSs will, at last, become an automatic use of the latter. As Dörnyei (1995) explained, the process of *consciousness* in the learners' minds about the automatic, uninduced, and immediate use of CSs during communication breakdowns is a result of fossilization. Meaning that EFL learners' communication strategies will become an integral part of their strategic competence as a result of on-going practice and awareness-raising.

Thus, it is sensible to assume that strategy-training programs can be of a significant factor to develop learners' strategic competence, and provide them with strategies to incorporate in daily conversations and avoid sudden communicative gaps. As previously discussed in the chapter, strategic competence differs from one language to another in terms of strategy use in different contexts. Therefore, it requires awareness-raising and instruction in order to be developed. Addedly, strategy-training programs, as a teaching method, are creative in the sense that they bring about new techniques to explain and elicit CSs (through videos, pictures, storytelling, and so on). We finally conclude that strategy-training programs should

be conducted more often in foreign language classrooms in general, and in oral expression sessions in particular, to raise learners' awareness on the different communication strategies in the English language. The implementation of such programs can be organized through detailed and systematic syllabi and with a range of different activities and illustrations.

We conclude this part by eliciting a crucial point about learners' proficiency level and its relation to strategic behavior development. Some of the works we reviewed administered a proficiency test to their participants in order to check whether low strategic competence is only linked to low proficiency learners. This assumption aligns with Tarone's (1983) solid argument entailing that strategic competence does not have a universally-established development rate; therefore, it cannot develop in parallel with learners' linguistic competence for instance, as it should be developed in isolation from the other types of competences. Simply put, there may be high proficiency learners with low strategic competence as there may be low proficiency learners with high strategic competence. Thus, teachers ought to analyze their learners' capacities of remedying communicative breakdowns in isolation from their overall level in the English language to better conduct strategy-training programs.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to uncover research works that are closely related to the problem under investigation, with a tendency to evaluate and present the major limitations, recommendations, methods, results, and distinct outcomes of strategy-training programs in order to carry out more systematic and effective research on the said problem. This selective review is meant to stand as a solid basis which advocates the role of strategy-training programs as a means to remedy learners' communication inadequacies.

In the following chapter, more theoretical background concerning the elements reviewed in this chapter will be presented; mainly on the notion of communication strategies, strategic competence, and strategy instruction in foreign language classrooms.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two: Strategic Competence and Communication Strategies

Introduction

2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

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2.8 Defining Communication Strategies

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Conclusion

Introduction

The present chapter will be reserved for the theoretical background of this research work. It delves into the notions of communicative language teaching, communicative competence, strategic competence, and communication strategies. Stepwise, it underpins a description of strategy-based instruction and strategy-training. Holistically, this chapter aims to shape the conceptual framework for this research project from a philosophical view, discussing Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence with relation to strategic competence, as well bringing to the forefront the available taxonomies of CSs, in order to clarify which taxonomy has been taken into account in this research work.

2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The need for proper and good communication skills in the English language has led to a pivotal focus on mastering the relevant communicative processes in almost all quotidian situations. This growing interest was backed by the opportunities the English language has granted to its speakers, ranging from work-related deals, international tourism and most importantly to education. These requirements have relied heavily on diminishing the traditional instructional methods which accentuate the grammatical functions of language and annihilate those of the communicative ones. While it is necessary to account for the ability to produce grammatically-correct sentences and make one's self perfectly understood, it is not all that is needed to reach a sophisticated level in English. Communication, as a holistic concept, should also be taken into consideration in order to render one's grammatical knowledge useful enough.

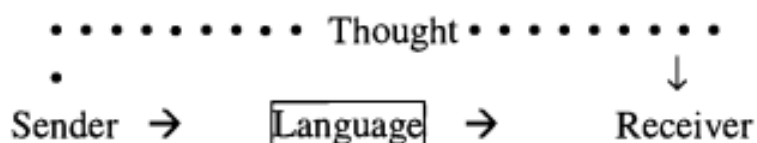
For this reason, the Communicative Language Teaching (Henceforth CLT) approach began to receive attention by the 1970s as a reaction to the Grammar Translation Method (Henceforth GTM) which, as the name suggests, focused on the grammatical notions of language rather than the communicative ones. From that point on, there have been various

scholarly definitions of the notion of CLT, describing the latter as an evolutionary turn in language pedagogy in which “explicit direct elements are gaining significance in teaching communicative abilities and skills” (Celce-Murcia & Dörnyei, 1997, p. 141, as cited in Spada, n.d.). In the same line of thought, it is agreed upon by the founding fathers of linguistics that language is a vehicle of thoughts, and thoughts are to be expressed in both written and spoken forms. As Broughton, et al. defined, “spoken language is the major and most complex techniques we have of communicating information” (p. 27, as cited in Xiao Qing, 2000, p. 1). Figure 2 displays the process of administering a communicative event from the sender to the receiver. After thoughts are arranged in the mind, they are transferred via an array of vocal sounds that we label as “spoken language”, whereas the receiver perceives the language and arranges it back as thoughts.

Figure 2

The Process of Administering a Communicative Event. (Source : Broughton, et al, 1980, p.27.

Source: Xiao Qing, 2000, p. 1)



Furthermore, according to Richards (2006), CLT diverges from the traditional teaching methods even in terms of classroom objectives and activities. The nature of the proposed tasks has now been aligning with the general purpose of this approach, that is abiding by the cooperative principle proposed by Grice (1975). Therefore, there has been a shift from memorization-based activities and drills to more interactional tasks such as pair work, group

work and project work activities. These types of activities were seen useful in leading learners towards using language productively in unassessed situations.

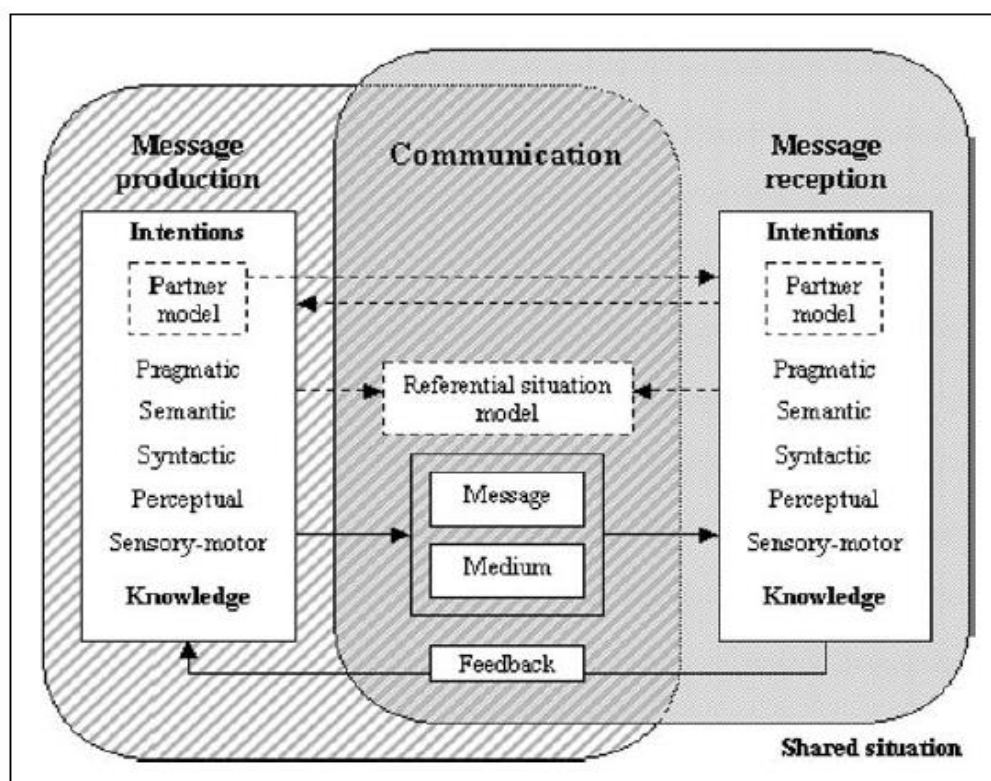
Owing to this step, fluency over accuracy became the main target in language classrooms, focusing more on delivering a comprehensive message fluently rather than retrospectively focusing on the accuracy of the message in terms of sentence structures and basic formations of the words. Besides, teachers have also shaped themselves accordingly by becoming more facilitators and guiders than commanders in the language classrooms. These reforms have started as an initiation to attract learners' attention towards the notion of communication, and have eventually resulted in the main focus on teaching communicative competence.

2.2 The Notion of Communication

According to Merriam Webster, communication can be defined as the “process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior”. In this sense, any process of communication must involve more than one partner who shares a given amount of reciprocal knowledge (See Figure 3):

Figure 3

Strohner's 2001 Structure of communication. Source: Richkeit & Strohner, 2008).



As figure 3 shows, communication is the byproduct of message production and reception, which is rooted in the boundaries of communicative intentions and knowledge types. The initiation of a communicative action, thus, indicates anticipatory processes from the producer of the message, joined with inferential ones from the side of the receiver.

2.3 Linguistic Competence

In the process of uncovering the schemes and definitions of communicative competence (Henceforth CC), it is first of a dire necessity to introduce the original concept whereby communicative competence was inspired from, that is Chomsky's (1959) notion of Linguistic Competence. The latter term reflected Chomsky's (1980) structuralist viewpoint on language which "encompasses those aspects of form and meaning and their relations, including underlying structures that enter into that relation which are properly assigned to the

specific sub-system of the human mind that relates representations of form and meaning (pp. 24-59, as cited in Karimnia & Izadparast, 2007, para. 5). The notion of linguistic competence was at first accredited due to its contributions to the field of modern linguistics. As Chomsky claims, all individuals attain the innate capacity to produce correct utterances unaffected by the cognitive and situational factors during conversations.

However, with the growing need for proper real-life communication, the sole reliance on the linguistic competence was not sufficient. Savignon (2018) sustained that “Speakers need know not only grammatical structures but also norms of usage and appropriacy in a given social context” (p. 2). In this sense, it could be comprehended that at the time before communicative competence emerged, language was addressed solely from a purely grammatical standpoint. Hence, both learners and teachers viewed language as a computerized device functioning through syntactic inputs and outputs. Contrastingly, as research moved forward, it was believed that words at the sentence level were not enough to cover any language holistically, as to that it is more than a mere combination of syntactically-related components. For that reason, Habermas (1970) argued that “general semantics cannot be developed sufficiently on the narrow basis of the monological linguistic competence proposed by Chomsky” (pp. 137-138). Consequently, a new approach to language had emerged, namely communicative competence, whereby language was addressed differently from a more communicative standpoint.

2.4 Communicative Competence

The term “Communicative Competence” was initially coined by Dell Hymes (1972). It refers to one’s ability to communicate effectively in various social and cultural contexts. This concept emerged as a countermovement against Chomsky’s dichotomy “competence” and “performance”. Hymes (1972) debated against Chomsky’s claims that language should be separated from sociolinguistic codes, then supported his claims in his paper “On

Communicative Competence “saying that the “Acquisition of competence is also seen as essentially independent of sociocultural features, requiring only suitable speech in the environment of the child to develop” (p.55). Tarvin (2014) also defines communicative competence as the “ability to use language, or to communicate, in a culturally-appropriate manner in order to make meaning and accomplish social tasks with efficacy and fluency through extended interactions” (p. 2).

In depth, this concept delves into the knowledge of language rules and how to apply them appropriately according to the given communicative events. Stepwise, communicative competence expands to cover the use of non-verbal communication as well, such as gestures, facial expressions, voice, and tone. Obtaining a relatively good level in communicative competence serves in maintaining and building relationships with individuals, either from the same or different cultural and social backgrounds, as well as creating a vibrant environment in different social situations.

2.4.1 Communicative Competence Framework

Hymes set forth a fourfold framework in which the concept of communicative competence coherently operates in. These four pillars are as follows: possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, and occurrence.

- ***Possibility***

This step supports the need that the locution must grammatically possible in order for it to be understood, meaning whether the locution has sufficient lexico-syntactic components to make a coherent message.

- ***Feasibility***

This pillar refers to the accessibility of locution by interlocutors. In simple terms, it necessitates that the interlocutors can make use of the utterances and process them without

experiencing cognitive load. Hymes (1972) defends that L2 (Henceforth second language) speakers must have the ability to use language itself, and be able to form both feasible and grammatically possible locution.

- ***Appropriateness***

Appropriateness is a core element of communicative competence. It refers to whether the locution aligns with the socio-cultural expectations in any given communicative situation. In depth, the interlocutors should be alerted to not use any cultural miscues which may hinder the process of understanding a message.

- ***Occurrence***

Occurrence refers to the possibility of a message to be performed, meaning whether the locution has been delivered to the recipient or not. Locution can conform to the previously mentioned pillars, yet it may not occur at last due to affective factors such as timidity or stress, and even due to external factors such as sudden interruptions. Hymes (1972) explains this segment as “Something may be possible, feasible, and appropriate and not occur” (p. 286, as cited in Tarvin, 2014, p. 4).

2.5 Models of Communicative Competence

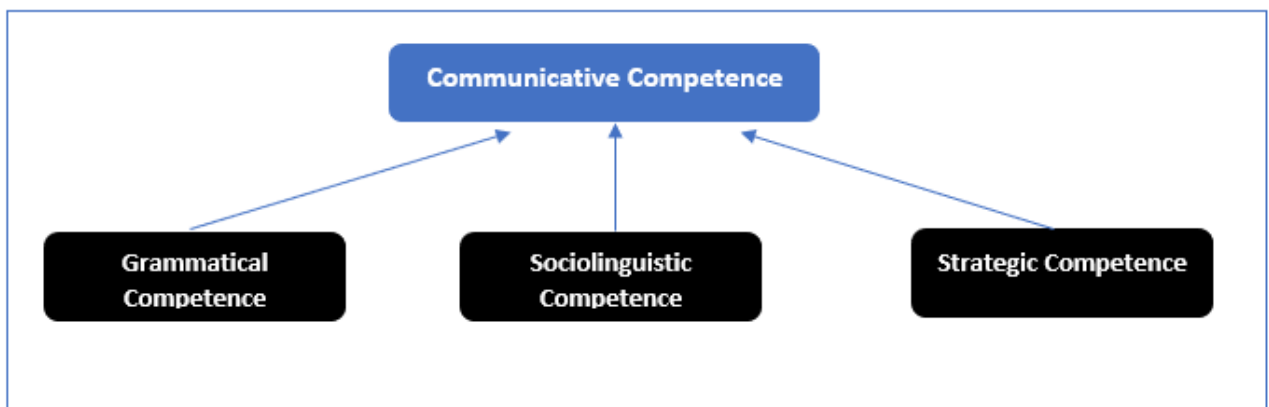
The views on which the components of communicative competence should include have been a center of controversy for the past decades. After the emergence of the concept, that is communicative competence, a host of linguists began to establish what is known as models of communicative competence. Each one represents a different scheme of other subdivisions of communicative competence, some of which are: Bachman, Celce-Murcia et al., Savignon, and Canale and Swain.

2.5.1 Canale and Swain's Model (1980)

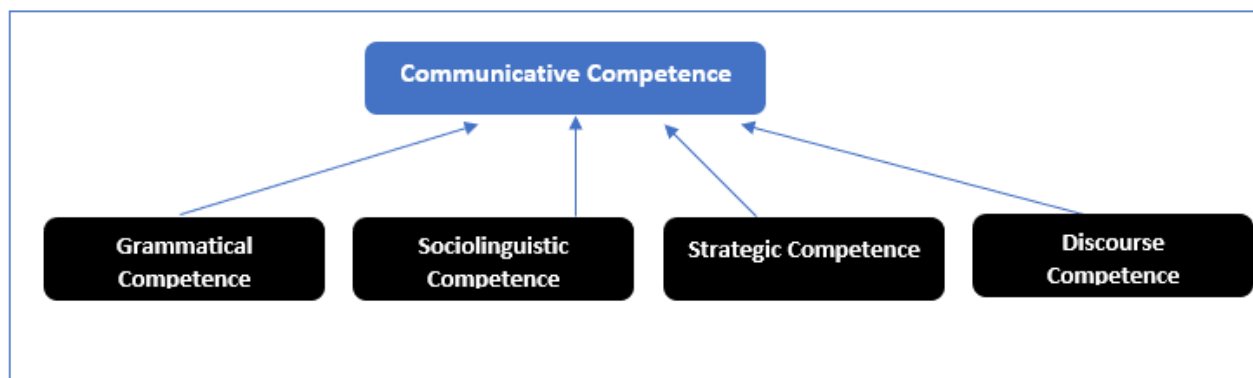
Canale and Swain (1980) asserted that communicative competence is rather a conscious or an unconscious knowledge of individuals about language and language use. They proposed an initial model of CC in 1980 which included the following trichotomy: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

Figure 4

Model of Communicative Competence by Canale and Swain (1980)



Three years later, a newer model of CC was proposed by Canale (1983) which included a fourfold of components, making it a four-dimensional model.

Figure 5*Model of Communicative Competence by Canale (1983)*

As figure 5 shows, the model comprises four main elements that are distinct yet interrelated. As far as grammatical competence is concerned, there should be a reference to one's knowledge about grammar rules, including the fourfold of morphology, syntax, phonology, and lexicon. However, when it comes to sociolinguistic competence, the linguistic surface is overshadowed to embody the rules of appropriateness in language in different social contexts.

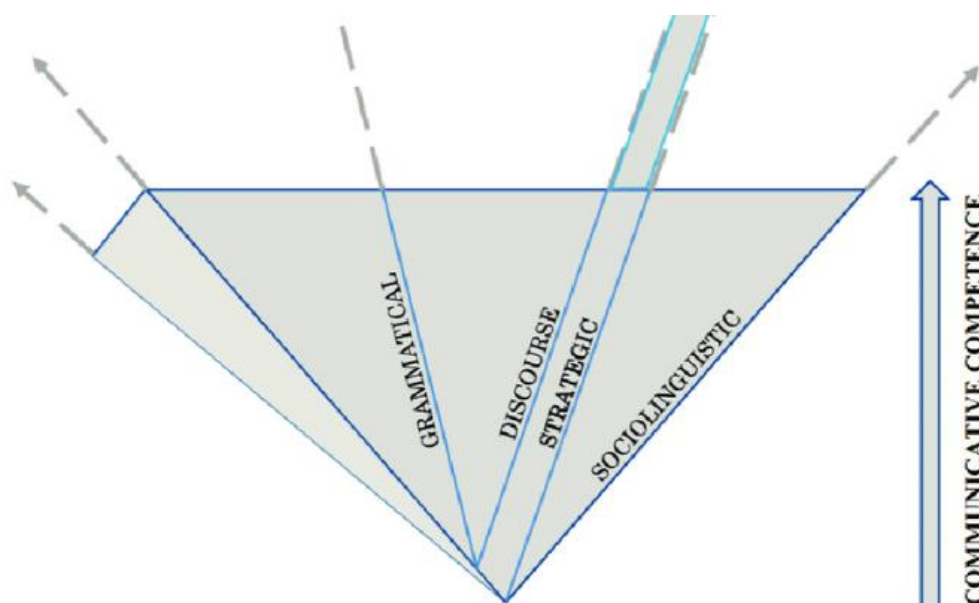
Strategic competence, as a third component, is responsible for overcoming communication breakdowns whether on the grammatical level, that is at the level of the sentence, or on the sociolinguistic one, that is at the level of language use. Strategic competence is regarded as the use of both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to overcome sudden language breakdowns. Finally, discourse competence is called for producing a unified spoken or written discourse through combining meaning and grammar to any language. Simply put, the standards of cohesion and coherence should be realized in order to achieve discourse competence. It should be noted, at last, that the aforementioned elements of communicative competence should be developed interconnectedly in order to boost the overall level of communicative competence.

2.5.2 Savignon's (1972) Inverted Pyramid

The most prevalent mentions of communicative competence, in addition to Hymes, were credited to the works of Savignon (1972). The researcher took the model of Canale and Swain as a starting point to develop a new model in the form of an inverted pyramid, so as to display how the sub-competences are interconnected and contribute to the overall level of communicative competence. According to Savignon's (1972) model, the sub-competence *strategic competence* is considered complementary to the other three main elements, that are discourse competence, grammatical competence, and sociolinguistic competence.

Figure 6

Savignon's Model of Communicative Competence (Source: The Center for ELF Journal, 2016, p. 26)



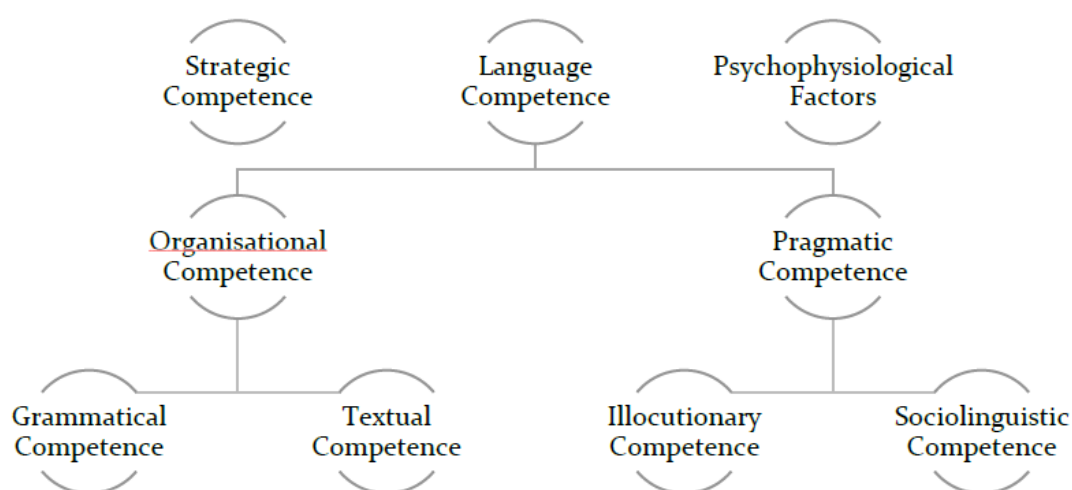
2.5.3 Bachman's (1990) Framework of Communicative Language Ability.

Regardless of the success accredited to the models of Hymes, Canale and Swain (1980), and Savignon (1972), Bachman proceeded to put forth a completely influential model of communicative language ability. His model embodies three main segments: language competence (knowledge about language), strategic competence (the ability of implementing this knowledge in communication), and finally the psychophysiological factors (the mental

processes affecting the implementation). Owing to this representation, Bachman's model does not divide the sub-competences independently from one another; however, he renders them complementary to one another, and combines the three of them under the umbrella of communicative language ability.

Figure 7

Bachman's Model of Communicative Language Ability (Source: Tas & Khan, 2020, p. 97)



As figure 7 shows, language competence consists of two different sub-competences. On the one hand, illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence fall under the umbrella of pragmatic competence, which is linked to psychophysiological factors. On the other one, both grammatical and textual competence are parts of organizational competence, all in which are related to strategic competence. It should be noted that this model resembles both *knowing* and *doing*; therefore, language competence and psychophysiological factors are taken into consideration through the applications of strategic competence, which is responsible for planning, assessing, and executing (Tas & Khan, 2020).

2.6 Defining Strategic Competence

One of the components of communicative competence that is rather neglected in communicative language teaching is strategic competence. As cited in Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991, p. 17) Canale and Swain (1980) defined the term as the “verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence” (p. 30). Simply put, users of language may encounter situations where their oral performance is hindered by either external factors (concrete interruptions) or internal factors (affective factors such as stress and anxiety).

When in such situation, strategic behavior is needed to prevent the occurrence of a communication gap, or rather, a communication failure. Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) also defined the term strategic competence as “the ability to get one's meaning across successfully to communicative partners, especially when problems arise in the communication process” (p. 17).

2.7 Strategic Competence and Communication Strategies

In foreign language classrooms, emphasis is put on the philosophical perspectives of communicative language teaching rather than its practicalities. Nunan (1987) pointed out in his paper that “While a great deal has been written on the theory and practice of communicative language teaching, there have been comparatively few studies of actual communicative language practices” (p. 30, as cited in Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1991, p. 17). Therefore, it can be deduced that foreign language classrooms should focus more on communicative language use. As far as strategic competence is concerned, this concept puts forth a set of practical strategies which can be much of a solution to language breakdowns. Owing to this fact, it is believed that this type of competences is highly practical, as it delves into the notion of communication strategies, which are how strategic competence is mostly expressed.

Tarone (1983) claimed that there are two main aspects of strategic competence that should be accounted for in order to make a critical evaluation of the foreign language learner: “1) the overall skill of the foreign language learner in successfully conveying information to a listener, and 2) the ability of the learner to use communication strategies when problems are encountered in the process of conveying information” (p. 123).

2.8 Defining Communication Strategies

Corder defined communicative strategies as a “systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his [or her] meaning when faced with some difficulty” (p. 103). CSs are, then, regarded as facilitative devices which are used by language speakers in order to achieve higher levels of pragmatic meaning. The utmost goal of communication strategies is to avoid conversational failure, and to repair an already existing resource deficit gap. This claim on the role of communication strategies is mentioned in most studies on CSs. Since the concept of CSs had emerged, researchers such as Tarone (1977), Corder (1983), Faerch and Kasper (1938), Dörnyei & Scott (1995) began to focus initially on different taxonomies of communication strategies. Each researcher targeted communication strategies from a different perspective.

Communication strategies vary in types and number. Since the concept of strategic competence was introduced as a sub-competence of communicative competence by Canale and Swain (1980), a host of researchers strived to establish a plethora of classifications of these strategies. Kriminia and Zadeh (2007) supported our initial perspectives that the use of communication strategies is not a bad practice. They sustained that, “the use of a communication strategy is not indication of communication failure; on the contrary, it can be very successful in compensating for the lack of linguistic knowledge” (p. 295).

2.9 Classification and Taxonomies of Communication Strategies

There are countless of CSs taxonomies in the literature. The sole difference between these taxonomies is that every taxonomy comprises of a set of language devices which the

researcher decided to label them as communication strategies. Since the available taxonomies are outnumbered, only some of them will be mentioned in this chapter. Most notably, Tarone (1977); Faerch and Kasper (1983b); Bialystok (1983); Paribakht (1985); Willems (1987); Bialystok (1990); Nijmegen Group; Poulisse (1993); and Dörnyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b).

Figure 8

Various Taxonomies of Communication Strategies (Source: Dörnyei & Scott, 1995, p. 196)

Tarone (1977)	Færch & Kasper (1983b)	Bialystok (1983)	Paribakht (1985)	Willems (1987)
AVOIDANCE	FORMAL REDUCTION	L1-BASED STRATEGIES	LINGUISTIC APPROACH	REDUCTION STRATEGIES
Topic avoidance	Phonological	Language switch	<i>Semantic contiguity</i>	Formal reduction
Message abandonment	Morphological	Foreignizing	-Superordinate	-Phonological
	Syntactic	Tr ansliteration	-Comparison	-Morphological
PARAPHRASE	Lexical		* Positive comparison	-Syntactic
Approximation			Analogy	-Lexical
Word coinage	FUNCTIONAL REDUCTION	L2-BASED STRATEGIES	Syno nymy	Functional reduction
Circumlocution	Actional red.	Semantic contiguity	* Negative comparison	-Message abandonment
CONSCIOUS TRANSFER	Modal red.	Description	Contrast & opposit.	-Meaning replacement
Literal translation	Reduction of propositional content	Word coinage	Antonymy	-Topic avoidance
Language switch	-Topic avoidance abandonment	NON-LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES	<i>Circumlocution</i>	
APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE	-Message abandonment		-Physical description	ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGIES
	-Meaning replacement		* Size	Paralinguistic strategies
MIME	ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGIES		* Shape	Interlingual strategies
	<i>Compensatory strategies</i>		* Color	-Borrowing/code switching
	-Code switching		* Material	-Literal translation
	-Interlingual transfer		- Constituent features	-Foreignizing
	-Inter-/ intralingual transfer		* Features	Intralingual strategies
	- IL based strategies		* Elaborated features	-Approximation
	* Generalization		-Locational property	-Word coinage
	* Paraphrase		-Historical property	- Paraphrase
	* Word coinage		- Other features	* Description
	* Restructuring		-Functional description	* Circumlocution
	-Cooperative strategies		<i>Metalinguistic clues</i>	* Exemplification
	-Non-linguistic strategies		CONTEXTUAL APPROACH	- Smurfing
	<i>Retrieval strategies</i>		Linguistic context	- Self-repair
			Use of L2 idioms and proverbs	-Appeals for assistance
			Transliteration of L1 idioms and proverbs	* Explicit
			Idiomatic transfer	* Implicit
			CONCEPTUAL APPROACH	* Checking questions
			Demonstration	-Initiating repair
			Exemplification	
			Metonymy	
			MIME	
			Replacing verbal output	
			Accompanying verbal output	

Figure 8

(Continued) Various Taxonomies of Communication Strategies (Source: Dörnyei & Scott, 1995, p. 196)

Bialystok (1990)	Nijmegen Group	Poulisse (1993)	Dörnyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)
ANALYSIS- BASED STRATEGIES	CONCEPTUAL STRATEGIES Analytic Holistic	SUBSTITUTION STRATEGIES	DIRECT STRATEGIES <i>Resource deficit-related strategies</i> * Message abandonment * Message reduction * Message replacement * Circumlocution * Approximation * Use of all-purpose words * Word-coinage * Restructuring * Literal translation * Foreignizing * Code switching * Use of similar sounding words * Mumbling * Omission * Retrieval * Mime <i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Self-rephrasing * Self-repair <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Other-repair
CONTROL- BASED STRATEGIES	LINGUISTIC/ CODE STRATEGIES Morphological creativity Transfer	SUBSTITUTION PLUS STRATEGIES RECONCEPTU- ALIZATION STRATEGIES	INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES <i>Resource deficit-related strategies</i> * Appeals for help <i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Comprehension check * Own-accuracy check <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Asking for repetition * Asking for clarification * Asking for confirmation * Guessing * Expressing nonunderstanding * Interpretive summary * Responses
			INDIRECT STRATEGIES <i>Processing time pressure-related strategies</i> * Use of fillers * Repetitions <i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Verbal strategy markers <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Feigning understanding

Figure 8 is a summary of 9 different taxonomies, which have been mentioned before. When analyzing the table holistically, it would not be difficult to notice that the classifications include a range of various language devices sectioned under categories. In Tarone's (1977) taxonomy, there exist four different categories of CSs: Avoidance strategies (which include strategies used to avoid communication, such as topic avoidance and message abandonment),

Paraphrase strategies (which are used to reformulate one's message when it is delivered incompletely or wrongly, such as approximation, word coinage, and circumlocution), conscious transfer (which are strategies employed in one's discourse with complete awareness; these strategies are used as ultimate resorts when speakers are aware that they have no other way to repair their communication. Examples of such strategies are literal translation and language switch). Finally, appeal for assistance strategies which are used to seek the recipients' aid in bridging the communication gap.

Although the remaining taxonomies consist of varied terminologies, which label CSs categories differently, there exist a host of similarities between the taxonomies. For instance, three out of nine taxonomies that are mentioned (Tarone, 1977; Faerch and Kasper, 1983b; and Willems, 1987) are quite similar. The three classifications support duality in strategy use. In other terms, CSs can be used to reshape one's message through reformulating, altering, or abandoning the message completely, as well as they can be utilized to convey a comprehensible message regardless of the linguistic deficiencies. This latter process is done through extending or even manipulating the language system (Dörnyei and Scott, 1995). Faerch and Kasper (1983b) labelled CSs which correspond to the first part of duality as "achievement strategies", while Corder (1981) labelled them as "resource expansion strategies". Dörnyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b) supported Faerch & Kasper's (1983b) perspective to the label of achievement strategies; however, he extends their category to reach reduction strategies.

Apart from the aforementioned distinction, the remaining taxonomies are set depending on certain language devices characterized by different properties. These concern the role of L1 in the conversation or the type of knowledge employed when using CSs. Even though the displayed taxonomies are backed by solid argumentation, it was still subjected to criticism. The Nijmegen group and Bialystok viewed the taxonomies over-detailed and unfounded (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995). However, when observing the taxonomies more profoundly, it can be deduced that

each classification serves a particular synchronic piece of work and fits with the context it is used in, which is the case of this research study.

2.9.1 Circumlocution Strategy

The word circumlocution is derived from the Latin word “Circum” which means “around” and “locution” which means language. Circumlocution can also be called *roundabout speech*. It is the use of a large number of words to describe a concept or an object.

Owning the ability to use circumlocution is one of the most important features when compensating for imperfect mastery and use of a foreign language. As an effective achievement strategy, circumlocution has been regarded as a measure of pragmatic competence. Despite its vital role in oral communication, this strategy is not frequently taught in foreign language classrooms (Scullen & Jordain, 2000). There have been various assumptions in the literature that foreign language teachers are negligent towards teaching communication strategies in general. As cited in Dörnyei and Thurell, Nunan (1987) defended that “While a great deal has been written on the theory and practice of communicative language teaching, there have been comparatively few studies of actual communicative language practices” (p. 137).

In daily conversations in English, foreign language speakers may often stumble upon concepts, objects, or terms that they cannot label. This inability to name can be attributed to linguistic deficiencies. However, it is important to note that not only foreign language speakers face this issue, as it is common among native speakers as well. Tarone (1983) argues that “Native speakers typically use the strategies of circumlocution and approximation” (p. 6). The ability to use circumlocution requires a set of prerequisites in order for it to be successful. A primitive, or core, vocabulary alongside a set of basic sentence structure should be used to describe shapes, sizes, colors, texture, function, and so on (Tarone 1983).

The application of circumlocution can be done through using basic sentence structures such as : “It is circular”, “It is oval”, “It is made of”, “It is an animal that”, “This word is a

synonym to”, “It is an object that we use to”, and many other sentences which can be formed through abiding by the following rules: first, mention the type of word/object, give a simple definition for it, give its synonyms or antonym, give examples in context-like situations, use sound analogies, gestures, and body language.

2.9.2 Using Fillers and Stalling Devices

Fillers, or stalling/hesitation devices, are one of the most reoccurring and naturally used communication strategies in any language. They are viewed as so because language users utter vocal segments instinctively for many purposes, namely for false starts, repetition, self-correction, stalling, and so on.

2.9.2.1 Defining Fillers

Fillers, or hesitation/stalling devices, are sound analogies that are used in order to gain time during interaction, and are employed by native speakers in every day conversations. Stenström (1994) defines fillers as “A lexically an empty item with uncertain discourse functions, except to fill a conversational gap (p. 222). There exists a misunderstanding on the use of fillers in language classrooms. Teachers often have a stigmatized image on using fillers; they ascertain that it indicates lack of preparation, uninterest, and stress. However, there is a more logical argument that should be taken into account. Native speakers are known to have an authentic, natural, and easy-going interaction. The reason behind it is that they make use of a variety of filler words at a time, and avoid repeating the same filler word. In contrast, some foreign language speakers rely on standardized fillers repeatedly, such as “um” and “like”. The fossilization of a set of fillers without sensing the need to vary can often give a bad impression on the speakers.

2.9.2.2 Types of Fillers

Rose (1998) categorized filler devices into two main categories: unlexicalized fillers and lexicalized fillers.

- Unlexicalized filler devices are also labelled as non-lexemes filler devices. These language items can be used by speakers to mark audible pauses in order to think of the next utterance. Some examples of lexicalized filler devices can be as follows: um, ehm, eeh, ah, and so on. These sounds are employed by most, if not all, users of language, whether they are native or foreign speakers.
- Lexicalized filler devices are language items which take the form of a word or a short phrase, such as “Well, yeah, like, sort of, you know”, and so on. This is to say that speakers utter words or short phrases to fill a cognitive gap and prevent communication breakdown. Even though fillers are frowned upon by most teachers, they are still very effective if used moderately. It is almost impossible to deliver a speech without resorting to fillers, at least once in a while. Because fillers vary in function, they are mostly used to either attract the spectators’ attention, gain time, empathize a situation, or mitigate utterances. mitigating utterances through the use of fillers is a common technique among natives. They are most likely used in order not to cause harm to the listeners’ feelings, so as to use fillers to prepare them for what comes next.

2.9.3 The Use of Comprehension Checks

Comprehension checks are communication strategies that are used to negotiate meaning across interlocutors. They extend the span of communication as listeners are often indulged in the conversation. This strategy is often realized through the use of some language items, such as “Am I clear?”, “Is it clear?”, “Are you following?”, “Does this point make sense?”, and so on. As much as these utterances seem as if they are concluding sentences used by the end of presentations, their role extends to a bigger framework. Comprehension checks can be used

when reaching a transition point in an interaction. For instance, instead of an awkward transition from one part to another, the speaker may ask the question “does this make sense”, and then move to the following part after receiving a binary answer from the recipients.

Another function of comprehension checks is when attempting to avoid talking too much. Asking whether the point is clear spares the speaker from further elaborations which may be needless to the audience. Moreover, they can be used to attract the listeners’ attention when sensing that they started to lose track during the communicative events.

Communication strategies are not just language items employed to fulfill a given communicative function, their role expands to reach sophisticated levels of strategic competence which is required to maintain conversations and develop one’s strategic behavior, as it is needed in foreign language classrooms in general, and academic setting in particular.

Conclusion

This chapter has brought to the forefront some of the most important notions of communicative competence and some of its existing models which are of relevance to this research work. It has also highlighted major definitions regarding strategic competence and communication strategies, as well as some of the most common taxonomies of communication strategies which have been used in a host of studies. Oral communication strategies serve as instant solutions of language inadequacies, and aid in improving, and thus developing, one's strategic behavior in communicative events. The explicit instruction of communication strategies is a dire requirement in foreign language classrooms because it raises learners' awareness against strategies, which may not be known by them autonomously. Therefore, awareness-raising and strategy-instruction may be an effective method to reduce communicative burdens, and improve the quality of communication.

The following chapter aims to outline a theoretical background with respect to the research methodology in research that is relevant to the current research study. It also seeks to provide the methodology adopted alongside backed argumentation for the procedures and choices presented in this work.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

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Introduction

This chapter brings to the forefront the foundations upon which research methodology in language learning is based. The first section will be dedicated for an overview of the main research paradigms, approaches, designs, as well as the data collection tools and procedures that are mostly utilized in the spectrum of educational research. Moreover, a more narrowed down account for the research paradigm adopted for this study is underlined alongside the rationale behind the choice of its components. In the same line, the procedures taken into account in the implementation of the treatment and the remaining data collection methods are further incorporated and discussed with relevance to key methodological considerations. In summation, this chapter lends itself a grounded basis upon which the researcher conducted this research work in the most systematic manner that is possible.

3.1 Research Methodology: Theoretical Background

It is always favorable to ground one's study prior to delving into the chosen outline to ensure that the right decisions have been made. Because research is methodology, there is a dire need to provide a holistic perspective of the latter to gain proper understanding of the various ways that a researcher can frame their methodology in the quest of delivering a scientific product. As Kothari (2004) advises, "Researchers also need to understand the assumptions underlying various techniques and they need to know the criteria by which they can decide that certain techniques and procedures will be applicable to certain problems and others will not" (p. 8). On the basis of the quote, we intend to provide a conceptual framework of this project's research methodology by rooting back to the theoretical aspects of the latter then concluding with the practical one, which are related to the choices and rationale behind this work's specific methodology.

3.1.1 Research Paradigms

In the process of choosing a research approach, namely quantitative, qualitative, or a mixed-methods, it is equally important to project the paradigm that is best compatible with the nature of one's research (Denscombe, 2017). In this section, we begin by defining two of the most important notions in research methodology, that are ontology and epistemology, both of which make the philosophical boundaries shaping one's way of addressing a particular problem. In addition, an introduction to research paradigms in educational research will be presented by means of outlining the available paradigms and the logic behind them.

3.1.1.1 Ontology and Epistemology

The roots of research paradigms date back to four main philosophical conceptions which are ontology and epistemology, methodology, and methods. Therefore, it is a must to delve into these perspectives, one at a time, with regard to the literature. There exist various definitions on the concept of ontology and epistemology; what they mean and how they shape the views of social sciences. Ontology, in social sciences, refers to one's belief regarding the essence of social phenomena (Cohen et al., 2018). In simpler terms, ontology concerns itself with the truth and nature of "being" and "existence", and what individuals bear to witness as "tangible" and "real". Hence, ontology raises the questions of what is there to know, and what the nature of the external world is. Within this concept, there emerged two important, yet distinct, perspectives: realism and relativism.

Cohen et. al (2018) opinionized on realism that "objects have an independent existence and are not dependent for it on the knower" (p. 5). Thus, for realists, this detached truth of the external world is not, by any means, affected by individual's perceptions or interpretations in any given context. However, relativists view that the truth about reality is not necessarily independent from individuals' interpretations. As relativity dictates that the reality is not absolute, yet is the byproduct of the distinct concepts emerging from humans' contributions to

the world's continuum. Thus, the latter is seen to be primarily hinged to the experiences and perspectives of individuals.

As for epistemology, the term is derived from the Greek word "episteme" which refers to "knowledge". According to Tuli (2010), "epistemology poses the following questions: what is the relationship between the knower and what is known? How do we know what we know? What counts as knowledge?" (p. 99). Therefore, this pivotal component lends itself to question the limits of knowledge, its roots, and how does it align with the researcher in the process of obtaining it. The third component of a research paradigm is "methodology". In this pillar, the research investigation is shaped by which guidelines should be followed and what data collection tools are to be incorporated with regard to the nature and purpose of the study. The last component of a paradigm is "methods". The latter denotes the ways in which data is gathered and subsequently analyzed according to what the research design dictates.

At last, it is summarized that the distinction made between the two concepts of ontology and epistemology, as well as methodology and methods, serve to determine which paradigm to adopt, and how to set the grounded basis for any research investigation in such systematic manners.

3.1.2 Research Paradigms in Educational Research

It was after the pioneering work of the American physicist and philosopher Thomas Kuhn in 1962 that the term "paradigm" emerged and gained popularity as a grounding floor for research. Despite the fact that the notion of paradigm may be a center of difficulty and confusion for some novice researchers, it is, as a matter of fact, considered pivotal when it comes to making research decisions and practices within an appropriate methodological framework. Therefore, before delving into the viral research paradigms adopted in educational research, it is worth to outline a comprehensive definition for the term. Kuhn (1962) defines paradigm as a "way of looking at or researching phenomena, a world view, a view of what counts as accepted

or correct scientific knowledge or way of working, an ‘accepted model or pattern’ (p. 23, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p.8). Differently put, a research paradigm is a holistic way of pursuing knowledge, and a shared belief upon which a research community is gathered.

There are various classifications of research paradigms in educational research, three of them are ongoingly used and adopted: the post-positivist, interpretivist (or constructivist), and pragmatist. The first paradigm, that is the post-positivist, tends to detach from the closed system of positivism which renders the universal laws as absolute and predictable, and advocates the partial, falsifiable nature of the external world (Cohen et al., 2018). The post-positivism perspective argues that knowledge is probabilistic but never absolute, and that it can be attained through empiricist practices by which quantitative research abides. Therefore, quantitative research, as literature dictates, conforms to post-positivist research paradigms, as the latter are not shaped by the research methodology, yet with the purpose of the study itself (Cohen et al., 2018).

Adjacent to the post-positivism paradigm, another frequently used paradigm is that of the interpretivist one. This paradigm is also labelled “constructivism” or “social constructivism”. As the name suggests, this type of paradigms is rooted in social borders; therefore, the methodology aligning with this type is of a qualitative nature. According to Cohen et al., (2018), the interpretive paradigm construes the social reality through the experiences of different participants, as well as it encourages the researcher’s own intervention arguing that subjective meaning may be as empirically testable as objective statements (p. 17).

In contrast with the previously mentioned paradigms, the pragmatist one depicts that the researcher’s subjective values can still be considered while sustaining an objective account during the data collection and analysis procedures. Cohen et al., define the pragmatist paradigm as “The research focuses on framing and answering the research question or problem, which is eclectic in its designs, methods of data collection and analysis, driven by fitness for purpose

and employing quantitative and qualitative data as relevant" (2018, p. 34). Thus, it can be said that the methodology abiding by this type of paradigms is mixed methods in nature, owing to the fact that the researcher takes into account both the qualitative and the quantitative properties of their research investigation.

In summation, there are several factors by which the research paradigm can be adopted in educational research. First, the nature of the problem under investigation determines the scope under which the research paradigm will fall. Second, the purpose behind conducting any given research study is also of a paramount importance in the adoption of a research paradigm, and lastly, the type of research questions and aims, as well as hypotheses, impinge on the selection of a research paradigm.

3.1.3 Research Approaches and Strategies

With reference to Creswell (2014), approaches to research are “the plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation” (p. 3). An approach is the first and foremost element to be selected at the beginning of any given research work through identifying the nature of the problem under investigation alongside the researcher’s own experience (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, there exist three main research approaches in the literature: the qualitative, the quantitative, and the mixed-methods research approach. The first approach is concerned with understanding a social or human problem in a natural setting, and deals with data from a pure exploratory nature. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as a “is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 22). The data gathered under a qualitative approach stem from the participants’ personal experiences, they can be classified under the measurement scales of nominal and ordinal data, and the latter are later analyzed and interpreted by the researcher.

The second approach, that is the quantitative one, lies at the other end of the methodology continuum, and displays data in terms of numerical values. This approach to language learning aims to generate initial hypotheses and test them by means of statistical procedures. Research projects falling under this type of research approaches have the ability to generalize the findings, as they lack bias and are not prone to subjectivity and personal interpretations (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, an eclectic research approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data, namely a mixed-methods approach, calls for “integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks” (Creswell, 2014, p.4). Thus, a mixed-methods research approach encourages the inclusion of numerical data without neglecting categorical ones under one holistic spectrum. This approach has been gaining international recognition and consideration, especially with the on-going publications of the prolific linguist, John. W. Creswell, who is currently engraving forceful contributions to the area of MMR (Mixed-methods research).

After having identified a proper research paradigm and approach to any research project, the next step would be to decide which design aligns appropriately with the methodology adopted by the researcher and the nature of their problem. A research design, as Cohen et al. (2018) define, is a practical plan through which a research project is addressed effectively, by means of mapping the field for collecting and analyzing data. For a research work to be methodologically justified, the researcher is required to elicit *how* the research questions are going to be answered (Kumar, 2011). Research designs are divided into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research designs. There exist relatively more quantitative research designs than qualitative or mixed-methods designs. Phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, and ethnography are known as qualitative research designs. The latter are “often based on deductive rather than inductive logic, are flexible and emergent in nature” (Kumar, 2011, 104). Moreover, examples of quantitative research designs include, but are not limited to, the true-experimental,

the quasi-experimental, and correlation research. However, mixed-methods research designs constitute of the parallel design, the embedded, the explanatory-sequential or the exploratory-sequential mixed-methods designs.

This chapter, however, does not intend to cover all the existing designs in educational research, yet it is only limited to discussing the designs adopted in this research project, namely one-group pre-posttests, case studies, and the convergent parallel mixed-methods designs. Quasi-experimental designs are known to be alternatives for true-experimental ones, but lack randomization which, logically, negates the possibility of generalization. In research, it is not always possible to conduct experiments in laboratories; therefore, researchers hold the option to mimic a true-experimentation (Cohen et al., 2018). Within this framework, there are a host of research designs incorporated, namely the one-group pre-post-test design; the one-group post-tests only design; the non-equivalent post-test only design; the pre-test-post-test non-equivalent group design; and the one-group time series design (Cohen et al., 2018).

In the case of one-group pre-posttest design, an initial test is presented to the participants, followed by an established treatment phase where the instructor pinpoints the existing problem, and strives to make a change. Following that, a post-test is eventually presented to the participants to evaluate the significance of the intervention. Therefore, this type of designs is most suitable in contexts where the availability of the participants deters the inclusion of a control group, or when the time factor is an obstacle for the consideration of the latter. However, this design, alongside the other types of quasi-experimental designs, are subject to criticism regarding the validity of the data and the impossibility of generalization; therefore, it is still desirable to opt for this design when the main focus is on seeking direct answers to some ambiguities between variables.

Another commonly used research design in educational research is the case study. According to Creswell (1994, p.12), case studies are “A single instance of a bounded system,

for example a child, a clique, a class, a school, a community, others would not hold to such tight definition”. It could be deduced from the said quote that the crucial note when conducting case studies is the pre-determined intention to approach the sample as an entity. Moreover, this design is commonly occurrent in quantitative research despite being a naturally qualitative one (Kumar, 2011). Addedly, it is best chosen in areas where little literature review is available on the context of investigation; where the researcher aims to understand a certain issue, and get an in-depth understanding of a given entity. There are a variety of ways in which case studies can be conducted in educational research. Kumar (2011, p. 123) identifies “in-depth interviewing, obtaining information from secondary records, gathering data through observations, collecting information through focus groups and group interviews, etc.”

Lastly, convergent parallel mixed-methods design calls for the collection and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, but with a larger qualitative or quantitative framework (Tegan, 2021). Therefore, this design combines two types of data at the same time, analyzes them separately, but with one type being secondary to the other. In other words, both quantitative and qualitative data could be collected within the same period, but with the quantitative data being the primary contribution to the research work, or quite the opposite. Correspondingly, this design may offer a rich amount of data in a short time, yet it also becomes subject to a variety of limitations that emerge from both qualitative and quantitative methods. In summation, it is crucial to advise that there should always be evidence and justification for the choice of the research approach and design, in order for the researcher to hold a systematic and correct undertaking of the research process.

3.1.4 Data Collection Methods

Information gathering is a means of collecting data that is relevant to the researcher’s work, either through primary or secondary sources. Data collections methods can be of a qualitative or a quantitative nature. The distinction is solely made on “the restrictions imposed

on flexibility, structure, sequential order, depth and freedom that a researcher has in their use during the research process” (Kumar, 2011, p. 132). Building on that, qualitative research methods tend to be less concomitant with the aforementioned considerations, as it is less systematic. Contrarily. Quantitative data collection methods tend to favor the said limitations. In the same line, data collection methods, in general, can take the forms of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, tests, and so on. The choice of a data collection method is made after identifying the purpose of the study, as well as the research aims and questions. The data collection methods incorporated in this chapter are those adopted in this research project, namely questionnaires, tests (pre-posttests), and interviews.

First, questionnaires are the most widely used information gathering methods in research. According to Cohen et al., (2018), questionnaires can be unstructured (using only open-ended questions), structured (using only close-ended questions), or semi-structured (using both open-ended and close-ended questions). A common belief shared by most researchers is the fact that questionnaires are easy to administer and analyze, and are capable of gathering a large amount of data in a relatively short time. However, this assumption is counterbalanced by the fact that questionnaires are also criticized for their validity and reliability (Dörnyei, 2007). Moreover, tests are used to gather data that are numerical in nature. Cohen et al., (2018) note that “tests can be used to compare students: to see if a student has achieved a particular fixed criterion” (p. 663).

Another commonly used data collection method is the interview. Kvale (1996, p. 11) advocates that “the interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulatable and data as somehow external to individuals” (as cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p. 506). Interviews are a social interaction between two or more individuals, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomena, or answer rising questions in any field of inquiry. According to Kumar (2011), semi-structured interviews are mostly used in educational

research, because they combine the properties of both structured and unstructured questionnaires. The combination of these features allows to gain a large amount of data in different ways. However, interviews can generally be subject to bias and subjectivity, they are time consuming, and may require substantial efforts from the part of the researcher.

Overall, data collection methods should be selected based on the nature of the study, corresponding with the research questions and the aims set beforehand by the researcher. Any random selection of the information gathering methods oftentimes leads to the discreditation of the study, as the process of outlining a methodological framework needs to be a top-bottom process (that is beginning from the nature of the study to reach the data collection methods), and not a bottom-top process (that is the opposite of the latter).

3.1.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The process of analyzing data should be taken into serious consideration by those conducting research. As it differs from the rest of the theoretical chapters, where the researcher collects and synthesizes information, it is oftentimes regarded as one of the most difficult stages when carrying out research. Therefore, one should know enough about the ways in which different types of data are analyzed properly to ensure the easy-goingness of the procedure.

Qualitative data analysis, according to Stirling (2001), occurs within three sequential stages, namely the reduction of the text, that is cleaning the data from any flawed or irrelevant information, the exploration of the text which allows the researcher to delve into the interpretation of the text in a more subjective context, and finally, the integration of the exploration (as cited in Akinyode & Khan, 2018). In other words, qualitative data can primarily be cleaned by means of reading and/or listening. Following that, for the data to be ready for analysis, it should first be transcribed and then codified. This process facilitates the organization of the codified data into separate themes, which eventually leads to the identification of

connections between the selected themes and develop final categories. The aforementioned sequential steps, at last, lead to drawing possible answers to the questions under investigation.

Other qualitative data analysis procedures include content analysis, thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis. Content analysis is a process whereby the codified data are henceforth summarized and reported by means of the message they intend to deliver. In other words, content analysis is a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination, replication, inference, and verification of the contents of written data (Gläser & Laudel, 2013, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p. 674). Thematic analysis, addedly, concerns itself with the identification of themes in data sets, which later facilitates drawing relationships between the themes. As Aljohaylan (2012) asserts, thematic analysis allows for gathering diverse concepts from the current research work and comparing them with others in different contexts.

Nevertheless, quantitative data are analyzed by means of statistical measures, and are completely different than those of the qualitative data analysis procedures. Dörnyei (2007) argues that quantitative analysis is “more straightforward in this respect than qualitative data analysis because here there are well defined procedures, guided by universally accepted canons” (p. 197). In depth, this type of data is analyzed using inferential and/or descriptive statistics. The latter does not infer any parameters, but only report what has been calculated. This includes the calculations of the mode, median, mean, range, variance, standard deviation (Cohen et al., 2018). Contrarily, inferential statistics, as the name suggests, aims to infer possible explanations based on what has been found at last and predict causation. Such statistics include hypothesis testing, regression and multiple regression, difference testing (E.g., t-tests and Analysis of Variance), factor analysis and structural equation modelling (Cohen et al., 2018, p.727).

3.1.6 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the selection of a miniature entity to represent an even larger entity. Amrate (n.d.) defines sampling as “the process of selecting individuals to form a sample that will estimate the characteristics of the whole population” (p. 1). Normally, there are two types of sampling techniques in research methodology, namely probability and non-probability sampling. The first type indicates that all the participants of the chosen population have equal chances of being selected to contribute in a research work. This type includes: random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, and systematic sampling. Contrarily, the non-probability sampling indicates that the participants do not have equal chances of being selected. This includes convenience sampling, voluntary sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling, and purposive sampling (Amrate, n.d.).

3.2 The Research Methodology for this Study: Choices and Rationale

In this section, a more detailed account of the carefully-taken decisions in this research project is presented. In other words, a discussion of the adopted paradigm, approach, and design will be provided in order to justify the choices of the data collection methods, as well as the data analysis procedures. By doing so, we give references to the first section of this chapter, that is the theoretical background of research methodology, to defend our choices in the following one.

3.2.1 The Research Paradigm

As any successful research has to interwind with specific ontological and epistemological beliefs which set the grounding floor for the research paradigm, approach, design, and methods. Therefore, the current research work is carried out from a pragmatic lens. Abiding by the selected paradigm stemmed from the nature of the problem under investigation, as well as the research questions and aims. In precise terms, the purpose of this research work is to explore the reality of strategic competence and its relation to the insufficient level of oral

proficiency. Addedly, it seeks to measure to what extent can the teaching of oral communication strategies improve one's oral proficiency and deter communication breakdowns.

3.2.2 The Research Approach

The research approach of this study is a mixed-methods approach. This particular type has been opted for due to the nature of the problem and the research questions. In precise terms, neither the qualitative nor quantitative research approaches alone would have been sufficient to carry out this study. Aligning with the pragmatist paradigm, a mixed-methods approach has been chosen because the researcher is making use of both qualitative and quantitative research data to fulfill the aims and answer the questions of the current project.

3.2.3 The Research Design

The design of this research project is a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. In this type of designs, the researcher converges between both quantitative and qualitative data for the sake of providing a comprehensive analysis of the findings (Creswell, 2007). In the case of this research work, teachers' semi-structured interviews and the self-report questionnaire were held at about the same time as the students' pretest session. Hence, this design shapes whereby one type of data is secondary to the other; meaning that the main study is primarily on a larger qualitative or quantitative scale, and would use the secondary type of data to support and answer different types of questions.

3.2.4 Data Collection Methods

The process of conducting research should always be outlined in a top-bottom process, meaning that it should initially begin with the nature of the problem and ascend to reach the data collection methods. Therefore, with relevance to this research project, semi-structured interviews, self-report questionnaire, tests (i.e., pre-posttests), and attitudes questionnaire have been chosen as data collection methods.

3.2.4.1 *The Semi-structured Interview*

3.2.4.1.1 Structure and Aim. In order to gain in-depth understanding on the reality in which the context of the study took place, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers of English at Biskra University to inquire about their experience with the concept of strategic competence and communication strategies. It has been mentioned in the literature that this aspect of strategic competence is rather neglected. Addedly, this claim was reinforced by the fact that little to know research on this competence has been detected in the current study context; the concept is neither taught nor hinted at in any of the tertiary level modules. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were held with teachers who had experience in teaching the modules of oral expression, language mastery, as well as those who had experience in teaching modules which required frequent oral presentation. The aim was to gain a better understanding on why the oral involvements of students are not taken into consideration from a pedagogical perspective as well as a socio-pragmatic perspective.

Moreover, it was a must to explore the teachers' opinions regarding the importance of such type of competence and its effects on the contribution of students in foreign language classrooms. The nature of the questions ranged from open-ended to close-ended questions, and included two statements whereby the teachers were asked to express their opinions regarding the quotes presented before them. Table 1 best outlines the aforementioned descriptions:

Table 1

The Interview Items and the Rationale behind their Inclusion

Item(s)	Objective
1	To gain knowledge about the teachers' work experience.
2-3	To check the existence of students who are unable to overcome oral communication breakdowns and understand the factors associated with them.
4	To investigate the adoption of explicit-teaching approach to strategic competence and oral communication strategies.
5-6	To explore the teachers' perspectives towards the need for explicit teaching and practice of oral communication strategy use, as well as the necessity to provide real-life setting to facilitate their learning.
7	To discover the teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of strategy-training programs.
8	To invite the teachers to provide any suggestions or comments which may help in conducting better strategy-training programs in the future.

3.2.4.1.1 Piloting and Validation. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, the piloting stage was required in order to identify possible deficiencies prior to its inclusion in the study. This research instrument was both piloted and validated by the supervisor. Therefore, a copy of the semi-structured interview questions (See Appendix H) was handed to the latter in order to present comments vis-à-vis the nature of the questions and the overall sequential order of the questions. Subsequent to the piloting stage, the researcher abided by the supervisor's instructions and rearranged the order of some questions with regard to the purpose of the interview.

3.2.4.2 The Self-report Questionnaire

3.2.4.2.1 Structure and Aim. In order to ground the current research, it was a dire need to administer a self-report questionnaire to the targeted sample (See Appendix I). The stimulus for the choice of this data collection method was the large number of oral communication strategies in the literature; therefore, it was crucial to accustom to the communication strategies used by the sample. In addition to the lack of sources in the context under study, the self-report questionnaire was administered to ensure that the chosen participants did not utilize the strategies incorporated within the strategy-training program. It is important to note that adopting self-report questionnaires aided in gaining quick and direct answers to serious questions emerging when planning the treatment sessions. This questionnaire helped in adjusting to the strategies least used by the participants and was later cross-checked with the literature to validate their effectiveness in foreign language classrooms.

The self-report questionnaire was adapted and adopted from Nakatani (2010), whereby this tool took the format of a table containing 20 statements with yes/no squares by the end of each sentence. Each statement defined a single oral communication strategy using the first-person pronoun "I" to indicate the process of self-reporting one's experience. An example of the statements provided in the table can be elicited as follows: "When I experience a sudden

communication breakdown, I remain silent because I do not know how to compensate for the gap”. Prior to the oral communication strategies table, the students were given two open-ended questions about whether they had encountered the terms “strategic and communicative” competences before. Table 3.2 illustrates the following:

Table 2

The Self-report Questionnaire Items and their Objectives

Section	Item	Content	Objective
1	1-2	Students’ awareness on communicative and strategic competence.	To gain insights on whether the students were taught about the terms.
2	1	Students use of oral communication strategies	To explore the oral communication strategies used by our sample participants.

3.2.4.2.1 Piloting and Validation. The self-report questionnaire used in this research project is an adapted and adopted version from Nakatani’s (2010) article named “Developing an Oral Communication Strategy Inventory”. Therefore, there was no need to pilot nor validate its content since it was not the researcher’s original contribution. The questionnaire was adapted and adopted in multiple other studies in the literature. The reason by such choice was reinforced by the fact that the questionnaire designed by Nakatani (2006) was highly effective and standardized; meaning that the nature of the questionnaire can be used to ground the floor for any research aiming at exploring the communication strategies used in any context.

3.2.4.3 *The Tests*

3.2.4.3.1 Structure and Aim. In the strategy-training program, tests (namely pre-posttests) were needed to gauge the improvement occurring at the level of students' strategic competence and their ability to behave strategically in oral involvements. The pre-test was authentically organized into two main activities:

The first included six main debatable statements whereby the participants worked in pairs; while student A agrees to the chosen statement and defends it for a maximum period of 2-3 minutes, student B disagrees with the statement and argues against it by the same token. This activity mainly targeted the strategies of filler gaps and comprehension checks, and was supported by the fact that the statements were controversial and oftentimes lead to heavy debates. The second activity, however, was mainly designed to measure circumlocution skills, whereby the students were presented with a total of six distinct pictures of daily-life objects and were asked to name them literally. In case of difficulty, the students were urged to describe the properties of the missing word, which directly indicates the level of circumlocution skills in particular and strategic competence in general.

Stepwise, the posttest was designed just about the same way in order to exclude extraneous variables such as affective factors. It was found in the literature that almost all quasi-experiments conducted in favor of teaching communication strategies reserved the same pre-posttest in order to measure the students' ability to communicate without the intervention of affective factors. Any change in the debatable statements or the picture description objects could inevitably lead to an effective deterrent, and this was noticed during the treatment sessions where the students enrolled in conversations about different topics other than the pre-test (See Appendix M).

3.2.4.3.2 Piloting and Validation. The tests were initially piloted and validated by the supervisor. Since the nature of the pre-posttest was merely an oral involvement whereby the participants had to solely communicate, the structure of the tests did not necessitate the piloting and validation by multiple experts in the field; therefore, the only expert who piloted and validate this research instrument was the supervisor.

3.2.4.4 *The Attitudes Questionnaire*

3.2.4.4.1 Structure and Aim. Posterior to the strategy-training program, the researcher administered an attitudes questionnaire (See Appendix J) in order to gain insights on the students' opinions regarding the strategy-training, which took place during the treatment sessions. The students' answers were needed to promote strategy-training programs which usually receive criticism, as well as to gain further awareness on the pitfalls occurring during the treatment sessions.

The questions were semi-structured, ranging from close-ended to open-ended questions, and were dissected into three sections. The first incorporated questions with respect to the students' perceptions about the strategy-training program, while the second investigated on their attitudes towards communication strategies. The last section was about the challenges faced by the participants and the possible future suggestions for the implementation of strategy-training programs. Table 3 better displays the description:

Table 3

The Post-treatment Attitudes Questionnaire and its Objective

Sections	Item(s)	Content	Objective
1	1-4	Students' perceptions of the strategy-training program	To gain further knowledge on the
2	1-5	Students' attitudes towards communication strategies	attitudes, level of satisfaction, and opinions
3	1-5	Challenges and further suggestions	on the implementation of the strategy-training program, as well as the challenges faced in the treatment period.

3.2.4.4.2 Piloting and Validation. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the included attitudes questionnaire, four experts aided in the piloting and validation process of this research instrument. Each expert highlighted a particular flaw within typos (unintentional grammatical mistakes), rearrangement of certain questions, and labelling the sections in a more comprehensive way in order to ensure the clarity of the questionnaire. Contrary to the researcher's expectations, the initial draft of the questionnaire was not as approachable and effective; therefore, by making use of the suggestions made by the said experts, the instrument was rendered more practical by the time it had been administered to the participants.

3.2.5 Data Collection Procedures

Before tackling the data collection procedures in detail, it is noteworthy to mark that prior to commencing the interviews, questionnaires, and pre-posttests, we intended to validate some ethical considerations for the four data collection methods.

3.2.5.1 Ethical Considerations

The process of carrying out research is dependent on the researcher's fixated belief in respecting the ethics code regarding the parties involved in the research work. Initially, this is done through respecting measures of honesty, objectivity, integrity, openness, and carefulness (Gajjar, 2013). Since research is cyclic, it must be conducted in ethical boundaries that ensure the validity and reliability of the reported data. As Gajjar (2013) writes, "many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public" (p. 9). This point induces the requirement of being aware that the way one's research is presented is equally important to what is actually presented.

There are many ways in which researchers can adhere to ethical norms. Ensuring that the participants agree by choice to partaking in one's study is viewed as a first step to do so. Addedly, ensuring ethics can be done by letting them know about the limits in which their responses will be used, such as giving the ways in which their responses will be analyzed and

to what would they contribute to the researcher's work (Hassan et al., 2021). Correspondingly, consent letters were handed to the Head of the Department (See Appendix B) as well as the Head of the Pedagogy Office (See Appendix C) in order to occupy the ICT Laboratory to carry on the data collection methods. Teachers of English and Third-year students of English at Biskra University were also handed copies of consent letters (See Appendix A) in order to sign their approval to participate in the current research project. Besides, all the participants were informed about the process of analyzing the data provided and the extent to which their responses will be used.

Moreover, ensuring ethical considerations when drafting the dissertation is done with regard to protecting the productions of others and making sure not to claim them as one's own. This prevents the risk of conducting scientific theft, also known as plagiarism. Gajjar (2013) reinforces our point by stating that "Most researchers want to receive credit for their contributions and do not want to have their ideas stolen or disclosed prematurely" (p. 9). Therefore, we made sure to properly cite and reference any text that was not originally produced.

Statistically, Type 1 and 2 errors, as well as P-hacking and Publication Bias are misconducts which violate the ethics code and render researchers unreliable for their productions. Type 1 error is the mistake of rejecting a true null hypothesis (false positive), while type 2 error is accepting a false null hypothesis (false negative). Stepwise, P-hacking (also called as significance chasing) is when the researcher falsifies the data analysis procedure in ways that result in the significance of the results. This act can also be done through presenting the data which exclusively generate significant results (Amrate n.d). Publication bias, however, is when the nature of the results influences the researcher's decision to withhold their data and refrain from publishing it, which usually happens in case of no significance of the results. We made sure not to fall in any of these unethical acts by guaranteeing transparency in the making

of this research work. This included justifying every methodological choice, providing a transparent, detailed account for the phases of data collection methods, as well as statistically testing the normal distribution of the results obtained from the pre-posttests. In addition, the transcripts of the qualitative interviews were attached in the appendices (See appendix O).

3.2.5.2 Data Collection Procedures for the Semi-structured Interview

To ensure the validity and reliability of the teachers' semi-structured interview, none of the interviewees were informed on the content of the interview questions. This process occurred within a time span of one month. The dates for the interview sessions are as follows: Sunday, October 16th; Monday, October 24th; Tuesday, October 25th; and Wednesday, November 9th. By the end of the allotted period, four teachers had been interviewed for the sake of exploring the pedagogical reality of strategic competence and communication strategies.

3.2.5.3 Data Collection Procedures for the Self-report Questionnaire

The current data collection method was administered to the students prior to the pre-test session. For the sake of exploring the students' use of communication strategies, 18 participants were gathered in one of the faculty's classes on Sunday, October 23rd. The self-report questionnaire was stapled with a consent letter for each participant. The content of the questionnaire was later explained to the participants who were given one full hour to answer the questions.

3.2.5.4 Data Collection Procedures for the tests

The pre-test session was first held on Sunday, October 30th, in the faculty's ICT Laboratory. First, the 18 participants were divided into pairs of their choice, and were later on divided into advocates and opponents. Afterwards, each pair was handed a statement and was given one minute to generate initial ideas then proceed with the debate. However, the second activity of the pre-test, which concerned picture description was an individual rather than a pair

work activity. Therefore, each participant was assigned two random pictures in which he/she attempted to describe. It is important to pinpoint that, in this activity, the participants were admitted to the classroom one at a time in order to ensure that one participant's answer is neither violated nor influenced by any other participants. The post-test was later held on Sunday, February 19th, and was carried out in the same procedure as the pre-test.

3.2.5.5 Data Collection Procedures for the Attitudinal Questionnaire

The attitudinal questionnaire was administered to the participants on Sunday, March 9th in the faculty's ICT Laboratory. The procedure of administering this questionnaire was about the same as the self-report questionnaire. The participants were gathered in the laboratory and were handed the document coupled with brief explanation of the content.

3.2.6 Data Analysis Procedures

3.2.6.1 Data Analysis Procedures for the Semi-structured Interviews

Since semi-structured interviews were oral in nature, the first step to their analysis is the transcription phase. Verbatim transcription will be used to transcribe the audio recordings via MAXQDA software. After the transcription process, the data will be cleaned then codified, and later sectioned into provisional themes. At last, thematic analysis will be carried out on the said software to make relationships between the categories identified in the coding process.

3.2.6.1.1 Thematic Analysis for the Interviews. In this section, a detailed explanation of the thematic analysis process for the interviews is underlined. It is first a requirement to provide a brief definition of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) who summarized that it “involves the searching across a data set – be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts – to find repeated patterns of meaning” (p. 15). Correspondingly, thematic analysis can be data-driven, meaning that the themes emerge from the data. It can also be

theory-driven, where the researcher has a pre-fixated image of the themes that they are looking for in data set. These types are also known as inductive and deductive thematic analyses.

For the case of the semi-structured teachers' interviews, we conducted a deductive thematic analysis because the purpose of this data collection method was to answer one research question. Therefore, we solely needed to explore aspects which were targeted in the said research question instead of roaming the data set for any possible emerging themes. Another justification for the deductive nature of the thematic analysis is that any other themes which could have emerged in case of an inductive analysis would not have served the purpose of conducting the interviews. Thus, we carried out the analysis procedure with account to what we believed was best to the quality of this research project. As for the steps of orchestrating the thematic analysis procedure, we will explain them through the six steps to doing thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) in their review article, which are as follows: Familiarization of the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining the themes, and producing the final report.

In the first step, that is familiarizing one's self with the data, verbatim transcription of the interviews was conducted using MAXQDA, then extensive and repeated readings were carried out to infer meaning and gain a general insight on the content of each interview prior to the coding phase. Posterior to the first step, we initiated the coding process using MAXQDA software by assigning general codes to different segments of the data set. This step is also known as open coding, where there exists a considerable number of provisional codes which may later be reduced in the process of axial coding. In the selective coding phase, we identified five main selected codes which were as follows: Teaching communication strategies at Biskra University, Teachers' experience with communication strategies, Practical explicit teaching of communication strategies, Students facing communication breakdown, and students fixing communication breakdowns.

In quest of searching for themes, that is the fourth step, we sorted the selected codes into initial themes which served the purpose of conducting the interviews. Then, we reviewed the themes to make sure that the codes have been upgraded to themes accurately. We came to conclude the fourth and fifth steps by having three main themes, which are: Teaching strategic competence at the tertiary level, The Focus on explicit teaching of communication strategies, and Awareness. In this stage, we strived to define each theme based on the data provided as well as the purpose of the interviews. This systematic procedure helped in the conduction of detailed, organized, and transparent thematic analysis which contributed to the reinforcement of the qualitative data and the enrichment of the observed gap on teaching strategic competence and the notion of awareness and explicit teaching at Biskra University. Finally, the final report of the themes was drafted with references to the transcripts as a way to quote the participants and add more strength to the argumentation and analysis (See Chapter four for more details).

3.2.6.1.2 Analyzing Qualitative Data Using MAXQDA. Computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data strengthens researchers' argumentation due to the wide array of backup this software, and many others, offer. The latter is user-friendly, does not require a complex experience in technology, and was of a great help in the recording and analysis of textual and audio data. As audio files are uploaded into the software, each interview audio record will be manually transcribed in a separate worksheet, which displays a host of features such as: speech speed, rewind speed, spelling checker, preferred fonts, size, bold, italics, and so on. The transcription process is relatively faster and more convenient using MAXQDA due to the facilities offered by the latter.

The coding process, in addition, takes less time compared to manual coding. The software allows for the creation of an infinite number of open codes by assigning to each of the latter a separate name and color. It also provides an easy axial coding, by allowing the user to "merge" themes of close proximity. At last, it permits the user to delete any irrelevant code

which may not be in relation to the officially selected codes. By the end of this step, the main selected codes will be upgraded to themes in accordance with the research questions of this study, and will later be prepared for thematic analysis. The software also provides the option of merging projects for the purpose of generating initial themes. Since we are working on four interview transcripts, one at a time, different codes will be generated in each interview. By merging the four projects together, the codes will also be merged in one worksheet. Then, we will strive to carry out selective coding to eliminate any similar codes.

What caught our attention as a facility in this software, especially for ambitious researchers aiming at pursuing their research within the same umbrella, is that MAXQDA can export a “codebook” which contains the main selected codes in word format. This codebook can be saved, referenced, or edited when needed in future projects, especially pilot studies. The final report of the analyzed data can be visualized in concept maps, graphs, and statistical representations and then exported in different formats such as Excel, PNG, Word, and so on.

3.2.6.2 Data Analysis Procedures for the Self-report Questionnaire

The self-report questionnaire data will be inserted in Excel, since it only includes binary questions. After the entry of the data, we will calculate the frequencies and percentages of each questionnaire item. Then, each statement will be presented in a table displaying the calculations mentioned above, and an analysis of the answers will be provided. The questionnaire item regarding the oral communication strategy use, however, will be presented in both graphs and tables, in order to give more clarity to the data. In addition, open-ended questions will be quoted in the analysis procedure to back up our claims on the findings.

3.2.6.3 Data Analysis Procedures for the tests

The initial phase of the analysis process is to assess the performance of the participants in the pre-test then the post-test sessions according to the marking grid (See Appendix N). In

this Stage, the researcher will count the frequency of each communication strategy at a time then assimilate a number to each communication strategy use. Repeated strategies will not be included once used more than twice in the same utterance. Then, the pretest and posttest marks will be compared by means of descriptive statistics, namely the mean of each test, the mean difference, and the standard deviation. Moreover, the results will further be tested using the one sample paired t-test to ensure that the occurring improvement (indicated in the mean difference) is due to the treatment implementation. At last, the Shapiro-wilk test of normality will be carried out to ensure that the data are relatively centered around the mean, indicating the normal distribution of the data.

3.2.6.4 Data Analysis Procedures for the Attitudes Questionnaire

The attitudes questionnaire data will be inserted in SPSS, including binary and multiple-choice questions in order to calculate the frequencies and percentages of each questionnaire item. Then, each question will be presented and visualized with a table displaying the calculations mentioned above, and an analysis of the answers will be provided. As for open-ended questions, they were included as quotes in order to back up the objectives of each questionnaire item. At last, a holistic analysis of both textual and numerical findings.

3.2.7 Sampling Technique

The population for this study constitutes of third-year students, as well as oral expression and language mastery teachers at Biskra University. The rationale behind the choice of third-year students of English was the fact that they make a middle-ground sample. While first- and second-year students do not encounter the term strategic nor communicative competence in their courses, master one students were not much available due to their loaded timetable. Therefore, third-year students (n= 18) were thought to be the perfect choice for this study. Moreover, teachers of oral expression and language mastery (n= 4) were selected because this particular type of competence can primarily be addressed in oral expression and language

mastery sessions. In summation, this study followed a purposive sampling technique for the aforementioned justifications.

3.3 Study Description and Rationale

The problem in this research work stemmed from the researcher's own observation and experience. On the one hand, given the researcher's occupational background, that is teaching English as a foreign language, we have noticed that learners were often hindered by sudden stutters and oral slumps when they were asked to elaborate on a certain concept or point. These breakdowns were not fully concomitant with neither the learners' low proficiency level, insufficient vocabulary capacity, nor reluctance towards basic grammatical rules. The learners often argued that they sometimes fail to reach the desired utterance even when they have a firm knowledge of grammar and a considerable number of words in their lexicon. When their speech is interrupted, learners had no clue about how to recuperate it once lost.

That is why we believe in the potential of teaching communication strategies to equip learners with the needed devices to save their own communication, learn how to argue successfully, and bridge their communication gap. Raising learners' awareness towards the varied communication strategies is of paramount importance, especially when done thoroughly. Addedly, given the newness of this aspect in the Algerian-context, we hoped to add more contextually-varied data to the existing literature through replicating what has been experimented overseas.

This study encompasses a strategy-training program which aims at teaching third-year students of English at Biskra University two compensatory strategies and one time-gaining strategy that are *Circumlocution*, *Comprehension Checks*, and *Use of Fillers and Hesitation Devices*. This program is mainly based on an authentic mini syllabus designed by the researcher. The syllabus is be adopted from Dörnyei's (1995) strategy training program. The program spanned for eight weeks in total, was divided into one session per week, and one hour per

session. Owing to the fact that this study follows a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. A pre-test, treatment, and posttest were carried out on the chosen sample. First, the participants completed a self-report questionnaire to adjust to the needed corpus. Then, in the pre-test, the subjects participated in a pair-conversation whereby they were given five minutes to talk about formal and informal topics briefly enough to analyze their speech rate and incorporation of communication strategies.

Adjacent to the treatment, the researcher carried out an interview with three teachers from the department of Languages and Literature at Biskra University to learn more about teachers' experiences with teaching CSs in foreign language classrooms and their attitudes towards strategy-training programs.

3.3.1 The Treatment Implementation

The first phase of the treatment sessions included the design of a miniature syllabus to be systematically followed during the training program. This Syllabus comprised of the number of sessions allotted for the training as well as the content of each session, the nature of activities, as well as the order of the lesson plan. This syllabus was initially validated by the supervisor, and was eventually adopted in the treatment sessions. The second phase consisted of the administration of a self-report questionnaire to ground the floor in the context of study. Building on that, this step sought to:

- Explore the context of study in relation to awareness on the importance of oral communication strategies in the academic context as a tool for maneuvering conversations in a more natural manner. The participants were asked about their prior knowledge concerning the use and importance of having a well-developed level of strategic competence.
- To investigate which oral communication strategies are employed by the participants in order to adjust to the needed ones during the treatment sessions.

- To avoid conducting a strategy-training program on strategies that are already used by the participants.

The third phase of the treatment stage concerned the implementation of the strategy-training program. Three lesson plans were authentically designed by the researcher. This step was carefully operated whereby the researcher dedicated serious efforts to provide real life examples of native speakers using the exact three strategies in their daily lives in the most natural setting. The videos were selected from movie clips and YouTube Shorts as well as YouTube videos of native American YouTubers, and were attached by the end of each lesson plan in the form of a link. The full lesson pack was later on emailed to the participants in order to check the audio-visual materials when needed. During the treatment sessions, the researcher emphasized on raising the participants' awareness on the importance of using oral communication strategies as part of their strategic behavior.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to discuss the main methodological considerations taken into account in this research work. We intended to follow Creswell's conceptual framework and begin from the very philosophical perspectives to research to the very practical ones, starting from the ontological and epistemological roots of methodology with regard to the paradigms, approaches, designs, and finally to the methods. In addition, a detailed section on the methodology of this study was drafted; The choices made by the researcher in the endeavor to conduct this training program, and the rationale behind those decisions. Addedly, the paradigm, approach, design, data collection methods, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures were further elaborated with reference to key ethical considerations.

The following chapter will be dedicated to data display and discussion. In the said chapter, the collected data will be presented and subsequently analyzed using the appropriate procedures. Building on that, the following chapter is reserved for the synthesis of the findings with regard to the research questions and aims posed at the beginning of this research project.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four: Fieldwork, Data Display, Analysis, and Discussion

4.1 Findings of the Study

4.1.1 The Semi-structured Teachers' Interview

4.1.1.1 Bounding the Study

4.1.1.1 Reporting the Semi-structured Interview Data

4.1.2 The Self-report Questionnaire

4.1.2.1 Reporting the Self-report Questionnaire Data

4.1.3 The Test

4.1.1.1 The pre- and post-test results

4.1.1.2 The paired sample t-test

4.1.1.3 The Test of Normality

4.1.4 The Attitudes Questionnaire on the Effects of Strategy-training

4.2 Discussion and Synthesis of the Findings

Conclusion

Introduction

With account to the previous chapter on the theoretical framework of the research methodology, as well as the rationale behind the choices of this research project's methodology, this chapter indicates the steps that go into the display, analysis, and discussion of the data with regard to this study. Initially, this chapter introduces a holistic picture of the researcher's endeavor to explore the reality of teaching communication strategies with reference to strategic competence, as well as measure the significance of strategy-training programs in improving learners' oral proficiency and reducing communicative breaks.

Building on that, this chapter will be segmented into two main sections. The first will be reserved for the presentation of the data gathered from the semi-structured teachers' interviews, semi-structured self-report questionnaire, the tests, and the semi-structured attitudinal questionnaire. This step is done through the conduction of deductive thematic analysis on the data analysis software MAXQDA, as well as taking measure of both statistical and descriptive analyses alongside visual reports.

The second section, however, will be devoted for the discussion and summary of the research findings, which will be achieved through coalescing previous studies with the current research work in order to answer the research questions. Following this gradation, we hope to make sense of the inquiries raised at the beginning of this research project by means of both qualitative and quantitative procedures.

4.1 The Results and Discussion of the Findings

In an effort to provide a methodological framework for this section, it is worth noting that this study follows a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. In this respect, the data collection methods were operating at one holistic phase instead of sequential convergent phases. Simply put, the qualitative data in this study served to provide an enriched description of the

population. Hence, the quantitative aspects of this study, as a primary method, were supported by the teachers' interviews and semi-structured questionnaires as a secondary one. In this section, the order by which the data collection methods are presented is based on the researcher's decision to provide an exploratory overview of the problem under investigation prior to the presentation of the primary data.

4.1.1 The Semi-structured Teachers' Interview

4.1.3.1 Grounding the Study

The semi-structured interview was organized in the ICT Laboratory at the faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages, Biskra University. The interviews took place in the following order: Teacher A: Sunday, Oct 16th; teacher B: Monday, Oct 24th; teacher C: Tuesday, Oct 25th; and teacher D: Wednesday, Nov 9th. The informants of this study were four teachers of English at Biskra University. The interviewees have taught oral expression and language mastery modules for more than five years. The rationale behind choosing these specific modules is that oral communication strategies (OCSs) are mostly utilized when the student's talk time (STT) is longer than teacher's talk time (TTT). Hence, it is in these modules, and especially oral expression, that the notion of strategic competence is allegedly introduced, instructed, and practiced.

Building on that, we conducted these interviews in order to gain insights on the selected themes which will be displayed in this chapter. In order to account for ethical considerations while carrying out the interviews, "the researcher is obliged to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant(s)" (Creswell, 2007, Chapter Nine). Therefore, in order to protect the informants' rights, we made sure to:

- explain the objectives of the interview verbally and in written format;

- hand-in a written consent letter to each informant to be signed and joined with their credentials;
- notify the informants on the data collection activities (the verbatim transcription); and,
- preserve the anonymity of the informants with regard to the verbatim transcriptions.

Dörnyei (2003) argues that qualitative researchers should provide screen prints of coded categories such as examples of open and axial coding, in order to increase the validity of the qualitative data. Therefore, a code matrix is attached, which entails the major selected codes by the end of the coding process. It should be clarified that the size of the circles indicates where the coded segments are heavily located in each of the informants’ transcripts. Differently couched, the bigger the circle is, the richer the data on that code is provided by the informant. The circles could also be replaced by numbers, indicating the number of times the informants have targeted each code. f

Figure 8

The Codes Matrix

Code System	Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
☐ Teaching CC at UMKB	●	●	●	●
☐ Teachers' experience with CSs (+)		●	●	●
☐ Practical explicit teaching (+) (+)	●	●	●	●
> ☐ Students facing CB	●	●	●	●
∨ ☐ Students fixing CG (+)	●	●	●	●
☐ Students with SC			●	●

4.1.3.2 Reporting the Semi-structured Interview Data

Q01: How long have you been teaching EFL?

Table 4

The Teachers' Teaching Experience

Teachers	Years of Teaching EFL
A	12
B	11
C	08
D	05

As seen in Table 4, the answers retrieved from this question entailed that the informants have been teaching EFL for five to 12 years. Some of them had the experience in teaching at the secondary school prior to the tertiary level, while others enrolled as part-time teachers in language centers. Two out of four interviewees have taught the module of oral expression before, while the remaining two have taught the module of language mastery. Hence, the informants lend themselves a trusted source of data since their prominent presence in the field has surely included the exposure to a variety of students with different levels of competencies and oral proficiencies. In addition, both the modules of language mastery and oral expression, as the names suggest, tend to put a relatively deeper focus on the notion of communication and oral proficiency, which is the umbrella of our investigation.

Q02: Along these years, have you spotted students facing sudden communication breakdowns and were unable to deliver a comprehensible message?

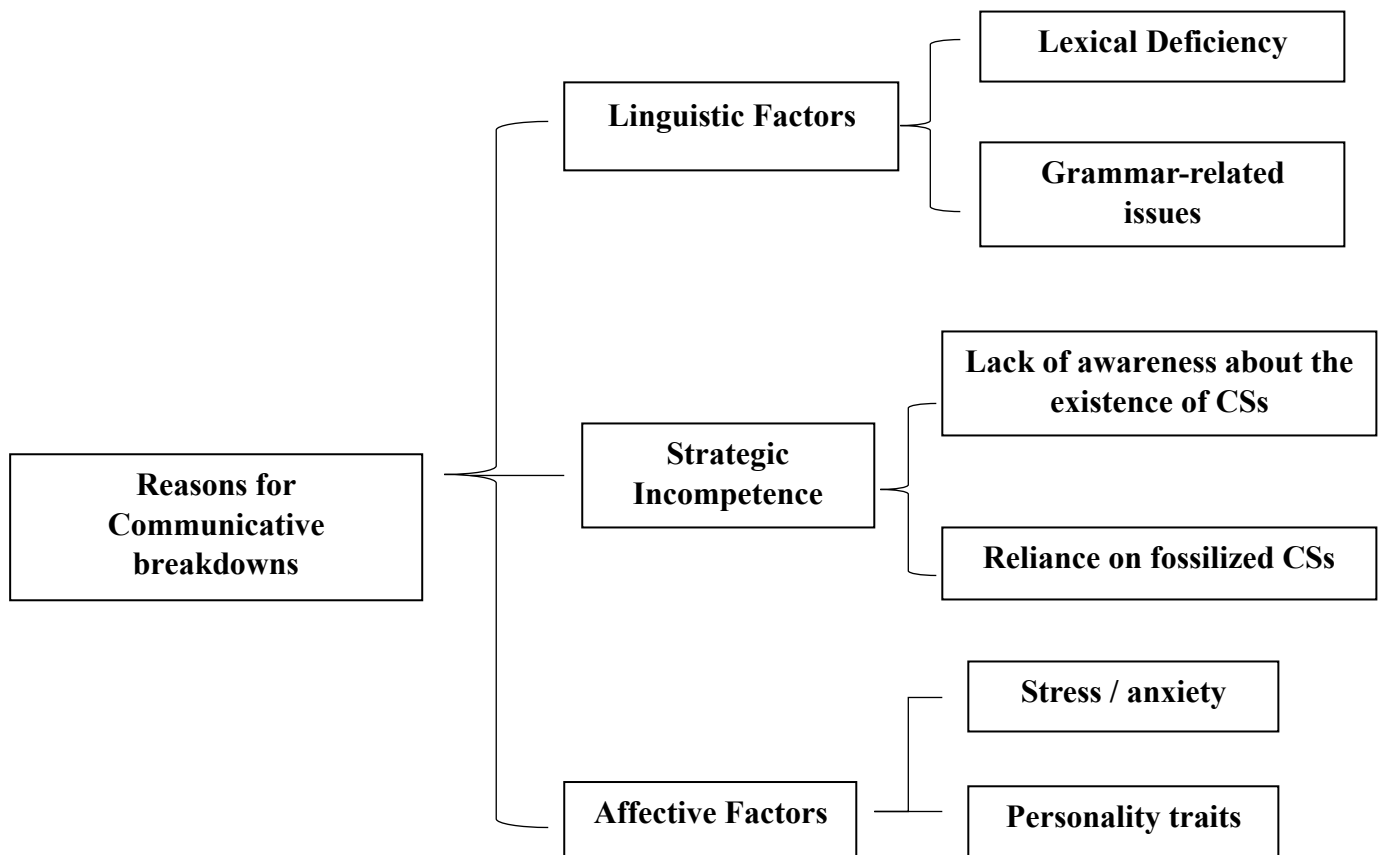
All the teachers answered with “yes” regarding the existence of students who were unable to overcome sudden communicative breaks. One teacher affirmed that this communication breakdown occurs regardless of the gender and/or overall level of the students, and stated that it occurs “at least once in their career”. Another teacher, though, strongly assigned the occurrence of communication breakdowns to males more than females, and claimed that females are more flexible when dealing with such gaps than males. Even though the gender factor is not, by any means, accounted for in this current research project, it will be considered as an intervening variable, which may affect the problem under investigation but will not be discussed further. Other studies within the same research area have conducted comparative studies on the use of CSs among males and females, yet again, this falls out of our interest and it does neither serve nor affect the findings of this study. The remaining teachers coalesced their arguments with their peer-informants and confirmed the fact that not just few, but a lot of students at the tertiary level at Biskra University encounter communicative breakdowns, that is without having the firm ability to bridge the gap and maintain the communicative channel.

Q3: With what factors do you associate sudden breakdowns in communication among EFL students at Biskra University?

Regarding this question, the teachers’ opinions were somehow various and distinct from one another. According to the first teacher, the causes for the sudden communicative breaks were thought to be linked to a combination of both linguistic and affective factors. In this sense, the former is related to the deficiency in language and the lack of syntactic or pragmatic competence, or just facing a lexical deficiency in general. The latter, however, may contribute to this issue in ways such as anxiety, shyness, fear of judgement, and so on. One powerful argument given by the first teacher was that it could also be a personal trait, the fact that sustaining good communication is a life skill more than it is a study skill. The second teacher,

in addition, argued that the affective factors are the product of a breakdown instead of being the reason for it. Differently elaborated, when learners are not equipped with communication strategies which render their speech more natural and backed up, they experience sudden pitfalls which lead to the accumulation of affective factors hindering them from carrying on with their message. Therefore, if a strategic baggage is used to cope with sudden breaks, affective factors may not interrupt the communicative event. Still, this claim should be further investigated and backed by concrete evidence in order for it to be validated.

In the same line of thought, teacher C also agreed on the fact that they may be the affective factors hindering students from proceeding with their message, while teacher D asserted that it could also be the lack of cultural knowledge. The latter stated “because one of the problems in a conversation breakdown is the lack of cultural knowledge- the socio-cultural norms. Since you are exposed to the native-like- here it means that you will be aware”. Building on that, since students may not be exposed to a real-life setting where native speakers use their language in the most natural way possible, it is rather difficult, if not impossible, to acquire the strategic behavior without having a glimpse on how it is acted out in real life. The following model summarizes the major factors to which the four teachers attributed the occurrence of communicative gaps:



Q4: The majority of teachers at the tertiary level, alongside the expected Caneva, claim that communicative competence is being regularly taught at universities with its subdivisions including strategic competence. Do you agree with this claim?

The Informants have provided extremely rich data on this question; therefore, samples of the teachers' responses will be presented in table 4.2 below:

Table 5

Teachers' Responses on Teaching CSs at Biskra University

Teacher	Response Sample
A	In fact- we do not teach this- competence or any particular competence. I think- ... We do not TEACH them- probably we integrate them - we sometimes include them as a part of a feedback- or- uh- part of remarks given to students.
B	When we take a close look at the Caneva and the objectives proposed provided in the Caneva, yes, they all promise of providing the perfect strategic training, but when it comes to the practical applications of the objectives of the Caneva, we may face here a kind of a breakdown. They keep teaching theory but the strategies themselves no- ... They don't live the experience. They don't give concrete examples. they don't make concrete tasks, practices, in real life situations, because this is what makes the real change.
C	I do agree that it is implemented, but is it obviously implemented? And are you aware of it? ... but are you really yourself reflecting on it? And are you having your students reflecting on their competence... Explicitly I don't think so, no. Are they teaching the strategies? No. they don't... you may have me agreeing to this, and you may have another one disagreeing to this, and they say "I already do that". But, if you are doing it, why are we not getting results?
D	I agree that it exists, but how is it applied- the problem lies in how it is applied. and the other problem is are all teachers aware about what is this communicative competence or not? Are they professionally well-trained? It is not only about knowing the theoretical part ... We have to know HOW to- and we take what is called in teaching, and- I always stress this- risk taking, I have to try, I have to apply, okay? Here, how we are teaching it is wrong ... we are teaching pure grammar (linguistic competence), we are focusing on the linguistic competence.

All four teachers confirmed the first hypothesis posed in this research work which assumed that EFL teachers at Biskra University often neglect teaching strategic competence, primarily due to the lack of materials alongside the unawareness of its importance, and the proper manner to teach it. As this question was the main prompter to opt for the teachers' interviews, the necessity to explore the reasons behind the reluctance towards teaching CSs and SC (Strategic competence) was at last achieved. It has been deduced that teachers refrain from teaching communicative competence in general and strategic competence in particular due to the following cumulative reasons:

- Some teachers lack the expertise to implement the practicalities of communicative competence given the lack of training and perhaps diverse knowledge on the current digital teaching strategies. The latter provide easier access to audio-visual data, mimicking a real-life interaction in the target language.
- The scarcity of teacher collaboration oftentimes contributes to the development of a rigid teaching methodology, where every teacher conforms to his/her own preferences without the need to vitalize their approaches to teaching. Students in this case are the victim of such philosophy because they do not receive the proper awareness on strategic competence in communication.
- Many teachers at Biskra University are unaware of this type of competence, that is strategic competence. This claim is backed up by the fact that none of the interviewed teachers failed to provide rich data into the nature of this competence and its importance in foreign language classrooms, mainly during oral interactions. Therefore, only abstract, and rather superficial accounts for the communicative aspects of language are allocated to at the tertiary level.

Q5: Tarone (1981) stated that, “Students not only need instruction and practice in their overall skill of conveying information using the target language; they also need instruction and practice

in the use of communication strategies to solve problems encountered in the process of conveying information” (p.124).

To what extent do you agree with this statement based on your own experience?

With close relevance to this research question, the focus was on raising awareness to the notion of the explicit teaching of communication strategies at Biskra University. The order of the fourth and fifth questions was done on purpose while designing the interview questions in the initial stage of preparing the data collection methods. Since we anticipated that teachers do not teach about neither strategic competence nor communicative strategies, we intended to follow up that question with inquiring about the need to explicitly introduce these notions to students. All the informants agreed upon our suggestion, and have provided satisfactory evidence on the importance of the direct and explicit instruction of the said aspects of language. As teacher A uttered, “For sure- yes. You know the teaching of things remains as just knowledge. We need a further step to transfer that knowledge into something um- concrete as a skill.” Building on that, we proved another point imposing the emphasis on communication strategies, not only from an instructional point of view, but rather from a practical one.

Furthermore, teacher B shared the same perspectives and stated that “CSs are the starting point of language mastery and success. I told you that it's a crucial component of communicative competence. I am emphasizing here the word "natural" way; I told you- the starting point to when we say language mastery here, we refer to all aspects of language, including communication which is the pillar”. After this, it was crystal clear that the awareness about the dire need for reforms in the instructional methods in the context of our study is rather passive; It is known and recognized, but not really taken into action. Teacher C confessed that the notion of communicative competence is implicitly included within the programs at Biskra University since it is a language class, yet, what students and teachers really need is a detailed explicit implementation of such aspect of language. Stepwise, teacher D provided a well-said

statement whereby he advocated the use of CSs in oral interactions, and insisted that “It will be as a refuel for them. Okay? So, I do agree to a large extent that if we taught them explicitly whether explicitly or implicitly, it WILL help them”.

Q6: Tarone (1981) argued that, “Street learners, on the other hand, often excel in strategic competence, those who have had the opportunity to develop their second language skills *outside* the classroom are typically able to get their message long before they have developed their native-like grammatical competence” (p. 122). To what extent do you support this claim with reference to the Algerian context?

The informants have also provided rich data on this particular question; therefore, tabulation is needed in order to present diverse opinions which will later on be synthesized.

Table 6

Teachers' Responses on Acquiring Strategic Competence in Real Life

Teacher	Response
A	I mean, sure- if- you are not familiar and if you are not exposed to a certain situation, that situation cannot be a part of your experience. Logic says this. The more familiar you are the better you become in terms of being competent in terms of finding solutions to certain breakdowns.
B	I think that is very true. It's a more natural process and practice, and this is perhaps the problem of those students who are only relying and heavily relying on that formal classroom instruction.
C	I emphasize that you should be aware of the idea that being a student is not limited to you being in a classroom and in the Amphie theater. A big part of it is being it is you being outside, taking whatever knowledge you learn in the classroom and taking the luggage with you outside your house or environment.

D Those who learn authentic language in the street- they are in constant contact with native speakers, in their daily life, how they speak the language, what do they mean exactly by this gesture. To a certain extent, they can overcome and they can speak freely compared to those who are limited.

It is worth noting that concurrent to the process of reviewing the literature, it was noticed that the acquisition of strategic competence was the center of debate among the prominent figures in this research area. Therefore, we strived to gather locally-varied data on the same argument. The teachers' responses were in favor for acquiring strategic competence in the most realistic environment. Teacher B reinforced the claim by stating that it is a "natural process", and therefore requires a natural setting to be learned and mastered. We believe that this reality is not quite offered in language classrooms at Biskra university, and we safely argue as such with reference to the data obtained in question number five, regarding the instruction of CSs at Biskra University.

Q7: What are your thoughts on the argument entailing that teaching communication strategies to EFL students helps them express their ideas in a more active and comfortable way? Given the fact that they are "first-aid" devices working as a temporary solution.

Owing to the fact that this research work is a pilot project for a strategy-training program, it was needed to collect the opinions of EFL teachers concerning the implementation of such program, all through pinpointing the importance of communicative strategies in reducing oral breaks as part of one's strategic behavior. It is also worth specifying that the context in which this research work is operating has not been active around this area of research. Thus, we were urged to inquire about the possibility of welcoming such ambitious initiative in case of its success. All the informants expressed their agreement on the claim that communication strategies are a prerequisite in any successful language classroom. In the same

line, teacher A reinforced the belief that communication strategies are part of one's strategic behavior which is used not only in the classroom, but also in every day conversations in the target language. He followed his congruity by stating that "These strategies should be a part of their ordinary life and survival situations".

Another claim introduced by teacher A was regarding the dire need for communicative strategies in the foreign language classroom. Building on that, he expressed that "students nowadays should be more open to what success in education means. So, it is not only being good achievers in terms of good grades, they need also to be communicatively accurate, fluent; they need to be competent; they need to think pragmatically; they need to also establish the world of work with the word of studying".

Stepwise, teachers B and D shared the same opinion as teacher A, and have provided valuable arguments regarding the pivotal role that CSs interplay along the speech process. Teacher B concluded her statement by arguing that "CSs are the starting point of language mastery and success", while teacher C expressed a relatively distinct opinion from the rest of the informants. As stated by the latter, the instruction of communication strategies has more potential in yielding positive results if implemented at the base of students' educational journey. He further asserted that freshmen students are more prone to improve their oral proficiency level through learning about CSs, since they make what he labelled a "Tabula Raza". This teacher's statement actually corresponds with our belief upon the implementation of strategy-training programs, as they are highly effective when applied over a longitudinal phase, in a formal academic setting, and with the collaboration of teachers.

Q8: Do you have any suggestions/recommendations which might contribute to the betterment of EFL students' proficiency and develop their strategic competence?

Under this question, some interviewees provided their thoughts on what they believed could be a successful activity to implement communicative strategies in language classes, while

some others expressed their interest in learning about how to implement such programs in the said context. Owing to this initiation, their responses have been accumulated in Table 4.4:

Table 7

Teachers Suggestions for the Implementation of Strategy-training Programs

Teacher	Response
A	for example, for beginners, putting them in authentic situations where they need to practice what they have learned. Activities like simulation and role-plays could be very useful to them. Teachers also could find ways how create contacts with their students and natives, especially with the development of technology, this is an excellent way for students to develop their communicative- strategies in general.
B	If I would give some recommendations, I would give them to teacher. If we can recommend teachers at least to do something and initiate a change. This kind of trainings would be of a great effect and an impact if it is done appropriately and efficiently. We can help them raise their awareness, giving them some practical insights just to help them develop their understanding of the crucial importance of this practice.
C	I would definitely love to see and attend classes in which they are implemented. I need to see how. That's probably the question in my mind. How can these strategies be implemented in a live class, and how are you as a teacher going to recognize that this is a communicative breakdown, then how are you going to diagnose it and then suggest a strategy which works for this particular student.
D	I provide my students two examples of conversation where the breakdown could be solved AND another case for example with a breakdown- would you please tell me what the other speaker did to overcome this problem? What expression did he use? What are the techniques? What are the strategies for example? I directly teach them and ask them to apply it.

It could be seen how the informants' perspectives vary in terms of purpose and nature of activities as well as their intentions regarding the strategy-training programs. While some suggested valuable teaching activities, others inquired about the ways in which such programs could be successfully implemented. The latter, again, has proved the point that awareness-raising is a must in the current context, and teacher-training should come long before strategy-training. Another point to elaborate on is regarding the students' endeavors to expand their language abilities outside of the classroom. As most of the informants agreed, students should also strive to develop their strategic behavior through the exposure to natives, not necessarily the direct contact, but even the indirect one through the media could be of an effective strategy as well.

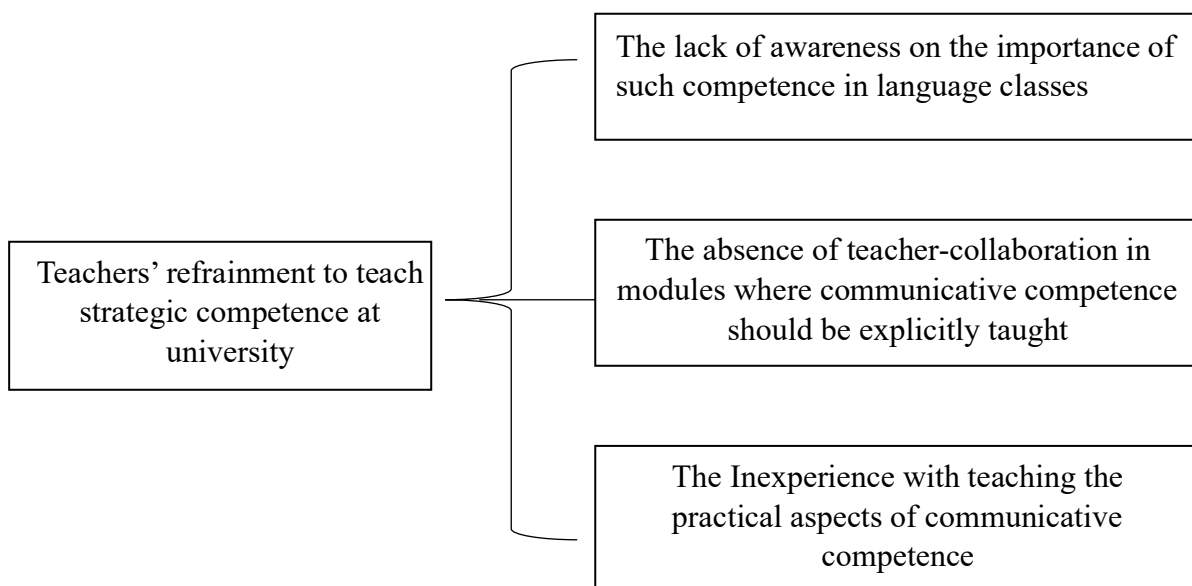
From the overall answers of the questions, and posterior to the coding process, three main themes emerged, and are presented as follows:

1. Teaching Strategic Competence at the Tertiary Level

The "teachability of strategic competence" controversy is seen to be well-rooted in the literature. After the emergence of the term "strategic competence", a host of researchers argued that teachers should teach students about language and not about communication strategies in the belief that they are easily transferrable from one's L1 to their L2. Notwithstanding, many other researchers began to respond to the backlash by conducting strategy-training programs to test the efficiency of the explicit teaching of communication strategies (Dörnyei, 1995; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995; Tarone, 1982; Nakatani, 2006). Along the years, the explicit teaching of communication strategies has become one of the most effective methods to raise students' awareness to the importance of having a developed level of strategic competence in language classrooms. One of the most successful studies was conducted by the prolific psycholinguist Dörnyei (1995), who provided six main approaches to a successful strategy-training program.

It is noteworthy to admit that this theme has also been discussed in the literature review chapter of this research work, and therefore more evidence is found on the raised assumptions.

In the context of Biskra University, neither the explicit nor the implicit teaching of strategic competence is taken into consideration. This claim has been proven by the end of teachers' interviews, as well as the researcher's own academic experience within the same context. The informants attributed the absence of teaching strategic competence in general, and communication strategies in particular, to a number of consecutive reasons. The following model best displays the latter:



As shown in the model, those three main aspects emerged when analyzing the responses of the four teachers' interviews. Two out of four teachers directly stated that they do not teach strategic competence or any other type of competence, and related that to the fact that in oral expression sessions, teacher talk time consumes student talk time and results in generic oral expression classrooms which, as expected, yields negative results on students' oral proficiency. It was also declared by teacher D that the lack of teacher collaboration in oral expression classrooms hinders innovation in this module's syllabi. This particular module has no one

particular syllabus that is followed by all teachers; however, it is an amalgam of oral classroom presentations, plays, and random games which are considered time consuming.

Stepwise, teacher B uttered that the theoretical framework of the Caneva proposes a host of promising pedagogical considerations; it gets more difficult, however, to implement those considerations in a language classroom. We support this claim by quoting teacher B who stated that “when it comes to the practical applications of the objectives of the Caneva, we may face here a kind of paradox”. Moreover, teacher C showed interest in knowing how can strategic competence be explicitly taught at the tertiary level, while the rest of teachers A, B, and D, indicated that they would implement such type of competence if given proper training on how to teach it. This marks our assumption that it was also the lack of experience teaching practical aspects of communication. It was noticed that the tertiary level at Biskra University is theory-laden and contains little to no foci on modern practical approaches to learning a foreign language. Hence, a serious gap occurs in communication among students as a result of reliance on traditional approaches to teaching. To support this claim, one of the core aspects of communication are targeted at later stages of the tertiary level, where the notion of communicative competence is introduced at the third year and the notion of strategic competence at the second master year.

2. The Focus on Explicit Teaching of Communication Strategies

Initially, we presupposed that the core issue with students’ lack of awareness on the importance of communicative competence was the implicit teaching of the latter. Oftentimes, teachers define communicative competence as a reaction to Chomsky’s linguistic competence. Students learn that it is one’s ability to use language communicatively and target social aspects of the latter. However, this knowledge remains just as simplistic, without going into details on what are its components or how important is each component. Let alone going in depth of each

subdivision and approaching it thoroughly. All four teachers agreed that communicative competence should be targeted directly and explicitly, by introducing the concept and delving into the practicalities and importance of such notion.

Likewise, strategic competence should also be addressed the same manner, especially in oral expression classrooms. Teacher B stated that “when we say teaching and training them it's more direct, tangible concrete, let's say”. This quote reinforces our opinion that the sole way to attract students’ attention towards strategic competence and communicative strategies is through the direct and explicit exposure to these notions. One way to do so is by following Dörnyei’s (1995) six main principles to teaching communication strategies (See chapter two). These principles allow for the direct teaching of CSs (communication strategies) from a holistic perspective instead of a broad introduction which has lower chances of achieving significant results.

3. Awareness

Throughout the four interviews, all the informants reinforced our claim that students of English at Biskra University face a considerable number of oral communication breakdowns at different degrees with little knowledge about the ways to overcome them. In the same line, the interviewees accredited the inability to overcome these communicative gaps to different factors. Among the latter was the students’ unawareness about the availability of devices which compensate for language breakdowns. This knowledge can even be missing among some teachers themselves. As teacher D stated, “The other problem is that do all teachers are aware about what is this communicative competence or not? “. In this respect, awareness is lacked from both parts; it is yet the teachers’ responsibility to bring to the forefront the scheme of strategic competence to their students to explore it. Moreover, the teachers confessed that they do not target the notion of strategic competence neither in oral expression classrooms nor those

of the language mastery ones. Such reluctance towards exposing EFL students to real-life scenarios where native speakers manipulate their mother-tongue is one reason why students do not feel comfortable enough when speaking in English.

Besides, Teacher D confirmed that if students are put in situations where they have to detect communicative strategies being used to solve communicative gaps, their awareness about strategic competence will improve considerably. In this regard, it can be understood that students cannot always naturally fix communicative gaps if not taught about how to compensate for breakdowns through the development of their strategic behavior, as this knowledge is only acquired at its fullest during the critical period or when merged within the target language community. In detail, students who have learned English at a younger age or those who picked up a language from its natural habitat have a considerably higher level of strategic competence than those who did not. Therefore, in order to mimic the aforementioned situations, awareness-raising attempts in language classrooms can be relatively as effective.

4.1.2 The Self-report Questionnaire

The semi-structured self-report questionnaire explored the students' use of communication strategies in oral interactions in English; therefore, it is of an exploratory nature serving to ground the study for the primary quantitative data, that is the treatment. It is also worth noting that the self-report questionnaire used in this study was adapted and adopted from Nakatani (2006), and was validated by the supervisor prior to the official administration to the current sample.

4.1.2.1 Reporting the Self-report Questionnaire Data

Q1: “Have you encountered the term “Communicative Competence” throughout your academic experience at Biskra University? If yes, what do you know about it?”

Table 8*Students' Responses on Communicative Competence Awareness*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	29.41%
No	13	70.59%
Total	18	100%

As indicated in Table 8, the majority of students declared that they have not encountered the term “communicative competence” along their educational career, that is three years in total. What we believe may be the reason for this unawareness is linked with the previous method, that is the teachers’ interviews. The fact that the interviewed teachers admitted that they do not teach communicative competence, or any type of competence, could be an educated guess vis-à-vis the students’ ambiguity towards it. What could be paradoxical here is the fact that usually, communicative competence is introduced in the third year at Biskra University. If this is the case, then it would, perhaps, mean that the concept has been introduced too broadly for the students to grasp and develop knowledge about it.

In contrast with the bigger portion of our sample, a few students reported that they were indeed aware of what the term meant. Drawing on that, they stated that it was introduced by Dell Hymes who claimed that social factors influence the use of language. Narrowed down, the reason behind this minority’s knowledge of this aspect of language can be attributed to the fact that our sample was chosen from different groups of the third-year class. Therefore, different teachers may have addressed this concept at different degrees of specificity. It could also be driven by the students’ enthusiasm which led to their extensive reading about this notion. What matters to this research project, nevertheless, is the difference between those who know, and

those who do not. As clearly indicated in Table 4, more than half of the sample did not know much about the term.

Q2: Are you familiar with the concept of “Strategic Competence” given your academic involvement at Biskra University?

Table 9

Students' Awareness of Strategic Competence

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	7.14%
No	17	92.86%
Total	18	100%

The numbers shown in Table 4.5 were not surprising given the presupposition that there was little to no emphasis on this type of competence in our context. This claim has previously been cross-checked when interviewing teachers of English in the same spectrum, that is Biskra University. It was crucial to make relations between the data collection methods in order to strengthen our arguments regarding the implementation of strategic competence at an earlier stage of the tertiary level. Addedly, as indicated in the table, only one student provided a brief definition of what was thought to be strategic competence. We quote the participant’s words as “it’s having a plan or a way to help with your speaking skills”. Although strategic competence expands its philosophy to more than a plan that helps with one’s speaking skills, it was rather impressive to encounter a third-year student with little awareness of the term. The rest of the participants shared absolutely no clue on this notion. It should be noted that this term is mildly

introduced by the end of the first semester of the second master year in our context, and we validate this claim by clarifying that this study is currently carried out by a master-two student.

Q3: In the table below are 19 English oral communication strategies. Which of these strategies do you use in your oral involvement? Please read them carefully then tick the used strategies.

Table 10

Students' Use of Communication Strategies

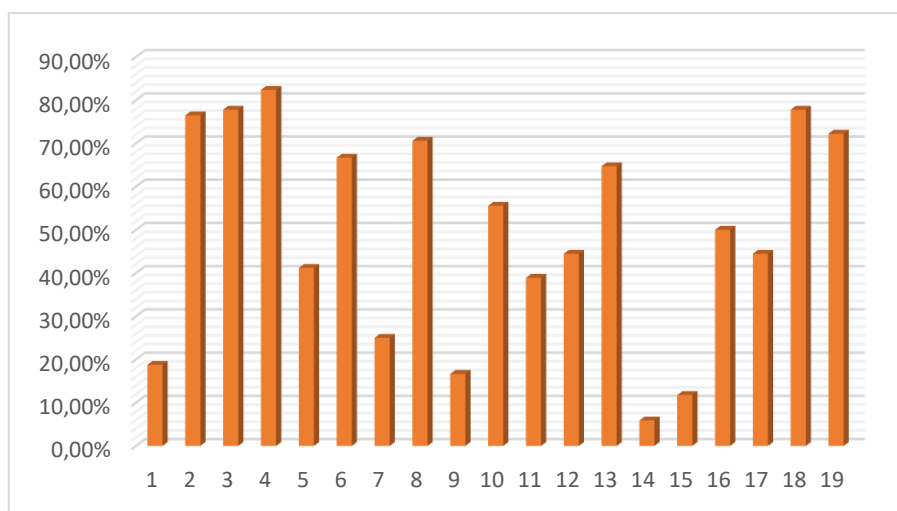
Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Message Replacement	3	18.75%
Self-correction/Repair	14	76.47%
Asking for Repetition	14	77.78%
Use of All Purpose Words	15	82.35%
Self-repetition	7	41.18%
Asking for Clarification	12	66.67%
Message abandonment	4	25.00%
Use of Fillers	13	70.59%
Circumlocution	3	16.67%
Internal Translation	10	55.56%
Omission	7	38.89%
External Translation	8	44.44%
Code-switching	12	64.71%
Word-coinage	2	5.88%
Foreignizing	2	11.76%
Approximation	9	50%

Confirmation Checks	9	44.44%
Mime	14	77.78%
Appeal for Assistance	13	72.22%
Total	19	100%

Table 10 displays the frequencies and percentages of each of the strategies mentioned above. In order to clarify more, we intended to find out which strategies are mostly used by the participants in order to exclude them from the strategy-training program, which was carried out posterior to the administration of the current questionnaire. Figure 4.2 best transforms the aforementioned explanation into the following visual report:

Figure 9

Students' Communication Strategy Use



Based on Figure 9, six out of 19 strategies were reported to be mostly used by the participants with a percentage range of 70% to 80% of the whole sample. Strategies number 2, 3, 4, 8, 18 and 19 are named in the following order: self-correction, asking for repetition, use of all-purpose words, use of fillers, mime, and appeal for assistance. The strategies of self-

correction and mime were regarded predominant in the pre-test session as well. Usually, these strategies are used spontaneously by the students, whether affected by the emotional barriers or not. Besides, the students regularly repeated themselves and used their hands to shape unrecognized objects. However, we noticed that the use of the latter strategy was only limited to hand gestures. Probably the same remark aligned with most of the frequently used strategies, as we noticed that they were used, indeed, but not in a fully-shaped manner. Use of all-purpose words, in addition, has ranked first in terms of the frequency in which it occurred among the participants. 15 out of 18 participants reported that they resort to this strategy when communicating in the English language. Unfortunately, it was not used much when cross-checked with the pre-test session.

In the same line, both strategies of appeal for assistance and use of fillers were reported to be used under the frequencies of 72.22% and 70.59% in the same order. Unfortunately, when cross-checked with the pre-test, none of these strategies were used appropriately. The participants rarely asked for the teacher's assistance and relied more on long pauses, even when given the time to think about what to say. Addedly, they consumed a very small number of filler words and looped them all over their intervention. Hence, their use of fillers still needed a treatment and intervention, so as to incorporate more filler words options into their repertoire for further use. The point from mentioning this point is to negotiate that sometimes, students misdiagnose themselves in questionnaires or interviews; therefore, it is always important to cross-check with other data collection methods in order to deliver accurate data.

4.1.3 The Test

4.1.3.1 The pre- and post-test results

Table 11

The Students' Pre-post Test Results

Student number	The Pre-test	The Post-test
01	6	11
02	8	13
03	7	13
04	8	9
05	3	11
06	4	9
07	5	8
08	4	9
09	6	9
10	9	15
11	8	10
12	8	14
13	7	11
14	6	7
15	6	12
16	6	10
17	9	12
18	4	10

Table 11 reveals the pre- and post-test scores posterior to the assessment of students' implementation of the taught oral communication strategies, following the criteria set in the marking grid. In the pre-test session, the majority of students faced serious issues in mending communication breaks, with little resort to oral communication strategies. It was noticed that in the debate activity, they oftentimes consumed the filler word "uh" and appealed to code-switching and message abandonment. Likewise, in the picture description activity, the participants showed scarce abilities to properly describe objects or concepts. They only provided the context under which the object is used, while neglecting many other important aspects of circumlocution.

However, in the post-test, the vast majority of the sample participants indicated a noticeable improvement in the use of CSs. Through awareness-raising, they employed more varied strategies coherently in their discourse which resulted in a more natural flow of speech. Another remark lied in their ability to use circumlocution strategies in such impressive ways when compared with the pre-test. As an example, three students could naturally provide the type of object, shape, color, texture, and real-life example of an object in the circumlocution activity. Such significance can only be numerically projected through calculating the means of the pre- and post-test and the difference between each. Table 4.8 displays the following:

Table 12

The Difference Between the Pre-post Test Results

Students	Test	Mean	Difference
18	Pre-test	— Xpre= 6.3333	4.3889
	Post-test	— Xpost= 10.7222	

Table 12 clearly displays an existing improvement through the means of both the pre- and post-test. To better illustrate the scores of the pre- and post-test in addition to the difference between the scores of the latter, the following histograms best transform those numbers into visual representations

Figure 10

The Pre-test Scores

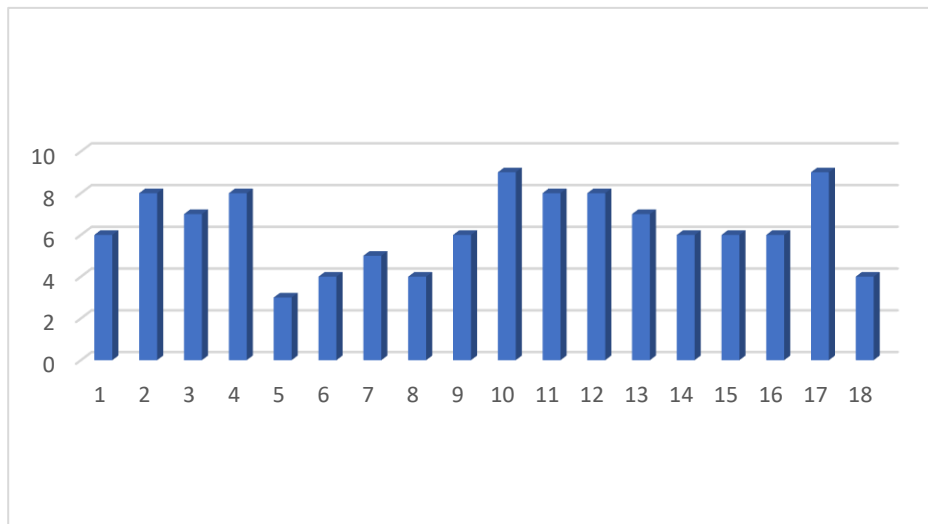


Figure 11

The Post-test Scores

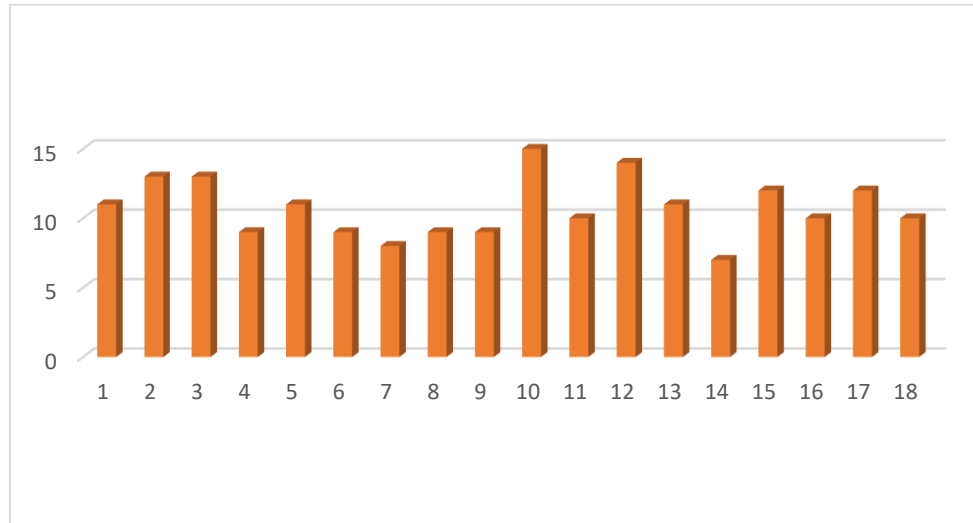
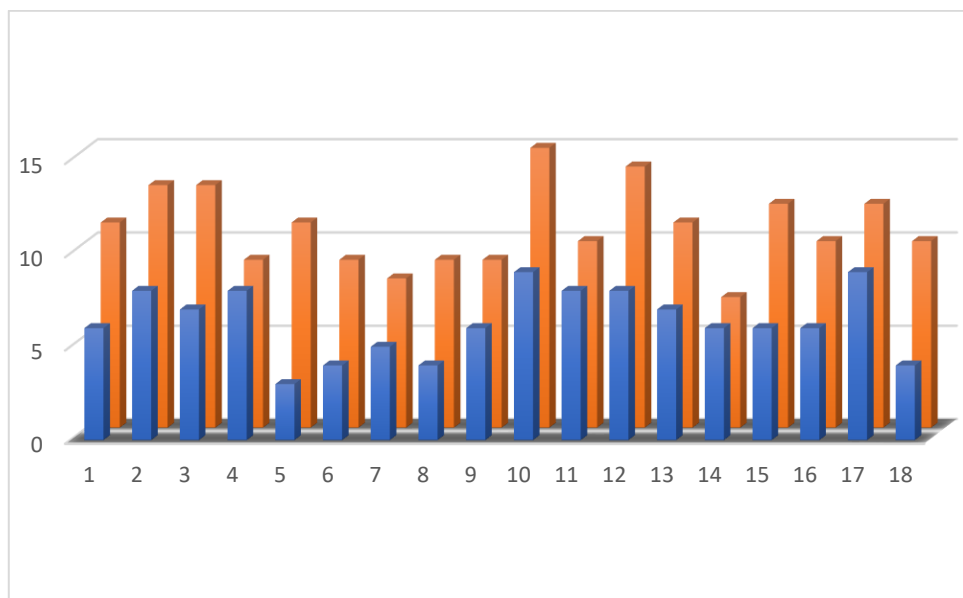


Figure 12

The Difference between the Pre- and Post-test Scores



As the histograms show a relatively significant improvement between the pre- and post-test results, we opted for a paired sample t-test in order to statistically prove the

significance occurring at the level of the post-test. The one sample paired t-test was conducted on SPSS, followed by Shapiro-wilk test of normality in order to ensure that the data are normally distributed around the mean.

4.1.3.2 The paired sample t-test

The paired sample t-test is also called the dependent t-test, and is used when two sets of scores are compared within the same unified group. In our case, that is the pre- and post-test results. Through the use of this test, one of the two hypotheses (the null and the alternative) will be nullified, and the other will be automatically accepted.

- The null hypothesis (H0) assumes that there is no significance and therefore the mean difference equals zero.
- The alternative hypothesis (H1) assumes that there is a significance and therefore the mean difference is higher than zero.

In the same line, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis indicates that the significance occurring at the post-test results is due to the implementation of the treatment sessions posterior to the pre-test session and not due to chance. Hence, the paired t-test was done using the SPSS software and the calculated results are as follows:

Table 13

The Paired Sample t-test

Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	P-value	T-test	Degree of Freedom	Critical Value
—	—	4.3889	0.05	9.729	17	.001
Xpre= 6.3333	Xpost= 10.7222					

As indicated in the table, the t-test value is higher than the critical value for 17 degrees of freedom. According to Field (2009), “If the probability of obtaining the value of our test statistic by chance is less than .05 then we generally accept the experimental hypothesis as true” (p. 53). In this case, the critical value is less than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis entailing that there is a significance of results is automatically accepted.

4.1.3.3 The Test of Normality

In order to provide statistical evidence for the significance of our data, we conducted an inferential statistics test of normality in order to make sure the data are normally distributed around the mean. According to Field (2009), a significance (Henceforth *Sig*) level that is less than 0.05 indicates a clear deviation from normality. As figure 6 displays, the significance levels for both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk are higher than 0.05, which statistically indicates the normal distribution of the data.

Table 14

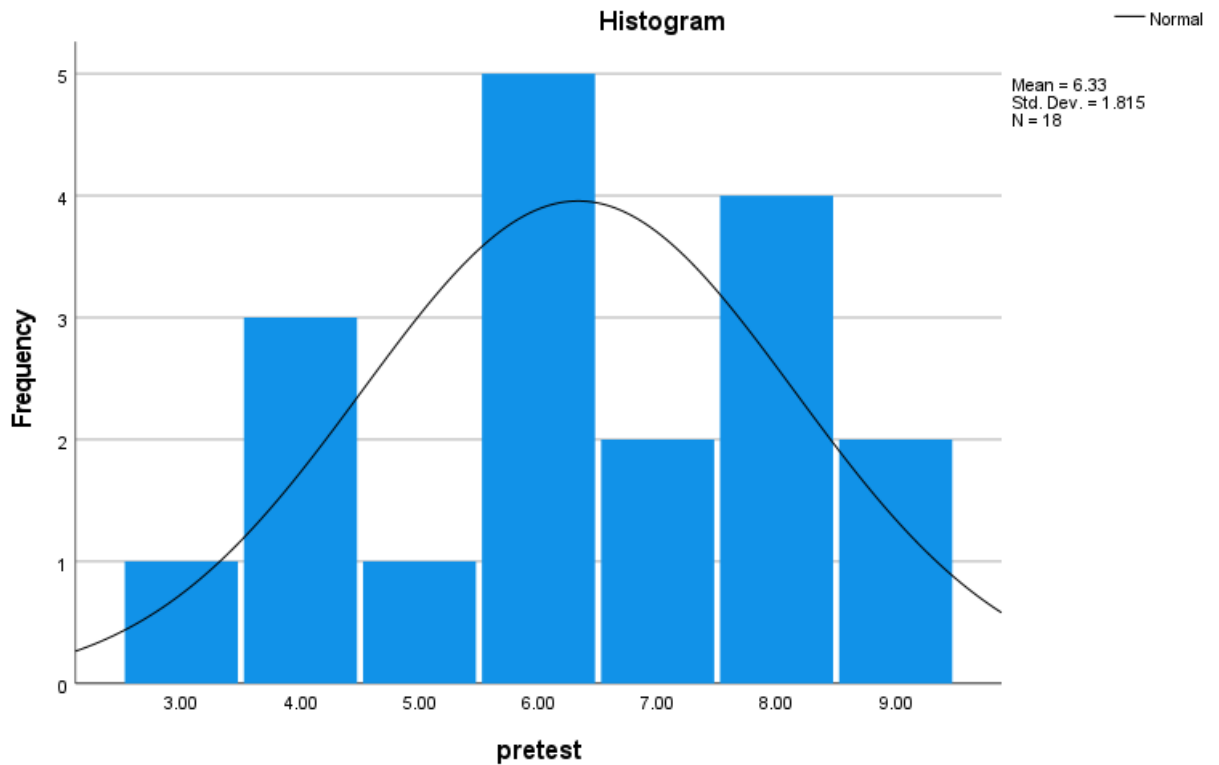
The Test of Normality

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality			
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.936	18	.244

To better illustrate the findings, Figure 13 best shows the normal distribution of the data that are closely centered around the mean.

Figure 13

The Test of Normality



4.1.4 The Attitudes Questionnaire on the Effects of Strategy-training

Section one: Students' perceptions of the strategy-training program

- How satisfied are you with the strategy-training program?

Table 15

Students' Satisfaction of the Training Program

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all satisfied	0	00%
Slightly satisfied	0	00%

Moderately satisfied	2	11.1%
Very satisfied	16	88.9%
Total	18	100%

As displayed in table 15, most of the students' responses leaned towards "very satisfied" regarding the strategy-training program. Only two out of 18 participants have chosen the option of "slightly satisfied", while none expressed their overall dissatisfaction. The main objective of this questionnaire was to gain proper insights on the students' attitudes regarding the strategy-training program. Because this latter is an initiation, as well as an addition, to the current context under which this study is taking place, we strived to make sure that the participants had developed positive perspectives regarding the implementation of such training. Addedly, the results illustrate that the treatment sessions yielded positive and satisfactory results due to the inclusion of authentic audio-visual materials, as well as the application of Dörnyei's (1995) six main principles to strategy-training (See Chapter 1).

- How often have you noticed that communication strategies help in mending communication breakdowns when speaking?

Table 16

The Frequency of Communication Strategies Mending Communication Breaks

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Always	09	50%
Often	07	38.9%
Sometimes	01	5.6%
Seldom	01	5.6%
Never	00	00%

Total	18	100%
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Most of the participants signified that communication strategies help in mending communication breakdowns while speaking in the target language. Similarly, 38.9% of the respondents believed that these strategies often help with communicative breaks, while 50% of the whole sample ensured that it always does. The answers to this question align with previous studies who have reached similar conclusions (Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2006). However, two out of 18 students rendered communication strategies as less helpful with sudden breakdowns in conversations. Although the number of people being neutral around the importance of communication strategies is quite low, it is still crucial to justify that the reason behind such choices may be accredited to the fact that some students were resistant towards the notion of communication strategies. Very few students were fueled by the ideology that CSs are negative in nature, and therefore their use may not always be the best solution. Hence, the findings of this study seek to nullify such stigma towards such strategies and yield in a transformational viewpoint for both teachers and students.

- Do you find the strategies of Circumlocution, Fillers, and Comprehension Checks helpful in maintaining authentic and natural conversations?

Table 17

Students' Agreement on the Helpfulness of Communication Strategies

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	100
No	00	00%
Total	18	100%

In this question, all the respondents advocated for the three strategies incorporated within the strategy-training program. Some of them explained that these strategies “help you to remember and organize your thoughts”, while some others commented that “these strategies are so helpful when speaking to avoid cutting in speech when forgetting the idea”. What could be of an essential point to mention is that during the treatment sessions, the students did confirm the pivotal role of the three strategies when performing in a natural communicative event. Through triangulating the strategies, their speech was rendered less disrupted and more composed. Besides, the treatment sessions could successfully dismiss the stigma around the use of fillers by the participants. This procedure was done by including a set of different filler words that were not recognized by the students, then prompting them to use them alongside the ones that they are used to include in their conversations. The strategies were also seen as “interesting” and “really helpful”.

- Has the teaching of Circumlocution, Fillers, and Comprehension checks helped you in using them in your assignments and oral involvements?

Table 18

Students Agreement Upon the Benefit of Teaching Communication Strategies

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	100%
No	00	00%
Total	18	100%

As seen in table 18, all the respondents agreed upon the assumption that the taught communication strategies were helpful to their assignments. They also showed some impressively positive viewpoints regarding this question. One of the respondents stated that

“after attending the experiment, it became way easier to employ these strategies while presenting. It has fruits, and it made the presentation sound more academic”. We believe that this impression was made after raising the students’ awareness on the importance of these strategies at the tertiary level. This experiment was theoretically split into two main sections: the explicit teaching of oral communication strategies, and awareness-raising against them. Therefore, we believe that both segments have been successfully achieved when cross-checking the test results.

It is also worth to say that being exposed to almost daily oral interactions in front of the teachers or classmates surely puts some pressure on the learners, and oral communication strategies are first-aid devices that are supposed to soothe the communicative tension when it occurs. Another solid argumentation by one of the students was as follows: “in the oral session, I did not prepare my presentation. I only checked only the highlights. When I was explaining a point, I had gaps in my speech and problems in delivering the message, so I used the strategies, and they were really helpful”.

Section two: students’ attitudes towards communication strategies

- To what extent have the strategies of Circumlocution, Fillers, and Comprehension checks affected your strategic behavior and oral involvement?

Table 19

The Frequency of Communication Strategies Affecting the Students’ Strategic Behavior

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very Positively	09	50%
Positively	09	50%
Negatively	00	00%
Very Negatively	00	00%

Total	18	100%
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This question is a follow-up to the previous question in the preceding section. The aim behind such inquiry was to understand the extent to which the taught strategies were implemented in real-life setting. Fortunately, half of the sample voted for “very positively”, while the other half voted for “positively”. The overall answers indicated that the respondents did include the strategies during their oral assignments, and have witnessed a noticeable improvement in their speaking skill in terms of managing communicative breaks. One remark that was cross-checked with the teachers’ interviews is that the interviewees commented that students are often not aware of the existing communication strategies, and solely rely on what they use in their mother tongue as a way of gaining time to think. Therefore, having our sample to implement new strategies in their oral assignments could be considered as an addition to the context under which this project is operating.

- Have you noticed any improvement in your ability to describe what you cannot name?

Table 20

Students Agreement on their Improvement in Using Circumlocution

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	94.4%
No	01	5.6%
Total	18	100%

This question particularly targets the strategy of circumlocution, and the reason behind such direct question goes back to the self-report questionnaire administered prior to the strategy-training. To begin with, none of the participants indicated that they use this technique

when faced with an inability to recall names of objects or abstract concepts. When reverting to the literature, circumlocution, specifically, was regarded a highly effective strategy that should be a prerequisite in foreign language classrooms (See Dörnyei, 1995; Baradeyah & Farrah, 2017).

In the same line of thought, it was observed that the respondents did not use this strategy in the pre-test session, because they did not have enough skills to use it. When attempting to describe certain objects that they could not name, the participants oftentimes stuttered as they could not produce a meaningful descriptive sentence of what they are seeing as an entity. Table 4.16 reveals that the students themselves noticed an improvement in their circumlocution skills. After the treatment phase, it was clear in the posttest that the participants have developed a scheme of circumlocution in their repertoire. They usually started by identifying the type of the object, the color, the shape, the texture, and then proceed to give a real-life context on what it is used for.

- Have you marked any improvement in your ability to gain time to think when you are experiencing a brain fog (a temporary state of inability to concentrate)?

Table 21

Students Agreement on the Improvement of Fillers and Comprehension Checks Strategies

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	100%
No	00	00%
Total	18	100%

This question targeted both fillers and comprehension checks strategies, as all of the participants expressed their agreement that there was a significance in gaining time when

feeling disconnected. One of the respondents indicated “Yes, I do. I have used ‘well’ to gain time and to manage a specific part for my presentation in my mind so I can start immediately”. Drawing on that, we can safely argue that the improvement in such strategies predates to the treatment sessions, where the students were prompted to use comprehension checks as a mediator between one point and another in an oral presentation. They were also prompted to utilize them in situations where the speakers were urged to gain time to think of the upcoming point. The same rule applies to the use of fillers, which was quite fossilized at the beginning of the treatment. Even though a lot of students indicated that they use fillers in their speech, it was rather the use of one or two standard filler words all across their involvement. However, it was noticed that a variety of filler words were added to the students’ repertoire and rendered their use of this strategy more natural and authentic.

- Do you feel that you have developed the ability to detect communication strategies in other individuals’ speech and imitate them in your own conversation?

Table 22

Students Agreement on Developing the Ability to Detect Communication Strategies in Speakers’ Speech

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	88.9%
No	02	11.1%
Total	18	100%

Prior to the post-treatment attitudes questionnaire, the teacher motivated the students to pay more attention to the oral communication strategies employed by fluent speakers of English in different contexts. This request was based on the belief that when students focus on how the

strategies are naturally used by fluent speakers, this may enhance and accelerate their learning process, as well as they would understand why it is relatively easy for some speakers to maintain conversations rather than some others. The results obtained from the table indicate that the majority of the participants have developed the ability to detect oral communication strategies employed by other speakers. The answers to this question presuppose that the students' awareness has been raised against the importance of these strategies in one's oral interaction.

- To what extent do you agree with the statement entailing that “communication strategies reduce affective issues such as stress and anxiety because they offer instant solutions for communication breakdowns”?

Table 23

Students Agreement on the Statement that Communication Strategies Reduce Affective Factors

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Completely Agree	12	66.7%
Mostly Agree	04	22.2%
Slightly Agree	02	11.1%
Slightly Disagree	00	00%
Mostly Disagree	00	00%
Completely Disagree	00	00%
Total	18	100%

Owing to the fact that communication strategies are viewed as speech remedials, it was necessary to confirm the participants' perspectives about these strategies reducing the affective factors as well. There should be a reminder that this question has previously been asked in the teachers' interviews, as it aimed to foresee the teachers' opinions regarding the correlation

between communication strategies and the affective factors. Building on the teachers’ attitudes, it was deduced that the affective factors are a result of communication breakdowns rather than the cause. In the same line, a common belief dictates that communication strategies are the tools by which one’s affective factors are reduced, and the ability to bridge the gap is optimized. Therefore, as the table displays, the vast majority of the participants agreed that communication strategies reduce affective factors due to their facilitative nature. Simply worded, when students are aware of the preexistent knowledge of the oral communication strategies which mend the communicative breaks, the affective factors will automatically be reduced, since the latter are induced by the fear of not delivering a comprehensible message.

Section three: challenges and future suggestions

- Do you feel that your strategic behavior would have improved much better if it had not been for the disconnected treatment sessions due to the winter break and exams period?

Table 24

Students Agreement on Whether their Level Would Have Improved if It Were Not for the Sudden Disconnection

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	77.8%
No	04	22.2%
Total	18	100%

This question was suggested exclusively due to the challenges faced by the researcher while conducting the treatment. As the latter phase was reaching half of the allotted sessions, the winter break, followed by the exams period, disrupted the flow of the training sessions. For that reason, it was alleged that the sudden interruption may have slowed down the learning

process. Indeed, most of the participants voted in favor of our hypothesis, claiming that they would have achieved better scores if it were not for the occurring circumstances. A few other students voted against our presupposition, indicating that regardless of the initial issue, there was still a noticeable improvement in their strategic behavior. It is also worth explaining that online sessions have been scheduled as practice sessions during the winter break, in order to maintain the instructional channel along the training program.

- Did you see that the teacher’s methodology when explaining the lesson was suitable?

Table 25

Students Agreement on the Suitability of the Teacher’s Methodology

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	100%
No	00	00%
Total	18	100%

Through posing this question, we intended to gauge the success of our teaching method which was inspired from Dörnyei’s (1995) six main teaching procedures that are relevant to strategy-training. The latter procedures were introduced by Dörnyei as a counterargument for those rising against strategy-teaching. The six procedures which were incorporated in this research project are in the following order: a) raising learners’ awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs, b) encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs, c) providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs, d) highlighting cross-cultural differences in CSs use, e) teaching CSs directly, and f) providing opportunities for practice in strategy use. The six successive approaches to strategy-training were carefully followed by the teacher along

the whole treatment phase. Fortunately, all the respondents expressed their satisfaction of the teaching methodology.

- Did you feel that the activities included as part of the treatment practice were effective?

Table 26

Students’ Agreement on the Effectiveness of the Activities Incorporated

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	100%
No	00	00%
Total	18	100%

The aim of this question aligns with that of the previous one, that is gaining insights on the students’ perspectives about the teaching method, including the activities used along the training program. To begin with, we intended to bring about different activities which place the learners in a natural English-speaking environment. The first activity was a game called “heads up”. The latter is a famous game in foreign language classrooms whereby students try to give as much descriptions as possible for the person holding the sheet of paper containing the described object to their foreheads. The aim of this game is to induce the circumlocution skills. Another activity was classroom debate, where students were given topics in which they debated with and against each other in an attempt to produce natural speech. Another activity was a free speech exercise. Here, the participants chose topics of their own and discussed them with their peers for no more than five minutes each. These activities were of a serious help to the improvement of students’ strategic behavior, which was proven through all of the respondents agreeing to the proposed question.

- What other challenges did you face during the strategy-training program?

We initially intended to unravel the potential difficulties or inconveniences faced by the participants regarding the taught strategies, the nature of activities, or the teaching method itself along the strategy-training program. Fortunately, there were no complains about the aforementioned aspects. However, one of the participants reported that the time schedule was sometimes unsuitable as it was rather difficult to attend the treatment sessions. It is worth declaring that finding suitable hours to implement the training program was a major challenge for the researcher, as the students came from different groups and it was nearly impossible to arrange sessions that were suitable for all. Another student reported that she faced some difficulties with incorporating different fillers in her speech, and had argued that they need more time to be fully implemented. We can evidence on the participant's opinion by stating that most strategy-training programs are done over a relatively extended period, which indicates that the shorter the duration is, the less likely the strategies are fully integrated for some participants.

- If you have any additional suggestion(s) regarding the implementation of strategy-training programs to improve learners' strategic competence and oral proficiency, please write it/them in the space provided below.

Through this question, we sought to attract students' suggestions to improve the teaching-learning experience of oral communication strategies under the program of strategy-instruction. Since this type of training is new to the current context of study, we aimed at collecting as much opinions as possible from both teachers and students of English at the tertiary level. One of the students commented that "the experiment was really useful; it should have included more students". To elaborate on this point, the supposed number of students selected for the experiment was up to 25 by the beginning of the experiment; however, we had experienced students' attrition even before the pre-test session due to the lack of the collaborative spirit among the chosen sample. In the same vein, a few more students suggested that the strategy-training should be included as an independent course due to the benefit it has

brought to their oral proficiency and strategic behavior. These comments were also given during the treatment sessions, which indicates that strategy-training programs could yield positive results if approached systematically and explicitly.

Furthermore, one student left an interesting comment entailing that more strategies should have been included within this training. Regardless of the fact that including three strategies was a challenge itself given the short time allotted for the experiment, we did consider the possibility of adding more strategies in future projects. The student also suggested that these training programs should be delivered to first- and second-year students as well, especially through the assistance of oral expression teachers since it would be helpful to their oral potentials that they will need as they progress along the years. Regarding this point, the same remark was mentioned in the teachers' interview whereby one of the respondents argued that communication strategies' instruction should be collaboratively done by oral expression teachers in order to witness the real success.

4.2 Synthesis of the Results

As the previous section chiefly aimed at presenting the findings of this study, the current unit is reserved for the holistic discussion and interpretation of the findings. In doing so, it is advised to root back to the research questions to which the data collection methods were chosen to find answers. Drawing on that, the first research question was posed as follows:

- Do EFL teachers at Biskra University teach communication strategies with regard to strategic competence development?

In order to answer this question, the semi-structured teachers' interview was carried out with oral expression and language mastery teachers at Biskra University. By the end of the data analysis, it was concluded that teachers of English at Biskra University do not teach communication strategies explicitly to their students. Supported by the teachers' confessions and remarks, most of the instructors in this context lack the expertise to implement the practical

teachings of communicative competence, especially when this notion is heavily present within the speaking skill. Differently couched, the informants indicated that the method of teaching in this context is theory-laden; it is induced by theory rather than practice in language classrooms. This pitfall dates back to the use of traditional teaching methods rather than being updated with the current ones targeting different communicative skills.

Likewise, having to implement an explicit instruction of communicative competence and its subdivisions in oral expression classrooms is a tough task, given the lack of openness to the different materials which target such aspects of language. Under the context of this study, strategic competence is the target subdivision completely neglected as a vital aspect of the speaking skill. Moreover, a major contributing factor to the resistance towards new teaching approaches is the lack of teacher-collaboration in oral expression sessions. The latter affects the innovation in the syllabus and leads to a manifold, but rather undetailed, teaching practices which achieve little to no significance. All our informants agreed upon this claim and have stated explicitly that there is no collaboration among teachers of oral expression, and therefore, one should not expect revolutionary additions if there is no significant change.

At last, it is of a crucial importance to stress on the fact that many teachers at Biskra University are unaware of strategic competence as a term, and communication strategies as an integral part of the natural authentic speech. Owing to this assumption, the teachers reported that this term is being taught mildly and is not targeted in-depth with regard to its effects on students' oral performance. These findings interwind with the suggestions made by Rababa'h (2005) whereby he stated that "teachers, on the other hand, should be conscious of communication strategies, and they have a variety of techniques to design and implement activities and tasks that are relevant to teaching CSs" (p. 160). It is noteworthy to say that some informants did declare that they were not aware of the existence of such strategies, while some

others argued that indeed, teachers in this context may refrain from teaching communication strategies because they are not trained enough, nor that they have the required method to do so.

In summation, the reluctance towards teaching communication strategies in oral expression and language mastery classes in this context indicates an existing gap in education, which confirms the first hypothesis posed in work. Therefore, awareness-raising is of an essential step to revolutionize the current teaching approaches. In order to facilitate such route towards the instruction of communication strategies, we put at the disposal of researchers and teachers a proposed mini-syllabus which organizes the steps into a systematic instruction of the strategies. Addedly, a compilation of lesson plans pieced with authentic audio-visual materials is also attached by the end of this research project as a reference for a start-up initiation.

- What are the oral communication strategies used by third-year students of English at Biskra University?

We sought to answer this question through administering a semi-structured self-report questionnaire to our sample participants. On the one hand, the findings of this study indicated that most students (70.59%) stated that they are unfamiliar with the term “communicative competence”. This notion is key to the success of language classrooms, and having more than half the sample unaware of it indicates a serious gap in the instruction, and a disequilibrium in theory distribution. Differently put, communicative competence is considered as one of the pillars of any language classroom; therefore, it should be introduced at an earlier stage than third year in order to acclimate students to the concept of communication which, inevitably, leads to developing their strategic competence. On the other hand, almost all the participants (92.86%) were not up-to-date with strategic competence. As stated in the chapter, this subdivision is crucial to the speaking skill and oral proficiency in particular, yet, it is broadly introduced at the master-two year in Biskra University, which is quite at a later stage. The proof

to such claim is that we noticed that the students had serious problems with speaking, and were oftentimes unable to get their message through in the simplest ways.

Addedly, we sought to explore the oral communication strategies employed by the participants in daily conversations in English. The findings displayed that use of all-purpose words (82.35%) was the most used one. Similarly, asking for repetition (77.78%) and mime (77.78%), as well as self-repair (76.47%) were also majorly used by the participants. The use of the latter ones is considered a strategy-transfer from the mother tongue, since they are also widely used in Arabic. Drawing on that, Paribakht (1985) found in his study that strategic competence in one's L1 is transferable to their L2 learning, and hence some adult learners may have a fairly developed strategic competence when attempting to learn a second language. The only downside in this situation is the lack of awareness about the transfer process, because learners need to have a holistic picture about the strategies, as well as the options they have that can be put into good use to improve their communication. This can reduce the incorporation of fossilized strategies such as coded-switching, literal translation, and fillers, and reversely increase the use of a more diverse taxonomy which renders their speech more natural.

It is also noteworthy to point that very few students (16.67%) made use of circumlocution strategy. Many studies advocated for the effectiveness of circumlocution (Dörnyei, 1995; Baradeyah & Farrah, 2017), because description skills are a pre-requisite in foreign language classrooms. Concurrently, a lot of students indicated that they used filler words (70.59%) in their speech; however, when cross-checked with the pre-test, it was concluded that they lacked awareness about the different filler words existing in English and had misdiagnosed themselves in the self-report questionnaire. That is why this type of questionnaire is always advised to be coupled with other data collection methods such as tests or observation. In light of such findings, the hypothesis entailing that third-year students use consumed communication strategies was supported. Initially, it was understood that the use of

fillers was limited to generic expressions as an instant response to a communicative gap, and not as a conscious process of employing communication strategies to solve the breaks. The same remark applies to the top-four mostly used strategies. Therefore, the use of fillers was still included within the strategy-training program alongside comprehension checks and circumlocution for the purpose of awareness-raising.

- Does the strategy-training of circumlocution, use of fillers and hesitation devices, approximation, and comprehension checks have any significant effects on the oral performance of bachelor students of English?

A one-group pre-posttest treatment was carried out in order to answer this question. Regarding the results of the pre-posttests, there was an increase in the scores and a significant improvement in the students' use of circumlocution. The students' ability to describe the properties of objects expanded to include more characteristics such as the type, texture, color, function, and use of the signified as opposed to the pre-test session, where the students barely mentioned the color and shape only. Addedly, there was an increase in the frequency of using fillers and comprehension checks. During the evaluation of the students' post-test performances, the researcher noticed that the students made use of more varied filler words as opposed to the pre-test performances which were characterized by the fossilized use of the filler word "uh". There was also an improvement in the use of comprehension checks which was not used at all in the pre-test session. such findings ensure that the strategy-training program of the three communication strategies yielded positive results on the students' strategic competence. The effectiveness of such significance was tested through the one sample paired t-test (.001) . As a result, the alternative hypothesis entailing that the improvement occurred due to the strategy training was sustained and the null hypothesis was subsequently rejected.

In the same line, the researcher aimed to raise the participants' awareness on the three strategies and their importance in maintaining a natural speech. The nature of activities allowed

the participants to triangulate the strategies and reduce the influence of affective factors on their oral performance. By the end of the treatment phase, the participants declared that they lacked complete awareness on the existence of strategic competence and communication strategies, and confessed that they now have the grounded basis to commence their path towards the autonomous development of their strategic competence. At last, the findings of such study intertwine with many studies (Lam, 2009; Nakatani, 2010; Benali Taouis, 2015; Dörnyei, 1995; Alibakhshi & Padiz, 2011) which advocated the explicit teaching of communication strategies and ensured significant results on the development of EFL learners' strategic competence.

- What are the learners' attitudes towards the strategy-training program of circumlocution, use of fillers and hesitation devices, approximation, and Comprehension Checks?

To answer the last question, that is exploring the students' perceptions and opinions regarding the strategy-training program of circumlocution, fillers, and comprehension checks, a semi-structured attitudinal questionnaire was administered to the participants posterior to the treatment sessions. The aim of this questionnaire was to gain insights on the shortcomings encountered in the training program that might be of a deterrent to the development of learners' strategic competence.

The first section of the questionnaire which sought to explore the students' perceptions about the strategy-training program indicated that the respondents were overall very satisfied with the training-program and had positive attitudes towards such teaching approach. In depth, the participants stated that they were able to incorporate more communication strategies in their assignments and oral involvements in general, and subsequently confirmed that communication strategies surely help in mending communication breaks when they occur. This confirmation was a result of exposing the students to a variety of authentic videos of natives using different oral communication strategies. In addition, they also supported the claim entailing that the

strategies of circumlocution, fillers, and comprehension checks were helpful in maintaining natural conversations, especially when used interchangeably.

Moreover, the second section of the questionnaire aimed to look into our students' attitudes towards the notion of communication strategies. In this regard, the focus was on naturally integrating the strategies of circumlocution, fillers, and comprehension checks within their discourse. Accordingly, the participants reported that their use of circumlocution and gap fillers had significantly increased by the time they were handed the attitudes questionnaire, and argued that their abilities to detect communication strategies in other speakers' discourse had concurrently improved. The findings of this section indicated that the students' awareness was successfully raised against the importance of communication strategies, especially with relation to affective factors. Posterior to the treatment phase, the participants confirmed that affective factors are the cause of communication breakdowns as a result of the lack of helping tools (in this case the oral communication strategies). Similarly, they were able to agree upon such presupposition after being indulged in an experience where they incorporated the three strategies when faced with sudden communicative breaks, and experienced a reduced influence of the affective factors on their oral interaction.

The last section of the questionnaire was reserved to the challenges faced by the students in the strategy-training program. In this part, we initially aimed to explore the drawbacks which might have hindered the easy flow of the training-program, including the participants' opinions regarding the teacher's methodology, the nature of activities, as well as mentioning any potential suggestions which may contribute to the betterment of such trainings. Fortunately, all the respondents had positive views regarding both the teacher's methodology and the nature of activities presented in the training program, which confirms our proposed hypothesis and reinforces the fact that strategy-training programs are desirable to incorporate in foreign language classrooms. This claim is well-established in the literature, especially with major

credits to the pilot study of Dörnyei (1995) which this current study aimed to replicate. Many other studies which advocated the positive attitudes of strategy-training programs and their effects on developing EFL students' strategic competence have been found in the literature, and were mentioned in the first chapter of this research project (Namaziandost, 2018; Scullen & Jourdain, 2000; Lam, 2006; Surkilan, 2014).

Conclusion

To begin with, this chapter was divided into two sections. The first one concerned the presentation and analysis of the data which were gathered by means of four data collection methods operating at a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design. The said section included statistical analysis using SPSS and thematic analysis using MAXQDA software for both quantitative and qualitative data in the same order. The second section was sequentially devoted for the synthesis of the findings and summary of the data obtained from the first section. Accordingly, it was imperative to revisit the research questions posed at the beginning of this research work and synthesize the main findings in quest to find relevant and convincing answers to the research questions.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five: Implications, Pedagogical Recommendations, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

Introduction

5.1 Implications of the Study

5.1.1 Theoretical Implications

5.1.2 Methodological Implications

5.1.3 Practical Implications

5.2 Pedagogical Recommendations

5.3 Limitations of the Study

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

General Conclusion

Introduction

Drawing on the study findings in the previous chapter, this present one culminates in a holistic view of the major theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of this research work, with reference to previous studies and the contribution achieved in the current one. Differently couched, this research project aims to denote the main implications which may coalesce or slightly differ from the main pilot study of Dörnyei (1995). It is noteworthy to pinpoint that the area of strategic competence and communication strategies is still unexplored much in the current context; therefore, scarce data is provided from both qualitative and quantitative considerations. Hence, this chapter strives to elicit some pedagogical recommendations for EFL teachers who are interested in strategy-training programs, students who seek to develop their strategic competence, and researchers in the quest of conducting more research on strategic competence and communication strategies. In addition, major limitations are also presented with account to the factors influencing the quality of strategy-training programs in particular, and teaching communication strategies in general. In doing so, it is imperative to address such concerns for the said community in order to avoid potential hurdles and achieve relatively better results.

5.1 Implications of the Study

5.1.1 Theoretical Implications

Previous research on teaching communication strategies in the middle east concluded that EFL students lacked awareness about the variety of communication strategies which could be of a helping tool when faced with sudden oral breakdowns. Most of these studies validated that the notion of strategic competence is also implicitly addressed in foreign language classrooms. Owing to this gap in theory, awareness-raising studies were conducted in several contexts in order to expand the limits of this pivotal subdivision of communicative competence, given the lack of exposure to real-life English-speaking environment within the said community.

The theoretical implications which have been drawn from this study, however, do not differ much from what has been stated in the literature. They reinforce, in fact, the existence of a serious gap when it comes to the knowledge about communicative competence and its explicit teaching in foreign language classrooms. Therefore, a number of crucial implications can be stated as follows:

- The theory provided on communicative competence at Biskra University occurs at a later stage of students' learning process, which achieves little success on their oral proficiency.
- The theory itself on communicative competence is exclusively limited to the general definitions of the notion, usually presented as an abstract concept that is limited to the users' ability to successfully communicate in the target language.
- The subdivisions of communicative competence are not at all addressed in foreign language classrooms. If any, only the generalities are considered such as definitions and brief examples, all introduced at the final year of their learning process, that is the master-two year.
- Little awareness on strategic competence is raised neither among teachers nor students in the context under which this study is carried out, and the reliance on traditional teaching methods contributes to the lack of this consciousness.
- The need for revolutionary changes in the instructional methods in oral expression and language mastery modules are present among many teachers, but the lack of teacher collaboration is a major deterrent from a potential positive change.

5.1.2 Methodological Implications

In this segment, attributions to major conclusions drawn from some methodological decisions which yielded positive outcomes in the process of conducting the field work of this research project are presented. They are as follows:

- The administration of self-report questionnaires prior to the tests aided in the careful choice of the strategies incorporated in the training program, which induced the participants' attitudes towards the teaching of new strategies.

- The organization of the teachers' interviews ahead of the treatment sessions helped in gaining a holistic perspective on the nature of teaching strategic and communicative competence at Biskra University, which similarly helped with designing suitable lesson plans targeting the knowledge gaps.
- The collection of data under the convergent parallel research design aided in outlining a triangulated perspective on the problem under investigation. Since the data collection methods were operating round the same time, the researcher was able to make a strong linkage between the teachers and students' perspectives.

5.1.3 Practical Implications

As a result of the findings displayed in the previous chapter, the following practical implications were deduced in the quest of conducting a successful strategy-training program:

- The students' awareness was successfully raised during the treatment through the detailed lesson plans and the inclusion of authentic audio-visual materials.
- The teachers' awareness was also successfully raised towards the implementation of strategy-training programs in oral expression and language mastery sessions.
- More contextually-varied data has been added from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, highlighting the social reality of Algerian EFL students' strategic behavior and teachers' strategic awareness, as well as testing the potential significance of strategy-training programs.
- The strategies of circumlocution, use of fillers, and comprehension checks have been implemented in the participants' oral performances in their learning process, especially in oral presentations.
- The results of the post-test indicated positive outcomes of the training program which aligned with the findings of Dörnyei (1995) on the teachability of communication strategies.

- The influence of the affective factors was relatively reduced when the three strategies were triangulated and, therefore, proved the point that they are capable of solving communication breakdowns.
- The students expressed positive results towards the strategy-training program and suggested that more similar initiatives would be organized in the context of this study.

5.2 Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on our experience in conducting research on strategic competence and organizing a pilot study for a strategy-training program, we aspired to write down a list of recommendations for teachers, students, and researchers interested in this field of study. They are as follows:

5.2.1 For Teachers

- Teachers are extremely encouraged to introduce the notion of strategic competence at an earlier stage of the students' learning process, especially in oral expression modules.
- Teachers should not solely rely on the theoretical teachings of the aforementioned concept, but to also give equal importance to the practical part of it.
- Teachers are highly urged to follow an explicit instruction approach to teaching communication strategies given the fact that it is the most effective way to draw their students' attention and devotion.
- Teachers organizing training programs for the first time should follow Dörnyei's (1995) six main principles to successful training procedures to ensure the easy flow of the experience.
- The organization of webinars or conferences, which aim to raise awareness on this neglected aspect of communicative competence, should be prioritized.
- Teachers should help students by providing authentic audio-visual materials whereby communication breakdowns are naturally solved in order to trigger their strategic behavior.

5.2.2 For Students

- Students are encouraged to expand the limits of their language intake outside of the classroom by exposing themselves to a real English-speaking environment.

- Students must not to give up when facing a communicative break and resort to the use of communication strategies to maintain the openness of the communication channel.
- Students should enroll in future research works operating under the notion of strategic competence with complete devotion and dedication for their own benefit.
- All EFL students are required to integrate a variety of communication strategies in their discourse through the constant practice with their peers.
- Students should feel more comfortable when using the English language and target it as their mother-tongue in order to develop the ability to control it, because all languages are operating round the same scheme, including the use of communication strategies.
- Students are highly advised to take future research works on strategic competence seriously in order to experience better and more efficient results by the end of their participation.

5.2.3 For Researchers

- Researchers are encouraged to add more contextually-varied data regarding the implementation of strategy-training programs in order to establish a richer literature on the said notion.
- Researchers are advised to cultivate the field of teaching communication strategies by creating more lesson plans, strategy-training syllabi, activities, and any practical considerations which may facilitate the conduction of these programs by future researchers.
- Researchers should try different approaches to teaching communication strategies in the quest of improving such experience and advertise its use on a larger scale.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The elucidation of the limitations of this study are of paramount importance because they fix the angle from which this research project should be looked at. In other words, it prevents the misinterpretation of the findings and aids in understanding the rationale behind certain choices. Building on that, this study was majorly hurdled by the time factor, given the note that less than

five months were given to complete the data collection phase. As a result, the following limitations emerged:

- The resort to three out of many communication strategies in the literature; only the least used by our sample yet the most effective ones were chosen.
- The organization of the strategy-training program on a span of four weeks in total instead of eight weeks as planned. The latter might have slightly affected the results of the post-test.
- The inability to conduct a focus-group with some of the participants who partook in the training program, which was extremely needed to provide richer data from the perspective of students. This data collection method was planned to be linked with the teachers' interviews in order to gain deeper understanding on the problem under investigation.

Another major limitation was the availability of the participants at our disposal. As we attempted to conduct the treatment on a small-scale sample ($n= 18$), the data should be cautiously treated, as no generalizations can be made on the findings. It should also be clarified that students' attrition was a major obstacle at the beginning of the experiment, as we could not maintain the students' commitment to our training program. One last limitation concerns the administration of a self-report questionnaire. Even though this data collection method provided rich data which later helped in the good choice of the strategies incorporated in the program, the participants still misdiagnosed themselves regarding some other strategies that they used, and therefore their answers were not very accurate.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

In the quest of expanding the limits of research on strategy-training and strategic competence, we seek to equip future researchers with a set of suggestions on what can be investigated and would be of a crucial addition to the existing literature on strategy-based instruction and the teaching of communication strategies. To begin with, since this research project has been conducted on a small-scale sample in a one-group pre-posttest experiment, further research should be carried out on a large-scale sample which encompasses both a control

and an experimental group in order to increase the validity and generalizability of the findings. Another major proposal is regarding the time allocation for strategy-training programs. It is well-founded in the literature that strategic behavior is developed over a relatively longer period of instruction whereby the strategies are fossilized in the learners' repertoire. Owing to the fact that this study was carried out over a short time span, future researchers are advised to replicate it over a longitudinal design in order to test the longevity of the effects of training programs on the students' integration of oral communication strategies, as well as the maintenance of their strategic behavior.

On a more practical basis, future research should incorporate more strategies within strategy-training programs, those which are seen to be desirable to teach. Since communication strategies are varied in types and classification, it is advised to carefully read through Dörnyei and Scott's (1995) article about the taxonomies of communication strategies in order to gain a deeper understanding on the most effective strategies in English. Moreover, the strategy of circumlocution is strongly advised to be considered in future training programs, given the remark that it was surprisingly favored by our participants. Even in the literature, this strategy is seen as one of the most effective strategies which shape learners' strategic behavior.

Furthermore, in spite of the fact that a lot of effort was dedicated to design suitable lesson plans and a miniature syllabus to be thoroughly followed along the treatment, it was still an ambitious initiative which could have been conducted in a better manner. For this reason, other researchers are advised to plan beforehand the necessary materials for their training programs by consulting experts in syllabus design as well as language assessment. By doing so, more focus would be paid to the creation of personalized yet professional materials which have higher chances of success. Another suggestion concerns the setting of the training program. It is suggested to choose a suitable place for the conduction of this type of studies, preferably those which put the participants in an environment that is close to a real-life English-speaking one, such as language laboratories or oral expression classrooms.

General Conclusion

The limits of communicative competence have been expanding over the years as a result of its prominent role in foreign language classrooms. As successful communication is pivotal for the maintenance of language classes, strategic behavior is seen as equally essential for the mastery of the oral language. For many years, the notion of strategic competence was being cultivated as the term became the driving force of one's oral proficiency capacities. Therefore, researchers have been on the quest to unravel the ways in which this particular subdivision can be enhanced enough to compensate for communicative breakdowns in a more native-like manner. As a result, strategy-training programs have been conducted in different contexts around the world in tandem with the growing literature on the teachability of communication strategies.

As far as this current study is concerned, a strategy-training program, which was done through a one-group pre-posttest treatment, was conducted to test the controversial hypotheses emerging from the literature. In precise terms, this study sought to explore the reality of strategic competence awareness concurrently with testing the efficiency of strategy-training programs, as well as their effects on EFL learners' strategic competence. The present investigation unfolded from our own interest in communication using the target language, that is English. As part of our occupational experience, we have been exposed to a number of students whose abilities to compensate for language breaks were below average compared with their relatively good linguistic repertoire. Posterior to reviewing the literature, it was learned that a particular subtype of communicative competence is responsible for this ability to maintain natural conversations, that is strategic competence. As a result of the theoretical linkage made between the literature and our observation, we strived to reach practical implications on strategic competence, which was hypothesized to be neglected in the context of this study.

In the pursuit of answering the research questions posed from extensive readings and synthesis of the literature, a pragmatist research paradigm was opted for in this study. Addedly, a mixed-methods approach operating in a convergent parallel mixed-methods design was supported to properly present and interpret the data from both qualitative and quantitative natures. From a more practical lens, a total of four data collection methods were employed to gather the necessary data for this work. Namely, the semi-structured self-report questionnaire, the pre-posttests, the semi-structured attitudes questionnaire, and the semi-structured teachers' interviews. During the analysis of the data collected through the aforementioned instruments, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were conducted on SPSS software, while thematic analysis was done through MAXQDA software in order to provide as much valid qualitative outcomes as possible.

The results of the data concluded that third-year students at Biskra University have a moderate level of strategic competence, given that they made use of generic communication strategies which did not contribute to the maintenance of their communicative channel. They also lacked awareness on the notion of strategic competence and communication strategies, arguing that they have not encountered such terms in their academic involvement. Additionally, oral expression and language mastery teachers also lacked awareness on the importance of strategic behavior in language classrooms. They experienced sudden realizations after the presentation of strong argumentation, evidenced with quotes from the literature. They eventually confirmed our assumptions and argued in favor of the explicit teaching of communication strategies in foreign language setting.

After the analysis of the pre- and posttest results, it was indicated that there was a significance level of $\bar{x}= 4.38889$, indicating the positive role of the strategy-training program in developing third-year students' strategic competence. In quest of ensuring that the occurring improvement was due to the implementation of the training program, the one sample paired t-test was conducted and the results indicated a statistical significance level. In order to ensure the

significance of the results, the Shapiro-wilk test of normality was conducted on SPSS. As a result, the p-value was higher than 0.05 ($p = .244$), and therefore the data were normally distributed. Hence, the null hypothesis entailing that the teaching of circumlocution, use of fillers, and comprehension checks has no significance on students' strategic competence was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was automatically accepted. However, a focal point with regard to the data obtained from the pre-posttests is that they are not generalizable, as a result of the conduction of the latter on a small-scale sample ($n = 18$). It is also noteworthy to denote that the students who partook in the experiment expressed their satisfaction with the training program and commented that it was of an addition to their academic journey.

Based on the summary of the findings, the current investigation serves as an initiative to the area of strategic and communicative competence as a means of maintaining a successful oral interaction. It does not, however, entail that the development of strategic competence is the sole route to achieve successful communication. Yet, it is seen as one of the easiest and direct ways to compensate for language breakdowns with disregard to the linguistic capacities of EFL learners. In this sense, this research project is both a pilot study and a foundation for future research, serving to provide a solid basis for the conduction of more systematic and successful training programs, or even the organization of awareness-raising programs which solely focus on the theoretical conceptualization of this pivotal subtype of communicative competence.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Informed Consent

Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

I am currently conducting a study on implementing a strategy-training program to develop EFL learners' strategic competence. At this phase of research, I will be carrying out a treatment on second-year EFL learners to investigate the effects of the strategy-training program on reducing their oral performance difficulties.

Hence, you are invited to take part in this research work. Within the span of eight weeks, two sessions per week will be organized. A self-report questionnaire, pre-test, treatment, posttest, and attitudes questionnaire will be held to gauge the effectiveness of such training program in improving learners' strategic competence in general and their oral proficiency in particular.

Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of students' personal information and data gathered throughout the process of conducting this research work will be guaranteed. If you consent to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form. Your permission and cooperation will be highly appreciated. For further inquiries, you are welcome to contact the researcher. Yours truly,

The researcher's Contact Details:

Doua Khenat

Email: Khenat.dyna@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

I have read and clearly understood the researcher's request. I consent to participate in the research project being undertaken by KHENAT Doua.

Name:

E-mail:

University:

Faculty:

Department:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix B: Consent Letter for Head of the Department of English**Informed Consent**

Dear Head of the Department,

I am currently conducting a study on implementing a strategy-training program to develop EFL learners' strategic competence. At this phase of research, I will be carrying out a treatment on Master EFL students to investigate the effects of the strategy-training program on reducing their oral performance inadequacies.

Therefore, I am seeking your consent to occupy the Faculty ICT Lab and possibly faculty rooms 05, 06, 07 to teach Master EFL students over a period of eight weeks. Within this period, one session per week will be organized. A pre-test, treatment fused with a focus group, and a post-test will be held to gauge the effectiveness of such training program in improving learners' strategic competence in general and their oral proficiency in particular. Addedly, a semi-structured interview will be held with EFL teachers to gain insights on some aspects regarding the teachability of oral communication strategies. Also, a self-report questionnaire will be distributed for students of English to consider their communication difficulties and attitudes concerning the strategy training program.

Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of students' personal information and data gathered throughout the process of conducting this research work will be guaranteed.

If you consent to the participation of the previously mentioned EFL students in this study, please sign the attached consent form. Your permission and cooperation will be highly appreciated.

For further inquiries, you are welcome to contact the researcher. Yours

truly,

The researcher's Contact Details:

Doua Khenat

Email: Khenat.dyna@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English

I have read and clearly understood the researcher's request. I consent to the participation of master students at the section of English in the research project being undertaken by KHENAT Doua.

Name:

E-mail:

University:

Faculty:

Department:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix C: Consent Letter for the Head of the Pedagogy Office**Informed Consent**

Dear Head of the Pedagogy Office,

I am currently conducting a study on implementing a strategy-training program to develop

EFL learners' strategic competence. At this phase of research, I will be carrying out a treatment on Master EFL students to investigate the effects of the strategy-training program on reducing their oral performance inadequacies.

Therefore, I am seeking your consent to occupy the Faculty ICT Lab and possibly faculty rooms 05, 06, 07 to teach Master EFL students over a period of eight weeks. Within this period, one session per week will be organized. A pre-test, treatment fused with a focus group, and a post-test will be held to gauge the effectiveness of such training program in improving learners' strategic competence in general and their oral proficiency in particular. Addedly, a semi-structured interview will be held with EFL teachers to gain insights on some aspects regarding the teachability of oral communication strategies. Also, self-report questionnaire will be distributed for students of English to consider their communication difficulties and attitudes concerning the strategy training program.

Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of students' personal information and data gathered throughout the process of conducting this research work will be guaranteed.

If you consent to the participation of the previously mentioned EFL students in this study, please sign the attached consent form. Your permission and cooperation will be highly appreciated.

For further inquiries, you are welcome to contact the researcher. Yours

truly,

The researcher's Contact Details:

Doua Khenat

Email: Khenat.dyna@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Section of English

I have read and clearly understood the researcher's request. I consent to the participation of master students at the section of English in the research project being undertaken by

KHENAT Doua.

Name:

E-mail:

University:

Faculty:

Department:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix D: Teachers Interview Consent Letter**Informed Consent**

Dear Teacher,

I am currently conducting a study on implementing a strategy-training program to develop EFL learners' strategic competence. At this phase of research, I will be carrying out a treatment on Master EFL students to investigate the effects of the strategy-training program on reducing their oral performance inadequacies.

Hence, you are invited to take part in this research work as an interviewee. Within this period, one session per week will be organized. A pre-test, treatment, and a post-test will be held to gauge the effectiveness of such training program in improving learners' strategic competence in particular and their oral proficiency in general. Addedly, a semi-structured interview will be organized with EFL teachers to gain insights on some aspects regarding the teachability of oral communication strategies. Also, a self-report questionnaire will be distributed to master EFL students to consider their communication difficulties and attitudes concerning the strategy training program.

Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of students' personal information and data gathered throughout the process of conducting this research work will be guaranteed.

If you consent to the participation of the previously mentioned EFL students in this study, please sign the attached consent form. Your permission and cooperation will be highly appreciated.

For further inquiries, you are welcome to contact the researcher.

Yours truly,

The researcher's Contact Details:

Doua Khenat

Email: Khenat.dyna@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Section of English

I have read and clearly understood the researcher's request. I consent to the participation of master students at the section of English in the research project being undertaken by KHENAT Doua.

Name:

E-mail:

University:

Faculty:.....

Department:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix E: Field Work Plan

Stage One: 1) Teachers' Interviews

Teacher	Date of the Interview	Status
A	Sunday, Oct 16 th , 2022	Done
B	Monday, Oct 24 th , 2022	Done
C	Tuesday Oct 25 th , 2022	Done
D	Wednesday, Nov 9 th , 2022	Done

Consent Letters

Head of the Pedagogy Office Consent	Permitted
Head of the Section of English	Permitted
Teachers' Participation Consent	Permitted
Students' Participation Consent	Permitted

Stage Two: Students' Self-report Questionnaire + Consent Letters

Number of Students	Distribution Date
From 12 to 16	From Sunday Oct 23rd to Thursday 27th

Stage Three: Pre-test + Treatment

Number of sessions per week	Date	Time
Two sessions per week (one hour per session)	Sundays and Wednesdays	1 O'clock

Stage Four: Posttest + Attitudes Questionnaire

Number of sessions per week	Date	Time
Post test	Sunday, Feb 19th, 2023	11:30 A.M
Attitudinal Questionnaire	Sunday, Feb 5th, 2023	1 O'clock

Appendix F: The Strategy-training Syllabus and Program

Name: Ms. Doua KHENAT	Date:	Level: Third-year Tertiary Level
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AIMS
<p>Main Aim: by the end of the training program, students will be able to use communication strategies automatically in their speech and keep the channel of communication open.</p>
<p>Subsidiary Aim(s): by the end of the training program, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Be familiar with the different CSs available for use in oral performance. ◆ Develop their strategic competence and maneuver their conversations confidently. ◆ Understand the structure, importance, and use of CSs in oral performance. ◆ Be able to communicate in alternative manners instead of abandoning the message.
<p style="text-align: center;">Personal Aim(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Observing the already used CSs in students’ speech. ◆ Examining students’ awareness of CSs employed in their speech.

Background
<p style="text-align: center;">Class Profile:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ students in total.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Timetable Fit:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">One session per week – One hour per session – Eight sessions in total.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Materials Used:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Personalized materials, core vocabulary inventory, white board, pictures from Google Image, Videos from YouTube.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Reference:</p> <p>Dörnyei, Z. (1995). <i>On the teachability of communication strategies</i>. <i>TESOL Quarterly</i>. Vol. 28. No, 1.</p> <p>Nakatani, Y. (2006). <i>Developing an oral communication strategy inventory</i>.</p> <p>Faucette, P. (2001). <i>Communication strategies from a pedagogical perspective: Benefits of training and an analysis of English language teaching materials</i></p>

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Month	Session	Lesson
October	Pretest	<p>♦ Oral pretest:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pair-dialogue. 2. Object description. 3. Concept description.
	Two	<p>♦ Overview on Oral Communication Strategies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature of oral Communication Strategies. 2. Importance of Communication Strategies. 3. Use of Communication strategies in oral tasks. <p>Practice.</p>
	Three	<p>♦ Introduction to Circumlocution Strategy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definition. 2. Structure and importance of circumlocution in EFL classrooms. 3. Core vocabulary inventory as a first-aid tool. <p>Practice.</p>
	Four	<p>♦ Verbalizing the Circumlocution Strategy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing L2 models of circumlocution. 2. Assisted practice of circumlocution. 3. Unassisted practice of circumlocution. <p>Evaluation of students' performance.</p>
November	Five	<p>♦ Introduction to Using Fillers and Use of Comprehension Checks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definition. 2. Structure and importance Fillers and Use of Comprehension checks in EFL classrooms. 3. Core vocabulary inventory as a first-aid tool. 4. Assisted practice of use of fillers and comprehension checks 5. Unassisted practice.
	Six	<p>♦ Verbalizing the Use of Fillers and Use of Comprehension Checks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. L2 models of Fillers. 2. Group-discussion. 3. Role-plays.
	Seven	<p>♦ Rehearsal of the Three Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pair-conversations. 2. Jigsaw tasks. 3. Free-conversation.
	Posttest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pair-conversation. 2. Concept description. 3. Students' attitudes on the training program.

Month	Session	Schedule	Types of Activities and Tools
October	One	Lead-in: Introduction of the lesson plan, that is the pretest, and an overview on the aims and requirements of the training program.	Pair-conversation. Describe the object/concept. White board.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Dividing students into pairs, giving two random sheets of paper to each pair containing one formal and one informal topic. ◆ Allowing each pair to converse unrestrictedly for no more than five minutes on the assigned topics. ◆ The teacher distributes random pictures to each pair portraying both familiar and unfamiliar objects/concepts. Student A pins a picture to their forehead and waits for student B to describe the object/concept in order for student A to find its proper label. 	
	Two	Warm-up: Five minutes discussion about the previous session.	Role-play. Stimulated recalls. Class- presentation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sensitizing students about the importance of oral communication strategies in maintaining successful communication. ◆ Measuring students' awareness of the employed strategies through stimulated recalls. ◆ Highlighting the most important communication strategies used in oral conversations. ◆ Practice: Role-play/Class presentation. 	
November	Three	Lead-in: introduction to the strategies incorporated in the training program, starting with circumlocution.	White board Personalized materials. Core vocabulary inventory.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Circumlocution: the teacher distributes personalized materials including the definition, nature, and use. ◆ Raising students' awareness on the strategy through detailed explanation. ◆ Presenting a core vocabulary inventory to be used in circumlocution. 	
November	Four	Lead-in: Review of the previous lesson.	YouTube shorts. Audios. Core vocabulary inventory. White board.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Presentation of L2 models of circumlocution strategy (unedited videos and listening materials of native speakers). ◆ Rehearsing the strategy of circumlocution in short dialogues with the teacher's assistance. ◆ Performing authentic use of circumlocution without the teacher's intervention. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluating students' use of circumlocution. 	
	Five	<p>Lead-in: Review of the previous lesson, and introduction of Use of Fillers and use of Comprehension checks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Presenting the strategy of using fillers through personalized materials. ◆ Providing L2 models of the strategy. ◆ Rehearsing the strategy using fillers and use of comprehension checks with the teacher's intervention. ◆ Performing without the teacher's intervention. ◆ Practice tasks. 	Personalized materials. Core vocabulary inventory. Group-discussion. White board.
		<p>Lead-in: Review of the previous session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Playing short videos and audios of native speakers using both strategies of circumlocution and use of fillers to the students. ◆ Asking students to note down the strategies they hear. ◆ Students are, then, required to imitate the recordings in their own way in story-telling activity. ◆ Students enroll in discussions and are allowed to resort to the core vocabulary inventory whenever they are faced with a communication difficulty. 	Short Videos. Group-discussions. Story-telling. White board.
	Seven	<p>Lead-in: Warm-up activity on the taught strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Providing more practice activities: pair-conversations and jigsaw tasks without the teacher's intervention. ◆ Free-conversation task: allowing students to choose random topics to converse about on the condition of using the taught strategies in moderation when faced with difficulties. 	Pair-conversation. Jigsaw tasks.
		<p>The posttest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Distributing random sheets of papers with varied topics (both formal and informal) to all the students. ◆ Giving the students five minutes to generate ideas. ◆ Each student enrolls in a pair-conversation where s/he makes use of the taught strategies. ◆ Collecting students' attitudes regarding the strategy-training program and the core vocabulary inventory. 	Pair-conversation. Posttest

Appendix G: The Strategy-training Program Lessons

Lesson 01: Introduction to Oral Communication Strategies

What are Oral Communication Strategies?

They are tools used to negotiate the meaning between interlocutors.



Where Do Communication Strategies Come from?

They are a part of *strategic competence*. The latter reflects the ability of language learners to actively find instant solutions for miscommunication. Strategic competence allows you to speak fluently even when you do not have many words in your repertoire!

What are the types of Communication Strategies in the English language?

There is an unlimited list of oral and written communication strategies in the English language; however, the following strategies are the most common ones:

Circumlocution: Describing the objects’ properties to find the accurate term.

Example: It is a vehicle that we find in the street. It is small. People buy street food from it. What do we call it? ... Oh! It’s a **Food cart**.

Approximation: Using a word which is from the same nature of the target word but is slightly different.

Example: What is this huge object in the ocean? Is it a sail boat? No. this is a ship!



Appeal for Assistance: Asking your peers, teacher, or anyone next to you for help in finding the target word.

Example: What do you call it when the sun hides behind the mountains at the end of the day? Oh, you mean **sunset**!

Why Are Oral Communication Strategies Important?

1. They will reduce your social anxiety and boost your self-confidence.
2. You will not struggle to deliver your message in public.
3. You will give yourself more time to think of the appropriate terms.
4. Speaking will be a little easier for you.
5. You will create a collaborative environment when you include other individuals in your speech.

How Can I use Oral Communication Strategies in my Talk?

- 1) Learn more about the communicative strategies.
- 2) Choose the ones that are more effective and successful.
- 3) Practice your conversations using the communicative strategies as helping tools.
- 4) Do not stop when miscommunication happens, use the strategies instead.

Practice: Choose your favorite oral communication strategy from the examples above and try to use it in a conversation

Lesson 02: Circumlocution Strategies

Part of communication in foreign languages involves the process of **negotiating meaning** when speakers lack the vocabulary.

Using **circumlocution strategies** will help you learn **new words** as you develop your **fluency** over time!



Brief Definition of Circumlocution

The word circumlocution is derived from the Latin word “circum” which means “around” and “locution” which means language. Circumlocution can also be called **Roundabout Speech**. It is the use of a large number of words to describe a concept or an object.

How Can we Use Circumlocution Strategies?

1. Identify the “type” of word/phrase: is it a person, place, or thing?

- ◆ If it is a thing, you can describe the properties of this object such as: “**it is made of...**”, “**it is used for...**”.
- ◆ You can list more details about this thing such as: the shape, color, and size.

2. Try to Give a Dictionary-like Definition: For example: “It means ...very tired”

3. Give Synonyms: For example: “**it’s another word for beautiful**”

4. Give Antonyms: For instance: “**It’s the opposite of ugly**”

5. Give Examples in Context-like Situations: For example: “We use this word when someone succeeds at school”, “we feel this way when the electricity goes off at night”, “it happens when the sun covers the moon”, etc.

6. **Give Descriptive Explanations:** By telling the audience **How, what, who, when, why, where, and how**. For Example: “When an accident happens, they put it in the middle of the road”, “We find this electronic machine in every hotel entrance”.
7. **Use More Sound Analogies:** Meaning that you should use some other words which rhyme with the word you are looking for. For example: it rhymes with “bad” (the word is sad), “it sounds like “four” (the word is door).
8. **Use Gestures & Sounds (and even pictures):** Here, you can imitate the sound that this object/person/or thing makes. Using non-verbal communication will definitely solve the problem for you!
9. **Encouraging your Audience to React with you:** By asking them direct questions such as: Can you guess the word now? Did you recognize the word I am looking for?

No matter what, do not give up! Keep talking and giving more words and examples until you find the exact word you are looking for.

Links for YouTube Extracts for Circumlocution (Native speakers):

Circumlocution Example Extract

1: <https://youtu.be/xlL9uNJvApA>

Circumlocution Example Extract

2:

<https://youtu.be/KwpztRtTXLE>

Circumlocution ESL Game

Extract:

<https://youtu.be/h2V17mHSF6w>

Lesson 03: Use of Fillers and Time-gaining Devices

A common misconception in the literature (**meaning in previous research studies and publications**) is the disregard of the role of fillers such as “**umm**”, “**uhm**”, “**well...**”, **etc.**, in speech; mainly for the purpose that they indicate the lack of preparation, anxiety, and unprofessionalism of the speaker.



However, fillers can contrarily save your speech if you use them **moderately!** Fillers are devices which **give the speaker more time to think of the next thought, OR, recover from a sudden ideas' dispersion.** Native speakers use filler words on a daily basis. What differentiates native from foreign speakers in terms of the use of fillers is that the latter **do not keep count** of how many times they are using the same filler word!

Facts about Filler Words:

- 1) They are empty words. No meaning can be attributed from these words.
- 2) They are used to “**fill**” a gap in communication.
- 3) They give you more time to think without resorting to “**message abandonment**”.
- 4) They allow you to stay connected. The teacher/jury/ or peers are not going to disregard you.
- 5) If used **MODERATELY**, your English would sound more natural and easy-going.
- 6) Your English will, also, sound more native-like.



Fillers Type and Use:

Type of Filler	Function	Use
“Um & Uh”	Gaining Time	Um... I am trying to find the word I am looking for.
“Well...”	Gaining Time	I was going to college and... well... I went to eat instead.
“You know”	Gaining Time	This training is good for... you know... speaking.
“Okay... so”	Appealing for Assistance Restructuring Gaining Time	... For building skyscrapers and... umm... [pause] Okay...so... it is a tool that they use to carry heavy metal.
“Sort of”	Gaining Time	The recent elections were sort of... suspicious.
“How can I say that”	Gaining Time	It is important to... umm [how can I say that] practice what you learn in order to improve.
“What is it called”	Gaining Time	I am looking for the... uhm... [what is it called] ... remote?

“Like” as a Filler Word:

The filler word “like” is the most consumed filler word by both native and foreign speakers of English. Since foreigners are often unaware of the other filler words existing in English, they heavily rely on “like” in their speech. It is overkill! [**Meaning it is too much**]. If you use it a couple of times in your speech, there is no harm. Always make sure you are not using way too much “likes” in your oral involvement. It may leave a bad impression that you are too anxious, not serious, or just not interested.

Links for YouTube Extracts for Use of Fillers and Time-gaining Devices (Native speakers):

<https://youtu.be/4l-CenGSKPI>

<https://youtu.be/C9g1V0C5seE>

<https://youtu.be/ao1pUXU9UYU>

<https://youtu.be/Lqs1zv2cASs>

<https://youtu.be/474XKwaB-Bc>

<https://youtu.be/8Pkr-sBc-3I>

<https://youtu.be/Xm0nqX35DAw>

<https://youtu.be/wsLOwa27u1c>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/-P3Y6AWahZE?feature=share>

Lesson 04: Comprehension Checks

Introduction

One of the reasons why foreign language speakers often fail to speak freely is because **they do not find comfort in the foreign language**. Sometimes, it is difficult to apply the same communicative strategies that one uses in his native language in that of the foreign one.

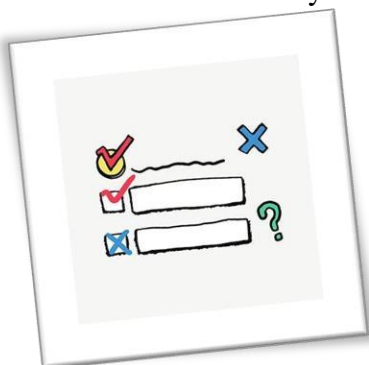


Therefore, **raising awareness** is important for the improvement of oral communication in English. To put this in perspective, English as a foreign language speakers find it complicated to speak in English because they only make use of the **raw** aspects of language (that is grammar and vocabulary). There is little to no use of the vivid aspects such as compensatory and time-gaining strategies which put their speech in motion.

Definition of Comprehension Checks

It is the use of words or phrases, such as **“Am I being clear”**, **“Do you understand”**, to make sure the listeners understand what you are saying.

The purpose of this strategy is not just to check comprehension, it is also a way to **negotiate meaning** with between interlocutors. Comprehension checks extend the span of communication and involve the listeners in your speech in a way or another.



How can I use Comprehension Checks?

- ❖ When you feel like you have talked too much, make pauses using comprehension checks.
- ❖ When you notice that the listeners are starting to lose track, make comprehension checks to ensure they are still following.
- ❖ Make comprehension checks when you want to move smoothly from one point to another in a more professional way.
- ❖ Make comprehension checks when you want to avoid talking too much

Comprehension Checks Words and Phrases

Comprehension Check Word/Phrase	Example
Am I being clear? / Am I clear?	... this theory revolves around habit formation. Am I being clear?
What do you think about this?	... Social factors have a vital role in language use. What do you think about this?
Is my point understood?	... [mumbles in Spanish]. Is my point understood?
Are you following?	... [the teacher marks that students are starting to zone out during the session] ... Are you following?
Does it make sense?	The evolution theory has definitely nothing to do with human genetic development. Does it make sense?

Links for YouTube Extracts for Comprehension Checks (Native Speakers)

<https://youtu.be/m3k3-FMRfvU>

<https://youtu.be/LraCkQHYvrk>

https://youtu.be/J_nwaEYlp_E

Appendix H : The interview questions

(A Preliminary Stage/ Diagnosis Interview)

Q1: How long have you been teaching EFL?

Q2: Along these years, have you spotted students facing sudden communication breakdowns and were unable to deliver a comprehensible message?

(If yes, how did the students usually mend their communication gap?)

Q3: With what factor do you associate sudden breakdowns in communication among EFL students at Biskra University?

Q4: The majority of teachers at the tertiary level, alongside the expected Canva, claim that communicative competence is being regularly taught at universities with its subdivisions including strategic competence. Do you agree with this claim?

(If yes, how are communicative and strategic competence implemented at the tertiary level?)

Q5: Tarone (1981) stated that:

Students not only need instruction and practice in their overall skill of conveying information using the target language; they also need instruction and practice in the use of communication strategies to solve problems encountered in the process of conveying information” (p.124).

To what extent do you agree with this statement based on your own experience?

Q6: Tarone (1981) argued that:

Street learners, on the other hand, often excel in strategic competence, those who have had the opportunity to develop their second language skills *outside* the classroom are typically able to get their message long before they have developed their native-like grammatical competence” (p. 122).

To what extent do you support this claim with reference to the Algerian context?

Q7: What are your thoughts on argument entailing that teaching communication strategies to EFL students helps them express their ideas in a more active and comfortable way, given the fact that they are “first-aid” devices working as a temporary solution.

Q8: Do you have any suggestions/recommendations which might contribute to the betterment of EFL students’ proficiency and develop their strategic competence?

Appendix I : The self-report Questionnaire

Students' Self-report Questionnaire

Dear Students,

We are conducting a research study on implementing a Strategy-training Program to develop English as a foreign language learners' strategic competence. Strategic competence allows English speakers to manipulate their speech when faced with difficulties and helps them bridge the communication gap when it occurs. Within the training process, three compensatory strategies, namely Using Fillers and Hesitation Devices, Circumlocution and Appeal for Assistance, will be taught to third-year students of English at Biskra University. *Circumlocution* is a coping strategy whereby speakers give properties of objects and concepts when they cannot find the word for them. *Appeal for Assistance*, addedly, is an effective strategy to seek the help from one's surrounding to rearrange their thoughts. As for Fillers and Hesitation Devices, they are effective for gaining time to think instead of retreating from the conversation. To help collect accurate data on the reality of strategic competence in the context under investigation, you are kindly requested to complete the following questionnaire. The anonymity of your personal information, as well as the privacy of the data collected throughout this process will be guaranteed.

The Researcher

Instructions:

In the table below are 18 English oral communication strategies. Which of these strategies do you use in your oral involvement? Please read them carefully then tick the used strategies.

Part One: Personal Information

Q2: Have you encountered the term "communicative competence" throughout your academic experience at Biskra University?

Yes No

If yes, what do you know about it?

.....

Q2: Are you familiar with the concept of “strategic competence” given your academic involvement at Biskra University?

Yes No

If yes, what do you know about it?

.....

Part Two: Oral Communication Strategies

No	Oral Communication Strategies	/
1	I give up and silently stand back when I can't make myself understood.	
2	When I realize that I have used the wrong words, phrases or pronunciation, I immediately correct them by myself.	
3	When I don't understand others, I ask them to repeat the words or phrases they have just said to help me understand their meaning.	
4	When I have difficulty in thinking of the right word(s), I use words or phrases with similar meaning to express myself.	
5	When I need to think of what to say, I repeat words or phrases I have just said to gain time to think.	
6	When I don't understand others, I ask them to clarify what they mean.	
7	I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.	
8	When I need to think of what to say, I use fillers such as 'um', 'uh', 'well'. 'You know', 'I see what you mean', etc. to gain time.	

9	I use circumlocution to react to the speaker's utterance when I don't understand his/her intention well.	
10	I try to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said.	
11	When I experience a sudden communication breakdown, I remain silent because I do not know how to compensate for the gap.	
12	I translate words and sentences literally from my mother-tongue.	
13	When I have difficulty explaining, I switch between my mother-tongue and English.	
14	I create a non-existing word in English based on a rule that I know (For example: ear broom for cotton bud).	
15	I use a word from my mother-tongue or L2 and adjust it to English phonologically (For example: dentifris for toothpaste).	
16	When I cannot find the appropriate word, I use a term that is relatively close to it (For example: ship for sail boat)	
17	I make confirmation checks to ask the interlocuters if they are following me as I explain.	
18	I describe objects that I cannot name nonverbally (I use body language and facial expressions).	
19	I resort to my surroundings (such as my peers, teachers, etc.) to help me find the word I am looking for.	

Table 1 Adapted and Adopted from: Nakatani, Y. (2006). *Developing an oral communication strategy inventory*. *Modern Language Journal*, 90. 151-168

Appendix J : The Post treatment Attitudes Questionnaire

Post-treatment Attitudes Questionnaire

Dear Student,

You are kindly asked to fill in this questionnaire, whose aim is to determine your opinions regarding the implementation of a strategy-training program to develop learners’ strategic competence. In this attitudinal questionnaire, you will be presented with a set of questions about your opinions and perceptions concerning the treatment sessions carried out by the researcher. It will help us understand better how the implementation of a strategy-training program has affected your strategic competence in particular, and your oral proficiency in general. Please tick (✓) the appropriate box or provide full statements where necessary.

The confidentiality of your data will be guaranteed.

The Researcher,

SECTION ONE: STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE STRATEGY-TRAINING PROGRAM

- How satisfied are you with the strategy-training program?
 - **Not at all satisfied**
 - **Slightly satisfied**
 - **Moderately satisfied**
 - **Very satisfied**

- How often have you noticed that communication strategies help in mending communication breakdowns when speaking?
 - **Always**
 - **Often**
 - **Sometimes**
 - **Seldom**
 - **Never**

- Do you find the strategies of Circumlocution, Fillers, and Comprehension Checks helpful in maintaining authentic and natural conversations?

Yes No

If yes, how can these strategies be helpful when speaking?

- Has the teaching of Circumlocution, Fillers, and Comprehension checks helped you in using them in your assignments and oral involvements?

Yes No

If yes, please explain how.

SECTION TWO: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- To what extent have the strategies of Circumlocution, Fillers, and Comprehension checks affected your strategic behavior and oral involvement?

- **Very positively**
- **Positively**
- **Negatively**
- **Very negatively**

- Have you noticed any improvement in your ability to describe what you cannot name?

Yes No

If yes, please specify how.

- Have you marked any improvement in your ability to gain time to think when you are experiencing a **brain fog (A temporary state of inability to concentrate)**?

Yes No

If yes, please specify how.

- Do you feel that you have developed the ability to detect communication strategies in other individuals’ speech and imitate them in your own conversations?

Yes No

- To what extent do you agree with the statement entailing that **“Communication strategies reduce affective issues such as stress and anxiety because they offer instant solutions for communication breakdowns”**?

- **Completely Agree**
- **Mostly Agree**
- **Slightly Agree**
- **Slightly Disagree**
- **Mostly Disagree**
- **Completely Disagree**

SECTION THREE: CHALLENGES AND FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Do you feel that your strategic behavior would have improved much better if it had not been for the disconnected treatment sessions due to the winter break and exams period?

Yes No

- Did you see that the teacher’s methodology when explaining the lessons was suitable?

Yes No

- Did you feel that the activities included as part of the treatment practice were effective?

Yes

No

- What other challenges did you face during the strategy-training program?

- If you have any additional suggestion(s) regarding the implementation of strategy-training programs to improve learners' strategic competence and oral proficiency, please write it/them in the space provided below.

Your collaboration, time, and dedication are highly valued.

Appendix K : The Questionnaire Validation Form

I hereby certify that I have read the student’s post treatment attitudes questionnaire in the study carried out by Ms. Doua KHENAT who is presently working on her MA dissertation at Biskra University. I have provided the researcher of this study regarding the implementation of a strategy-training program to develop learners’ strategic competence with remarks and comments concerning the layout, as well as the content of the questionnaire.

Background of the Expert

Name:

University:

Present Occupation:

Degree:

Telephone Number:

Email Address.....

Signed:

Researcher’s Contact Details

Ms. Doua KHENAT

Email: Khenat.dyna@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English

Appendix L : The Opinonnaire

1. Are there any repetitive questions?

Yes No

- If yes, please specify them.

.....
.....
.....

2. Did you find any grammar/spelling mistakes in the questions?

Yes No

-If yes, please notify them below.

.....
.....
.....

3. Are there any irrelevant questions that need to be removed?

Yes No

-If yes, please provide the number of the question(s) below.

.....
.....
.....

4. Is the questionnaire of reasonable length?

Yes No

5. Are there any ambiguous questions that need to be reformulated and / or clarified?

Yes No

-If yes, please indicate which questions require rewording.

.....
.....
.....

6. What do you think of the layout?

.....
.....
.....

7. Are the response categories appropriate?

Yes No

8. If there are any questions that you believe are of close relevance to the purpose of the questionnaire but were not included, please write them below.

.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for your time and collaboration

Appendix M : The Pre-posttests

Pre-posttest Activities for the one group pre-post-test experiment

Pre-test Outline: By the end of the pre-test, the participants will have undergone the following tasks:

- ◆ Classroom discussion task (including formal and informal topics).
- ◆ Object-concept description task.
- ◆ Role-play task.



Part One: Classroom Discussion [Targeting Fillers & Asking for Clarification] 5pts each (10pts)

Activity One: Discuss the following questions with your teacher and classmates. Elaborate on each statement you make.

PREPARE

Work in groups of three. A, B, and C.

Student A: Say a statement from 1-6

Student B: Agree and explain why.

Student C: Disagree and give a different option.

1. Women are better managers than men.
2. The western parenting style is better than the eastern one.
3. Mass digitalization leads to human degradation.
4. Gender equality will never exist.
5. The military service should be optional.
6. Men are silent-sufferers nowadays.

SPEAK

You're going to attend a conference for language learners from around the world. The conference starts with a face-to-face welcome reception, where you're expected to mingle with the other conference participants. Before the conference, help your partner to plan one or two simple stories to tell at the event. You don't need to write your stories – just plan what you'll say. Use these ideas and your own ideas:

- your best/worst experience as a language learner
- your best/worst experience of trying to network with strangers
- anything else that will grab people's attention - see the ideas in the 'Useful phrases 2' box for inspiration

Help you partner to work out a 'hook' for each story – a line to make others desperate to ask you about it.

Part Two: Object/Concept Description [Targeting Use of Circumlocution] 5pts

Activity One: Describe the following objects in details to help your friend guess their names.



- ◆ Autism:
- ◆ Covid-19:
- ◆ Capitalism:

Activity Two 5pts: Imagine that you are going home, you suddenly witness a horrible car accident on the other way of the road. You are the only witness who will tell what happened in details to the police officer (the place, the vehicles, the crash, the causality, your reaction and actions concerning the accident).

Appendix N : The Scoring Scale

The Use of Circumlocution, Fillers, and Comprehension Checks	Score Range
Excellent: The smooth and frequent use of circumlocution, fillers, and comprehension checks interchangeably in ways that mark their speech natural and smooth. The varied use of filler words and refraining from using fossilized filler words (Uh/Like).	13-15
Very good: The careful and varied use of fillers and circumlocution but with the lack of using comprehension checks. The triangulation of the three strategies is missing, but the overall performance is coherent, independent, and is characterized with minor mistakes (the use of fossilized fillers).	10-12
Good: The reliance on fillers and comprehension checks only but using varied filler words. The frequent inclusion of other strategies such as hand gestures and facial expressions. A noticeable reduction in the affective factors influence.	7-9
Average: The utter reliance on filler words with some long pauses. A noticeable influence of the affective factors due to the slight misuse of the strategies. The incorporation of some circumlocution strategy when slightly prompted by the teacher.	4.5-6.5
Poor: The absence of using any of the taught strategies and the reliance on monotonous and fossilized filler words. Resorting to code-switching and literal translation instead of making use of the three strategies. The existence of a massive influence of the affective factors which hinder the speech process.	1-4

Appendix O: The Interview Transcripts**Interview with teacher one**

[0:00:01.1] **I:** So this is interview with teacher number one. Yes. Um- welcome. Thank you so much for being a part of my interview.

[0:00:10.1] **R:** My pleasure.

[0:00:12.6] **I:** Okay, so- how long have you been teaching EFL?

[0:00:13.9] **R:** I've been- teaching English for- twelve- thirteen- I can't remember the- but since- officially since 2002-

[0:00:35.3] **I:** So you've had many years being exposed to students-

[0:00:37.9] **R:** It's not a lot of years as you said um but- quite- quite a considerable experience.

[0:00:45.4] **I:** And along these years, have you spotted students facing sudden communication breakdowns and were unable to deliver a comprehensible message?

[0:00:52.1] **R:** I often do, I mean-, this is uh- uh- a recurrent problem in uh- in my classes regardless to the level and regardless to the gender- regardless to the proficiency level- every student encounters, um- this communication breakdown a- at least once in their- study career

[0:01:16.8] **I:** So even the good students?

[0:01:20.8] **R:** Even the good students.

I: And- uh- how did they actually mend their communication gap- when it occurs- how do they fix it usually?

[0:01:31.2] **R:** Um- well- m-many students do not find the- the adequate way to cope with it. Um- uh- a lot of fillers like- eh- for example- like- eh- repetition of words uh- using expressions like um- i mean- actually- hesitation devices- uh in some cases- finding an equivalent- in case for example- vocabulary shortage, an equivalent in a- another language, um- sometimes students ignore about that and continue talking or speaking etc. Uh- each one has his own way of- uh- of coping with this. Some succeed in finding an exit- others are stuck

in- in it. So, it's a personal experience to every student.

[0:02:36.0] **I:** And with what factor do you associate these sudden breakdowns. Do you think it's affective or it's the lack of a certain-

[0:02:46.5] **R:** Maybe it's a combination of affective and linguistic factors. I mean- linguistic in- a- in the sense of having a- um- a- deficiency in lexical competence for instance- syntactic competence- even pragmatic competence. So uh- affective factors- many issues may contribute to this, including anxiety, shyness, uncomfortable environment, fearing of, for example others' judgments- um- unfamiliarity for example with the subject sometimes. Um- it could be also a personal trait- where for example this is how he or she used to talk- okay- uh so- because sustaining good communication strategies is like a- um- a life skill- it's not a study skills where some people are not good at um- dealing or sustaining um- a long conversation with many participants- so, as i said it's a combination of both factors.

[0:04:15.7] **I:** That's great. Okay- question four says: The majority of teachers at the tertiary level claim that CC is being regularly taught at universities with strategic competence. Do you agree with this claim?

[0:04:35.8] **R:** In fact- we do not teach this- competence or any particular competence. Okay? What we are actually doing is that we- train students to develop a certain level of proficiency in language, via certain channels. Uh- it could be a content-based channel- a skill-based channel. These strategies are meant to be developed by the students themselves. Uh- we as teachers may help in familiarizing students with different techniques of coping with certain communicative problems. Um- as an example a course of study skills for first and second years is supposed to- to be the foundational course for familiarizing students with these competencies.

However, i think- i think that it's a matter of- um- lack of practicing those study skills in the field, which makes the content delivered remains as mere theoretical concepts without- um- let's say- putting them into something practical that students will demonstrate while they communicate. In oral expression courses for instance- the same thing. We- we- aim at

familiarizing students with different- uh- ways of speaking uh- without fear of audience - without fear of judgement. But, I think that in a way- of course this is a personal experience- uh in a way we fail to target these strategies in the sense that we do not directly or explicitly teach them. We do not TEACH them- probably we integrate them - we sometimes include them as a part of a feedback- or- uh- part of remarks given to students.

[0:07:13.4] **I:** Question 6 says that Tarone argues that street learners on the other hand often excel in strategic competence- those who have had the opportunity to develop their second language skills outside the classroom are typically able to get their message long before they have developed their native grammatical competence. So this is exactly what you have been saying earlier. So- when teachers do not explicitly teach strategic competence and the CS in the classroom- sometimes we have uh- learners who have not been exposed to real life english speaking environment, and this is the case for most English students at Biskra university. So- they cannot really acquire the strategic competence- so it is sometimes difficult for them to learn it by themselves. Do you agree?

[0:08:15.5] **R:** I mean- sure- if- you are not familiar and if you are not exposed to a certain situation- uh- that situation cannot be a part of your experience. Logic says this. Um- the more familiar you are the better you become in terms of being competent in terms of finding solutions to certain breakdowns and- and- another thing- outside of the classroom if you are also good in finding exits to your breakdowns, for sure you will find also solutions when you face communicative difficulties in the classroom. That's why i said earlier it's a life skill-- more than it is a classroom or it is a study skill.

[0:09:17.9] **I:** Because what you referred to as street learners are people who learn it outside- and this is-

[0:09:19.0] **R:** Which is a part of their life- from probably from a very young age where for example many children are- are very good at finding strategies to cope with their communicative problems. Others may struggle with that problem till a very late age- uh- so as i said earlier it's a combination of both linguistic and affective factors.

[0:09:52.0]**I:** So you do believe that maybe if teachers explicitly and directly teach these strategies-

[0:09:58.1]**R:** Teach and practice at the same time- i mean it's not only about familiarizing them and telling them that there is this strategy which is called that and that- no- we have to put students into situations where these strategies can be used.

[0:10:15.4]**I:** They can be "first aid" devices- like a resort.

[0:10:17.8]**R:** For sure- yes. You know the teaching of things remains as just knowledge. We need a further step to transfer that knowledge into something um- concrete as a skill.

[0:11:15.7]**I:** Again- Tarone stated that: Students not only need instruction and practice in their overall skill in conveying information using the target language, but also need instruction in the use of CSs to solve problems encountered in the process of conveying information. To what extent do you agree with this statement based on your experience.

[0:11:39.6]**R:** A 100%. So it's not only about the instruction and practice- um- to convey information, but also instruction and practice in the use of uh- to solve problems. I mean- students are- i mean- especially at the tertiary level meant to be problem solvers, you see- here you are going to talk further to favor the idea of these soft skills. Okay- so- i think the modern instruction should be uh- should- further cover these soft skills besides the what is called the macro skills- uh- soft skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, discussing, synthesizing, uh- these skills should be also to be emphasized in the instruction- uh- not just from the instructional POV but from the practical POV.

[0:12:53.3] **I:** Thank you so much sir. Uh- we have two remaining questions. Number 7 says what are your thoughts on the argument entailing that teaching CSs to EFL students help them express their ideas in a more active and comfortable way given the fact that

they are first aid devices working as a temporary solution?

[0:13:19.1] **R:** These strategies should be a part of their ordinary- uh- life and survival situations- so they- they- should not be considered just a first-aid only when they are needed. Though, at first it seems that they are the first aid devices, but actually we encounter these breakdowns every day every single moment- okay so it has to be fully integrated and not used as an emergency devices. Uh-students- nowadays should be more open to what um- to what success in education means. So it is not only being uh- good achievers in terms of uh- good grades etc- they need also to be uh- communicatively uh- let's say uh- accurate, fluent, they- they need to be competent- they need to think pragmatically- they need to also- to- establish the world of work with the word of study. So um- so i think that the concept of instruction should be redefined okay- taking into consideration that strategic competence okay- is- one of the principle ingredients within that formula in general.

[0:15:40.5] **I:** Now the last question is: Do you have any suggestions or recommendations which might contribute to EFL students' proficiency to develop their strategic competence?

[0:15:45.6] **R:** Um- okay- many ways - many solutions could be suggested here: One- um- for example for beginners, putting them in uh- life situations okay- or authentic situations where they need to practice what they have learned. Um- activities like simulation and role-plays, okay, could be very useful to them. Um- teachers also could find ways how to- um- create contacts with their students and natives- especially with the development of technology- uh this is an excellent way for students to develop their communicative- strategies in general regardless whether they are strategic or not. Um- students also should change their minds concerning the notion of instruction at university in particular. So they are not here to only- um- get a diploma which says that they are graduates of a particular major, but they are here to uh- to be- to be successful citizens in wider sense, uh- and also--

the programs in the curriculum in general- again- they need to be redefined and reshaped where more-- competencies should be emphasized or- new competences should be emphasized- okay- besides the traditional ones. You see I am talking about redefining- reshaping. I think we are looking forward to have some kind of uh- um- some kind of changes in the instruction itself here at university, where making students uh- exposed to the real world uh- okay- i mean the world in which language is supposed to be used- okay- this point i think it is very important when it comes to developing strategic competence.

[0:18:49.4] **I:** Would you recommend ST programs?

[0:18:53.9] **R:** Ah okay- uh- anything- I am an advocate of trainings, you know that. Uh- i always think that any given skill cannot be successfully acquired or achieved unless there is a parallel training. I am 100% with any training that supports the theoretical instruction. For sure. Workshops could be beneficial- uh- to train students could be also beneficial- having focus groups- you see we are talking about revolutionizing the- the educational- let's say- the educational life.

Interview with teacher two

[0:00:02.5] **I:** So first- there are 8 questions in general, I have two quotes- i have written them here. This is quote for question 06, and the other one is for question 05.

[0:00:13.2] **R:** Okay- yeah.

[0:00:15.4] **I:** So I want to start with an introductory question, and it says how long have you been teaching EFL?

[0:00:17.1] **R:** That's a basic question. Um- i have been teaching EFL for now- let's say 05 years.

[0:00:27.2] **I:** Hmm. So along these years, have you spotted students facing sudden communication breakdowns and were unable to deliver a comprehensible message?

[0:00:40.2] **R:** Actually yes, most of the time. Yeah.

[0:00:41.2] **I:** So it was a very reoccurring issue-

[0:00:43.4] **R:** A very frequent issue, yes, yes.

[0:00:45.8] **I:** And how did they usually mend this communication gap?

[0:00:48.3] **R:** Um- here we may face a kind of variation among students. They do not lead to the same strategies- let's say- yeah, to cope with this kind of problem- communicative problem. Um- just as i flashback- perhaps- some of them may eh- rely on the literal translation perhaps if they feel comfortable with the teacher- i mean translating from the target to the source language. Some of them do that especially I- eh- I may claim that males- males do that more than females. Um- some of them- males- males again make long pauses without saying anything. They become reluctant to pursue their message. That's a frequent phenomenon or strategy or whatever it is. For girls- girls are more flexible- um- i don't know why am i precising gender now (chuckle) yes- are more flexible when it comes to dealing

with such problem, communicative problems. They may reformulate their sentences or their passages. They eh- perhaps um- code-switching is another frequently, commonly used strategy by both genders, especially -again- males. Yes!

[0:02:41.8] **I:** So they take the easier path?

[0:02:44.8] **R:** Yeah the shortcut, yeah, as if they are resorting to their native language, they feel safer um- because communication has to do with safety by the way. Safety here and- being relaxed and being safe and secure while speaking and addressing others is a very crucial component of communication. It's not just a pure linguistic eh- practice. It's more than that- okay? So a lot of strategies, Doua, a lot of them- when i say a lot of them i don't mean a lot of them but some strategies are used frequently- I told you literal translation, code switching, um- um- making reformulations, um- and making pauses, long pauses, without saying anything. They just wait for you to reinitiate the conversation.

[0:03:52.3] **I:** And with what factors do you associate these breakdowns. Some teachers always link it to affective factors, but, can you also associate them with the unawareness of certain resorts or strategies which maybe can help?

[0:03:59.8] **R:** Definitely, because, the affective factors are the product of a breakdown- a real breakdown. So perhaps the affective factors are the product other than the reason for this breakdown. Well- yeah, when we focus on the breakdown or the root and the source of this breakdown then yes- it could be the reason. Also, lack of awareness, lack of strategic baggage and knowledge. Yeah yeah i do confirm this assumption.

[0:04:46.7] **I:** So if they know that there are strategies they will get stressed and demotivated?

[0:04:53.3] **R:** Yes, they do not know how to cope with this problem. So they automatically and immediately they struggle with anxiety and lack of confidence. Yes, so what you are assuming is really logical.

[0:05:10.8] **I:** Now. We came to a very controversial question and it says- the majority of teachers at the tertiary level here in Biskra claim that cc as a term and a concept is being

regularly taught at the university. So they strongly claim that they do teach it. And, when we say cc we also mean the subdivisions like linguistic competence, strategic, pragmatic, etc. So to what extent do you agree with this claim?

[0:05:56.0] **R:** Um- when we take a close look at the caneva and the objectives proposed provided in the caneva, yes, they all promise of providing the perfect eh- strategic training (chuckle) but eh- theoretically speaking we can say we are working on that in one way or another. But when it comes to the practical applications of the objectives of the caneva, we may face here a kind of paradox (chuckle) a breakdown- a real breakdown. Now, what is the problem? i never tried to think about that but, if we make some assumptions again- we are just making assumptions here- um- so we can say that the problem is that we do not have well-trained teachers. We have the theory but the application- here we are not bridging the gap between theory and application. Teachers are not concerning themselves with having the necessary knowledge, competence, of how to practically apply those principles and use in real life setting- language setting. So here is the source of this breakdown among teachers. So it's a matter of responsibility, integrity, professionalism. Um- we are not being professionals sometimes. Um- we also always seek the shortcuts- the easiest ways to deliver the lessons and the lectures and so on. So there is no deep devotion.

[0:08:51.9] **I:** Because the subdivisions of CC are not being taught at all. When i mentioned the term strategic competence i always received gazes and confusion- facial confusion. Even some teachers that i have asked before- they said i have never heard of this type of competence before. So this is what made me shocked and scared at the same time. So, how can you not know about this term? It's a subdivision- a main subdivision especially Bachman's new typology.

[0:09:17.5] **R:** You see- uh so you see they keep teaching theory but the strategies themselves no- we have code-switching. What is code switching it is this and that but they- they don't go deep into. They don't live the experience. They don't give concrete examples, they don't make

concrete tasks, practices, in real life situations, because this is what makes the real change.

[0:09:55.2] **I:** Now question 05. The question :

[0:10:01.3] **R:** I already- I already- interpreted this quote (chuckle)

[0:10:17.8] **I:** So to what agree do you agree with this statements even though you have just literally said it?

[0:10:20.3] **R:** I have just said it (chuckle). Of course i do, yeah, i strongly agree that this statement- we are in need- urgent need of such instruction and practice in the use. The practical, actual, use of CSs inside the classroom.

[0:10:45.9] **I:** So this is what we lack here in the context of Biskra.

[0:10:48.7] **R:** For sure, yes, i do confirm.

[0:10:58.5] **I:** Now question 06; the other quote. To what extent do you agree with this statement? [0:11:14.9] **R:** I think that is very true.

[0:11:26.9] **I:** So this quote reinforces my claim that SC is related to language acquisition. It comes with the language, like a full- package.

[0:11:29.5] **R:** It's a more natural process and practice- both- okay. And this is perhaps the problem of those students who are only relying and heavily relying on that formal classroom instruction. Um- we can say superficial in a way- but it's still a theoretical knowledge- okay- they are still learning about those strategies but are not learning and acquiring those strategies they are just learning about them. What are CSs we have this and that and that's it we stop there. They do not reflect on them, and it's a huge dangerous gap.

[0:12:35.1] **I:** Especially here in Algeria since we do not have much of an environment which speaks english. So there is this lack of practice. Especially with this type of competence since it is related to real life setting.

[0:12:36.9] **R:** Especially if it is strategic that needs more devotion uh- what- it's self-

explanatory, so we need more awareness and devotion.

[0:12:58.8] **I:** Now question 07

[0:13:09.0] **R:** CSs are the starting point of language mastery and success. i told you that it's a crucial component of CC. I am emphasizing here the word "natural" way. I told you- the starting point to when we say language mastery here we refer to what- to all aspects of language. Eh- including communication which is the pillar.

[0:14:41.0] **I:** Depending on the literature, i found many claims that even native speakers have the breakdowns, but since they acquired the language, they know how to fix them naturally. It's the same case for arabic. We as arabic speakers or maybe the algerian dialect when we are lost we have certain strategies that we use but we do not know that.

[0:15:01.9] **R:** Because we keep facing real life situations all the time frequently regularly.

[0:15:05.0] **I:** So when students lack practice, they dont know that what they are facing is natural, and they react to it in a more unnatural way.

[0:15:18.7] **R:** They experience what i call the mental- emotional block. So the problem is yes- it is linguistic- it is strategic but it is still psychological. They are linked to each other. So this kind of training may help in reducing the amount of inhibition, anxiety, and providing them with the necessary information- that would be very helpful. That is promising actually.

[0:16:05.4] **I:** Do you think that awareness-raising can actually reduce these affective factors that are really bothering students? Through the STP, you raise their awareness that this problem is occurrent even their mother tongue because it's acquired and that there are a set of strategies that they will learn etc so here you are teaching them how to deal with these problems.

[0:16:18.9] **R:** Yeah- so awareness here is an automatic outcome of this training, so raising their awareness is- let's say more abstract. But when we say teaching and training them it's more direct, tangible concrete let's say. So raising awareness may not be sufficient it's so- I can't grasp the idea of raising awareness. But say it directly, Doua, say it directly: Teaching them

explicitly- would be more powerful.

[0:17:34.4] **I:** Last question is do you have any suggestions for the improvement XXXXX??

[0:17:44.1] **R:** If i would give some recommendations i would give them to teachers not learners- so if we can recommend teachers at least to do something and initiate a change. This kind of trainings would be of a great effect and an impact if it is done appropriately and efficiently. So here back to my point- we need then- well trained teachers. The process is never random it is a cyclic process. So that is one of the most effective ways in which we can cope with this severe problem. Raising teachers' awareness- now- when we say raising teachers' awareness that is possible for me- but when we say raising students' awareness- unreachable sometimes.

Because they are in need of more as i told you more tangible- they need to demonstrate for them and show them how to do these things. But since teachers are more experienced language users yeah- we can help them raise their awareness, giving them some practical insights, providing them with some knowledge just to help them develop their understanding of the crucial importance of this practice- training- okay- so that's very important.

[0:20:08.1] **I:** Especially that it's a lifelong process. You are serving them for life- you will not need this type of competence in your university but also for the rest of your life.

[0:20:18.2] **R:** Now you mentioned the word temporary solution. The temporary solution here you are referring to the training itself - to the actual training. But then it's their personal journey to develop them and create more strategies, so yes.

[0:21:04.1] **I:** So I just want to confirm that this problem really exists in Biskra university.

[0:21:05.2] **R:** Of course it does exist. By the way it does exist even among us as teachers.

And then it's the competence okay- yeah- we may lack such competence. i admit- it's because of, as you said lack of knowledge, lack of training and practice, and lack of responsibility. As if we are not taking responsibility of our language development, and language competence. We are stuck in a very limited linguistic repertoire related to our discipline : Literature civilization etc. And we stop there- we are not trying to develop our language competence yeah- regularly as you said it's a lifelong process. So we both face the same problem but with different degrees (chuckle).

Interview with teacher three

I: Uh- so we will first start by a very introductory question, it's about how long have you been teaching EFL? [0:00:45.3] **R:** You mean- tertiary level-?

[0:00:50.3] **I:** Or even at language centers, it still counts.

[0:00:53.6] **R:** No- I have never taught in language centers. Uh- i have- i did- so my teaching experience started in 2015 in secondary school. So i taught from 2015 to 2018, that's at secondary school, and from 2018 on- i started teaching in Biskra. BUT- you know, there was a year- i think it was 2017-2018 where i taught a- part-time- sort of experience with teaching at university. I taught a class of written expression, third-year written expression in the teachers' training school, Constantine. Yea- that's where i basically had my post-graduate degree.

[0:01:51.2] **I:** Alright and along these years, have you spotted students facing sudden communication breakdowns and were unable to deliver a comprehensible message.

[0:02:02.3] **R:** I did, a lot of them. You mean- are you limiting them to university?[0:02:10.7] **I:** No, EFL learners in general.

[0:02:13.9] **R:** Of course, many of times, many of times ah- you know- I've encountered this problem-, AND, I had students you know- asking for permission to use Arabic. Can I use- NO. I always emphasize that it is prohibited to use Arabic, at all. You can just have all the time in the world, you can ask the help of your friends, you can act it, you can whatever- you can do whatever you like with- with your body language- and we can help you out.

[0:02:43.7] **I:** Except using Arabic.

[0:02:46.3] **R:** Y-yeah except using your native tongue.

[0:02:51.7] **I:** So this was the only way they mended their- uh- was- was there any other way that they used to fix this breakdown. [0:02:57.4] **R:** Themselves?

[0:02:59.4] **I:** Yeah.

[0:03:00.3] **R:** So you're not talking about me,

just themselves. [0:03:01.6] I: No no no. The students, yes.

[0:03:01.8] R: Eh- when they- when they encounter this breakdown of communication, when they couldn't find the word. They are stuck.

[0:03:11.1] I: Yes, so instead of referring to code-switching, is there any other strategy?

R: Uh- hmm- they would ask me. Sir, how- eh- sometimes i have students who eh- can- you know, explain the word and then i provide the word. Eh sir, eh- i mean this and that, so i can provide the word, or one of the classmates can provide the word. Or- the word sitting next to her or him already somehow figures out the word. And then- yeah- he tells the word and um- it's fixed. Um- uh i have never um- you know, according to my recollection, i have never seen a student working with a paper dictionary. I would have preferred students working with paper dictionaries- yeah- but with the phones? You know, they are always checking their phones. So i can't really KNOW if they had this breakdown or not. Maybe that it in their head- they stuck in their head, then they check the word then they find the word then they speak.

[0:04:15.2] I: What about here, at the tertiary level, especially during the sessions of language mastery, does it frequently happen? Especially when you ask them about something that is more conceptual, abstract, and- they trying to describe that or- talk about it..

[0:04:35.5] R: Um- it- it may happen but the problem I have with these kind of questions is that i do not have any answers- not any answers but uh- fewer- let's say answers, when these- you know philosophical kind of questions uh- especially in second semester. Um i- i don't really have that interaction. The interaction i have is good, but when i dont i don't have any. So- uh- maybe they are uh- i dont know- maybe they don't have any idea. Maybe they don't understand it. Although i- i keep repeating that if you don't understand i can reexplain but- um i didn't have that really satisfactory interaction when it comes to- what you just said abstract- you know that kind of uh- leveled-up critical thinking where they move up to really you know analyzing synthesizing and evaluating. Um- but i- i suppose that there will be some problems. This is an assumption but i

think that if they try, if i have let's say- a perfect interactive class i believe we will have these breakdowns at a- at a- certain point in time. But the problem i will have let's say- a vivid recollection of interaction where we are discussing like- lively, uh- you-know this concept or that concept, so it's always me prompting at least i have a little answer then prompt- ask another question just to push the discussion on and on.

[0:06:18.4] I: Great. And, with what factors do you associate these communication

breakdowns at the tertiary level? [0:06:27.6] R: Um- not only master?

[0:06:29.5] I: Yeah. Just tertiary level in general. Some say that they are affective factors, stress, anxiety, lack of motivation, etc. But others-

[0:06:48.5] R: Yes, it could be stress, anxiety- uh, you know- it happened to me! Uh- when i used to be a student, uh- eh- i- i do have ideas, but the idea just slipped through me when- whenever i just try to talk. It's because of uh- you know uh- stress and anxiety and eh- sometimes stage fright. Uh- although already uh- I tried to you know- act it in my head many times before i go there of before uh- start answering. But- but- i did have some practical solutions i did- as- a- as a student. That's why i believe that uh- you know- if you are really uh- intentionally working on yourself and recognizing your weakness- you're going to have solutions, a lot of them. I used to write- like- before i answer i write- like- notes or a sentence, and then i refer to it whenever- once i am stuck. Just a key word or something. That's why i love key word. They- they just- you know, lighten up a part of my head where stress just overcomes. So- so yeah part of it can be effective. Because i have classmates and i have students who are just old enough to just talk. They- just talk- eh- it may be crap, doesn't mean anything, but they just "talk". This kind of students also need some kind of a- they don't have communication breaks but the- the communication itself is a problem. That's the problem we have. It's- it's content. They have a way but the content is missing, and with the other students who are not really engaging, it's the reverse probably, they have content they have ideas they wanna share probably but- there are a lot of problems that are involved in there.

[0:07:56.8] I: Do you think that probably if students are provided with certain strategies to keep going it would be effective?

[0:09:37.6] R: Absolutely. Uh- i just told you that uh- you know- i did it myself i- i didn't have a teacher telling me that you should do this but because i believed that i was eh- let's say committed type of students uh- i figured it out myself like- i believe that any student has it in them. They can do- they can figure out lots of solutions and I believe that- this is better, why? Because every student has their own personality, has their own learning styles, so you know- i- i- like you know- taking notes, and i like key words, and i like sentences you know- guide it, but other students may like other things. d-draw for example, they may like prompts from classmates, help, there are people who like to work in teams like- groups. So- so yes, that's why i am telling you like- yes these strategies- obviously there are a lot of strategies- that's why it could work for a lot of people and it definitely will. Because it worked for me in away. At- at least i overcame that sensation of being lost in my thoughts when i tried to express an idea.

[0:10:53.6] I: Alright. So question four says: The majority of teachers at the tertiary level, alongside the expected caneva of course, claim that communicative competence is being regularly taught at universities with its subdivisions including strategic competence. Do you agree with this claim?

[0:11:09.7] R: It is- I- i do agree that it is implemented, but is it- like uh- mm- is it obviously implemented, and are you aware of it? Yeah- that's a problem. Because we have this, and i will take this for granted, as long as we are teaching a language then it's communication, then you should- you should talk and you should communicate- that's what we tell students. I- are we as teachers uh- let's say- aware of the things we do in class? Are you giving students time? Or are you just eating up all the time, all the one hour and a half in the oral expression classes. There are students- I- I have been taught by teachers- in an oral expression session and they keep talking and talking and talking- so- teacher time takes up the student time. So i- i- believe as a language course, it is implemented, if not explicitly then absolutely implicitly because it's a language class.

You're supposed to talk and communicate in order to develop this competence, that's your basic job eh- that's your basic occupation as a student AND for teachers you are going to have to- let's say i don't know, you're going to have to point it for them. Students can't realize or self-reflect- that's the problem we have like this kind of self-reflection. Are students reflecting on their performance? Or are they just there in the class not even knowing what they're doing. That's a problem i have when i look back into- you know- uh- at my experience as a student. I didn't really think anything. I just did things mechanically. I just- you know- i do the stuff that teachers ask and they do some extra- stuff- and then, yeah but I have never reflected on my style i just have- I just did what I had to do because of certain circumstances, but are the students aware- uh- are all the students like this? i don't think so. I think that many students struggle. In this context? University of Biskra?

Plenty of students struggle with this kind of gap in communication. Uh- i have seen it. I've seen it, and this is just oral! Which is supposed to be informal, which is supposed to be just communication. You know- let alone the written discourse which is a- catas- you know, a disastrous experience as i suppose. So I somehow understand what teachers say, yes it is implemented because it is a language class that's what they wanna say probably, but are you really yourself reflecting on it? And are you having your students reflecting on their competence? So yes, and no. Explicitly I don't think so, no. Are they teaching the strategies? No. No they don't. In the oral expression sessions, we had this experience, it's just topics and speech. And I understand that oral expression teachers try to uh- make the class fun. They try to make the students talk. But within this atmosphere of communication, are you teaching something? Or are you in the process of speech.

[0:15:52.5] I: This relates to question number five, it's a quote. This one: Students not only need instruction and practice in their overall skill of conveying information using the target language. They also need instruction and practice in the use of communication strategies to solve problems encountered in the process of conveying information” (p.124). To what extent do you

agree with this statement based on your own experience?

[0:16:09.1] R: A hundred percent, a hundred percent. So- so- this is obviously saying that teachers should explicitly instruct students on these strategies- communicative strategies. Do you have in oral expression uh- you know- you have listening right?

[0:18:58.5] I: Supposedly, yes. But in reality, no.

R: Yeah- we used to do listening. Uh- we used to do one hour and a half listening, and one hour and a half speech. And within the session of listening we used to have also communication debates, discussions, and all. So i believe that- that would make probably some difference in terms of students being comfortable in their own skin. I wasn't comfortable in my own skin. I couldn't really catch any words spoken in the oral videos, but I- what stuck to me is that is that experience of listening we used to have. Like- we used to watch videos on YouTube, target authentic videos. We used to have papers and fill in the gaps but uh- you know it was consistent. It wasn't just a one time experience it was a yearly exercise. And we used to like- be very consistent and we uh- were made to do it. It's like- it's not like in your hands to just say no, you have to be there, and if not you're gonna be punished and we used to have that type of fear. I don't think the students in Biskra have that.

[0:20:51.9] I: Uh another quote, that's question six which really reflects what we have been talking about right now, and it says Street learners, on the other hand, often excel in strategic competence, those who have had the opportunity to develop their second language skills *outside* the classroom are typically able to get their message long before they have developed their native-like grammatical competence”

[0:21:31.5] R: So the class just helps in the process of- it just- polishes up your communication.

[0:21:41.3] I: Yes. So to what extent do you support this claim with reference to the Algerian context?

[0:21:44.6] R: I keep telling this to students, especially Master one students, you know- with

mastery of language, you- you see we only have one unit on for example an important unit um one hour and a half lecture one hour and a half TD, and that's it. We move on to something else. And i emphasize this is that as students you should be aware of the idea that being a student is not limited to you being in a classroom and in the amphi theater. It's it's you know a big part of it is being it is you being outside. You taking whatever knowledge you learn in the classroom and taking it you know- taking the luggage with you- outside, outside your house or environment.

[0:24:04.0] I: Question 07 is what are your thoughts on argument entailing that teaching communication strategies to EFL students helps them express their ideas in a more active and comfortable way, given the fact that they are “first-aid” devices working as a temporary solution?

[0:24:40.1] R: I would definitely argue that it would be truly beneficial IF let's say if it starts from the base. Like first year and then you go on and on. At least there you have fresh students like- tabula raza is like you are going to fill them with whatever you want. And- with motivation. And these things should have been implemented explicitly- because obviously they are implicitly implemented because it's a language. But explicitly implemented in the syllabus- yeah- like a detailed uh- units in the course itself. Like one-two three- this is what you're going to do. It's- it's hard work. And it requires the consent of most of the teachers teaching that particular module. Obviously you are not teaching on your own. That's the problem we have. It's the teacher/teacher cooperation when it comes to uh- you may have me agreeing to this, and you may have another one disagreeing to this, and they say- uh i already do that ! They say. But, if you are doing it, why are we not getting results?

[0:29:14.5] I: Okay. The last question says do you have any suggestions/recommendations which might contribute to the betterment of EFL students' Proficiency and develop their strategic competence?

[0:29:26.1] R: Recommendations? You know the first time I encountered this topic it was really interesting, like- i myself haven't paid attention to it. Like- it didn't catch my attention AT ALL, and this is the first time it really um- popped into my head that- students really need to- let's say get

a knowledge on the practical things that they have to do to improve their um- oral abilities. So, they do exist. i did not know that there are strategies which exist. I- obviously I didn't have any research on it. But- i didn't have any intention to go to that area of research, but knowing that they do exist. I would definitely love to see- and attend classes in which they are implemented.

Like- i need to see *how* that's probably the question in my mind. How can these strategies be implemented in a live class, and how are you as a teacher going to uh- recognize that this is a communicative breakdown, then how are you going to diagnose it and then suggest a strategy which works for this particular student. It's really interesting. Really interesting, but it really needs some dedication from the teachers' part. It- it really needs a certain type of teachers! Like- if you are going to teach this type of competency, you also need to be REALLY competent.

[0:33:43.5] I: Great. Thank you so much for your collaboration.

Interview with teacher Four

I: [0:00:00.5] Hello and welcome to the interview. The first question is an introductory question. It says how long have you been teaching EFL for?

[0:00:08.0] **R:** Uh- all the modules? EFL in general? Eleven years. Including part-time teacher and including uh- full-time permanent teacher. Uh 7 plus 4.

[0:00:37.4] **I:** And along these years, have you spotted students facing sudden communication breakdowns and were unable to deliver a comprehensible message?

[0:00:42.1] **R:** Well- concerning this point, let me be frank with you here. Not only few but a lot of- a lot of students were face this problem. I don't know if i'm allowed here to compare- as far as EFL is concerned- if i'm allowed to make a comparison here between EFL students, due to my experience in Guelma and here, I personally- I don't know if i am allowed to compare here- there is a difference, okay?

[0:01:23.6] **I:** So concerning Biskra university, how do they usually fix these breakdowns, or-, do they fix them even-? [0:02:16.6] **R:** Before talking about fixing them, let's talk about what causes them-

[0:02:26.7] **I:** Yes! This is in question three.

[0:02:26.8] **R:** Okay- so- um- they are not making efforts to fix. So the problem where it lies- it lies not only in- we don't put the blame only on students, but because, the way they are being taught.

[0:02:53.3] **I:** So they do not know how to fix the breakdowns..

[0:02:54.5] **R:** They are not aware.

[0:02:57.8] **I:** And with what factors do you associate these breakdowns. Some teachers they say affective factors, and some say the inability to even know how to maneuver conversations.

[0:03:10.0] R: Well uh- here- concerning- you say teachers they- put the blame on the affective factors- let's say the emotional factors?

[0:03:20.5] I: Exactly.

R: Well- to a certain extent yes- but if we put the blame on these affective- when we say affective ones we are talking about emotional- including motivation.

[0:03:36.5] I: Yes, for sure.

[0:03:39.8] R: It gives me the impression what you have said that here as if you are putting the blame on students.

[0:04:16.6] I: Now the majority of teachers at the tertiary level, alongside the expected Canva, claim that communicative competence is being regularly taught at universities with its subdivisions including strategic competence. Do you agree with this claim?

[0:04:38.8] R: I agree that it is- that it exists, but how is it applied- the problem lies in how it is applied, and the other problem is that do all teachers are aware about what is this communicative competence or not? Are they professionally well-trained? It is not only about knowing the theoretical part of- okay I know about this communicative competence I know what it is but- It is not enough because we are in teaching, we have to know HOW to- and we take what is called in teaching, and- i always stress this- risk taking, i have to try, I have to apply, okay?

[0:05:48.4] I: Alright. Now we have question five which is the quote that says: Students not only need instruction and practice in their overall skill of conveying information using the target language; They- also need instruction and practice in the use of communication strategies to solve problems encountered in the process of conveying information". To what extent do you agree with this statement?

[0:06:20.9] R: I agree that they need to be taught this- they need to practice it- they need to be aware and we have to call their attention that in order to overcome such problem in communication, there is something that fixes this problem which is called the strategic

competence- this strategic competence is- is- is- whether it is explicitly taught or implicitly. Implicitly for example without telling them at the end. You see- look at this example i provide my students two examples of conversation where there is a breakdown and where- where the breakdown could be solved AND another case for example with a breakdown- would you please tell me how- what the other speaker did to overcome this problem? What expression did he use? What are the techniques? What are the strategies for example? Okay? And this is implicitly. Or explicitly directly i teach them and ask them to apply it.

[0:07:37.8] I: Excellent. Now question 06, another quote: Street learners, on the other hand, often excel in strategic competence, those who have had the opportunity to develop their second language skills *outside* the classroom are typically able to get their message long before they have developed their native-like grammatical competence” To what extent do you support this claim with reference to the Algerian context?

[0:08:36.2] R: I will just give my opinion here- it is not necessary. Those who learn authentic language in the street- they are in constant contact with native speakers, uh- in their daily life, how they speak the language, what do they mean exactly by this gesture. To a certain extent, they can overcome- they can speak freely compared to those who are limited- but this does not mean one hundred percent that those who are in exposure to the outside means that they won't have breakdowns in communication. Because to overcome this problem, it is a strategy that should be taught and we should make them aware whether it is outside or inside- so to a certain extent I- I- agree that those who in exposure to the external factors- the exposure to native speakers- how they speak, their culture- because one of the problems in a conversation breakdown is the lack of cultural knowledge- the socio-cultural norms. Since you are exposed to the native-like- here it means that you will be aware. So you reduce the percentage of having breakdowns in communication. Here, how we are teaching it is wrong. We are not- we are- we are teaching pure grammar (linguistic competence), we are focusing on the linguistic competence.

[0:10:11.7] I: Now what are your thoughts on argument entailing that teaching communication strategies to EFL students helps them express their ideas in a more active and comfortable way, given the fact that they are “first-aid” devices working as a temporary solution.

[0:12:08.9] R: It will be as a refuel for them. Okay? So i do agree to- uh- a large extent that if we taught them explicitly whether explicitly or implicitly it WILL help them. Uh- how can i put this- uh- for example if uh- you know about circumlocution- do you know about it?

[0:12:21.7] I: Yes.

R: Shall i clarify it for you? I don't know about it in arabic but let's say it in English here. For example, how to- to gain- for example you have a word, uh- an expression you are asked to give an opinion, to describe something- for example this classroom. All about the classroom,

instead of describing it in one sentence, you describe it in uh- five or six sentences for examples. You start making it long- you see this enables the student to gain time to think- and what, and more than that to build self-confidence. So this reduces the effective factors that were introduced in the beginning. Okay?

[0:13:27.5] I: Yes.

[0:13:49.6] R: For example when I used to teach oral expression I allow- I give them- you know where there is the STT and the TTT. STT is the student's talk time. I don't stop them for example. I tell them- I do not correct them, but to self-correct themselves.

[0:14:00.9] I: That is a strategy! It is called self-repair.

[0:14:11.4] R: Self-repair or self-correction, yes! I give him time to correct himself, okay. Just looking at him and just listening to give him time to, AND, when we have for example uh- a conversation between two students for example communicating to each other- there is something that i tell them about to gain time and it reduce stress as well- to reduce these affective factors, i tell them to- uh I ask them not to be shy to ask for more clarification.

[0:14:49.4] I: Exactly! It is another strategy which is called asking for clarification.

R: Yes. Don't be shy! Excuse me! What do you mean by this? Would you please speak slowly? Yeah- so you give time by asking for clarification.

[0:15:07.8] I: So one more question, Do you have any suggestions/recommendations which might contribute to the betterment of EFL students' Proficiency and develop their strategic competence?

[0:15:29.9] R: Listen, before this, let me- there are some activities- i don't know to what extent you will take this in your study- extracurricular activities. As a teacher of oral expression, as a teacher of written expression, as a teacher of any other module that requires students to speak, not only limit myself to the curriculum. I have to think of extra activities to help students among them the role play- okay? I should focus on the role play

ملخص الدراسة

لقد انتشرت الأبحاث في الآونة الأخيرة حول استراتيجيات الاتصال لأن معظم متعلمي اللغات الأجنبية أبدو نقص كبير وفشل في توظيف مهارات المحادثة في مناقشاتهم اليومية باللغة الإنجليزية. وبسبب هذه المسألة، برز التدريب على الاستراتيجيات كحل محتمل للحد من هاته المشكلة. وعلى هذا المنوال سعت هذه الدراسة إلى قياس فعالية برنامج التدريب الاستراتيجي في تطوير السلوك الاستراتيجي لطلاب السنة الثالثة لغة إنجليزية، بالإضافة إلى لاستكشاف طبيعة الوعي الاستراتيجي بين أساتذة مادتي التعبير الشفوي وإتقان اللغة. ولتأطير هذا العمل من الناحية المنهجية، اعتمد في هذا المشروع الذي طبق على عينة قصدية نموذج بحثي عملي متزامن مع منهج المقاربة المختلطة. وبعد ذلك، اتبع تصميم مواز متقارب في عملية جمع البيانات والتي أجريت عن طريق استبيان للتقارير الذاتية، الاختبارات، المقابلة، والاستبيان. أشارت النتائج إلى أن العينة المختارة واجهت مشاكل في التعويض عن التقسيمات اللغوية بسبب عدم معرفة استراتيجيات الاتصال، والتي نجمت عن إجماع المعلمين عن تدريس الكفاءة الاستراتيجية في مرحلة سابقة للسنة الثالثة جامعي. وعليه، أسفرت نتائج التحليل الموضوعي إلى أن الطلاب والمعلمين على حد سواء يفتقرون إلى الوعي بالدور المحوري لهذا النوع من الكفاءة، مما أدى إلى تدهور مهارات المحادثة للطلاب. كما أن نتائج البيانات الكمية حددت أهمية في النتائج اللاحقة التي تم تشكيلها بواسطة عينة واحدة مقترنة باختبار t بالإضافة إلى اختبار Shapiro-wilk للحالة الطبيعية، مما أكد أن برنامج التدريب الاستراتيجي ساهم في تكامل الاستراتيجيات الفعالة. كما زاد من وعي السكان المستهدفين بالانفتاح على تعاليم الكفاءة الاستراتيجية.