AN ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

USE BY NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

DURING THE ORAL PROFICIENCY

INTERVIEW

By

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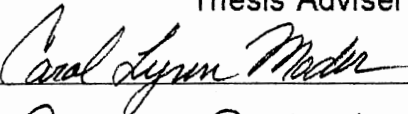
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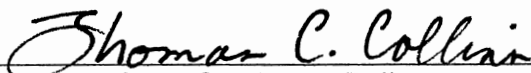the requirements for
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Second language learning can be a difficult process for many learners. In their pursuit of language proficiency, students may study the rules of the language in a grammar book, study new vocabulary by looking up every word in a dictionary,or memorize the drills taught in class. While the ability to understand the rules, words, and structures of the language are important, until the learner can communicate in the target language he will not be able to reap the benefits of all his hard work. Students taught through the Grammar-Translation or Audiolingual methods often find their linguistic skills lacking when interacting with native speakers of the target language. The frustration these language learners experience prompted an attempt by language researchers and teachers to discover a solution for this gap between the classroom and the real world.

One approach to bridging the gap between the classroom and the real world is the communicative approach to language learning. This approach focuses on developing ability in understanding and communicating meaning in the target language. Many books and articles have been written over the last twenty years on the subject of communicative methodology and the approach has undergone many transformations (Widdowson, 1989; Brumfit, 1984;

Littlewood, 1989). Throughout these transformations, several underlying principles have remained basic to the approach:

> "* Achieving communicative competence as the main goal
>
> * teaching forms and handling errors in a communicative manner
>
> * an orientation which integrates all four language skills (not only speaking, but listening,reading and writing as well);
>
> * focusing on meaning, understanding and authentic language."
>
> (Oxford, Lavine and Crookall,1989, p.33)

To promote these principles of language learning, the communicative approach encourages the learner to take greater responsibility for his language learning. This aspect is one of the beauties of the communicative approach; it allows and even requires the learner to take responsibility for how and what type of language is learned. This responsibility requires the learner to adopt some techniques or strategies to attain her goal of language proficiency. These strategies are sometimes called learning strategies.

Language learning strategies are techniques, behaviors or steps the learner uses to facilitate the learning process. There has been a great deal of research done in the area of learning strategies in the last fifteen years. Learning strategies can aid acquisition, storage and retrieval of information (Rigney, as in Oxford and Crookall, 1989). Learners may struggle with strategy usage at first, but eventually the strategies become habitual and transferable to other situations. Once the learner has a good repertoire of these strategies, she will have the tools to bridge the gap between the desire and the linguistic ability to communicate a message.

In the communicative approach to second language learning, one of the most important strategies is the communication strategy. In fact, according to Canale and Swain (1980) strategic competence is one area of competence

necessary to achieve communicative competence. Tarone defines a communication strategy as "a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared"(1981, p.287). In other words, when there is a gap between what the person wants to communicate and the person's linguistic capability, he may use a communication strategy to bridge that gap.

What are the techniques language learners use to communicate a message? Are these techniques confined to linguistic knowledge? Is there a relationship between proficiency level and strategy use? In the last fifteen years, there have been several studies which have attempted to answer these questions. Much of the work in this field of communication strategies has focused on discovering the strategies actually used by second language learners. Tarone (1977) developed a taxonomy which has provided the foundation for much of this research. Although studies in the field of communication strategies have used task, proficiency level and native language of subjects as variables for research, Tarone's strategy typology has remained a core for most research in the field of communication strategies. Most of the research to date has focused on verifying a taxonomy of communication strategies, with few empirical studies on frequency of strategy use, or tying strategy use to proficiency level.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the use of communication strategies of subjects at three different levels of oral proficiency, (intermediate, advanced and superior) as determined by the Oral Proficiency Interview. As the Oral Proficiency Interview provides a format for different types of linguistic tasks in an interactive situation, a group of test interviews have been used as the source of data for this research.

The study begins in Chapter Two with a review of previous theoretical and empirical research on communication strategies

Chapter Three explains a pilot study which compared native speaker and non-native speakers' strategy use in a short interview, and the major study which compares the strategy use by thirty non-native (ten subjects at each level) English speakers during the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The strategy taxonomy used in the pilot study originated in research by Abraham and Vann (1987). In the Abraham and Vann study, there were three main types of strategy: content clarification, production trick and social management. Under each main strategy type, there were a number of sub-strategies which provided more detail about the main strategies. After the pilot study, it was clear that a more detailed taxonomy and longer interview would be necessary to draw any real conclusions about strategy use. A new taxonomy, again based on Abraham and Vann's, was developed to more accurately assess strategy use in the Oral Proficiency Interview. The taxonomy used in the major study had five main strategies (message abandonment and appeal for assistance were added), and twelve sub-strategies. Analysis of Variance and Tukey HSD statistical analyses were applied to determine the significance of differences in the means of strategy use between and within the three proficiency levels (as determined by the OPI)

Chapter Four contains the results of the study. The results show significant differences in strategy use between and within levels. Advanced level speakers use significantly more strategies than both intermediate and superior level speakers. There was no significance in the difference between intermediate and superior. Further analysis showed that content clarification and/or production trick strategies were the strategies with the highest means for

all levels. Appeal for assistance and message abandonment had the lowest means among all proficiency levels.

Chapter Five contains a discussion of the results obtained in Chapter Four. While there is a significant difference between levels for strategy use, the most striking statistics are in *types* of strategies used at each level. As stated in the previous paragraph, there were no significant differences between the highest and the lowest levels in this study, but there were significant differences in the types of strategies used by these two levels. The differences in types of strategies used reveals that language learners at different levels of proficiency really do use different strategies.

Chapter Six discusses the implications of this research, and makes suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

All language teachers have witnessed their students struggle for a word or phrase when trying to communicate in a second language. The student may have a very specific idea in mind; he might be able to very easily articulate his thoughts in his native language, but because he is trying to communicate in another language, he discovers the limitations of his linguistic ability. How can second language teachers help students through these situations? Some theorists believe new, more communicative methodologies will help learners experiencing communicative distress.

The move to more communicative methodologies came about as a result of the frustration students were experiencing when they tried to communicate in their second language outside of the classroom. As the focus of language learning moved away from the linguistic competence described by Chomsky (1965) to communicative competence as described by Hymes (1972), many second language researchers and teachers have moved beyond the structure of grammar books and drills of earlier methods to the development of more communicative skills. Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence refers to the linguistic or grammatical knowledge equivalent to that of a native speaker; his attention was focused on the rules of the language needed for generative grammar (Widdowson,1989, p.129). Many second language researchers felt

there was more to the communication than vocabulary and syntax. Hymes (1972) proposed his theory of Communicative Competence to fill the gap left by Chomsky's linguistic competence theory. It should be made clear that both of these theories are using the word competence in a different sense from ability. They are referring to competence as "systems of knowledge" (Canale and Swain, 1981) or "underlying knowledge of a...native speaker..."(Spolsky, 1989, p. 138). Hymes' theory was concerned not only with grammatical knowledge, but also the actual use of that knowledge to communicate. In any case, this theory of communicative competence provided a theoretical rationale for the communicative approach to teaching.

Hymes' theory of communicative competence is comprised of three major systems of knowledge: grammatical competency, sociolinguistic competency and strategic competency. Grammatical competency is based on the syntactic or semantic rules of the language. Sociolinguistic competency concerns knowledge of the sociocultural rules and the appropriateness of discourse. Strategic competence, concerns the "knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that are used to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance factors due to insufficient grammatical or sociolinguistic competence" (Canale and Swain,1980, p. 31).

About the same time as Hymes was introducing the idea of communicative competence, Selinker (1972) wrote about strategies and their place in the "interlanguage" of a second language speaker. Selinker described "...items, rules and subsystems which occur in interlanguage performance which are a result of an identifiable approach by the learner to communicate with native speakers of the target language as, 'strategies of second language communication.' " (Selinker,1972, p. 215). Another classification of strategies introduced by Selinker were "strategies of second language learning " which

was "items, rules and sub-systems which occur in interlanguage performance which are a result of an identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned" (1972, p. 215).

As indicated by Selinker's definition of the two strategy types, communication strategies should be considered separate from learning strategies; however there has been some controversy over whether communication strategies should be considered separate from learning strategies. The main focus of communication strategies (as defined by Selinker) is on the process of participating in a conversation in the target language. But in reality, both communication and strategy use occur in all four language skills. Another complication is that some learning probably occurs as the learner is communicating. Some theorists have set communication strategies apart from learning strategies under the assumption that they are referring to *oral* communication strategies (Tarone, 1977, Faerch and Kasper, 1983 a; 1983 b). Other theorists have tried to distinguish communication strategies from learning strategies by classifying them under a type of learning strategy called "compensation strategies" (Oxford,1990). Oxford, Lavine and Crookall (1989) combine the ideas of communication strategies, learning strategies, and competence by stating, "Compensation strategies...are the heart of strategic competence" (p.33). This controversy has led to different approaches to definitions and taxonomies, but most research on communication strategies has been done on oral strategies and that will be the focus of most of the literature reviewed in this study.

The idea of strategic communication and competence has intrigued many second language researchers and teachers. Developing strategic competence in second language learners would help students in both the communicative classroom and the real world. When the grammar books and

dictionaries weren't handy, students could use these strategies to actually communicate, to stay in the conversation, and isn't that the goal of every language learner?

The work of Selinker and Hymes stimulated research to identify and better understand communication strategies. Most of the first studies were theoretical; these studies focused on developing the definitions and characterization of communication strategies (Varadi, 1973; Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1976; Tarone 1977; Faerch and Kasper, 1983c; Oxford 1990). Following the development of several taxonomies, some empirical work was done relating strategy use with such variables as the speaker's inferencing ability (Bialystok and Frohlich, 1980), success in language learning (Abraham and Vann, 1987) and proficiency (Paribakht, 1985; Poulisse and Schils, 1989). In the rest of this chapter examines the different approaches that have been taken to define and characterize communication strategies. Following the definitions and characterizations, there will be a discussion of the different taxonomies of communication strategies and an overview of the research relating proficiency level to strategy use.

Defining Communication Strategies

As the interest in developing communicative competence among second language learners grew, teachers and researchers became interested in discovering more about communication strategies. For the last fifteen years, a number of researchers have tried to define strategies and to discover when and how they are used (Tarone, 1983; Corder, 1983; Faerch and Kasper, 1983c; Varadi, 1983; Paribakht, 1985). In this section, the definitions of communication

strategies will be discussed. Although many researchers in the field of second language learning have attempted to define communication strategies, it seems as though each study has its own definition. Below are three of the definitions of communication strategies proposed by noted researchers in the field of strategy research:

1. "..a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared" (Tarone,1980, p. 419).

2. "...systematic techniques employed by a speaker to express meaning when faced with some difficulty" (Corder, 1983, p.16).

3. "A conscious attempt to communicate the learner's thought when the interlanguage structures are inadequate to complete that thought" (Varadi, 1983, p. 81).

All of these definitions are similar in that they describe communication strategies as occurring when there is a linguistic problem of some sort and the speaker makes a conscious attempt to solve the problem. While these definitions have been widely accepted, there are some inherent problems in operationalizing the definitions. These problems have led to disputes over the real definition of a communication strategy.

First, there is the issue of a linguistic problem or "gap". How can an observer tell if a speaker is experiencing a problem in communicating a message or lexical item? Instinct tells us that when a speaker hesitates, uses rising intonation or stammers, she is experiencing a problem communicating.

But do these overt signals always mean the speaker is experiencing a linguistic problem? The speaker may actually be processing the content of her response to a question or comment. For example, the subject may be unfamiliar with the topic, or unsure of how to respond. In these cases, hesitation may not be due to a linguistic problem. Any of these signals may mean a linguistic problem, or that the speaker is planning her next statement.

It is also important to consider that overt signals do not always accompany linguistic problems. If a speaker is experiencing a linguistic problem, or is unsure of the clarity of her message, she may use a strategy to clarify her meaning before the listener has any opportunity to perceive that there is a problem. The speaker may feel a responsibility for the comprehensibility of the message and use a strategy before the listener has a chance to misunderstand. This sense of responsibility for sending a comprehensible message is not limited to non-native interactions. Strategy use certainly occurs between native speakers as well (see Kellerman, Bongaerts and Poulisse, 1987). Misunderstandings due to linguistic difficulties can occur in almost any type of discourse. The types of strategies used by native and non-native speakers may vary, but both speak strategically, that is the speaker feels a responsibility for message and will use strategies if needed to successfully convey the message. Because the overt signals may not be signals of problematicity and speakers may use strategies when there is no problem perceived, experiencing a linguistic problem is not defining characteristic of communication strategies.

Another implication of the definitions supplied above is that the speaker makes a conscious attempt to solve the linguistic problem or bridge the communicative gap. Like the "problem" issue discussed above, it is difficult to tell if the speaker is consciously solving a linguistic problem through the use of

strategies, or experiencing a cognitive processing problem. Consciousness is very difficult to measure, making this part of the definitions problematic as well.

From this discussion of definitions of communication strategies, we can see that there are a few basic problems with the definitions previously presented by strategy theorists. Problematicity and consciousness are not the only problems with definitions of communication strategies that have been proposed to date. Most research has focused on non-native discourse, but strategies are used by native speakers as well. The addition of a few words, or taking the time to give an extended explanation are strategies native speakers may use to communicate their intended meaning. Faerch and Kasper (1983a) feel that true communication strategies can occur only in the discourse of non-native speakers. But as second language learners move closer to native-like proficiency, their linguistic needs for communication strategies may change. Non-native speakers who have achieved higher levels of proficiency may use more linguistically difficult communication strategies that are similar to the strategies used by native speakers.

Simple definitions only seem to add to the confusion of what a communication strategy really is. It may be useful to take a more functional approach to understanding communication strategies. In the next section, the characterizations of communication strategies by Corder (1983) and Faerch and Kasper (1983c) will be reviewed. These general characterizations provide insight into the broadest categories of strategies. Following the section on characterizations of strategies, there will be a review of taxonomies and the research the taxonomies are derived from. The taxonomies should provide a closer view of what strategies are and when they occur. Finally, there will be a review of the research which has related strategy use to second language proficiency.

Characterization of Communication Strategies

As defining communication strategies has proved somewhat difficult, several researchers have attempted to understand communication strategies better through characterization of strategies based on whether the speaker will reduce or expand on opportunities to speak the target language. In this section, the characterizations of Corder (1983) and Faerch and Kasper (1983c) will be reviewed.

Message Adjustment or Resource Expansion.

This classification is based on the idea that speakers have an intended goal when speaking and a chosen route to achieve that goal. When the chosen route doesn't achieve the intended goal, the speaker has two options, he may change the goal or change the chosen route for that goal. Corder (1983) calls the first option, (changing the goal), "message adjustment or risk avoidance"; the second option, (changing the route for the intended message), Corder calls "resource expansion" which is "'success oriented' though risk running" (p. 17).

Message adjustment may occur on many levels. According to Corder, avoidance can occur on the topic level, on the semantic level, or "given messages can simply be reduced, retaining some but not all of the features originally intended" (Corder, 1983, p.17). The speaker must lower her communicative goal to one within her linguistic abilities. This is certainly limiting, especially for the beginning or intermediate language learner, who may have lofty goals but limited vocabulary. Another disadvantage of message

adjustment strategies is that they involve very little risk for speaker. Risk taking is an important characteristic of the "good language learner" (Rubin, 1975) and while message adjustment strategies assure fewer mistakes for the speaker, they reduce the opportunity to become a better language learner.

The second characterization described by Corder was "resource expansion". Like message adjustment strategies, there are many levels of resource expansion strategies. These strategies incur greater risk for the speaker than message abandonment, as the speaker must extend his linguistic abilities, and the levels of that risk characterize the level of resource expansion. "The scale of risk taking indicates the extent to which the speaker is risking communication failure" (Corder, 1983, p. 18). This means that some strategies within the class of resource expansion strategies incur greater risk than others. Strategies based on the L1, for example, "transfer or language switching", are the least effective strategies and the speaker takes a great risk of being misunderstood. On the other hand, paraphrasing, another resource expansion strategy, which is based on the target language, incurs less risk for the speaker. The words "abandonment" and "expansion" used by Corder in these titles provide clues to the productivity of these strategies. Both types of strategies fit the definition of communication strategies; they allow the speaker to bridge a communicative gap and stay in a conversation, but perhaps the latter, resource expansion, allows the speaker to learn while using communication strategies.

Reduction Strategies and Achievement Strategies.

A similar classification system to Corder's was provided by Faerch and Kasper (1983c). Like Corder's description of communication strategies, these strategies provide two paths for bridging the linguistic gaps that may occur in oral communication. The first category, "reduction strategies" involve avoidance of the gap by reducing the speaker's communicative goals. The second category, "achievement strategies", like Corder's "resource expansion" requires the speaker to confront the problem and achieve a solution.

Faerch and Kasper (1983c) further classify reduction strategies into "formal reduction strategies" and "functional reduction strategies". They believe this further classification of reduction strategies reflects the speaker's risk taking attitude. Formal reduction strategies are used by speakers when the speaker "*avoids using* rules/ items which he has at his disposal, and which in a different communicative situation would be the most appropriate way of reaching his communicative goal" (p. 40). The speaker may choose formal reduction strategies when he is a little insecure about the correct form of the word or structure. Again, the speaker is unwilling to take the risk of making a mistake, and therefore avoids the task. Functional reduction strategies are more like Corder's avoidance strategies; the speaker does not have the linguistic skills to reach his communicative goal, and therefore avoids the task.

Achievement strategies are similar to Corder's "resource expansion" while these strategies require more risk from the speaker, ultimately they lead to greater success in both the communicative process and the learning process.

Corder (1983) and Faerch and Kasper (1983c) have similar approaches to the characterization of communication strategies, but these characterizations

are too broad to provide any real understanding of the specific approaches to communicative problems speakers may use. However, several taxonomies describe and classify more specific strategies. These taxonomies which are discussed in the following section, lead to a greater understanding of when and how communication strategies are used.

Taxonomies of Communication Strategies

One of the first communication strategy taxonomies was presented by Varadi in1973. Although this taxonomy didn't appear in print until much later, Tarone (1977) published a taxonomy and a study which was strongly influenced by Varadi's work (as cited in Bialystok, 1990). Tarone asked nine non-native speakers at the intermediate level to do a picture description task. She then developed a taxonomy characterizing the strategies the subjects used.

The subjects of this experiment were to asked to describe three pictures in their native language and second language: two simple drawings and a complex illustration. Seven items within the complex illustration were targeted to provide the corpus of data for analysis. The purpose of this study was primarily to identify strategies used by the subjects and develop a taxonomy of communication strategies. From the data, Tarone developed a taxonomy of five main strategies and seven sub-strategies: **avoidance** (*topic avoidance and message abandonment)* **paraphrase** (*approximation, word coinage,and circumlocution*), **conscious transfer** (*literal translation and language switch*), **appeal for assistance** and **mime**.

when the subject rewords the message using synonyms or describes the characteristics of the object or action; **conscious transfer** occurs when the speaker borrows a word from her target language; **appeal for assistance** is counted when the speaker consults a dictionary or native speaker for assistance; and **mime** occurs when the subject uses a gesture to get her meaning across to the listener. This taxonomy seemed comprehensive and provided the basis for most of the subsequent research in the area of communication strategies. Much of the research on communication strategies that followed Tarone's study used similar tasks and adaptations of her taxonomy. Several have related strategy use to proficiency level and that will be the focus of the review of research that follows.

Another taxonomy, proposed by Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) was based on Tarone's taxonomy, but characterized strategies by their source. The three categories of strategies in this study were **L-1 based strategies, L-2 based strategies** and **paralinguistic strategies.** **L-1 based strategies** were based on the subject's first language. The sub-strategies in this category were *language switch*, where the subject inserts a word from her native language; *foreignizing* , where a target language modification is applied to the L-1 term; and *transliteration,* where the subject literally translates a term from her first language. These three sub-strategies correspond to Tarone's **conscious transfer** strategy. **L-2 based strategies** (based on the speaker's second language) are similar to Tarone's **paraphrasing** and include *semantic contiguity,* defined as "the use of a single lexical item which shares semantic features with the target item" (Bialystok and Frohlich, 1980, p.11). In this taxonomy, there are two types of **L-2 based strategies:** *description* where the subject describes the features of the target item; and *word coinage,* where the subject makes up a word by using the morphological

description where the subject describes the features of the target item; and *word coinage,* where the subject makes up a word by using the morphological features of a word in the target language and changing the word to accommodate his message. For example, if the speaker wants to communicate a verb meaning "conduct business" but cannot think of the correct word, he may coin the word, "businessing". **Paralinguistic strategies** were similar to Tarone's **mime**. Strategies under this category were basically non-verbal, and were comprised of gestures or sounds to signify meaning.

Unlike Tarone's earlier study, Bialystok and Frohlich's study did not have as its main objective the development of a taxonomy of strategies. The purpose of this study was to "examine conditions for the selection of certain communication strategies in terms of (the subjects') inferencing ability, formal proficiency level attained, and features of the communicative situation" (1980, p. 5). The subjects of this study were put into three groups, one group of twefth grade students studying French in a "core" program, one group of twelfth grade students studying French in a advanced level class, and one group of adult students studying French in an intensive language learning program. All were native speakers of English studying French. Proficiency was based on performance on a cloze test, and the tasks designed to elicit discourse were picture reconstruction, and picture description. In the first task, the subject was asked to describe a picture in French so that a native speaker of French could reconstruct the picture on a flannel-board. The second task was to describe the same picture (used in the first task) in French, in as much detail as possible.

The results of this study suggest that proficiency is related to the number and effectiveness of the strategies used by non-native speakers. Subjects that had high scores on the cloze test , "were both more efficient in their strategy use in that they required fewer strategies to convey the information,and more

use is *more efficient* strategy use. Bialystok and Frohlich also suggested that the results indicated a certain level of proficiency is a prerequisite for the effective use of communication strategies. This study has important implications both in verifying Tarone's taxonomy and developing a better understanding of the relationship between proficiency and strategy use. Though the categories of strategies are broken down differently, many of the strategies used by Bialystok and Frohlich are similar to the strategies in Tarone's taxonomy. The fact that many of the strategies in Tarone's taxonomy were replicated in this study gives further credence to Tarone's list of strategies. In this study, Bialystok and Frohlich have shown that strategy use does vary with proficiency level. Although this study contributed to greater understanding of the relationship between strategy use and proficiency level, because Bialystok and Frohlich's study used a task which involves a less authentic communicative task to elicit strategies, the results may not be generalizable to a more communicative situation.

Another study which related strategy use to proficiency was Paribakht's (1985) study relating strategic competence and proficiency level. The subjects of this study were three groups of twenty adult subjects: two groups were comprised of native speakers of Persian, one group at an intermediate level, and one at an advanced level of an English language program; and a third group comprised of native speakers of English. Grammatical proficiency was measured by the Michigan Test of English Proficiency, and oral proficiency was measured by the International Educational Achievement Test of Proficiency in English as a Foreign Language.

The task for this study was to communicate a list of twenty lexical items which consisted of both concrete and abstract items. Examples of the concrete

The task for this study was to communicate a list of twenty lexical items which consisted of both concrete and abstract items. Examples of the concrete items are *funnel, lantern and pomegranate*. The list of abstract items included words like *fate, pride and courage*.

The taxonomy used in this study is based on the idea that there are four approaches to communication problems. The approaches are based on the "types of knowledge utilized by the speakers..."(Paribakht, 1985, p. 135). The first approach is the **linguistic approach**, which uses the semantic features of the target items; it is similar to Tarone's "paraphrasing" in that it includes strategies such as *circumlocution* and *synonymy*. She also uses Bialystok and Frohlich's *semantic contiguity* under this category. The second approach is the **contextual approach**, which is used when the subject "provides contextual information rather than ...semantic features" (p.137). Strategies under the third approach type, **conceptual approach**, were those which utilized the speakers general knowledge of the world. The final approach in Paribakht's taxonomy was **mime** which exemplifies the subject's knowledge of gestures. This final approach is also found in the taxonomies of Tarone (1977) and Bialystok and Frohlich (1980).

Paribakht found that the advanced level speakers used *fewer* strategies than both the intermediate level and the native speakers. The results indicate that strategy use is "dynamic" and changes in strategy use reflect the "transitional nature" of the subject's interlanguage. This study by Paribakht proved Bialystok and Frohlich's (1980) suggestion that a certain level of proficiency must be acquired to use communication strategies, but as a communicative task was not included, the results are not generalizable.

While the studies that have been reviewed confirm the validity of Tarone's taxonomy of communication strategies, there seems to be a problem

concrete words may be useful in eliciting communication strategies in a research situation, how often are these activities used in real communication in the target language? While the taxonomies seem reliable and valid, the tasks do not seem to fit the goal of relating strategy use to communicative competence.

A more interactive communicative task was used by Abraham and Vann (1987). In this study, the researchers compared the learning strategy use of two learners, Gerardo and Pedro. These learners were described "successful" and "unsuccessful" respectively, as determined by their progress through a language learning program. Both subjects of the study were at the same grade level in the language learning program, were native speakers of Spanish and were matched on other factors, such as positive attitudes about the U.S.and willingness to take risks. The two subjects differed in their formal education, weeks in the program, and final TOEFL and TSE (Test of Spoken English) scores. Gerardo had finished a bachelor's degree, had been in the language program for 24 weeks, had a final TOEFL score of 523 and TSE score of 120 and was described as the "successful" learner. Pedro, the other subject, was described as the "unsuccessful" learner, and had only completed a high school diploma, he had been in the program for 40 weeks, and had a final TOEFL score of 473 and TSE score of 180.

The two subjects were interviewed about their (learning) strategy use, then their learning strategies were tabulated according to strategies observed during the interview and two other tasks (focused on general learning strategy use). As a separate part of the taxonomy, communication strategies were tabulated as well. The taxonomy used in this study was developed by Naiman et al. (1978), but has many similarities to Tarone's taxonomy. Although Abraham and Vann do not disclose their rationale for selecting this taxonomy, it

is assumed that the different task required some adaptation of the taxonomy. The taxonomy of communication strategies used in this study had three major types of strategies. The first strategy type was **content clarification/ verification**, which was comprised of strategies where the subject attempted to clarify something he had said or something the interviewer had said. The second type of strategy was **production tricks**, which was comprised of strategies similar to Tarone's **paraphrasing** and Bialystok and Frohlich's **L-2 based strategies.** The strategies under this category were sub-strategies such as using synonyms, paraphrases, or examples and making up a word. One strategy in this category would be considered a **L-1 based strategy**, "Transfer or language switch". The third strategy type was **social management**. This category was comprised of strategies which "had the effect of encouraging the interviewer to talk more" (p. 90). The strategies in this category included confirming the interviewer's understanding, joking, and thanking the interviewer for correction.

The results of this study showed that the "successful" learner not only used more communication strategies, but used a wider variety of strategies as well. It is interesting to note that the "unsuccessful" learner had a higher TSE score than the "successful" learner, but used fewer communication strategies. The discrepancy between "success" and TSE scores means that Gerardo's "success" in the language program may not be directly related to his oral proficiency. Abraham and Vann do not attempt to explain this discrepancy, as they are only looking at "success" in the language program as it relates to strategy use.

From the results of this study, Abraham and Vann feel that the "better" or more "successful" language learner used more strategies. This means that the researchers feel that the *more* strategies used, the *more* "successful" the

learner. This conclusion is certainly different from the conclusion Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) came to in their study relating communication strategies and proficiency. Bialystok and Frohlich found that subjects who used *more* strategies were using the language more efficiently. The different conclusions arrived at in these two studies lead to questions about the taxonomies and measurements of proficiency. The two studies certainly used two different approaches to categorizing strategies. While both studies used a taxonomy based on Tarone (1977), Bialystok and Frohlich adapted the taxonomy to fit the strategies subjects would use in a picture re-construction or description task. Abraham and Vann's taxonomy was suited to the interview situation used to elicit strategies in their study. It seems that each study must develop a taxonomy that fits the strategies elicited in the that study. Because each study uses a different taxonomy and a different measure of proficiency, it is difficult to generalize from one study to another. But each new taxonomy allows us to see the diversity of communication strategies and how important it is to use communicative tasks for this kind of research. The Abraham and Vann study, while limited in scope, did use the interview technique, thereby arriving at more generalizable results, but the measurement of oral proficiency used was not related at all to strategies.

A later study by Poulisse and Schils (1989) relating foreign language proficiency level to the task performed by the subjects, provided some insight into the use of strategies in a various communicative situations. In this study of 3 groups of Dutch learners of English, strategy use was analyzed for three tasks, a picture description, a story re-telling, and a 20 minute interview with a native speaker discussing topics such as holidays,school and sports. Poulisse and Schils used three different proficiency levels in their study. The first group was comprised of 15 second year university students who had studied English

for 7 years; members of this group were ranked at the advanced level in the language learning program. The second group was comprised of 15 fifth year secondary school students ranked at the intermediate level in their language program, who had studied English for 4 years. The third group contained 15 third year secondary school students who had studied English for 2 years and were ranked as beginners.

Poulisse and Schils cite the need to develop different taxonomies according to the communicative nature of some tasks. In this research, they have developed an original taxonomy that fit the strategy use in all three tasks. The authors of this study used "a subset of CS [communication strategies] namely, compensatory strategies". These strategies are characterized as achievement strategies under the Faerch and Kasper (1983a) definition. These strategies are those used by the speaker to reach her communicative goal through alternative methods. This study is interesting in that it applies a taxonomy to a variety of linguistic tasks, although only one task is really communicative. Also, Poulisse and Schils distinguished between "**conceptual** and **linguistic** strategies" (1989, p. 21). Conceptual strategies are identified as when, "the speaker manipulates the concept and refers to it either by listing (some of) its defining and/or characteristic features" (p. 21) Linguistic strategies are those strategies which result from "the speaker's manipulation of her linguistic knowledge" (p. 21).

Poulisse and Schils found that strategy use was inversely related to proficiency level. The intermediate and advanced level subjects used fewer communication strategies than the beginning level subjects. These results replicate the findings of Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) in that the more proficient subjects used fewer communication strategies. There were no significant differences between the intermediate and advanced levels. Poulisse and

replicate the findings of Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) in that the more proficient subjects used fewer communication strategies. There were no significant differences between the intermediate and advanced levels. Poulisse and Schils concluded that proficiency level has a limited effect on choice of compensatory strategies because while the beginning level was significantly different from the other levels, the intermediate and advanced levels were not significantly different from each other in their strategy use. They speculated that the beginning level was not low enough to show the effect of proficiency level on use of communication strategies. Perhaps it is *not* that the low subjects were not low enough, but that the advanced subjects were not sufficiently different from the intermediate subjects and rather than adding a lower level, a higher level (superior) should be added to the sample.

The research reviewed in this section has shown the evolution of communication strategies from the struggle to define them to identifying them in different linguistic tasks. The studies reviewed have varied both in their taxonomies and measures of proficiency. We have seen that different studies adapt taxonomies to fit the discourse required by the task subjects are asked to perform. Picture description and re-construction tasks call for different types of strategies than an interview task. Therefore, each study should have a taxonomy suited to the kinds of tasks required of subjects in the study. Besides taxonomies, another variable in the the studies was the measurement of proficiency. In two of the studies proficiency was measured by grade level achieved in a language learning program (Bialystok and Frohlich, 1980; Poulisse and Schils, 1989), the other used progress in a program as a measurement of "success" (Abraham and Vann, 1987). Neither measurement of proficiency is really a valid measurement of oral proficiency. As witnessed in the Abraham and Vann study "success" may not always correlate with high

level. Grade levels in a language learning program are determined by many different variables; oral proficiency is only a small part of that determination. Since all of these studies are comparing the strategies used in oral discourse, it seems that the measurement of proficiency should be related only to oral proficiency. Although the Abraham and Vann study did use the Test of Spoken English as a measurement of oral proficiency, they didn't discuss this as a factor influencing strategy use. Even though the Abraham and Vann study did include (though they didn't account for) an accepted oral proficiency measurement (the Test of Spoken English) in their study, that instrument is not an communicatively authentic measure either. The Test of Spoken English is non-interactive and doesn't measure oral proficiency in a communicative manner.

Future studies that try to relate proficiency to strategy use should use a communicatively valid measurement that is focused on oral proficiency. An instrument such as The Oral Proficiency Interview may provide a proficiency measurement that is more communicatively valid than the Test of Spoken English.

Finally, the results of the three empirical studies reviewed in this chapter reveal that there is a relationship between proficiency and strategy use. Two of the studies found that more proficient speakers used fewer strategies (Bialystok and Frohlich,1980; Poulisse and Schills,1989). On the other hand, one study (Abraham and Vann, 1987) found that a more "successful" learner used more communication strategies. A closer look at the subject profile in the Abraham and Vann study shows the subject with the highest TSE score (while being the "unsuccessful" subject) actually did use fewer communication strategies than the other subject. Looking at the results of these three studies in the light of proficiency rather than "success", the results all indicate that more proficient speakers use fewer strategies than less proficient speakers.

After reviewing the research on communication strategies, I have made some assumptions about communication strategies and the relationship between strategy use and proficiency level. First, communication strategies can used by any speaker wishing to communicate a message. The speaker may anticipate there will be problems in the comprehensibility of the message (especially in native/non-native interaction) and any strategy the speaker uses to convey the message can be considered a communication strategy. Second, strategy use is task-related and taxonomies should reflect the strategies required by the given task. Third, proficiency level does seem to have an effect (though sometimes limited) on strategy use.

In the following chapter, the relationship between proficiency (as measured by the Oral Proficiency Interview) and strategy use will be examined again. Using the Oral Proficiency Interview both as an elicitation task , and as a measurement of Oral Proficiency, the strategy use by subjects at three different levels will be analyzed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

As interest in communicative methodologies grew, interest in the components of communicative competence grew. As stated in the previous chapter, among the three components of communicative competence named by Hymes (1972), one was strategic competence. Since Selinker (1972) first introduced the idea of communication strategies, definitions have been attempted (Tarone, 1977; 1980; 1981; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Corder, 1983; Varadi, 1983), taxonomies developed (Tarone, 1977; Paribakht, 1985; Varadi, 1983) and research has been conducted to gain a better understanding of what strategies are and how important they are to the language learner. Much of the early research was theoretical, focusing on defining communication strategies and developing taxonomies that described them. Over the last fifteen years, the taxonomies, developed as a result of more research, have remained relatively consistent with the taxonomy developed by Tarone (1977). Some studies have re-categorized strategies within the taxonomy according to the strategy's source (Bialystok and Frohlich, 1980), or the speaker's approach to communicative problems (Paribakht, 1985), but overall, the same strategies described in Tarone's taxonomy appear again and again in the research.

Because Tarone's original study was so successful in developing a valid taxonomy of communication strategies, many researchers relied on the

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elicitation techniques used in her research as well (Bialystok and Frohlich, 1980; Bialystok, 1983; Varadi, 1983). While the research that followed Tarone's elicitation technique has provided a large corpus of information on the communication strategies of non-native speakers, the linguistic tasks used in these studies were neither interactive nor communicative. Picture description and reconstruction or word transmission tasks are not typical of the daily interactions that non-native speakers encounter. To gain a more complete understanding of how strategies are used in real communicative discourse, the elicitation technique must also be communicative.

Of the previous research done on communication strategies, only two, Abraham and Vann (1987) and Poulisse and Schils (1989) used communicatively oriented tasks as an elicitation technique. The Abraham and Vann study wasn't very generalizable as it was focused more on overall learning strategies than oral communication strategies, and there were only two subjects studied. Poulisse and Schils (1989) did incorporate an interview into the elicitation techniques of their research, but the interview was not really designed to require any specific linguistic tasks. Because the task is such an important factor to the strategies used in discourse, a task which requires the subject to attempt a variety of linguistic tasks should provide a more comprehensive format of the strategies used by non-native speakers.

Another factor considered in previous research was the subjects' proficiency level. In Paribakht's study, oral proficiency was determined by the International Educational Achievement Test of Proficiency in English as a Foreign Language. This is not a well-known test in the United States, and it is not as widely accepted as a measurement of oral proficiency as the Oral Proficiency Interview. Of the two studies which used a communicative elicitation task, Abraham and Vann (1987) used the TSE (Test of Spoken English) and

grade level as measurements of proficiency. The TSE is not considered to be a very communicative format for determining oral proficiency, and therefore not a suitable measure for communicative proficiency. (As there is *no* interaction with other speakers). there are other problems with using grade level as a determination of proficiency (as it was in Poulisse and Schils and Bialystok and Frohlich). Grade level may be determined by factors unrelated to oral proficiency.

Most of the previous research in the field of communication strategies has been focused on non-communicative tasks and proficiency measurements which were not communicatively valid. To overcome these difficulties, the research reported here uses the Oral Proficiency Interview both as the elicitation task and the measurement of proficiency. The purpose of this study is to analyze communication strategy use in a communicative task and determine the relationship between strategy use and proficiency level as measured by the Oral Proficiency Interview.

The first step in this research was to do a pilot study to analyze actual communication strategy use. The pilot study was based on Abraham and Vann's study comparing the learning strategies of two second language learners, one described as "successful" and one as "unsuccessful". The Abraham and Vann study used an extended interview with questions about general learning strategy use. This pilot study used a shorter interview as a format for eliciting and asking subjects about their communication strategies. Another difference between this pilot study and the Abraham and Vann study was that rather than comparing successful and unsuccessful learners, this pilot study compared native and non-native speakers. Using a modified interview and the Abraham and Vann taxonomy in the pilot study led to refinement of the strategy taxonomy and general methodology of the main study.

This chapter will first discuss the pilot study, then the methods of the major study. The pilot study explores the relationship between strategy use of native and non-native speakers. Based on the Abraham and Vann study, the native speakers were expected to use more communication strategies as they were the most proficient speakers.

The Pilot Study

The hypothesis for this study is that there is a relationship between communication strategy use and whether or not a person is a native speaker of English. Abraham and Vann (1987) studied and characterized the learning and communication strategies of two non-native speakers, one "successful" and the other "unsuccessful". Using characterizations of communication strategies first developed in a study by Naiman et al. (1978) and adapting it for their own use, Abraham and Vann counted the strategies used by the two speakers. The study showed the "successful" learner used a significantly greater number of strategies than the "unsuccessful" learner.

In this pilot study, Abraham and Vann's (1987) interview (modified) and characterizations of communication strategies are used to analyze the relationship between native and non-native speaker' strategy use. It was assumed that native speakers would use more communication strategies, because they were more successful connumicators in English than the non-native speakers. The idea that native speakers will use more strategies than non-native speakers was a somewhat naive view of strategy use, but the pilot study did increase the researcher's understanding of communication strategies.

<u>Subjects</u>

This study used ten female subjects who volunteered to be interviewed on their communication strategies. The five non-native speakers were enrolled in classes at the English Language Institute at Oklahoma State University. The five native speakers of English had all attended Oklahoma State University, but only three were enrolled at the time of the study. The women were between the ages of 18 and 34, and had varied language backgrounds and experiences. Two of the subjects had no second language, five had studied a second language, and three had studied more than two languages. Information on the native speakers and their language background can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1

NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKING SUBJECTS AND THEIR LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS

Subject	Susan	Mary	Judy	Rebecca	Kay
Home State	Arizona	Ohio	Louisiana	Oklahoma	Oklahoma
Native Language	English	English	English	English	English
# of Languages spoken	1	2	2	2	2

Non-native speaker information is contained in Table 2. The five native speakers were from Arizona, Louisiana, Ohio, and Oklahoma, and the five non-native speakers were from China, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Korea and Indonesia.

TABLE 2

NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKING SUBJECTS AND THEIR LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS

Subject	Ling	Huda	Susana	Jung-Sook	Ferawati
Home Country	China	Ethiopia	Ecuador	Korea	Indonesia
Native Language	Chinese	Amharic	Spanish	Korean	Indonesian
# of Languages spoken	2	4	3	2	3

* Subjects' names in both tables have been changed to protect anonymity

Materials

A modified version of the interview used in the Abraham and Vann study (1987) was used to eicit communication strategies. The original interview (see Appendix A) was comprised of fifty questions which asked the subject questions about her language background, insights into language learning, and study habits. In this study, the interview was modified to twenty questions designed to gain information about how the subjects overcome difficulties they have in

communication. Some of the questions were designed to stimulate conversation and in the final question, the subjects were asked about their feelings on the subject of *eugenics*. This question was designed to provide the experimenter with some insight into strategies used by the subjects when presented with an unknown word. Interview questions were the same for all subjects. The interview was tape-recorded so the experimenter could later characterize strategies used by the subjects.

Procedures

After the interview, the researcher listened to the tapes and characterized strategy use by the subjects. Some of the strategies described by Abraham and Vann were not applicable to this study and therefore deleted. The strategies which were deleted were, "goes back to question asked on earlier day to ensure that he was understood", "relates his experience to that of interviewer" and "thanks interviewer for correction". As these strategies did not occur in this pilot study they were deleted from the taxonomy used for characterization of strategies. An example of each strategy used (taken directly from the interviews) is provided below. The interviewer's statements are marked "I" and the subject's statements are marked "S".

The following are the three main categories of communication strategies as defined by Abraham and Vann (1987):

1. Content Clarification/ Verification

      A. Asks for more information or repetition of the question.

Content Clarification (continued)

    I : What level of education do you have?

    S: *You mean about um...English?*

  B. Corrects interviewer's understanding of her statement.

    I : Hokkien is a type of Chinese?

    S: *Yes...ah but I don't think Hokkien is a type of Chinese ...we have a different anguage.*

2. Production Tricks

  A. Uses synonyms, spells, or paraphrases to communicate ideas

    I : May I ask your name?

    S: *Yes, my name is Jing, J-I-N-G.*

  B. Appears to make-up word

    I : How do you study for tests?

    S: *I make up a resume.* (This is the Spanish word for notes)

  C. Gives an example of what she is describing

    I : Are you sometimes shy when you speak English?

    S: *When I cannot think right to make a right sentence, I get shy.*

3. Social Management

    A. Repeats interviewer's repetition of answers to

       confirm understanding

       I : So your native language is Chinese?

       S: *Ya..that's right, Mandarin Chinese.*

    B. Jokes

       I : Do you like Stillwater?

       S: *Well, I suppose it's o.k. for students...ha ha.*

    C. Uses cues to indicate understanding.

       I : Do you understand?

       S: *Uh -huh.*

Each time one of the subjects used a communication strategy as described above, the interviewer scored it under the appropriate heading. After listening to the interview, the totals were tallied for each subject (see Tables 5 and 6 on pages 39 and 40). A chi-square analysis was used to determine if the differences between native and non-native speakers' strategy use was significant.

Results and Discussion

As there were not very many total communication strategies, the data were collapsed into the three areas of strategies: **content clarification, production tricks, and social management.** As can be seen in Table 3,

an analysis of the communication strategies used by subjects during the interviews reveals the non-native speakers of English used many more strategies than native speakers. A chi-square was run on this data and the results show a strong relationship between native/ non-native English speakers and types of strategy used.

The chi-square crit for 2 degrees of freedom $p < .05$ is 5.9915. The chi-square observed for this experiment is 8.853, $p < .012$. (This information is also contained in Table 4 on the following page) The chi-square observed value for this experiment leads us to reject the null hypothesis, and accept that there is a relationship between native/non-native speakers and the type of strategy used.

TABLE 3

TOTAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

STRATEGY	Native	Non-native	TOTAL
Content Clarification	9	30	39
Production Tricks	0	8	8
Social Management	2	47	49
TOTAL	11	85	96

TABLE 4

CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY USE

Test Statistic	Value	DF	Prob
Pearson Product Moment Correlation	8.853	2	0.012
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	9.503	2	0.009

TABLE 5

A COMPARISON OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

Subject	Sub #1	Sub #2	Sub #3	Sub #4	Sub #5
Strategy					
Content Clarification					
Asks for more info or repeat	2	2	1	2	2
Corrects interviewer's understanding					
Production Tricks					
Uses synonyms, paraphrases or spells					
Appears to make up word					
Gives example					
Social Management					
Repeats or paraphrases for interviewer's understanding					
Jokes	1		1		
Uses cues, "uh-huh"					
Time for interview	2' 54"	3' 54"	3' 42"	3' 49"	3' 27"
Total Strategies	3	2	2	2	2

TABLE 6

A COMPARISON OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

Subject	Sub #1	Sub #2	Sub #3	Sub #4	Sub #5
Strategy					
Content Clarification					
Asks for more info or repeat	4	4	4	8	6
Corrects interviewer's understanding		1		1	2
Production Tricks					
Uses synonyms, paraphrases or spells	2		2	1	
Appears to make up word					
Gives example	1			1	1
Social Management					
Repeats or paraphrases for interviewer's understanding	5	1		3	1
Jokes			1		3
Uses cues, "uh-huh"	9	7	4	12	4
Time for interview	8' 37"	6' 15"	6' 30"	9' 29"	11" 44"
Total Strategies	21	13	11	26	17

As there was an obvious lack of strategy use by native speakers, it was difficult to draw conclusions on the hypothesis of this study. But despite the lack of data on native speakers, the data on non-native speakers is worthy of closer inspection.

The results of the tabulations of communication strategies are revealed in Tables 5 and 6. Table 6 shows the communication strategies used by non-native speakers during the course of the interview. Social management strategies comprised 55% of the total strategies used by non-native speakers. The strategy used by almost all subjects (but the Indonesian) was the cue to indicate understanding. According to Table 3, the second highest frequency of strategy use was content clarification (a frequency of 30), and the least popular strategy category among the non-native speakers was the production tricks category (with a frequency of 8) . The fact that a physical cue to indicate understanding requires very little linguistic ability or competence, and it is an almost universal indication of understanding, makes the frequent use of this strategy easy to understand. Native speakers probably did not use this strategy because they felt no need to indicate understanding. This may be an artifact of the elicitation task as native speakers would use this gesture in most interactive situations. As non-native speakers are more aware of the possibility of a misunderstanding in communication, they may feel the need to indicate understanding so the conversation may continue.

Types of strategies used in the interview were not the only variables in which native and non-native speakers varied. Along with information on the frequency of strategies used, Tables 5 and 6 show the time required to complete the interview. The non-native speakers took almost twice as long to complete the interview. This may be due to several factors. The non-native

speakers probably took longer to answer, carefully planning and negotiating their way through the interview. Table 6 reveals the use of more content clarification strategies among non-native speakers; this means subject's responses were longer, as the subjects felt the need to be certain they understood questions and their responses were understood by the interviewer. The interviewer's impression was that the two subjects who used the most strategies, the Chinese (non-native subject 1) and the Korean (non-native subject 2) were the least proficient of the subjects. There were several points in the interview when the Korean subject completely misunderstood the question and it had to be re-stated more slowly. As can be seen in Table 6, these two non-native speakers used the greatest number of strategies. The most frequently used strategy among these two speakers was the social management strategy "uses cues". This strategy is the least linguistically demanding strategy and perhaps because these subjects are less confident of their linguistic abilities, they rely heavily on "uses cues". It would seem from the results of this pilot study that second language learners with the least proficiency use the most strategies.

Conclusions

While the lack of strategy use by native speakers made the totals very one-sided, this study did provide insight into some factors which should be considered in future research.

As there is less linguistic misunderstanding between native speakers of the same language, the use of the communication strategies investigated in this study may not be a necessary skill in native/ native interaction. While native

speakers certainly use communication strategies, they would probably involve different kinds of strategies than the ones non-native speakers use. Most of the previous research has been on the communication strategies of non-native speakers; therefore, while native speakers use communication strategies, they haven't been accounted for in taxonomies to date. Another factor to consider is the fact that the reason native speakers didn't use very many strategies may have been due to the facility of the task. This study showed more proficient non-native speakers using fewer strategies. The less competent language learners had to grapple with the task of communicating effectively, and therefore used more strategies or tactics to ensure understanding.

A more careful characterization of strategies used by native speakers along with situations which require more strategy use would provide more interesting data on native speakers. The type of questions asked in this interview prompted very little free discourse, and as the discourse was limited, so were the strategies. As the Abraham and Vann interview was developed for use with non-native speakers, it only measured non-native speaker strategies. Some of the questions were unsuitable for native speakers. Questions which allow the subject to discuss some topic freely (if she desires) would probably reveal more about how and when strategies are used in real communicative situations. The attempt was made in this study to give the subject a difficult linguistic task to prompt strategy use. Selecting a task which is linguistically difficult for both the native speaker and any level of non-native speaker is a tricky job. To properly study how subjects deal with instances of linguistic difficulty, the interviewer would have to use a series of questions which require the use of various types of linguistic tasks such as comparing and contrasting, describing, and explaining. Also a longer interview would also allow more

interaction between the interviewer and the subject, simulating a real communicative situation.

This study shows the need for more investigation into the use of communication strategies by language learners. The Abraham and Vann study showed the "successful " language learner used more communication strategies than the "unsuccessful" language learner. In their study, Abraham and Vann gaged success by progress through an intensive language learning program and TOEFL test scores. This pilot study showed that the more proficient non-native speakers didn't use as many strategies as the less proficient non-native speakers. Future research should include a more in depth analysis of strategy use by language learners. As deeper analysis would require an analysis of variance to reveal where differences occur. It would be necessary to increase the sample size to get significant results.

Another aspect of this study which should be considered in future research is measurement of proficiency level. The Abraham and Vann study measured success by rate of progress through the language learning program; actually, the subject in the Abraham and Vann study with the lower number of communication strategies had a higher score on the Test of Spoken English (TSE). Abraham and Vann do not address this discrepancy between TSE scores, TOEFL scores and success in language learning, but they focus more on learner attitude and motivation. As the strategies measured were oral communication strategies, the proficiency of the subjects should be based on some measure of oral proficiency. Many proponents of the communicative approach to testing and teaching feel that the TSE does not allow test subjects to display their true abilities. Those who prefer communicative testing value the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) as it allows subjects to reveal their linguistic abilities in a variety of tasks that are both communicative and interactive.

Relating oral communication strategy use to oral proficiency would indeed provide insight into the usefulness of strategies for the language learner and how they relate to oral proficiency.

In the major study, the relationships between second language proficiency and use of communication strategies is explored further. Using the Oral Proficiency Interview as the format and non-native speakers at three levels of oral proficiency (intermediate, advanced and superior), the major study in this research attempted to confirm the hypothesis that subjects with lower levels of proficiency use more communication strategies as found in Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) and Poulisse and Schils (1989). Based on the Abraham and Vann study, the native speakers were expected to use more communication strategies as they were the most proficient speakers. The major study further investigates the relationship between proficiency and strategy use by focusing on non-native speakers rated at different levels of oral proficiency. The major study investigates the following questions: Is there a relationship between proficiency and communication strategy use? Are different types of strategies used more often by different proficiency levels? Based on the pilot study, it is expected that lower proficiency subjects will use more strategies.

The research hypothesis for the major study is that subjects rated at lower levels of the Oral Proficiency Interview use more communication strategies than subjects rated in the high levels of the Oral Proficiency Interview.

The Major Study

The purpose of this study, like the pilot study, is to analyze strategy use by non-native speakers in an interview situation. In the pilot study, it was found

that less proficient speakers used more strategies. Because of the small sample size, it was difficult to draw any real statistical conclusions about differences in strategy use in the pilot study. In the major study, the sample size is increased and the short interview format is abandoned for the longer and more linguistically diverse (and standardized) Oral Proficiency Interview.

Previous studies have focused on developing taxonomic systems of the communication strategies in some corpus of discourse. There have been few quantitative studies examining the frequency of strategy use and its relationship to proficiency level. This study examines the relationship between strategy use and proficiency level as measured by the Oral Proficiency Interview.

In the pilot study, a short, linguistically undemanding interview was used as the elicitation task. In the major study, the Oral Proficiency Interview was used in hopes that it would provide a format for more discourse and more strategy use in an interactive,communicative situation. The interview setting is a room where a trained interviewer and the interviewee are the only people present. An audio cassette tape recorder is in plain sight, and the subject is aware that the interview is being recorded. An interview may take from ten to thirty minutes. There are no prescribed questions to these proficiency interviews and the atmosphere may seem to be one of relaxed conversation. The subject is not drilled, but asked questions (depending on proficiency level) about her family, hobbies, home country, interests and at the higher levels, perhaps her political and philosophical ideologies. A good interviewer engages the subject in a conversation, seeming merely curious and genuinely interested in the subject's background, but all the while testing the subject's linguistic strengths and weaknesses.

At the beginning of a typical interview is the "warm-up", where the subject is asked simple questions about her name, where she is from, or how long she

has been studying English. This portion of the interview is designed to put the subject at ease, get her used to the tape recorder and to give the interviewer a baseline from which to work.

The interviewer builds from this baseline to more difficult questions; from the ability of the subject to answer each question, the interviewer gains clues to the subject's proficiency level. The interviewer makes a silent determination of the proficiency of the subject, then questions are asked to confirm the ranking. This type of question is called a "level check". "During this phase,it is the interviewer's job to determine the highest level at which the student can sustain accurate speaking performance" (Bragger, 1985, p.45). If the interviewer determines from these early responses that the subject is at the intermediate or advanced level, she may ask the subject to do a role play to further test linguistic ability. (Level guidelines for the Oral Proficiency Interview can be found in Appendix B). Once the subject has passed the level check, the interviewer moves on to the next phase of the interview, called the "probe".

The probes are a series of questions and tasks which require the subject to display the "ceiling" of her linguistic ability (Bragger, 1985, p.46). For example, if the subject has the linguistic ability to answer questions at the intermediate level, the interviewer my give the subject a role play which is designed to portray the skills of an Intermediate speaker. If the subject successfully fulfills the task requirements, it would be a successful level check, and the interviewer may ask her some questions designed to exemplify the skills of an Advanced speaker (a probe). If the subject is unable to complete the task, or is brought to "linguistic breakdown", the interviewer can be certain that her ranking is correct. Linguistic breakdown occurs when a subject is linguistically unable to complete a task during the interview. Signs of linguistic breakdown are when the subject "...begins to falter, hesitate, grope for words

and to behave in a visibly less comfortable manner" (Bragger, 1985). If the subject is successful at the advanced task, the interviewer must go on to a level check for the superior level.

Once the level is ascertained and confirmed several times through probes testing for higher levels of proficiency, the interviewer reverts back to simpler questions. These questions bring the subject to a comfortable level so she may feel comfortable and confident again; this portion of the interview is called the "wind down". As superior subjects speak at the top level of proficiency, there are no probes, only level checks to determine with certainty the superior rating. Therefore, the stages of the Oral Proficiency Interview are, the warm up, a series of level checks and probes (except at the superior level) and finally the wind down.

The interviewer's task is a difficult one, since she must constantly be aware of the subject's linguistic ability, creatively testing the subject's linguistic strengths and imitations and carefully guiding the interview process through a series of prescribed stages yet she must have the demeanor of a caring, interested acquaintance.

The Oral Proficiency Interview was used for this study because it requires the subject to complete a series of linguistic tasks in an interactive format. One of the problems of the interview in the pilot study was the difficulty of eliciting communication strategies during the course of the interview. The lack of strategies may have been a result of the length of the interview or the facility of the linguistic tasks. Using the Oral Proficiency Interview as the format for analysis, both of these problems are alleviated.

<u>Subjects</u>

The subjects for this study were thirty non-native speakers of English chosen from a group of persons who volunteered to be interviewed for research purposes. These subjects were randomly selected from a pool of forty-five Oral Proficiency Interviews conducted by Dr. Gene Halleck from the summer of 1989 through the spring of 1992. These interviews were conducted at Pennsylvania State University, Monterrey Institute of Technology in Monterrey, Mexico, and Oklahoma State University. Dr. Halleck is certified by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to administer and rate Oral Proficiency Interviews. Each subject in the sample had been ranked by Dr. Halleck and/or other certified Oral Proficiency Interview raters. The names of all possible subjects were separated according to proficiency level (intermediate, advanced, or superior) and ten names were randomly selected from each level. The level guidelines developed by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages can be found in Appendix B. Subjects were not chosen from the novice (lowest) level because a quick review of several interviews uncovered very little strategy use.

Tables 7,8 and 9 contain background information about the subjects at each level. The subjects selected from the sample represent a variety of language backgrounds. Among the thirty subjects selected, eight languages were represented. The native languages represented in this study were Japanese (N= 13), Spanish (N=10), Portuguese (N=2), Russian (N=1), Arabic (N=1), Czech (N=1), German (N=1), and French (N=1).

The interviews were conducted both inside and outside the United States. It is important to note that the ten Spanish speakers were learning English as a foreign language, while the remaining twenty subjects were

learning English as a second language. Sixteen of the interviewees were women and fourteen were men.

TABLE 7

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL SUBJECTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Subject Name	Native Language	Home Country
Asif	Arabic	Tunisia
Hideko	Japanese	Japan
Miho	Japanese	Japan
Seiji	Japanese	Japan
Ayako	Japanese	Japan
Hiro	Japanese	Japan
Yuko	Japanese	Japan
Jorge	Spanish	Mexico
Teresa	Spanish	Mexico
Pedro	Spanish	Mexico

* Subject names have been changed to protect anonymity

TABLE 8

ADVANCED LEVEL SUBJECTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Subject Name	Native Language	Home Country
Carla	Portuguese	Brazil
Maria	Spanish	Mexico
Ulrich	Czech	Czechoslovakia
Marta	Russian	Russia
Alberto	Spanish	Mexico
Satoru	Japanese	Japan
Emilio	Spanish	Mexico
Hiroko	Japanese	Japan
Kenji	Japanese	Japan
Tamaki	Japanese	Japan

* Subject names have been changed to protect anonymity

TABLE 9

SUPERIOR SUBJECTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Subject Name	Native Language	Home Country
Junko	Japanese	Japan
Henri	French	Niger
Jose	Spanish	Columbia
Akiko	Japanese	Japan
Julia	Spanish	Mexico
Angela	Spanish	Costa Rica
Bella	Portuguese	Brazil
Jaime	Spanish	Mexico
Heinz	German	Germany
Rita	Spanish	Mexico

* Subject names have been changed to protect anonymity.

<u>Procedure</u>

Interviews were transcribed from audio cassette tapes and the written texts were analyzed for communication strategies listed in the taxonomy from the pilot study. As the strategies were tabulated, some strategies listed by Abraham and Vann were not present in the discourse; on the other hand, some of the tactics used by speakers were not accounted for in the taxonomy. As has been the case with other research on communication strategies, the taxonomy in this study has been derived from the discourse used in the elicitation task. Because Abraham and Vann's study was comprised of personal interviews that were conducted over several days, some of the strategies in the taxonomy didn't fit in this study. Because of the linguistic tasks which are part of the Oral Proficiency Interview some new strategies were added to this study. Therefore, the taxonomy used in this study is comprised of strategies from Abraham and Vann (1987), Tarone (1977) and some that have been added to the taxonomy because they were present in the data.

Characterization of Communication Strategies

The following section provides detailed definitions and examples of the strategies described in Table 10. The table breaks down communication strategies into five different categories: **message abandonment, content clarification, production tricks, social management, and appeal for assistance.** As in the pilot study, the characterizations used by Abraham and Vann (1987) provided the basic taxonomy for the strategies counted in this study. The strategies described by Abraham and Vann were originally developed by Naiman et al. (1978) and "other researchers" (Abraham & Vann,

1987, p. 85). After analysis, several new strategies were added from other taxonomies such as **message abandonment** and **appeal for assistance** (Tarone, 1981) and "switching to the mother tongue" (Oxford, 1990). Some strategies from the Abraham and Vann study were excluded as they were not appropriate for this study; for example, "shows example of what he is describing" (Abraham and Vann,1987) was not appropriate in this study because only audio tapes were used.

Particular strategies were deleted because they were not used by subjects in this study, such as the content clarification strategy described as "goes back to question asked on earlier day to ensure that he was understood" (Abraham and Vann, 1987, p. 89) or the social management strategy described as "thanks interviewer for correction" (Abraham and Vann, 1987, p. 89)

In developing taxonomies for studies such as this, it has been found that linguistic task has an effect on the types of strategies used. Bialystok states that, "learners will adjust the way in which they approach a problem according to what they consider relevant" (1990, p. 52).

Because the Oral Proficiency Interview requires the subject to successfully complete linguistic tasks such as narration, description, comparison and contrast, explanation, role play and asking questions, interviewees may use strategies which haven't been included in previous taxonomies. These strategies may not fit the traditional views of communication strategies illustrated in communication strategy literature as they occur without linguistic breakdown. As noted in the literature review, there are some inherent problems in limiting the definition of communication strategies to those tactics a speaker uses when experiencing linguistic problems.

The more difficult linguistic tasks in the Oral Proficiency Interview may elicit different kinds of strategies than those used in picture reconstruction or

description. An example of when these strategies occur would be when the subject supplies additional information, to be certain her intent is understood. These strategies may be more similar to the strategies a native speaker uses when communicating with another native speaker.

In this study, the taxonomy includes four strategies which have not been included in any previous taxonomies. In two of the strategies which have been added, "short clarification" and "extended explanation", the subject provides additional information beyond what is required for comprehension of the message. While these do not occur during linguistic breakdown, they do seem to facilitate communication in a more native like manner. The other two strategies, "apologizes for English" and "I don't know what the word is..." were found in the interviews, and facilitated communication and therefore seemed worthy of including in the taxonomy as they were typical of the social management strategies as described by Abraham and Vann (1987, p. 90).

The following section describes and characterizes the five basic categories of strategies used in this study: **message abandonment, content clarification, production tricks, social management, and appeal for assistance.** Table 10 on page 56 contains a brief listing of strategies and sub-strategies Each strategy description includes a definition, characterizations of the strategy under different taxonomies, and an example from the Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI) conducted by Dr. Halleck. To include the context of the discourse, some examples are lengthy and the reader may actually see several communication strategies within the chosen text. The section of the text that exemplifies the strategy which is being discussed will be italicized. In the examples provided, Dr. Halleck (the interviewer) is designated as "I", the subject as "S". Not all examples require interaction, and background information is included in parentheses when deemed necessary.

TABLE 10

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

A.   Message Abandonment

B.   Content Clarification (CC):

    1 Asks for more information or repeat
      of question (CC1)
    2 Short Clarification (CC2)

C.   Production Tricks (PT):

    1 Repeats word or part of question as
      pattern for answer (PT1).
    2 Uses synonyms (PT2)
    3 Uses paraphrase (PT3)
    4 Uses example (PT4)
    5 Extended explanation (PT5)
    6 Transfer or language switch (PT6)

D.   Social Management (SM):

    1 Repeats or paraphrases interviewer's
      understanding to confirm (SM1)
    2 Jokes (SM2)
    3 Apologizes for English (SM3)
    4 I Don't know the Word...(SM4)

E.   Appeal for Assistance (AA)

Message Abandonment This strategy is typical of strategies categorized as "reduction strategies" (Faerch & Kasper, 1983c); the speaker stops and/or abandons the intended message. This may occur when the subject is unsure of how to proceed, either because the vocabulary, structure, or concept is beyond the subject's linguistic grasp. There is some controversy over the definition of message abandonment. According to Tarone (1977) **message abandonment** occurs when "the learner begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue and *begins a new sentence* " (my italics). Faerch and Kasper (1983c) believe that the second attempt to begin a new sentence is not message abandonment, because the subject is continuing to pursue the original message. **Message abandonment** may occur in the Oral Proficiency Interview when subjects are unable to complete a linguistic task in the course of the interview.

In the interview, a probe for higher levels of proficiency often brings the subject to "linguistic breakdown". A subject may be experiencing linguistic breakdown when she, "begins to falter, hesitate, grope for words, and to behave in a visibly less comfortable manner " (Bragger, 1985 p. 46). This breakdown is fertile ground for the use of communication strategies. Tarone's definition of message abandonment is therefore an indication of linguistic breakdown, something that may occur at every level of proficiency measured by the Oral Proficiency Interview. While **message abandonment** and linguistic breakdown are important features of the interview and communication strategy research, how the subject handles the situation is even more important. In many situations, **message abandonment**, as Tarone defines it , actually prompts the use of communication strategies. If the subject uses a communication strategy following **message abandonment**, the utterance falls under the category of that strategy. The use of the strategy is the important

feature of the utterance; the fact that the original tactics were abandoned is only an indication that the subject will have to resort to strategies or abandon the message entirely. In keeping with Faerch and Kasper's definition of **message abandonment** in this study, only if the subject abandons the message entirely,will the utterance be characterized as message abandonment.

Example 1. *Message Abandonment.* **(MA)** In this study, **message abandonment** is described as occurring when the speaker abandons the original message with no further attempts to continue. In example **MA1**, the subject begins a message but discovers she is unable to continue with the topic. In this example the subject abandons the entire message, whereas in **MA2**, the interviewee abandons a word.

MA1. (In this example, the subject is asked to describe tatami, a traditional Japanese floor covering)

S: It's made of -made of straw. It is bra**. Can I say that? And about this thick. And we don't wear our shoes on the tatami. *So that means we (pause) um no.* And yeah, I like tatami because it's very comfortable for me.

In example **MA2**, the subject abandons the message when a lexical item isn't within her linguistic grasp.

MA2.   I : What courses will you take?

S: Ah, I don't know what courses I'm gonna take, but maybe laborra..I don't know laborra

Message abandonment (continued)

> work ah *I don't know how you say thats (sic)*
>
> *course in English, but eh count-accounting.*
>
> *Ah courses don't know the...*

I : It's hard to say.

S: Yeah.

Content Clarification This is the second category of communication strategy measured in this study. These strategies aid communication between the two interlocutors by allowing the interviewee to be certain about the content of the question or task required by asking follow-up questions and/or rephrasing the interviewer's statements.

> **Example 2.** ***Asks for more information or repetition of***
>
> ***question.*** **(CC1)** This strategy occurs when the subject is unsure of
> the interviewer's statement or question. When the subject does not
> understand the task or type of information the interviewer is asking for,
> the interviewee may ask for more information, as illustrated in the first
> example **(CC1a)**

> **CC1 (a)**　　I : Can you tell me what it means to be a
>
> Japanese?
>
> S: *Ah, the characteristics of a Japanese, or*
>
> *what?*

The next two examples, **CC1 (b)** and **CC1 (c)**,illustrate an interviewee asking for repetition. Note the apology for lack of proficiency in **CC1 (b)**. This is an example of the combination of strategies that often occurs

when a subject is experiencing linguistic breakdown. Actually the text of

CC1 (c) contains two **content clarification** strategies

        CC1 (b)   I : ...we were talking about the burdens and the

                                    pleasures of having a large, extended family

                                    or a nuclear family and the ..I wonder

                                    whether you could take one side or the other

                                    and discuss them.

                                S: *Can you you repeat that again, I'm sorry.*

        CC1 (c)   S: When you're talk about nuclear family,

                                      you're including uncles and cousins...

                                    I : No nuclear is probably just mother and

                                    father

                                  S: I mean, I'm sorry, extended.

                                  I : Yeah, extended would be a lot of relatives

                                  S: *O.K., so your question is?*

Example 3. *Short clarification.* **(CC2)** This strategy was added to the traditional corpus of communication strategies because it was found in the interviews, and clearly aids communication. This strategy is probably more similar to communication strategies of native speakers. It is important to understand that "short clarification" is used by the interviewee to clarify the content of a response. This strategy is different from "uses a synonym", as it provides additional information, by addition of one or two words, (many times the words are adjectives or adverbs) to clarify an already sufficient response. This communication strategy is

illustrated in the examples below. In each case, the interviewees have added an adjective to provide additional information to an already acceptable response.

CC2 (a)   S: I stopped studying college there for one year, just to come here to improve *my English, my spoken English....my written English*

CC2 (b)   S: ..And here, since *I've been a student, a graduate student* at State College, I don't think I have lived a typical ah daily life here because all I did was work on papers.

In the following example, the two have been speaking about traditional Japanese Drama. The Interviewee has confessed that she doesn't like the traditional style of Japanese plays

CC2 (c)   S: ...In Tokyo, um well, I guess I-I 'll try to go to concerts and *plays, modern plays*.

CC2 (d)   S: ...went (sic) ah very *good player, basketball player*, ...yes when I was a child.

Production Tricks The strategies under this classification comprise the bulk of communication strategies examined in strategy research to date. In the Abraham and Vann study, this classification contained only three general types of strategies:"uses synonyms, paraphrase, repetition or example to communicate idea"; "appears to make up a word"; and "shows an example of

what he is describing" (1987, p.89) In this research, there are six sub-strategies under this classification. The title of this category exemplifies the strategies in this category very well. The strategies in this category fit Tarone's definition of a paraphrase, "The rewording of the message in an alternate acceptable target language construction, in situations where the appropriate form or construction is not known or not yet stable" (1977, p.198) Again, as with all of her definitions of communication strategies, Tarone is referring to tactics a speaker uses when experiencing linguistic breakdown. In this study, linguistic breakdown doesn't have to occur for the strategy to be counted as a **production trick**. When the speaker takes responsibility for the comprehensibility of the message by using a paraphrase, synonym or example or provides an extended explanation, the tactic is considered a **production trick**. A feature of this classification of strategies is that they may be used in conjunction with each other; if a subject is encountering some difficulty, she may use a series or combination of **production tricks.**

> **Example 4.** *Repeats word or part of question as*
> *pattern for response.* **(PT 1)** When subjects use this strategy, they
> use a pattern from the interviewer's question in their response. This
> strategy has not been accounted for in any previous studies, but can be
> a useful strategy for subjects who are unsure of the task.
> In the following example, the interviewee is describing some interesting
> spots to visit in the nearby town.

> **PT1 (a)**   I : What is the Cathedral?
>
>   S: The church..the church like the principal
>
>   church.
>
>   I : Is it still used as a church?

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Repeats word or part of question...(continued)

>   S: Yes still used as a church, what else...Uh
>
>   I don't know micro plaza and I don't know
>
>   what else.

PT1 (b)   I : So did you go into an intensive

>   program?
>
>   S: Intensive program, yes.

Example 5. *Uses synonyms*. (PT 2) Tarone (1989) calls this
"approximation", under the classification of "paraphrase". Oxford (1990),
also groups paraphrasing (which she calls circumlocution) and using
synonyms together (p. 48). In reality, this strategy is different from
paraphrasing because as used in this study, the term refers to a *single
lexical item* which "shares enough semantic features in common with the
desired item to satisfy the speaker" (Tarone,1981, p. 62). . Like **CC2**,
("short clarification") this strategy serves to clarify, but it doesn't provide
additional information. It is also different from **PT3** ("paraphrasing")
discussed below, in that the speaker only uses one word of similar
meaning to clarify the message. The strategy of "uses synonyms" is
characterized in the following three examples (the synonyms are in
italics):

PT2 (a)   I : What are the advantages to having such a

>   large family?
>
>   S: Well, actually, um I'm very happy having *an
>
>   extended family or a large family*, I mean it's

Uses synonyms (continued)

           really extended because there are so many of us you know.

PT2 (b)   S: I just went to you know the ESL program like this. I really want to come here, but you know they didn't offer me *seat*, I mean (ha ha). *anything, any place* for me so I just went there (to another school)

PT2 (c)   I : Tell me about your family.

                    S: My *immediate family-my parents*. live in Texas, Bryan, Texas; they moved from Columbia four years ago.

At times, there may not be any substitution, but because the subject is groping for a word, the subject may continue the attempt by using a synonym, which is similar to the correct lexical item, but seems somewhat odd, as in **PT2 (d)**.

PT2 (d)   S: ..to be a very um ah *unusable person*.

In **PT2(d)**,the interviewee is perhaps looking for the word <u>useless</u>, but cannot come up with it so he uses a synonym.

Example 6. *Uses Paraphrases. (PT3).* This strategy is similar to the previous strategy, except that "uses a paraphrase" is a more

extended process than "uses a synonym". Oxford (1990) and Tarone (1981) call this strategy, "circumlocution". Oxford's definition of circumlocution is,"Getting the meaning across by describing the concept" (1990, p.51); Tarone defines circumlocution as occurring when the speaker "describes the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language structure" (1981, p. 286). In the taxonomies of Tarone and Oxford, this strategy must be used as a result of linguistic breakdown to be considered a communication strategy. In the following examples, the speaker "uses a paraphrase" (in italics) of the original message to clarify the message.

PT3 (a)   I : Was life different here from Columbia?

S: Oh yes, especially the food...and you know in Columbia we are not used to these *hot food,and these very um..I mean..food with lots of spices.*

The full text for the following example can be found in **PT2 (a)** on page 62.

PT3 (b)   S: I mean extended (family) *because of the fact that there were so many of us you know.*

PT3 (c)   I : It must be quite different to live in a little town like State College after coming from Osaka.

Uses paraphrases (continued)

S: But my my house is *not so in the center of Osaka, ah ah a little bit away from the center town,* the buildings

Example 7. *Uses example.* **(PT 4)** As the name of this strategy implies,the subject using this strategy gives an example to clarify the message. Linguistic breakdown doesn't always have to occur for subjects to use this strategy. This strategy was originally described in the Abraham and Vann (1987) study, but the strategy was not included in the research of Oxford (1990), Tarone (1977) or Faerch & Kasper (1983c). "Uses example" differs from "short clarification" in that utterances were counted under this category when two requirements were satisfied: a) the interviewer did not ask the subject to provide an example, and b) the utterances included the words "for example" **(PT 4a),** "for instance" **(PT4b)** or "like" **(PT4c).**

PT4 (a) S: Ah, that happens in many cases, *for example,* when you're giving a speech in English.

PT4 (b) S: There were many problems, *for instance,* we couldn't ah..get all our stuff in one place.

PT4 (c) S: Private Schools *like* you know, the Pan-American School.

Utterances which didn't specifically state the words used in the previous examples were also counted in this category. At times, subjects would provide an example or series of examples without stating a purpose for the additional information. In the following example from the interviews, the subject is discussing his life as a bachelor

> **PT4 (d)** S: Well, it was-it was very important for me...to have ah left home as a single mean and learned to to carry the businesses of daily life...You see..*going shopping, doing my own laundry and cooking dinner for myself.*

Example 8. *Extended Explanation.* **(PT 5)** The interview format used in this study allowed the use of "extended explanation", which occurs when the speaker uses extended discourse to communicate a message. The OPI is comprised of many different types of questions, some require only short answers, some questions probe for "extended explanations". For example, when the interviewer asks a subject to compare life in their home country with life in the United States, or to explain their feelings on some political issue, the subject (depending on the level of proficiency) may give a short response or a long, detailed response. Responses which answered the question very briefly were not counted under this category of strategy; but often, especially at the superior level, the subject would carry on, giving information over and above what the task actually required.

Length of response is a controversial issue among those who research, administer and rate the OPI. "Paragraph length" discourse is a part of the criteria (under text type) for advanced proficiency speakers,

and superior speakers should display "extended discourse" to meet the text type criterion for that level (See Appendix B, ACTFL Guidelines). There is very little research on the exact definition of these text types, since oral discourse is difficult to measure in terms of sentences or paragraphs. For the inexperienced rater, visual representations of the interviews are probably the best way to determine the differences between these two text types. One can look at the transcripts and see that subjects at the lower levels of proficiency have very short responses to the questions; the length of response increases as the proficiency level increases (of course this depends on the task requirements of the question as well). Responses which merely answered the question, without any additional information were not counted under this category. Only detailed responses, that went beyond the requirements of the question were counted as an extended explanation strategies. An extended explanation is given in both of the following examples. In **PT5 (a)** the subject gives an acceptable response, and then goes on to provide additional information, which was neither required nor asked for in the question. This strategy has not been included in the major studies on strategies, but this researcher felt it necessary to include as it does facilitate the communicative process. In **PT5 (b)** the subject makes an uninitiated response to the interviewer's comment. These two examples, while brief, illustrate "extended explanation" strategies.

PT5 (a)   I : How long have you been here?

S: *Ah, for about eight months. I arrive (sic)here last August, August 1991. My husband came here to get his PhD, and ah I applied to them,*

Extended explantation (continued)

> *in a, in TESOL program and I I'm gonna start*
>
> *hat in August, next August*

PT5 (b)   S: I um, I was working. I used to work at Johnson
and Johnson professional products.

I : What did you do?

S: *Ah, I was a an administrative sec and*
administrative supervisor. I was a bilingual
secretary before that. Then I became an
administrative supervisor. I had an area of, I
worked in the area of ah administrative
support for the whole area of research and
development. And I had four girls who worked
with me for secretaries.

Example 9. *Transfer or language switch.* **(PT6)** Subjects using
this strategy revert to another language when they are unsure of how to
proceed. The subject may use her first language, or another language
which she thinks will facilitate communication. These strategies are
among the easiest to detect. This strategy is included in most previous
communication strategy research. Bialystok calls them "conscious
transfer" and "language switching", and puts them in separate categories
(1990). Oxford categorizes both as "switching to the mother tongue"
(1989). As with many of the other strategies, the subject may use a
combination of strategies to complete the original communicative goal,

but when any language other than English was used in the interview (other than a proper noun) the utterance was counted under this category of strategy.The subject in the first example, **PT6 (a)** is a native speaker of Spanish.

> **PT6 (a)**   S: I don't know how to say in Ingles...That's ah how you say? Anima...us persons who works with the animals-*peradia*.
>
>   I : Animal trainers?
>
>   S: *Gardaria?*

The subject in the next example is a native speaker of Japanese.

> **PT6 (b)**   I : Are you speaking a lot in Japanese these days?.
>
>   S: Yes, but after in during Thanksgiving holiday, we, we means Notiko and Chiko and wata-me *Watashi*..no-me, no I.tried I spoke only English...

Social Management In this classification of strategies, the subject uses techniques or tactics which have, " the effect of encouraging the interviewer to talk more" or "keep the conversation flowing" (Abraham & Vann, 1987, p.90). Strategies in this category are considered strategies which facilitate the social aspect of communication. This categorization, which originated in the Abraham & Vann (1987) study, included two strategies which did not apply to this study, but the first two strategies listed, **SM1**-"repeats or paraphrases interviewer's understanding" and **SM2**-"jokes", came from the original study. **SM3**-"apologizes for English" and **SM4**-"I don't know what the word is..." were added

to this category as they were considered social strategies and were frequently found in the interviews used in this study. These strategies which have been added fit into a social aspect of communication. They serve to develop a rapport between the two interlocutors. Abraham and Vann included this category of strategies because they provided evidence of the interviewee's "desire to keep the conversation flowing" (1987, p. 90).

Example 10. *Repeats or paraphrases interviewer's understanding to confirm interviewer's understanding.* **(SM1)** This strategy may be used by subjects to *confirm* the interviewer's understanding. It should be made clear that **SM1** is considered a different strategy from **PT1**("Repeats word or part of question as pattern for response") as it is not the response to a question, but reply to a statement. Also, by using the **production trick** strategy, the subject changes the format of the question to a statement as a pattern for her response.

SM1(a)   I : Is your town a big city?

S: Umm ah Hana city is ah umm more bigger than Mishima City, I think

I : Bigger.

S: *Bigger.*

SM1(b)   S: My roommate said he's against having abortion, because ah like ah it's kind of selfish for parents to have abortions.

I : O. K.

S: Then that's kind of selfish for parents.

Repeats or paraphrases...(continued)

> I : That's his point of view.
>
> S: *Yeah, that's his point of view.*

Example 11. *Jokes.* **(SM 2)** Strategies which fall under this category, usually involve a humorous story which the subject relates in the course of the interview. It is usually clear that the story is meant to be funny either through the subject's or the interviewer's laughter. It should be made clear that some cultures, such as the Japanese, will laugh to hide embarrassment; the simple fact that the subject is laughing does not meet the criteria of this category. Only when the interviewer also laughs or states that she thinks the story is funny do the stories meet the criteria for this strategy. The stories are usually rather long, and require several turns of the subject and interviewer, so only one example is given here. Some of the stories the subjects related were a disastrous first trip to an American barber shop and one subject realizing that she had finally become a fairly proficient speaker when she discovered that she could skillfully argue with her husband in her second language. This strategy example is long and involves several turns, the whole sample is considered as the "joke"; therefore, there will be no italics are used in this example.

> **SM2 (a)**   I : So what else do you argue with your roommate about?
>
> S: Oh, once a time I was talking-I was talking about ah the sounds of dogs barking. (I: ha!) In Japan and America, but my friend didn't believe what I said, like there are different

Jokes (continued)

sounds between Japanese dog and American dog. Like ah they say, "No, you are kidding" and like that...Like I said in Japan in dog bark like wan-wan, but in America they know dog bark like waf-waf or something, but they said like, "No, that's a lie, you are telling lie to us" Like that,then I - ah seems like they had a big debate, ok how about cow sound? and in Japan cow-cows sound like mow-mow but in America, moo-moo.

I : Well is it really the sound or is it the sound that we say that they make? So,maybe the cows really sound the same, but we just use our own language to translate that cow's talking.

S: Oh but I mean like if you imitate-imitate to have a sounds of dogs, you I mean already show a difference sounds, right?

I : But maybe that's because we're using our language and the best our language can do is different from your language.

S: Yeah, but I mean, sometimes I heard dogs barking in America.

I : They sound different?

S: They sound different.

Jokes (continued)

> I : Ha ha ha
>
> S: Yeah, so...
>
> I : That's funny.

Example 12. *Apologizes for English.* **(SM3)** Subjects may use this strategy when they are in a situation in which they are linguistically unable to fulfill their communicative goal (linguistic breakdown); they lack the strategy which will "save" them, so they make an apology to maintain the flow of the conversation. In this setting of linguistic breakdown, the subject may go through a series of strategies and resort to **SM 3.** The example illustrates the subject struggling with a response, and finally apologizing for her English.

SM3(a)

> I : Could you compare your life in Chihuahua to your life here in Monterrey?
>
> S: *Here you are all the time..you are ahm I don't know how to say that....I'm sorry, ah I know some English, I understand what talking but I han't* (sic) *much vocabulary.*

Example 14. *"I don't know what the word is..."* . **(SM4)** This strategy is similar to the previous strategy (**SM3** "apologizes for English") but does not involve an apology. There are several patterns for the statements that fall under this category. Also under this category are statements that begin with, "I don't know how to say...". This strategy has been put under a separate classification from "apologizes for English"

because the intent seems somewhat different. The subject is not going so far as to apologize to the interviewer, and seems unconcerned about the missing word. This may actually be a type of stalling until the proper lexical item comes to mind or an appeal for assistance without actually asking for assistance. The strategies in this category are different from the next strategy (**AA-appeal for assistance**) in that there is not an actual articulation of the appeal.

SM4 (a)   S: I am studying industrial engineering.

I : Are there many women in the course?

S: Well, how they are, they in you know generations ah higher, *I don't know how to say it.,* they, they're not as much as my generation, but now it's pretty common that women study in that career too.

Appeal for Assistance **(AA).** In this strategy the subject attempts to handle linguistic breakdown by enlisting the aid of the interviewer. There are two types of strategy under this category, "asks interviewer" and "asks self". While the subject is articulating a breakdown of some type, most subjects don't act as though they expect a response to the **appeal for assistance.**

In this example, the subject is talking about returning to his home country

AA   S: So then I was thinking about yeah, I should kind of get a job, but ah since I came here and ah I met a lot of people..kind of started to doubt like ah *how you say..*I should get some ah

Appeal for assistance (continued)

> skills like ah or techniques...I mean kind of
>
> which I can use for my life.

Summary of the Methods

The transcripts of the Oral Proficiency Interviews were reviewed and strategies tabulated. The tabulations of strategy use within each level can be found in Appendix C (intermediate level) Appendix D (advanced level) and Appendix E (superior level).

There were some problems making decisions on which category some strategies fit into. The taxonomy was developed from the text; when it seemed the subject was using strategic language, and the pattern was repeated in other interviews, a category was added to the taxonomy. Oral discourse can be difficult to fit into taxonomies and categories. This is one of the difficulties of communication strategy research; without knowing the cognitive processes the speaker is using, it is difficult to know what or why a strategy is being used. Once a category of strategy (or sub-strategy) was decided upon, the criteria for that strategy had to be decided on. Because some of the strategies originated in this study, the criteria evolved from the discourse of the speakers. At times, the original definition of the strategy changed as a result of the speech acts placed in that strategy type.

In one case, this change in definition, as a result of the strategies counted under that strategy name, changed the suitability of the sub-strategy to be placed in the strategy category. In the sub-strategy "short clarification" the original purpose of the strategy fit into Abraham and Vann's (1987) category of

"content clarification". Their implied definition (though not supplied in the text) was a strategy in which there was an attempt to clarify some misunderstanding between the two interlocutors. Because short clarification evolved into a strategy used without misunderstanding, it probably should have been placed under the category of "production tricks".

Another example of the breakdown of definitions was in the sub-strategy, "I don't know what the word is .". Originally this strategy fit into the social management category of Abraham and Vann's taxonomy. It was separated from the next category, appeal for assistance, on a purely lexical basis. In truth, while the strategies may be lexically different, the intent is probably the same for **SM4** ("I don't know how to say it..") and **AA** (appeal for assistance). Also, the sub-strategies under appeal for assistance were combined into one strategy, as the intent of both statements seemed the same.

Another problem with analysis of the data was the problem of embeddedness. When a speaker was experiencing difficulties with the message or even in giving an extended explanation, often several strategies were attempted in the course of the communication. In cases where a number of strategies were used, each one was counted as a separate strategy. In a case where the subject appeared to abandon one strategy for another, that was not counted as message abandonment, but the strategy that the speaker used was counted.

The approach in this research was to fit the strategy in a category in the taxonomy, adjust the definition where necessary, and tabulate the data. As stated earlier in this section, it is sometimes difficult to characterize discourse into strategies. From her own research, Bialystok states, "...disputes on classification occurred for at least 50 per cent of the utterances" (1990, p.77).

Reliability of classification is one of the most difficult issues in research of this type, but it doesn't necessarily diminish the implications of the results.

Once the data had been tabulated an Analysis of Variance was used to analyze the differences between means for strategies in the whole sample between levels and within levels. If the Analysis of Variance showed that there were significant differences (level of acceptance was p=0.05) within the data, a Tukey HSD analysis of pairwise differences was run on the means to determine where the significant differences were and the level of significance.

In the following chapter, results of the Analysis of Variance and Tukey HSD are shown, and in Chapter Six there is an interpretation of the results.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter provides an analysis of the data which was obtained through the methods described in the previous chapter. Tables displaying raw data on the tallies of each strategy and sub-strategy are in Appendixes C, D and E. This study investigated the following questions: Is there a relationship between proficiency and communication strategy use? Are different types of strategies used more often by different proficiency levels? The research hypothesis for this study was that subjects rated at lower levels of proficiency use more communication strategies than subjects rated in the high levels of the Oral Proficiency Interview. An analysis of variance was run to determine significant differences in mean strategy use among all levels, and strategy use and sub-strategy use within and between levels. A brief list of strategies and sub-strategies can be found in Table 10 on page 56.

Table 11, on page 81 shows the overall tally of the five main strategies used at each level of proficiency. As can be seen from this table, the most frequently used strategies were **production tricks** and **content clarification**. The frequency of use for these two strategies is similar to the total strategy use frequency. The advanced level uses more of these strategies than both the intermediate and superior levels. Use of the two strategies that were used least by the subjects in this study, **message abandonment** and

appeal for assistance, decreased as proficiency increased. **social management** is the only strategy that decreases significantly among advanced level speakers.

A one-way Analysis of Variance was run on the raw data (which can be found in Appendixes C, D and E) to determine if there were significant differences in strategy and sub-strategy use between and within levels. If significance was found, a Tukey HSD was used to determine where significances were and to determine the probability level of significance between the means of the raw scores. Only probabilities with levels less than 0.05 were considered significant. Table 12 shows the results of that analysis.

TABLE 11

TOTAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY USE BY LEVELS

Strategy type Level	Message Abandonment	Content Clarification	Production Tricks	Social Management	Appeal for Assistance	Total
Intermediate	16	106	161	52	12	347
Advanced	15	119	264	25	31	454
Superior	3	56	197	51	6	313
Total	34	275	622	127	49	1107

Differences in Strategy Use within the Whole Sample

In the following tables, significant differences will be labelled with brackets.

TABLE 12

MEAN STRATEGY USE AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS BY LEVEL

Source	$\bar{X}$	S.D	F	p
Intermediate	2.479 ⌉	3.193		
Advanced	3.486* ⌐	4.344		
Superior	2.257 ⌋	2.257	5.022	0.007

* Denotes significance at $p < .05$

The Analysis of Variance for mean strategy use by level showed a significant difference between the intermediate level and the advanced level, and a significant difference between the advanced and superior levels. The Tukey HSD showed no significant difference between the intermediate and superior proficiency levels on overall strategy use, but there was a significant difference between the strategy use of advanced level and the other two levels of proficiency.

TABLE 13

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF TYPE OF STRATEGY USED FOR WHOLE SAMPLE

Strategy	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
Message Abandonment	1.133	1.196
Content Clarification	4.683	4.164
Production Tricks	3.517	3.828
Social Management	1.283	1.988
Appeal for Assistance	1.633	2.895

F=16.597   p=0.000

Table 13 shows the means for each type of strategy within the whole sample. From this data, it is clear that **content clarification** and **production trick** strategies were the most frequently used strategies. An Analysis of Variance on this data indicated a significant difference between the five strategy types. In the whole sample, **content clarification** and **production tricks** are used significantly more often than the other three strategies. A Tukey analysis of this data revealed a significant difference between the use of **content clarification** strategies and **message abandonment, social management**, and **appeal for assistance**. There was also a significant difference between **production trick** strategies and these same three types of strategies. In the next section, the differences in strategy use within each level will be examined.

Differences in Strategy Use Within Levels

Tables 14, 15 and 16 show the differences in strategy use within the intermediate, advanced, and superior levels. In this series of tables, the information in Table 13 (Means and Standard Deviations of Strategy Use for Whole Sample) is broken down by levels and examined for significance within levels. Through further analysis, the differences between each strategy use within each level become more clear. Table 14 presents the data on strategy use within the intermediate level.

TABLE 14

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF STRATEGIES USED WITHIN THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

STRATEGY	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
Message Abandonment	1.600	1.265
Content Clarification	5.300	3.771
Production Tricks	2.683	3.377
Social Management	1.300	1.600
Appeal for Assistance	1.200	1.874

F=6.929   p=0.000

From the data presented in Table 14, it is clear that **content clarification** and **production trick** strategies have the highest means at the intermediate level. The means for the other three strategies are very close. The Analysis of Variance for strategy use within the intermediate level (Table 14), showed that there is a significant difference in strategy use within the intermediate level. A Tukey analysis of the means showed a significant difference between **content clarification** strategies and all other strategies. There were no other significant relationships between strategies at this level.

In the next table, Table 15, the means and standard deviations of strategy use within the advanced level are presented.

TABLE 15

**MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF STRATEGIES
USED WITHIN THE ADVANCED LEVEL**

Strategy	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
Message Abandonment	1.500	1.269
Content Clarification	5.950	5.346
Production Tricks	4.567	4.824
Social Management	1.225	1.493
Appeal for Assistance	3.100	4.332

F=6.745   p=0.000

The means presented in Table 15 reveal that **content clarification** and **production trick** strategies were the most frequently used strategies among subjects in the advanced level. One notable difference between the means of strategy use for the intermediate level (Table 14) and the advanced level (Table 15) is the high mean for **appeal for assistance** among subjects at the advanced level. The Analysis of Variance for strategy use within the advanced level showed a significant difference in the types of strategies used. A Tukey analysis of this data showed **content clarification** strategies were used significantly more than **social management** and **message abandonment** strategies. Differences between **content clarification** and **production trick** strategies were not significant.

Table 16 reveals the means for the use of each strategy at the superior level.

TABLE 16

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF STRATEGIES USED IN THE SUPERIOR LEVEL

Strategy	X	S.D.
Message Abandonment	0.300	0.483
Content Clarification	2.800	2.285
Production Tricks	3.300	2.812
Social Management	1.325	2.246
Appeal for Assistance	0.600	0.966

F=7.494   p=0.000

Table 16 shows that similar to the intermediate and advanced levels, the superior level used the **content clarification** and **production trick** strategies the most of any strategy accounted for in this study. The means for the least frequently used strategies for all levels, (**message abandonment** and **appeal for assistance**), were the lowest at the superior level. The ANOVA revealed significant differences in strategy use at the superior level. According to the Tukey analysis, superior level subjects used **content clarification** strategies significantly more often than **message abandonment**,and **production trick** strategies were used significantly more

often than **message abandonment, social management** and **appeal for assistance** strategies.

Table 17 on page 88,shows the means and standard deviations of the strategies described in Tables 14, 15 and 16. This table combines those strategies for all levels and reveals which strategies are used most often and compares strategy use between levels.

Although an ANOVA on the interaction between levels and strategies showed the difference was not significant, ther were significant differences in the use of some strategies by each level. A Tukey analysis shows the intermediate level used significantly more **message abandonment** strategies than the superior level. **Content clarification** strategies were used significantly more often at the advanced level than the superior level. While the differences between the advanced level and the intermediate level were significant for **production trick** strategies, there was no difference between advanced and superior, and intermediate and superior. For **social management** and **appeal for assistance** strategies, there were no significant differences. To gain a clearer understanding of where these differences lie, Tables 18, 19 and 20 on pages 89, 90,and 91 allow comparison of the means of each strategy at the three different levels. By examining each strategy separately at each level, we can see where the differences in strategy use by each level are significant.

TABLE 17

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF STRATEGY USE BETWEEN LEVELS

LEVEL	Intermediate	Advanced	Superior
Strategy			
Message Abandonment	$\bar{X}=1.600$ s.d.=1.265	$\bar{X}=1.500$ s.d.=1.269	$\bar{X}=0.300$ s.d.=0.483
Content Clarification	$\bar{X}=5.300$ s.d.=3.771	$\bar{X}=5.950$ s.d.=5.346	$\bar{X}=2.800$ s.d.=2.285
Production Tricks	$\bar{X}=2.683$ s.d.=3.377	$\bar{X}=4.567$ s.d.=4.824	$\bar{X}=3.300$ s.d.=2.812
Social Management	$\bar{X}=1.300$ s.d.=2.186	$\bar{X}=1.475$ s.d.=2.148	$\bar{X}=1.325$ s.d.=2.246
Appeal for Assistance	$\bar{X}=1.200$ s..d.=1.874	$\bar{X}=3.100$ s.d.=4.332	$\bar{X}=0.600$ s.d.=0.966

Level x Strategy F=1.787   p=0.078

Differences in Strategy Use Between Levels

In this section, each type of strategy will be analyzed to determine differences between usage at each level.

TABLE 18

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF MESSAGE ABANDONMENT STRATEGY USE BETWEEN LEVELS

	$\bar{X}$	S D
Intermediate	1.600 ⌐	1.265
Advanced	1.500 ⌐	1.269
Superior	0.300 ⌐	0.483
F=4.558		p=0.020

The means for the strategy, **message abandonment** reveal that the intermediate and advanced level used this strategy more than the superior level. An ANOVA for incidence of **message abandonment** strategies showed that there were significant differences between levels. The Tukey analysis of the differences between these means showed a significant difference in the use of **message abandonment** strategies between the intermediate and superior levels. There was also a significant difference between the means of the advanced level and superior level.

TABLE 19

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF CONTENT CLARIFICATION STRATEGY USE BETWEEN LEVELS

	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Intermediate	5.300	3.771
Advanced	5.950 ⌐	5.346
Superior	2.800 ⌙	2.285
F=3.436		p=0.038

While the means for **content clarification** show that the intermediate and advanced levels used this strategy more than the superior level, the standard deviations within the intermediate and advanced levels are very high. An ANOVA run on the means of **content clarification** strategies showed that there were significant differences between levels for **content clarification** strategies. A Tukey analysis of this data shows the advanced level subjects used significantly more **content clarification** strategies than superior level subjects. There were no significant differences between the intermediate and superior, nor the advanced and superior levels.

TABLE 20

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PRODUCTION TRICK STRATEGY USE BETWEEN LEVELS

	$\bar{X}$	S D
Intermediate	2.683⌐	2.186
Advanced	4.567⌐	4.824
Superior	3.300	2.812
F=3.897		p=0.022

The mean for the **production trick** strategy use is higher for the advanced level than the intermediate or superior level.The ANOVA run on the means of **production trick** strategy use between levels showed there were significant differences in the use of **production trick** strategy between levels. A Tukey analysis of this data showed there was a significant difference in the use of **production trick** strategies between the intermediate and advanced levels. The differences were not significant between any other levels.

TABLE 21

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SOCIAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY USE BETWEEN LEVELS

	$\overline{X}$	S D
Intermediate	1.300	2.186
Advanced	1.475	2.148
Superior	1.325	2.246
F= 0.027		p=0.973

The means for **social management** strategy use are very close between levels. The ANOVA run on means of **social management** strategy use showed there were no significant differences between the levels analyzed in this research.

TABLE 22

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE STRATEGY USE BETWEEN LEVELS

	$\bar{X}$	S D
Intermediate	1.200	1.874
Advanced	3.100	4.332
Superior	0.600	0.966
F=2.202		p=0.130

The mean for use of the **appeal for assistance** strategy is noticeably higher at the advanced level than for the other two levels. While there are differences between the means of strategy use for this strategy, the ANOVA revealed that the differences were not significant

The previous set of tables showed means of strategy use in the entire sample, within each level and between each level. As seen in Table 10 (Communication Strategies) on page 56, and the raw data tables in Appendixes C, D and E, each main strategy type is broken down into sub-strategies. The number of sub-strategies vary for strategy type. Each sub-strategy is explained and examples are given in the methods section. The above section has shown that there are differences in strategy use between levels. In the next section, the sub-strategies of each strategy will be analyzed for differences in use for all levels. By looking at sub-strategy use it will be clear which specific strategies are used within each strategy type. In the section below, means of sub-

strategies are compared for significance within the whole sample, within levels and between levels.

Differences in Sub-strategy Use in the Whole Sample

Tallies were made of each sub-strategy used by each subject, and like the strategy data, the means were analyzed using an Analysis of Variance. If the probability was less than .05, a Tukey analysis was run to determine the level of significance.

As there were no sub-strategies within the strategies of **message abandonment** and **appeal for assistance**, those strategies are not included in this analysis.

TABLE 23

**MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF CONTENT
CLARIFICATION SUB-STRATEGIES WITHIN
THE WHOLE SAMPLE**

Sub-strategy	X	S.D.
Asks for more information or repetition of question	3.600 ⌐	3.013
Short Clarification	5.767 ⌐	4.876
F= 4.053		p= 0.012

The mean for use of the sub-strategy "short clarification" appears to be higher than "asks for more information or repetition of question". The ANOVA run on **content clarification** sub-strategies showed that "short clarification" had a significantly higher mean than "asks for more information or repetition of question".

TABLE 24

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PRODUCTION TRICK SUBSTRATEGIES WITHIN THE WHOLE SAMPLE

Sub-strategy	X	S.D.
Repeats as pattern for answer	2.300	2.521
Uses synonyms	5.800	4.723
Uses paraphrase	6.167	4.371
Uses example	3.000	2.364
Extended explanation	3.433	3.350
Transfer or Language Switch	0.400	1.163
F=12.944		p=0.000

Among the **production trick** sub-strategies, the means are highest for the two sub-strategies, "uses paraphrase" and "uses Synonyms". "Transfer or Language Switch" has the lowest mean of any of the strategies in this strategy group. The Analysis of Variance run on **production trick** sub-strategy data shows that there is a significant difference between the means of these sub-strategies. Tukey results show that the whole sample uses "repeats as pattern for answer" significantly less than "uses synonyms" and "uses paraphrases". "Using synonyms" is used significantly more often than "uses examples",

"extended explanation", or "transfer or language switch". In fact, all sub-strategies in this category were used significantly more than "transfer or language switch". "Uses paraphrases" is used significantly more often than "uses examples" or an "extended explanation". "Uses an example" is used more than "transfer or language switch" sub-strategies, and "extended explanation" is used significantly more than "transfer or language switch". There is no significance in the differences of the most used sub-strategies, "uses synonyms" and "uses paraphrase".

TABLE 25

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SOCIAL MANAGEMENT SUB-STRATEGIES FOR ALL LEVELS

Sub-strategy	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Repeats for interviewer's understanding	2.800	2.976
Jokes	0.700	0.952
Apologizes for English	0.633	0.964
"I don't know what the word is..."	1.000	1.509
F= 9.696		p= 0.000

The means for sub-strategies in **social management** reveal that "repeats for interviewer's understanding" is the most frequently used sub-strategy in this type of strategy. The ANOVA run on **social management** sub-strategies showed that there was a significant difference between the use of these sub-strategies within the whole sample. A Tukey test was run on the data, and the only significant differences were between "repeats interviewer's understanding" and all other sub-strategies in this category.

Differences in Sub-strategy Use Between Levels

In the next set of tables, data on each type of strategy will be broken into sub-strategies and use between levels will be compared.

Differences in Content Clarification Sub-strategy Use Between Levels

In the previous section, Table 23 (Means and Standard Deviations of **content clarification** sub-strategies for all levels) revealed that the sub-strategy "short clarification"had the highest mean of the two sub-strategies under this type. In this section, each sub-strategy, "asks for more information or repetition of question" and "short clarification" is compared between levels.

TABLE 26

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF "ASKS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR REPETITION OF QUESTION" BETWEEN LEVELS

	X	S.D.
Level		
Intermediate	5.400	4.006
Advanced	3.500	1.900
Superior	1.900	1.663
F=4.108		p= 0.028

The means for "asks for more information or repetition of question" reveal that the frequency of use for this strategy decreases as proficiency increases.

The intermediate level has the highest mean usage for this sub-strategy of the three proficiency levels analyzed in this study. The ANOVA run on the means of this sub-strategy showed there were significant differences in the use of these sub-strategies between levels. The Tukey analysis showed that the intermediate level used "asks for more information or repetition of question" significantly more than the superior level.

TABLE 27

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF
"SHORT CLARIFICATION"
BETWEEN LEVELS

Level	X	S.D.
Intermediate	5.200	3.736
Advanced	8.400	6.586
Superior	3.700	2.541

F=2.711   p=0.083

While the mean of "short clarification" is highest for the advanced level, the large standard deviation for that level probably discounted any differences between levels. The ANOVA run on the means of "short clarification" showed that there were no significant differences between levels for the use of this sub-strategy.

Differences in Production Trick Sub-strategy Use Between Levels

In the section showing the results of **production trick** sub-strategy use for all levels, Table 24 showed that there were many significant differences between the six sub-strategies in this strategy category. In this section, the means of all six sub-strategies are compared between levels.

TABLE 28

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF "REPEATS AS PATTERN FOR ANSWER"

	X	S.D.
Level		
Intermediate	2.800	3.084
Advanced	1.300	2.406
Superior	2.800	1.874
F=1.196		p=0.318

The means for the intermediate and superior level were the same for "repeats as pattern for answer". The mean for this sub-strategy drops between the intermediate level and rises again from the advanced to superior level. The Analysis of Variance run on the means of the sub-strategy, "repeats as pattern for answer" revealed that there was no significant difference between levels.

TABLE 29

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS
OF "USES SYNONYMS"

Level		
	X	S.D.
Intermediate	4.200 ⌐	2.860
Advanced	10.400⌐	4.881
Superior	2.800 ⌐	1.874
F=7.556		p= 0.002

The means for the sub-strategy, "uses synonyms" are much higher for the advanced level than the other two proficiency levels. The ANOVA run on the means of "uses synonyms" showed there were significant differences between levels. The Tukey test run on the mean differences showed the advanced level used this sub-strategy significantly more than both the intermediate and superior levels.

TABLE 30

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF
"USES PARAPHRASE"

Level	X	S.D.
Intermediate	5.500 ⌐	4.836
Advanced	9.600 ⌐	3.062
Superior	3.400 ⌐	2.591
F=7.556		p=0.002

The mean for the sub-strategy "uses paraphrase" is higher for the advanced level than either the intermediate and Superior level. The ANOVA on the means of "uses paraphrase" showed significant differences between the three levels. The Tukey analysis showed paraphrasing was used significantly more often by the advanced level than the intermediate and superior levels.

TABLE 31

**MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF
"USES EXAMPLE"**

	X	S.D.
Level		
Intermediate	2.100	2.998
Advanced	3.300	2.111
Superior	3.600	1.776
F=1.139		p=0.335

While the means for the use of this strategy increase as proficiency increases, the ANOVA run on the means showed there is no significant difference between levels.

TABLE 32

**MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF
"EXTENDED EXPLANATION"**

	X	S.D.
Level		
Intermediate	0.600	0.966
Advanced	2.500	2.068
Superior	7.200	2.300
F=32.981		p=0.000

The means for the sub-strategy "extended explanation" increase with proficiency level. The ANOVA run on the means for the sub-strategy of "expanded explanation" showed that there were significant differences between levels. The Tukey analysis showed both the superior level and the advanced level used this sub-strategy significantly more often than the intermediate level. The Tukey test also showed that the difference between the use of this sub-strategy was significant between the advanced and superior level.

TABLE 33

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF "TRANSFER OR LANGUAGE SWITCH"

Level	X	S.D.
Intermediate	0.900	1.912
Advanced	0.300	0.483
Superior	0.000	0.000

The means of frequency use for this strategy for each level decrease as proficiency decreases. The ANOVA run on the means of each level for "transfer or language switch" showed no significant differences.

Differences in Social Management Sub-strategy Use Between Levels

The following tables illustrate the means and standard deviations between levels for the use of sub-strategies of the **social management** strategies. Table 25 (Means and Standard Deviations of **Social Management** Sub-strategies Among All Levels), showed that for the whole sample, "repeats for Interviewer's Understanding" was the most often used sub-strategy in this strategy category. The following tables illustrate level differences in the use of the four sub-strategies of **social management**.

TABLE 34

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF "REPEATS FOR INTERVIEWER'S UNDERSTANDING"

Level	X̄	S.D.
Intermediate	3.400	3.307
Advanced	1.600	1.838
Superior	3.400	3.438
F=1.240		p=0.305

The means for the sub-strategy "repeats for Interviewer's understanding" are the same for the intermediate and superior levels. The mean for this sub-strategy falls at the advanced level and rises to the previous mean between the advanced and superior level. The ANOVA run on "repeats for interviewer's understanding" showed there were no significant differences between levels.

TABLE 35

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF
"JOKES"

Level	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
Intermediate	0.400	0.516
Advanced	0.700	0.949
Superior	1.000	1.247
F=0.992		p= 0.384

The means for the sub-strategy "jokes" increase with proficiency level.

The ANOVA run on the Social Management type sub-strategy of "jokes" showed

that there were no significant differences between levels.

TABLE 36

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF
"APOLOGIZES FOR ENGLISH"

Level	X	S.D.
Intermediate	1.100	1.449
Advanced	0.600	0.516
Superior	0.200	0.422
F=2.397		p=0.110

The means for this sub-strategy, "apologizes for English" decreases with proficiency level. The ANOVA run on the means of the sub-strategy, "apologizes for English" showed there were no significant differences between levels.

TABLE 37

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF
"I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE WORD IS..."

Level	X	S.D.
Intermediate	0.300	0.675
Advanced	2.000	1.886
Superior	0.700	1.252
F=4.249		p=0.025

While the means for use of the sub-strategy,"I don't know what the word is...", are higher for the advanced level, the Analysis of Variance between the means showed there was a significant difference between levels. The Tukey analysis found the significant difference was between the intermediate and advanced levels.

Summary of Results

This chapter has shown the results of ANOVA and Tukey analysis for each strategy and sub-strategy among all levels, between levels and within levels. When all levels were compared, the means for general strategy use were significantly higher in the advanced level than either the intermediate or superior levels. Of the strategies analyzed, means were the highest in **content clarification** and **production trick** strategies. Within both the intermediate level and advanced level, **content clarification** strategies had significantly higher means than the other four strategy types. For the superior level, both **content clarification** and **production trick** strategies had significantly higher means than **message abandonment, social management** and **appeal for assistance** strategies.

Differences between levels for each strategy showed that the intermediate level had significantly higher means than the advanced level for **production trick** strategies, but means were not significantly different between intermediate and superior, or advanced and superior. For the advanced level, **content clarification** strategies had the highest means; these were significantly higher than the means for the superior level, but not the intermediate level. The superior level used **message abandonment**

strategies significantly less than the other levels of proficiency. There was not a significant difference between levels for **social management** or **appeal for assistance** strategies.

Among the **content clarification** sub-strategies, "asks for more information or repetition of question" was used by the intermediate level significantly more than the superior level. The second sub-strategy in this category, "short clarification" was used most by the advanced level and but there was no significant difference between levels..

Of the **production trick** sub-strategies, three sub-strategies, "repeats as Pattern for Answer," "uses Example," and "transfer or Language Switch" were not found to be significantly different between levels. "Uses synonyms" and "uses paraphrases" were used at the advanced level significantly more than either intermediate or superior levels. Means for "extended explanation" were significantly higher for the advanced and superior levels than the intermediate level.

Of the four **social management** sub-strategies, only one was found to be significantly different between levels; that sub-strategy was "I don't know what the word is...". The advanced level used this sub-strategy significantly more than the intermediate; neither the differences between intermediate and superior, nor advanced and superior were significant.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

A large amount of data has been accumulated in this study on the communication strategies of non-native speakers of English at three different proficiency levels. In the previous chapter, the means, standard deviations, ANOVA results and probability levels for strategy use between and within levels were tabulated. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the significant differences in the corpus of data and determine trends which will lead to a better understanding of communication strategies and their use by non-native speakers. First, the trends of strategy use among all levels will be reviewed to confirm the research hypothesis. Once differences have been examined among all levels, the most frequently used strategies and the significant differences between and within levels will be examined, then the less frequently used strategies will be discussed

Strategy Use Among All Subjects

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the first significant difference among all subjects in the study was overall strategy use. As can be seen in Table 12 on page 80, subjects in the advanced level used significantly more strategies than subjects in intermediate or superior levels. The fact that strategy use increased between the intermediate and advanced level may be an

indication that the use of communication strategies requires more linguistic ability than intermediate level speakers have acquired. This increase in overall strategy use is understandable; some strategies, especially some of the **production trick** strategies, require diverse lexical abilities, but more importantly they incur greater risk for the speaker.

To produce synonyms and paraphrases, or provide examples, a subject may need to have a fairly wide-ranging lexicon. On the other hand, intermediate level subjects may not willing to attempt **production trick** strategies, as they involve a certain amount of risk. Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) found that the more proficient subjects in their study used more L-2 based strategies, these L-2 based strategies are related to the "Resource expansion" strategies described by Faerch and Kasper (1983). As discussed in Chapter 2, speakers using "Resource expansion" strategies are running greater risk that their message will not be understood. Also, Rubin (1975) identified the good language learner as one willing to take risks. While it would be presumptuous to assume subjects at the intermediate level aren't good language learners, they may not have had enough experience with success in language learning that they are willing to take the risk involved in using communication strategies. It is hard to know which of these possibilities is the real case and in any event, the reason for lower strategy use at the Intermediate level may vary according to the situation and or subject. Relating strategy use merely to the speaker's linguistic proficiency may explain the increase in strategy use between intermediate and advanced level speakers, but it doesn't explain the differences between the advanced level and the superior level.

The intermediate level used fewer communication strategies than the advanced level, but strategy use did not continue to rise with proficiency level. Subjects rated as advanced used more strategies than those rated

intermediate, but overall strategy use decreased between the advanced and superior levels. Again, this may not be contrary to expectation, as subjects with superior linguistic ability may not experience the linguistic breakdown that often precludes strategy use. It would seem obvious that advanced level subjects would use more communication strategies than subjects at the superior level, as advanced level subjects are expected to experience more linguistic breakdown.

While both the intermediate and the superior level used fewer strategies than the advanced level overall, particular strategies had higher means in the Intermediate level than the superior level. In fact, the mean for the strategy **message abandonment** was higher for the intermediate level than any of the other levels. **Appeal for assistance** and **content clarification** were used more by the intermediate level than the superior level. Although the differences between the means for overall strategy use were not significant between intermediate and superior, the fact that means for certain strategies were significantly different between these two levels reveals that looking at the use of particular strategy types may be more enlightening than overall differences in strategy use by levels.

The research hypothesis for this study was that subjects at lower levels of proficiency would use more communication strategies than subjects at higher levels. This first set of results shows the research hypothesis to be false. Subjects at the lower levels do not use more strategies overall. Perhaps subjects with lower linguistic abilities do not have sufficient resources or confidence to use all of the communication strategies analyzed in this research. These results agree with Bialystok and Frohlich's (1980) study which found that proficiency level does seem to be related to strategy use. Poulisse and Schils showed that subjects at lower levels used fewer strategies, but they didn't

include the higher levels of proficiency to see the diminished strategy use witnessed in this study. The differences in these results may be a due to the different task, the different taxonomy, or the different means of ranking proficiency.

Although the original research question has been answered, there are still other questions to be answered in this study Do different levels use different types of strategies? Can the differences in strategy use be related to proficiency? These questions can be answered by further analysis of the data.

As it has been determined that subjects at the advanced level used more strategies than the other levels, it would be interesting to focus on actual strategy use for further analysis. In the following section, strategies which were significantly different between levels will be reviewed first, then the strategies which were not significantly different between levels will be examined.

Message Abandonment

This first strategy in the corpus was used by the intermediate and advanced level significantly more than by the superior level. It is easy to understand why subjects at the intermediate level would use this abandonment strategy more than subjects at other levels. Because of their lower proficiency, it is expected that subjects at the lower levels experience more linguistic breakdown. With fewer linguistic resources at their disposal, they may choose **message abandonment** more often than other levels of proficiency. As superior level subjects have more linguistic resources, they may not have to resort to abandoning any part of the message.

<u>Content Clarification</u>

Content clarification was the strategy with the highest means at each level of proficiency **content clarification** strategies were used significantly more than **message abandonment, social management,** and **appeal for assistance** strategies. The two sub-strategies under **content clarification** are, "asks for more information or repeat of question" and "short clarification". Looking at the use of the first of these sub-strategies by levels, we can see that there is a significant difference between levels.

The first sub-strategy under **content clarification,** "asks for more information or repetition of question" was used most frequently by intermediate subjects, and superior level subjects used this sub-strategy the least. It is easy to understand this difference in strategy used between levels; intermediate level subjects may more often misunderstand the interviewer's question, and so this is a useful strategy for low level speakers. In many instances, the subject may repeat part of the question to ask for clarification.

When all subjects were analyzed together, "short clarification" was the more frequently used sub-strategy of the two in this category. "short clarification" was a strategy added to the taxonomy originating in this research. It is not a communication strategy in the traditional sense, (it may occur without linguistic breakdown) but the high means for "short clarification" show it is a factor in communication. While the differences between levels was not significant, there is a visible trend in the means between levels; "short clarification" was used most by advanced level subjects. This may indicate an awareness or ability in advanced level speakers that intermediate level speakers don't experience. The advanced level speakers may be aware that a "short clarification" would facilitate communication of their message, and since

they have the linguistic ability to add a word or two that would serve to clarify their message, they used this strategy the most. The subject may not be experiencing linguistic breakdown, but takes responsibility for communication of the message and uses a short clarification to make sure the message is clear. Subjects at the superior level are probably more confident of their ability to communicate a message and may not feel the need to add short clarification.

Therefore, even within strategy types, there are differences between levels. As the two sub-strategies under **content clarification** were employed differently at different levels, the purposes of interviewees using these sub-strategies may differ. While both strategies serve to clarify, one seems to be preferred by subjects at the lower level ("asks for more information or repetition of question"), while the other sub-strategy ("short clarification") is used more by the higher level. As mentioned at the end of Chapter 3, the strategy, "short clarification" in reality was more of a **production trick** than a **content clarification** strategy. Actually, "short clarification" seems to be a shorter version of "extended explanation"(which *is* a **production trick**). If these two sub-strategies are compared between levels, (comparing the means of each sub-strategy as they appear in Tables 27 and 32) it is clear that the use of "short clarification" rises between intermediate and advanced levels (intermediate X=5.200, advanced X=8.400) and the means of "extended explanation" increase between Advanced and superior (advanced X= 2.500, superior X= 7.200). These differences between the use of these strategies may reveal something of the interviewees' attitude about communicating in the target language. Both of these strategies show a desire or sense of responsibility on the interviewee's part to make sure he is understood.

Production Tricks

For general strategy use among all subjects, **production trick** strategies are the most common after **content clarification** strategies. Between the advanced and intermediate levels, **production trick** strategies were used significantly more by subjects at the advanced level. While subjects at the superior level used fewer of these strategies than the advanced level, the difference was not significant.

Most of the traditional taxonomies of communication strategies include a class of strategies which are similar to the type called **production tricks** in this research. As stated earlier, this type of strategy may be more difficult as the subject may not want to take the risk required in the use of **production tricks.** The results of the ANOVA reveal that "uses paraphrases" and "uses synonyms" and "extended explanation " are the most popular among the sub-strategies of this category. In fact, the other sub-strategies in this category, "repeats as pattern for answer", "uses example" and "transfer or language switch", were not significantly different between levels.

The two most frequently used sub-strategies in the category of **production tricks** are an important part of the corpus of strategies used in most communication strategy research. Many studies have broken them down differently, but typically, "synonyms" and "paraphrases" are considered a popular strategy among second language learners. Note that like **content clarification** strategies, these two sub-strategies are used significantly more by the advanced level than either of the other two levels. As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, these results probably are due to advanced level subjects experiencing linguistic breakdown and having the proficiency to use synonyms and paraphrases. The Abraham and Vann study (1987) actually

combined these two strategies and the results from this research show that levels which use one sub-strategy, probably have the linguistic skills to use the other sub-strategy.

The sub-strategy with the third highest mean for **production trick** strategies was "extended explanation". This sub-strategy was another one of the strategies which originated in this research. Throughout the interviews, it was clear that some subjects offered extensive explanations beyond what was required to answer the interviewer's questions. As explained in Chapter 3, during the OPI, the interviewer may ask questions which require long answers. The idea of these questions is to encourage the subject to give as extensive an answer as the subject is able to successfully complete. Questions may cover such topics as family life or leisure activities. The length of response is usually up to the subject of the interview. The point of all this is that some subjects in these interviews had the linguistic ability to give lengthy responses to simple questions. As seen in the results section, subjects at the advanced level had significantly higher means than subjects at the intermediate level.

"Extended discourse" is one of the characteristics of the text type of subjects rated as superior on the OPI. Subjects rated advanced should have "paragraph level" discourse. The extended discourse of superior speakers and the paragraph level discourse of advanced speakers seemed to serve as strategies in that the subjects used "extended explanation" to clarify or explain their meaning. While subjects at the Intermediate level had opportunity to give more extensive answers, as a rule, they didn't take the opportunity.

The analysis of the means for "extended explanation" between levels reveals an intersection of the Oral Proficiency Interview rating and strategy use. The fact that means for this sub-strategy rise with proficiency level relates to the increased length of discourse descriptive of a rise in proficiency ranking by the

OPI. This means as the use of this sub-strategy increases, so does the length of discourse. For these reasons, "extended explanation" may be more characteristic of discourse proficiency than strategy proficiency.

Like "short clarification", "extended explanation" may be an indication of the subject's desire to take responsibility for clearer understanding between the two interlocutors. Extended discourse is also very challenging for the second language learner. By choosing to give a longer answer than required, the subject is taking a risk that he will be able to successfully complete the task. This strategy may also be more like the strategies native speakers would use when communicating with each other. From that point of view, it is easy to understand why the superior level speakers would use more "extended explanation", as that is the level of discourse most like native speakers. While this sub-strategy doesn't fit the traditional definition of a communication strategy, it is a point on which proficiency and strategy use meet. The subjects who took the risk of a linguistically more difficult answer, and were able to successfully complete the task, were also the subjects who received a superior rating for the interview. On the other hand, the subjects who either didn't take the risk, or weren't able to successfully complete the task (either because of lack of proficiency or strategic competence) were ranked intermediate.

One other sub-strategy of this category that should be discussed is the final sub-strategy in the group. While "transfer or language switch " did not show any significant differences between levels, and the statistics are low, it is interesting to note that the means for this strategy had an inverse relationship with proficiency level. Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) found that strategies such as this which are based more on the subject's first language than their second language, are the least successful of communication strategies, and are usually used by subjects at the lower levels. The statistics in this study confirm that the

lower level subjects did rely on this strategy, whereas Superior level speakers in this study didn't use language transfer even once.

Social Management Strategies

There were no significant differences for use of this type of strategy between levels. The strategies which fall under this classification are techniques which aid in developing a rapport between the two interlocutors. Like some other strategies already described in this study, these strategies may occur without any actual linguistic breakdown. While there were no significant differences between levels for this strategy, there were significant differences in the use of sub-strategies in this category.

Within **social management** strategies, there are four sub-strategies: "repeats for Interviewer's understanding"; "jokes"; "apologizes for English" and "I don't know what the word is...". The first two sub-strategies may occur without linguistic breakdown, whereas the last two probably occur most often when the subject is experiencing a linguistic difficulty. While the last sub-strategy is the only strategy that differed significantly between levels, the other strategies are worthy of review.

The means between levels for the sub-strategy, "jokes" did not differ significantly, but the means did increase with increasing levels of proficiency. The ability to make jokes is another example of lexical ability confounded by risk. Making a joke in a second language is a fairly difficult task and requires a willingness to take risks. If the attempt to make a joke is not successful, it could prove to be very embarrassing.

Conversely the next sub-strategy, "apologizes for English" had a higher mean for the intermediate level than the advanced level, and the advanced level mean was higher than the superior level. This strategy was another of the strategies added to the corpus of strategies included in this research. Subjects would use this technique when experiencing difficulty in the language, and apologizing for their lack of proficiency seemed to be a way of easing the distress of not having the ability to communicate their message. It seemed to fit very well into the category of **social management** as this was an attempt to bridge a gap using social skills rather than linguistic skills. The means for this strategy follow what is expected. Intermediate level speakers will experience more breakdown and not have the linguistic resources to complete the task. Using a **social management** strategy such as "apologizes for English" allows subjects to gracefully slip out of the breakdown.

The final sub-strategy which was also a strategy type originating in this study,is a strategy similar to "apologizes for English". By saying "I don't know what the word is.." the subject is admitting his inadequacy, but doesn't go so far as to apologize. As noted in Chapter 3 the difference between this **social management** strategy and **appeal for assistance** is probably more of a lexical difference than a semantic difference. This sub-strategy was used significantly more by the advanced level than the intermediate level. It is somewhat surprising that the superior level would have a higher mean for this strategy than the intermediate level, but this too may be an effect of proficiency. The subject at the superior level may be more cognizant of the fact that they don't have a particular lexical item to complete a desired message, but unlike "apologizes for English" the subject does not really abandon the message. By using the "apologizes for English", subjects were apologizing for their overall linguistic ability in the second language, whereas in this sub-strategy, the

subject realizes that they are only missing a particular lexical item and the message is not entirely lost. In the previous sub-strategy, the subject is almost abandoning the message, but uses a social strategy to alleviate the situation. When subjects use this strategy, they merely seem to be acknowledging that they don't have the particular word they want, but the message is not lost.

Summary

The research hypothesis for this study was that lower levels of proficiency use more communication strategies; the statistics lead to rejection of the hypothesis.

While the research hypothesis had to be rejected, the study reveals some interesting reasons for the difference in strategy use between levels. The original idea was that subjects at lower levels would use more communication strategies because they encountered more linguistic breakdown. This research found the relationship between communication strategies and proficiency is not based merely on numbers of strategy used. There seems to be a stronger relationship between types of strategies used and proficiency than numbers of strategies used.and proficiency.

In the next chapter, the implications of these differences between types of strategies used by different levels will be discussed.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS

The research hypothesis for this study was that lower proficiency speakers would use more communication strategies than medium or higher proficiency speakers. It was assumed that because speakers at the lower proficiency levels experience more breakdown in communication, they would use more strategies. A natural extension of this hypothesis is that strategy use would have an inverse relationship with proficiency level. This means that subjects at the superior level would use fewer strategies than any other level and intermediate (the lowest level observed in this study) would use more strategies than any other level. The results of this research lead to rejection of the hypothesis as they indicate that both lower proficiency (intermediate) and higher proficiency (superior) speakers use fewer strategies than advanced level.

While the results of this research indicate that subjects at the intermediate and superior levels of proficiency use fewer communication strategies than subjects at the advanced level, more important than the numbers are the reasons for these differences. Subjects at the intermediate level and subjects at the superior level don't differ significantly in the overall numbers of strategies they use, but the reasons for variation from the advanced level are different for each level. The means for strategy use by subjects at the intermediate level were lower than the advanced level because they used

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fewer **production trick** strategies. The means for strategy use by subjects at the superior level were lower than advanced for strategies such as **message abandonment, content clarification** and **appeal for assistance.**

In fact, while the mean strategy use for the intermediate and superior levels, were not significantly different, "extended explanation" is the only sub-strategy that is used significantly more by the superior than either the advanced or the intermediate levels. While the superior level used "extended explanation" more than any other level, intermediate level speakers relied more on strategies such as **message abandonment, appeal for assistance** and one sub-strategy of **content clarification**, "asks for more information or repeat of question". This indicates a difference in approach to communicative problems by the intermediate and superior levels. The intermediate level speakers rely on the strategies associated with less risk; those which Faerch and Kasper call "reduction" strategies. The advanced level speakers use the "achievement" strategies that incur greater risk and are associated with more successful communication. Finally, the superior level speakers use fewer of the "reduction" strategies than the intermediate level and more extended explanations than any other level.

These results suggest that subjects at these lower levels might achieve more success in communication if they could learn to use strategies like "uses synonyms", "uses paraphrases", and "uses examples" which were used more frequently by the advanced level, and avoid strategies like **message abandonment** and **appeal for assistance** and the sub-strategy, "transfer or language switch". As discussed in the first chapter, "achievement strategies", such as using synonyms, paraphrases and examples, lead to greater success in the communicative process (Faerch & Kasper, 1983).

If speakers at intermediate levels of proficiency could learn to use some of the **production tricks** that advanced level speakers use, they might be able to become more successful communicators. Several studies have shown the positive effect of strategy training on language learning (Chamot and Kupper, 1989 and Ramirez, 1986). In fact, "Unlike most other characteristics of the language learner, such as aptitude, attitude, motivation, personality and general cognitive style, learning strategies are readily teachable" (Oxford and Nyikos,1989; p. 292). Students at lower levels of proficiency could learn to use **production trick** strategies such as using synonyms and examples. These strategies are based in the subject's vocabulary and could be developed in the classroom. Using paraphrases requires a little different linguistic structure and may not be as easy to teach. Paraphrasing, and using examples and synonyms are not the only **production trick** type strategies available to learners wishing to become more communicatively competent. Other strategies, which were not focused on in this study, could also come under the heading of **production tricks**. Using "mime" from Tarone's taxonomy or some of the different approaches in Paribakht's taxonomy (such as the "conceptual approach" or "contextual approach") would be examples from other taxonomies that could be useful to intermediate level speakers. These strategies also typify the achievement strategies associated with successful communication.

But while a larger vocabulary may seem to be the factor hindering intermediate level speakers from using L-2 based **production tricks**, a more important factor is the risk factor. Bialystok (1983) found that less proficient speakers use less L-2 based strategies because these strategies incur greater risk for the speaker. It would seem that trying to use synonyms and paraphrases involves more risk than a large vocabulary. Learners at the lower

levels may not be willing to take the risk of beginning a message they cannot complete. By developing the vocabulary and giving intermediate level students practice using **production trick** strategies, the risk involved may not be as daunting to the language learner.

The trend in strategy training has been to discover what strategies students use, through a strategy inventory (See Oxford, 1990) and then give students practice using the strategies. Since the results of this study indicate that advanced level speakers use different types of strategies than intermediate level speakers, strategy training should focus on the differences in strategy use between these two levels. It would be frustrating for the intermediate level speaker to attempt to learn a strategy which is really only used by superior level or native speakers. Conversely, advanced level speakers would only face set-backs in their strategy use if they were taught to rely on the strategies that intermediate level speakers use. Superior level speakers could benefit from the understanding that reduction strategies are beneath their abilities and are not associated with successful communication in the second language.

By teaching lower level students about the techniques they can use when experiencing linguistic difficulty, teachers can provide their students with the skills to make them more competent communicators in a second language. In role play situations or games that force learners to use strategies, they may experience the ineffectiveness of "reduction" strategies, especially in a mixed language group. Another advantage to strategy practice in the classroom, is students are probably less fearful of taking the risk involved in using some communication strategies in the controlled environment of the classroom. If

students can become used to using strategies in the classroom, perhaps strategy use can be transferred outside the classroom as well.

The results of this study show that there are relationships between strategy use and proficiency level as rated by the Oral Proficiency Interview. The research of Abraham and Vann showed the importance of learning strategies to the "successful" learner. If second language teachers can foster the use of communication strategies among their students, the students will feel more communicatively competent. By teaching students strategies appropriate for their level (and the next level above), students can gain the benefits of strategy use without the frustration of being unable to convey their message.

Although there were some difficulties in this study, this research has shown that there is a difference in the types of strategies used by different levels of speakers. The differences between levels for strategy use suggest some interesting points to pursue in future research.

There were a few factors which could not be considered in this study. As stated at several points in this study, linguistic breakdown, while a major factor in the traditional definitions of communication strategies, is difficult to determine. If breakdown could be quantified or observed in some way, it might be easier to tell when speakers are experiencing problems. One way of approaching this problem is to videotape the interviews; video tape would allow another means for interpreting linguistic breakdown. If the observer could see the interviewee, there might be indications of nervousness or uneasiness that don't come across on audio tape. Another way to determine breakdown might be to measure the hesitations in seconds to determine if there is an amount of time for hesitation which can be associated with breakdown. Finally, examining the interviewee's own interpretation of the

interview and her thought processes during the interview might give insight into breakdown and strategy use.

In this study, there were not enough subjects from any one language group to draw conclusions about strategy use by different language groups. It would be worth pursuing to find out if subjects from different languages rely on different types of strategies. Teachers using strategy training in the classroom could focus on the weaknesses in strategy use speakers from specific language groups experience.

While the area of communication strategy use has been approached from many different angles in the last fifteen years, there is still much to learn about how strategies are used and how they can help second language learners become more communicatively competent speakers. This research has shed a little more light on the strategy use of different levels of proficiency and has implications which can be carried into the communicatively oriented classroom of second language learners.

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APPENDIX A

PILOT STUDY INTERVIEW

Pilot Study Interview

Text: (Read before each interview) This interview is for a research project I am doing on differences between native and non-native speakers of English.

I will be asking all subjects the same questions, so some of them may seem a little odd. There are no wrong answers to these questions, so just relax and answer them as well as you can.

I will be tape recording this interview so I can analyze the differences later.

1.   May I ask your name?

2.   How old are you?

3.   Approximately what level of education do you have?

4.   Where were you born?

5.   Where did you spend your childhood?

6.   What languages were spoken in your home as you were growing up?

7.   What do you regard as your native language

8.   Do you speak any other languages?

9.   Some say they have a gift for language, others say they haven't. Would you regard yourself as strong, medium or weak in language learning?

10.   Where do you live in Stillwater?

11.   How do you like Stillwater?

10. Where do you live in Stillwater?

11. How do you like Stillwater?

12. What do you like about this town?

13. What languages do you speak with the people you live with?

14. Are there others you speak English with?

15. How do you usually study for tests?

16. When you learn a new word in class, do you look it up in a dictionary, ask a friend or simply try to work around it?

17. In speaking, if you don't know a word or expression you want to use, do you find other words to express your idea (say the word in your own language), look up the word in a (bilingual) dictionary, or just forget about expressing the idea?

18. Do you participate in class?

19. Do you mind having your English corrected?

20. When you make a mistake, do you prefer being interupted right away or would you rather finish your statement?

21. Some people feel very shy and helpless when they actually use the language. Do you feel this way sometimes? What is the situation you are in when this happens? If you used to be shy and overcame it, what did you do to change your shyness?

22. How do you feel about the controversy over **eugenics**? Eugenics: A science that deals with improvement (as control by human mating)of hereditary qualities of a breed or race.

e.g.- using eugenics to breed a more intelligent child.

APPENDIX B

ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW LEVEL GUIDELINES

BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS

OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Assessment Criteria: Speaking Proficiency

Global Tasks/ Functions	Context	Content	Accuracy	Text Type
SUPERIOR Can discuss extensively by supporting opinions, abstracting and hypothesizing	Most formal and informal settings	Wide range of general interest topics and some special fields of interest and expertise; concrete, abstract and un-familiar topics	Errors virtually never interfere with communi-cation or disturb the native speaker	Extended discourse
ADVANCED Can describe and narrate in major time/aspect frames	Most informal and some formal settings	Concrete and factual topics of personal and public interest	Can be understood without difficulty by speakers unaccustomed to non-native speakers	Paragraph discourse
INTERMEDIATE Can maintain simple face-to-face conversa-tion by asking and responding to simple ques-tions	Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations	Topics related primarily to self and immediate environment	Can be understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to non-native speakers	Discrete sentences and strings of sentences
NOVICE Can produce only formulaic utterances, lists and enumera-tions	Highly predict-able common daily settings	Common discrete elements of daily life	May be difficult to understand, even for those accustomed to non-native speakers	Discrete words and phrases

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APPENDIX C

RAW DATA ON STRATEGY USE BY INTERMEDIATE

LEVEL SUBJECTS

Appendix C

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF INTERMEDIATE LEVEL SPEAKERS IN THE ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW

Subject	message abandonment	content clarification	production tricks	social management	assistance appeal	Total
Asif	0	7	20	7	2	36
Hideko	4	12	18	9	1	44
Miho	2	14	28	7	1	52
Seiji	3	12	5	1	2	23
Ayako	1	14	23	0	0	38
Hiro	2	15	11	9	0	37
Yuko	2	10	21	1	0	34
Jorge	1	4	2	1	0	8
Teresa	0	2	19	6	6	33
Pedro	1	16	14	11	0	42
Total	16	106	161	52	12	347

Appendix C (continued)

CONTENT CLARIFICATION STRATEGIES OF INTERMEDIATE LEVEL SPEAKERS

Subjects	Asks for more information or repetition of question	Short Clarification	Total
Asif	2	5	7
Hideko	11	1	12
Miho	2	12	14
Seiji	9	3	12
Ayako	7	7	14
Hiro	11	4	15
Yuko	4	6	10
Jorge	0	4	4
Teresa	2	0	2
Pedro	6	10	16
TOTAL	54	52	106

PRODUCTION TRICK STRATEGIES OF
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL SPEAKERS

Subject	Repeats as pattern for answer	Uses synonyms	Uses paraphrase	Uses example	Extended explanation	Transfer or Language switch	Total
Asif	2	5	2	8	1	2	20
Hideko	11	1	2	0	3	1	18
Miho	1	8	11	7	1	0	28
Seiji	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
Ayako	3	5	14	1	0	0	23
Hiro	2	5	1	3	0	0	11
Yuko	2	9	10	0	0	0	21
Jorge	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Teresa	4	3	6	0	0	6	19
Pedro	1	4	7	1	1	0	14
Total	28	42	55	21	6	9	161

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL SUBJECTS

Subjects	Repeats interviewer's understanding	Jokes	Apologizes for English	"I don't know what the word is..."	Total
Asif	7	0	0	0	7
Hideko	4	1	4	0	9
Miho	4	1	1	1	7
Seiji	1	0	0	0	1
Ayako	0	0	0	0	0
Hiro	7	1	1	0	9
Yuko	1	0	0	0	1
Jorge	1	0	0	0	1
Teresa	0	1	3	2	6
Pedro	9	0	2	0	11
Total	34	4	11	3	52

APPENDIX D

RAW DATA ON STRATEGY USE BY ADVANCED

LEVEL SUBJECTS

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF ADVANCED LEVEL SPEAKERS
IN THE ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW

Subject	message abandonment	content clarification	production tricks	social management	assistance appeal	Total
Carla	3	24	26	5	1	59
Maria	1	10	29	1	0	41
Ulrich	0	12	33	0	2	47
Marta	1	17	28	0	0	46
Alberto	2	5	23	4	1	35
Satoru	1	13	27	6	1	48
Emilio	4	19	19	1	5	48
Mako	2	8	28	3	1	42
Hiroko	1	6	31	0	6	44
Tamaki	0	5	20	5	14	44
Total	15	119	264	25	31	454

Appendix D (continued)

CONTENT CLARIFICATION STRATEGIES
OF ADVANCED LEVEL SPEAKERS

Subject	Asks for more information or repetition of question	Short Clarification	Total
Carla	2	22	24
Maria	4	6	10
Ulrich	2	10	12
Marta	4	13	17
Alberto	2	3	5
Satoru	5	8	13
Emilio	6	13	19
Mako	0	8	8
Hiroko	5	1	6
Tamaki	5	0	5
TOTAL	35	84	119

PRODUCTION TRICKS OF ADVANCED
LEVEL SUBJECTS

Subject	Repeats as pattern for answer	Uses synonyms	Uses paraphrase	Uses example	Extended explanation	Transfer or Language switch	Total
Carla	0	4	13	4	5	0	26
Maria	2	7	13	4	4	1	31
Ulrich	4	10	11	4	6	1	36
Marta	0	13	10	3	2	0	28
Alberto	0	8	11	0	3	1	23
Satoru	0	14	6	6	1	0	27
Emilio	7	5	13	0	1	0	26
Mako	0	18	6	2	0	0	26
Hiroko	0	17	7	4	3	0	31
Tamaki	0	8	6	6	0	0	20

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
OF ADVANCED LEVEL SUBJECTS

Subjects	Repeats interviewer's understanding	Jokes	Apologizes for English	"I don't know what the word is..."	Total
Carla	5	0	1	0	6
Maria	0	1	1	5	7
Ulrich	1	0	1	4	6
Marta	0	0	0	4	4
Alberto	2	2	0	0	4
Satoru	4	2	1	1	8
Emilio	1	0	0	0	1
Mako	0	0	1	2	3
Hiroko	0	0	1	3	4
Tamaki	3	2	0	1	6
TOTAL	16	7	6	20	49

APPENDIX E

RAW DATA ON STRATEGY USE OF

SUPERIOR LEVEL SPEAKERS

Appendix E

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF SUPERIOR LEVEL SPEAKERS IN THE ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW

Subject	message abandonment	content clarification	production tricks	social management	assistance appeal	Total
Junko	0	2	13	7	0	22
Henri	1	8	17	0	0	26
Jose	0	6	22	1	0	29
Akiko	1	7	21	2	0	31
Julia	0	2	18	6	0	26
Angela	0	6	21	9	1	37
Bella	1	5	24	5	0	35
Jaime	0	14	29	11	3	57
Heinz	0	2	13	2	1	18
Rita	0	4	19	8	1	32
TOTAL	3	56	197	51	6	313

CONTENT CLARIFICATION STRATEGIES
OF SUPERIOR LEVEL SPEAKERS

Subjects	Asks for more information or repetition of question	Short Clarification	TOTAL
Junko	0	2	2
Henri	2	6	8
Jose	3	3	6
Akiko	2	5	7
Julia	1	1	2
Angela	4	2	6
Bella	0	5	5
Jaime	5	9	14
Heinz	1	1	2
Rita	1	3	4
TOTAL	19	37	56

PRODUCTION TRICK STRATEGIES OF
SUPERIOR LEVEL SPEAKERS

Subject	Repeats as pattern for answer	Uses synonyms	Uses paraphrase	Uses example	Extended explanation	Transfer or Language switch	Total
Junko	2	2	0	1	8	0	1 3
Henri	2	2	0	4	11	0	1 9
Jose	4	4	3	3	9	0	2 3
Akiko	5	5	2	6	6	0	2 4
Julia	4	4	4	1	5	0	1 8
Angela	4	4	4	3	9	0	2 4
Bella	0	0	9	3	9	0	2 1
Jaime	2	2	5	6	6	0	2 1
Heinz	0	0	3	4	4	0	1 1
Rita	5	5	4	5	5	0	2 4
TOTAL	2 8	2 8	3 4	3 6	7 2	0	198

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
OF SUPERIOR LEVEL SUBJECTS

Subjects	Repeats interviewer's understanding	Jokes	Apologizes for English	"I don't know what the word is..."	TOTAL
Junko	0	3	0	4	7
Henri	0	0	0	0	0
Jose	1	0	0	0	1
Akiko	2	0	0	0	2
Julia	6	0	0	1	7
Angela	8	0	1	0	9
Bella	2	1	1	0	4
Jaime	8	3	0	1	1 2
Heinz	0	2	0	0	2
Rita	7	1	0	1	9
TOTAL	3 4	1 0	2	3	4 9

VITA

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