

Justyna KAROŃ
Akademia im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES APPLIED BY POLISH INTERMEDIATE USERS OF ENGLISH – THE RESULTS OF A PILOT STUDY

Streszczenie:

Artykuł przedstawia rezultaty badania pilotażowego sprawdzającego zastosowanie strategii komunikacyjnych przez polskich średniozaawansowanych użytkowników języka angielskiego, jak również prezentuje krótki przegląd najważniejszej literatury i taksonomii związanych z pojęciem strategii komunikacyjnych. Badanie pilotażowe zostało przeprowadzone jako część większego projektu badawczego i przyjęło podział strategii komunikacyjnych zaproponowany przez Dornyei & Scott¹, aby określić strategie używane przez uczestników badania. Wyniki badań wskazują, że uczestnicy, pomimo niższego poziomu zaawansowania językowego, wykorzystywali bardziej językowo zaawansowane strategie komunikacyjne, takie jak parafraza i peryfraza. Zauważono również, że interakcja pomiędzy rozmówcami była zaburzona na skutek dominacji jednego z uczestników.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the notion of communication strategies constitutes one of the most frequently researched areas connected with language use and communication. In the era of English functioning as a lingua franca and the domination of international and multinational language exchange, communication strategies seem to be an extremely efficient tool securing the successful flow of conversation. The multitude of classifications of communication strategies can be sometimes overwhelming, nevertheless, all typologies are characterized by similar features, referring for example to the cases when speakers decide to abandon their intended message or re-structure its content. The paper briefly presents the most widely-accepted typolo-

¹ Dornyei, Z., Scott, M.L.: Review article. Communication strategies in a second language: Definitions and taxonomies. *Language Learning*, 47/1997. Pp. 173–210.

gies of communication strategies in order to give insight into the strategies adopted for the research study. As for the practical part, the aim of the paper is to present the results of the pilot study that was performed as a part of a larger research project in order to investigate the communication strategies used by Polish intermediate users of English. The idea for the pilot study stemmed from the need to investigate whether intermediate users of English resort to the use of communication strategies in the extent equal to proficient users. The results of the previous research dealing with the influence of the level of proficiency on the application of certain communication strategies seemed for a long time inconclusive. However, the recurring observation was that proficient users more frequently resorted to L2-based strategies, which is undoubtedly supported by their more extensive linguistic knowledge. Quite contrary, less proficient speakers are claimed to opt more willingly for L1-based strategies, which can be interpreted as an attempt to express their intended message by all means. These findings were supported by Bialystok & Frohlich², Paribakht³ and Liskin-Gasparro⁴. Therefore, in the cases when the knowledge based on a foreign language proves insufficient, the use of one's native language is treated as a way to keep the communication continuing. It can be thus stated that the use of L1-based strategies aims at preventing communication breakdowns and that communicative efficiency is the most significant goal. The pilot study desired to investigate whether less-proficient users of English would limit their strategies only to the ones based on their native language or decide on the whole range of strategies. The observation was performed on the basis of two communication tasks that were performed by two intermediate speakers of English. The tapescripts of the recordings were analyzed in order to identify the occurrence and the frequency of the communication strategies.

2. Communication Strategies – Definitions and Literature Review

The research concerning the use of communication strategies is quite extensive and it encompasses various approaches to that issue. It is generally claimed that the communication strategies research was started by Selinker⁵ who was the first to introduce that concept. His pioneering work influenced further investigations com-

² Bialystok, E., Frohlich, M.: Oral Communication Strategies for Lexical Difficulties. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin* 5 (1)/1980. Pp. 3–30.

³ Paribakht, T.: Strategic competence and language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, 6 (2)/1985. Pp. 132–146.

⁴ Liskin-Gasparro, J. E.: Circumlocution, Communication Strategies and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines: an analysis of student discourse. *Foreign Language Annals* 29 (3)/1996. Pp. 317–330.

⁵ Selinker, L.: Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 10/1972. Pp. 209–231.

pleted by Varadi⁶ and finally Tarone⁷ who is credited with the earliest taxonomy of communication strategies. That taxonomy was further developed by Paribakht⁸. In the mainstream research in the eighties, Canale & Swain⁹ connected communication strategies with strategic competence, consequently opening new perspectives for the research. Subsequent research led to the extension of that idea, and thus Varadi¹⁰ introduced the conception of communication strategies responsible for form and meaning manipulation, which was followed by Faerch and Kasper's distinction into "reduction strategies" and "achievement strategies"¹¹ where the first group implied the strategies aiming at reducing the message content, whereas the latter group referred to the strategies used to communicate the whole intended meaning. Soon afterwards Faerch & Kasper¹² published a breakthrough volume *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*, which presented the most significant papers dealing with the notion of communication strategies, for example the research by Bialystok¹³ Blum-Kulka & Levenston¹⁴, Corder¹⁵, Haastrup & Phillipson¹⁶. The subsequent years abounded in further elaboration on communication strategies and large-scale research projects, such as the Nijmegen Project, which was presented by Poulisse¹⁷ and later by Kellerman, Ammerlaan, Bongaerts & Poulisse¹⁸. As for the general discussion of communication strategies the early nineties witnessed the arri-

⁶ Varadi, T.: Strategies of target language learner communication: message adjustment. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18/1980. Pp. 59–71.

⁷ Tarone, E.: Conscious communication strategies in interlanguage: a progress report. *TESOL*, 77/1978. Pp. 194–203.

⁸ Paribakht, *ibidem*.

⁹ Canale, M., Swain, M.: Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics* 1 (3)/1980. Pp. 1–47.

¹⁰ Varadi, T. Strategies of target language learner communication: message adjustment. In: C. Faerch, G. Kasper (Eds.): *Strategies in interlanguage communication*. New York: Longman 1973, 1983. Pp. 159–174.

¹¹ Faerch, C., Kasper, G.: *Strategies in interlanguage communication* New York: Longman 1983. P. 38.

¹² Faerch, C., Kasper, G.: *ibidem*

¹³ Bialystok, E.: Some factors in the selection and implementation of communication strategies. In: C. Faerch, G. Kasper (Eds.): *Strategies in interlanguage communication*. New York: Longman 1983. Pp. 110–118.

¹⁴ Blum-Kulka, S., Levenston, E.A.: Universals of lexical simplification. In: C. Faerch, G. Kasper (Eds.): *Strategies in interlanguage communication*. New York: Longman 1983. Pp. 119–139.

¹⁵ Corder, S.P.: Strategies of communication. In: C. Faerch, G. Kasper (Eds.): *Strategies in interlanguage communication*. New York: Longman 1983. Pp. 15–19.

¹⁶ Haastrup, K., Phillipson, R.: Achievement strategies in learner/native speaker interaction. In: C. Faerch, G. Kasper (Eds.), *Strategies in interlanguage communication*. New York: Longman 1983. Pp. 140–158.

¹⁷ Poulisse, N.: Problems and solutions in the classification of compensatory strategies. *Second Language Research* 3/1987. Pp. 141–153.

¹⁸ Kellerman, E., Ammerlaan, A., Bongaerts, A.T., Poulisse, N.: System and hierarchy in L2 compensatory strategies. In: R.C. Scarcella, E.S. Anderson, S.D. Krashen (Eds.): *Developing communicative competence in second language*. New York: Newbury House 1990. Pp. 163–178.

val of some key attempts to classify the existing taxonomies, which were published by Bialystok¹⁹, Dornyei²⁰, Rababah²¹, Littlemore²², or Nakatani²³.

The abundance of the research in the field of communication strategies unavoidably resulted in their numerous definitions. Traditionally, communication strategies have been studied from two major perspectives: the interactional view and the psycholinguistic view. The interactional view focuses on the processes of interaction and negotiation of meaning, perceiving communication strategies as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared”²⁴ and thus communication strategies are believed to occur in certain interactional contexts:

1. A speaker desires to communicate a meaning *x* to a listener
2. The speaker believes the linguistic or sociolinguistic structure desired to communicate meaning *x* is unavailable or is not shared with the listener
3. The speaker chooses to
 - a) avoid-non attempt to communicate meaning *x* or
 - b) attempt alternate means to communicate meaning *x*. The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning²⁵.

On the other hand, the psycholinguistic view described communication strategies as planned and conscious mental procedures, namely: “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal”²⁶ or “willful planning to achieve explicit goals”²⁷. That approach suggested intentionality and consciousness operating in the strategy choice and was further supported by Poulisse who claimed that communication strategies act in fact as problem-solving behaviours which are a direct reaction towards linguistic shortcomings.

Compensatory strategies are processes, operating on conceptual and linguistic knowledge representations, which are adopted by language users in the creation of alternative means of expression when linguistic shortcomings make it impossible for them to communicate their intended meanings in the preferred manner²⁸.

¹⁹ Bialystok, E.: *Communication strategies: a psychological analysis of second language use*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1990.

²⁰ Dornyei, Z.: On teachability of communication strategies. *TESOL Quarterly* 29/1995. Pp. 55–84.

²¹ Rababah, G.: Second language communication strategies: Definitions, taxonomies, data elicitation methodology, and teachability issues. A review article 2002. Retrieved November, 15., 2010, from <http://www.nyu.edu/iesp>

²² Littlemore, J.: The communicative effectiveness of different types of communications strategy (2003). Retrieved November, 20., 2010, from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>

²³ Nakatani, Y.: Developing an oral communication strategy inventory. *Modern Language Journal*, 90/2006. Pp. 151–168.

²⁴ Tarone, 1980. P. 420.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 419.

²⁶ Faerch, C., Kasper, G.: *Strategies in interlanguage communication*. P. 36.

²⁷ Bialystok, 1990, p. 1.

²⁸ Poulisse, N., 1990. The use of compensatory strategies by Dutch Learners of English. *Enschede: Sneldruk*. Pp. 192–193. 9.

Taking into account the numerous publications based on those approaches, one should not be surprised with the multitude of the existing taxonomies concerning communication strategies. However, despite their diversity, it is still possible to identify corresponding parts and shared understanding of a given strategy, as

the variety of taxonomies proposed in literature differs primarily in terminology and overall categorizing principles rather than in the substance of specific strategies. If we ignore, then, differences in the structure of the taxonomies by abolishing the various overall categories, then a core group of specific strategies that appear consistently across the taxonomies clearly emerges²⁹.

Additionally, all the communication strategies centre around two core features. The first of them is problem-orientedness, which is “the idea that strategies are used only when a speaker perceives that there is a problem which may interrupt communication”³⁰. Thus, the application of strategies aims at overcoming communication problems related to insufficient linguistic knowledge. Another core feature of communication strategies is consciousness, referring to the deliberate selection of particular interlanguage items and strategies. Due to the controversiality connected with miscellaneous interpretations of that term, Dornyei & Scott³¹ suggested dividing consciousness into three sub-aspects: consciousness as awareness of the problem, consciousness as intentionality, and consciousness as awareness of strategic language use. Accordingly, despite the fact that the specific terminologies of particular taxonomies vary to a great extent, the overall similarities concerning the meaning and application of each strategy seem to be quite apparent. Table 1 presents the most widely-recognized taxonomies of communication strategies, which were classified by Dornyei & Scott³². It was decided that the taxonomy introduced by Dornyei & Scott as being the most extensive one, would be the most suitable for the needs of the pilot study.

²⁹ Bialystok, 1990, p. 61.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

³¹ Dornyei, Z., Scott, M.L.: Communication strategies: an empirical analysis with retrospection. In: J.S. Turley, K. Lusby (Eds.): Selected papers from the proceedings of the 21st annual symposium of the Desert Language and Linguistics Society. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University 1995. Pp. 155–168.

³² Dornyei, Z., Scott, M.L., 1997.

Table 1. Various Taxonomies of Communicative Strategies – Dornyei & Scott

Tarone (1977)	Faerch & Kasper(1983)	Bialystok (1983)	Paribakht (1985)	Willems (1987)
AVOIDANCE 1. Topic avoidance 2. Message abandonment	FORMAL REDUCTION 1. Phonological 2. Morphological 3. Syntactic 4. Lexical	L1 BASED STRATEGIES 1. Language switch 2. Foreignizing 3. Translation	LINGUISTIC APPROACH <i>Semantic contiguity</i> 1. Superordinate – Comparison – Positive comparison – Analogy – Synonymy – Negative comparison – Contrast & – Apposition – Antonymy <i>Circumlocution</i>	REDUCTION STRATEGIES 1. Formal reduction – Phonological – Morphological – Syntactic – Lexical 2. Functional reduction – Message abandonment – Meaning replacement – Topic avoidance
PARAPHRASE 1. Approximation 2. Word coinage 3. Circumlocution	FUNCTIONAL REDUCTION 1. Actional reduction 2. Modal reduction 3. Reduction of propositional content – Topic avoidance – Message abandonment – Meaning replacement	L2 BASED STRATEGIES Semantic contiguity Description Word coinage	1. Physical description – Size – Shape – Colour – Material 2. Constituent features 3. Elaborated features 4. Locational property 5. Historical property 6. Other features 7. Functional description <i>Metalinguistic clues</i>	ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGIES 1. Paralinguistic strategies 2. Interlingual strategies – Borrowing/code switching – Literal translation – Foreignizing Intralingual strategies – Approximation – Word coinage – Paraphrase – Description – Circumlocution – Exemplification – Self-repair 3. Appeals for assistance – Explicit – Implicit – Checking Questions 4. Initiating repair
CONSCIOUS TRANSFER 1. Literal translation 2. Language switch	– Topic avoidance – Message abandonment – Meaning replacement	NON-LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES	CONTEXTUAL APPROACH 1. Linguistic context 2. Use of L2 idioms and proverbs 3. Idiomatic transfer	
APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE MIME	ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGIES <i>Compensatory strategies</i> 1. Code switching 2. Interlingual transfer 3. IL based strategies – Generalization – Paraphrase – Word coinage – Restructuring 4. Cooperative strategies 5. Non-linguistic strategies <i>Retrieval strategies</i>		CONCEPTUAL APPROACH 1. Demonstration 2. Exemplification 3. Metonymy	
			MIME 1. Replacing verbal output 2. Accompanying verbal output	

Table 1. Various Taxonomies... (cont.)

Bialystok (1990)	Nijmegen Group	Poulish (1993)	Dornyei&Scott (1995)
ANALYSIS-BASED STRATEGIES	CONCEPTUAL STRATEGIES 1. Analytic 2. Holistic	SUBSTITUTION STRATEGIES	DIRECT STRATEGIES
CONTROL-BASED STRATEGIES	LINGUISTIC CODE STRATEGIES 1. Morphological creativity 2. Transfer	SUBSTITUTION PLUS STRATEGIES	<i>Resource deficit-related strategies</i> 1. Message abandonment 2. Message reduction 3. Message replacement 4. Circumlocution 5. Approximation 6. Use of all-purpose words 7. Word coinage 8. Restructuring 9. Literal translation 10. Foreignizing 11. Code switching 12. Use of similar sounding words 13. Mumbling 14. Omission 15. Retrieval 16. Mime
		RECONCEPTUALIZATION STRATEGIES	<i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> 1. Self-rephrasing 2. Self-repair <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> Other-repair
			INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES
			<i>Resource deficit-related strategies</i> 1. Appeals for help <i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> 1. Comprehension check 2. Own-accuracy check <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> 1. Asking for repetition 2. Asking for clarification 3. Asking for confirmation 4. Guessing 5. Expressing nonunderstanding 6. Interpretive summary 7. Responses
			INDIRECT STRATEGIES
			<i>Processing time pressure-related strategies</i> 1. Use of fillers 2. Repetitions <i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> 1. Verbal strategy markers <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> 1. Feigning understanding

3. The Pilot Study

3.1. The Participants

Two participants (male and female) volunteered to take part in the research project. Their age was 30 and they worked in the same department in one of the international companies. The fact that the speakers were colleagues was believed to be an additional advantage, as it prevented the feeling of inhibition and stress caused by the situation of being faced with a totally new communication situation. They were both assessed to be on the intermediate level, despite the fact that they had been learning English for approximately fifteen years. Before the research study, the speakers were asked to complete the language background questionnaire and it was discovered that English was their second foreign language, as the female speaker claimed to be quite advanced in Spanish, and the male speaker had a good command of German.

3.2. The Procedure

The conversation took place in a quiet room and was digitally recorded. The participants were informed about the process of recording and showed no objections concerning that aspect. Before the recording started, the speakers were briefly introduced into their task. The participants were asked to perform a communicative activity based on role-playing – the speakers were informed that their conversation takes place in a shop offering unusual household appliances and gadgets. One speaker was assigned the role of a shop assistant and the second speaker was a customer. Then, the speakers swapped their roles. The speaker being the shop assistant randomly selected three pictures presenting three different devices and the task was to persuade the customer to purchase them. It was decided that a communication activity based on a role play could act as an additional stimulator prompting the speakers into the language use reaching beyond their everyday needs and thus stimulating their linguistic creativity. Assuming the roles of a shop assistant and a customer the speakers could present the linguistic repertoire that was not normally displayed, and therefore could result in a more frequent application of communication strategies used in order to communicate the desired meaning. Following the instruction, the speakers were not given any extra time to prepare and they were asked to start the conversation immediately once they selected the pictures. Once the first role play finished, the speakers swapped the roles and performed the second simulation. Then, the recordings of both conversations were transcribed and analyzed with the aim of identifying the communication strategies that the speakers resorted to.

3.3. Communication Strategies Identification

The pilot study adopted the taxonomy suggested by Dornyei & Scott³³ which consists of three main categories: direct strategies, interactional strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are rooted in individual learner's linguistic repertoires and are in fact "an alternative, manageable and self-contained means of getting the meaning across"³⁴. Interactional strategies function thanks to the mutual involvement of the participants in the process of communication and their willingness to cooperate when faced with communication problems. Finally, indirect strategies are responsible for securing the conditions promoting understanding and cooperation. Having the above-mentioned classification in mind, the tapescripts of the conversations were analyzed with a view to identifying the strategies that appeared during the interaction. For the sake of clarity, the female speaker is marked as F and the male speaker as M.

3.3.1. Direct Strategies

CIRCUMLOCUTION

Among the direct strategies circumlocution, which is "a description of the desired lexical item or a definition of it"³⁵, appeared to be particularly favoured by the speakers. It was noticeable whenever they lacked some lexical items or expressions and in order not to abandon the desired message, they decided to convey the meaning using other available linguistic resources. By referring directly to the interlocutor the speakers additionally attempted to keep the communication channel open.

M: yes, we can also offer you... this... some kind of... uhm... machine... you can use... uhm... to... on morning, to wake up...

M: you... don't have to use... ehmm... the garden... the things that you... use in the garden... by yourself but they are used menac... mech... mech... mechanically

F: oh... it also looks like this casino machine... like this... you... know... this...

M: u are... uhm... it is made from the... uh... flowers... dead flowers from your garden

F: something round

WORD COINAGE

Word coinage is a strategy frequently applied when a speaker fails in the attempt to retrieve a lexical item from his linguistic storage. Then, also lacking the idea for another way of expressing the desired thought, the speaker creates a new word in order to communicate the initial concept. The word coinages observed in the study frequently referred to the speakers' L1 repertoire and thus, despite the

³³ Dornyei, Z., Scott, M.L., 1997

³⁴ Ibidem. P. 198.

³⁵ Tarone, E., Cohen, A.D., Dumas, G.: A close look at some interlanguage terminology: a framework for communication strategies. Working Papers on Bilingualism, 9/1983. P. 11.

fact that they were not the correct forms, they did not cause communication breakdown.

M: aaaa... it can also be used for kitchen... for example if you're... eee... baking something in... the **baker**...

M: oh, so something like **navy**, yes?

F: yes

M: or navigation?

RESTRUCTURING AND SELF-REPHRASING

Restructuring appears when a speaker realizes that the desired message poses too great a risk to continue the utterance in a given manner. Then, the speaker decides to restructure the sentence in such a way so as to express the thoughts without the necessity to experiment with the unknown linguistic areas. Quite frequently, the original message is abruptly interrupted and followed by a more convenient structure. Self-rephrasing comes into action when the speaker perceives a pressing need to paraphrase the message, usually as a result of an emerging threat of misunderstanding.

F: **it should be... it can help me... take something for me**

M: **no... for... we have... another machine for... for the other... activity... it's only...**

CODE SWITCHING

Despite the initial assumption that lower-proficiency speakers would more willingly rely on the L1-based strategies, the study found only one example of switching into Polish. Even in this case, the lacking lexical item was immediately prompted by the interlocutor, which can indicate that despite the shared linguistic background, both speakers were determined to continue their conversation in English.

F: ok but... butt, first, first... first time I see them I think that is... **łodówka**

M: **fridge**... yes, you're right because...

SELF-REPAIR

Self-repair is the strategy manifesting speakers' knowledge concerning the rules of L2 and it appears when a speaker identifies a mistake and instantaneously resolves to correct it. Traditionally, such a correction takes place within the same turn, although there are cases when it can be postponed till the subsequent turn-taking. The instances of self-repair in the pilot study were of the lexical character, when speakers decided to substitute the erroneous lexical items with more appropriate expressions.

M: you don't have to stand and go to the **bedroom**... **bathroom**... aa... you can be washed on your bed...

F: it has some **problem**... **program** that...

3.3.2. Interactional Strategies

ASKING FOR CONFIRMATION AND EXPRESSING NONUNDERSTANDING

The interlocutors presented a very limited range of interactional strategies, as asking for confirmation was the only one they found useful. Typically, this strategy is characterized by one speaker repeating the words of the interlocutor in order to confirm their correct understanding. The second example included here can be also interpreted as an expression of nonunderstanding, as the male speaker clearly indicates his doubts concerning the information given by his female partner, and although his subtle attempt to correct the female speaker initially seems to be futile, as she reiterates erroneous item, the female interlocutor actually provides the correct form in the continuation of the turn.

M: em... and it's it has four arms...

F: **four arms?**

M: four arms, yes... to ummm. to wash you when u are waking up...

M: that's nice... ehm... and how much does this auto chauffeur cost?

F: ten hundred pounds

M: **ten hundred??**

F: yes, it very cheap... mmmm... if you want to .have person... some driver... you must to pay... **five thousand**... for a month

3.3.3. Indirect Strategies

USE OF FILLERS AND REPETITIONS

Indirect strategies focus on maintaining the conversation despite communication problems. The speakers in the pilot study resorted only to the use of fillers and repetitions, which undoubtedly provided them with some extra time to rethink and restructure their utterance. Those manifestations of time-gaining strategies typically happen within the limits of one turn and are uninterrupted by the interlocutor.

F: this is actually... prepared to... **aaaa**... change the... **aaa**... channels on the TV... but...
hmm... you know... it also add some options that he will also has... **uhmmm**... some kind
of drinking... **uhmmmm**...

M: that's nice, and what's **this... this... this machine**

3.4. Discussion and Implications for Further Research

The study findings demonstrate that the intermediate users of English applied a limited number of strategies. Despite the initial assumption that the deficits in their linguistic knowledge would prompt them to limit themselves merely to L1-based strategies, the speakers in fact presented unexpected confidence in using circumlocution and reconstructing, which were traditionally linked with more-

proficient speakers (Jourdain³⁶). There were also some cases of self-rephrasing and self-repair, which can consequently indicate that speakers on each level of proficiency are able to reflect on their utterances and correct them whenever their linguistic resources allow them to do so. It is also quite unexpected that the whole interaction witnessed only one instance of code-switching and that the shared linguistic background did not influence the choice of the strategies based on the Polish language. The limited occurrence of interactional strategies may stem from the fact that the male speaker was clearly the dominant interlocutor and assumed the role of an expert speaker. His turns were longer and more linguistically developed, he demonstrated more willingness to manipulate the structures and the meaning and in some parts of the exchange he even gave the impression of being virtually uninterested in his interlocutor's words. Obviously, being aware of his dominance over the female speaker, he neither required any support nor needed to appeal for help. The use of indirect strategies, which are supposed to enhance communication and keep the communication channels open, also focused on individual needs of the speakers, as they mainly served the purpose of providing some extra time for the organization of thoughts. Consequently, it can be stated that the level of interaction and communication between the speakers leaves a lot to be desired. Apparently, this pilot study has certain limitations. First of all, further research should include a greater number of participants in order to get more data for analysis. Furthermore, it might prove interesting to introduce mixed-proficiency groups in order to investigate the influence of the language level on the choice of strategies. Another suggestion would be to extend the research area by observing the native/non-native and non-native/non-native interactions and the choice of communication strategies in such contexts. Finally, the diversification of tasks types might also produce interesting results.

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³⁶ Jourdain, S.: A native-like ability to circumlocute. *The Modern Language Journal* 84 (2)/2000. Pp. 185–195.

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