An Exploration of EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Teaching of Communication Strategies

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Abstract

Research topic: *An exploration of the EFL teachers' perceptions of the teaching of communication strategies.*

This thesis is a study of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of the teaching of communication strategies in some universities in the United Kingdom. This is an exploration to understand how EFL teachers perceive the idea of teaching communication strategies in their classrooms. The relevant literature suggests that there are contrasting points of view among researchers about the pedagogical effectiveness of the teaching of communication strategies. Consequently, the focus of this research is to look at the current EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences of teaching communication strategies. The participants of this study were thirteen EFL teachers from two universities in the United Kingdom. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were the main methods used to elicit teachers' views and experiences on teaching communication strategies. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with the assistance of the NVIVO computer software. The findings of this study revealed that EFL teachers in some universities in the United Kingdom recommend and support the teaching of communication strategies. I also found out that students are becoming more dependent on their electronic devices and especially the translation applications installed on their mobile phones to help them search for the meaning of the vocabulary which they do not know. This issue intensified the teachers' concerns about their students learning. This study also revealed that culture has an important role in the teaching and learning of communication strategies. This thesis argues that the teaching of communication strategies can be pedagogically effective to learners. It also suggests further research into the impact of the use of technology on learners' communication strategies in the classroom.

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Abbreviations

CAQDAS   Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software.

CLT   Communicative Language Teaching.

CS   Communication Strategy.

CSs   Communication Strategies.

Cps   Compensatory Strategies.

EFL   English as a Foreign Language.

ESL   English as a Second Language.

FL   Foreign Language.

GTM   Grammar Translation Method.

QDA   Qualitative Data Analysis.

SL   Second Language.

SLA   Second Language Acquisition.

UK   United Kingdom.

L1   First Language.

L2   Second Language.

TPR   Total Physical Response

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my father and mother, my wife and my son Mohamed who supported me all the time during this study. I would like also to dedicate this work for my coming baby 'inshallah'.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This introductory Chapter provides the rationale and background of this study. Section 1.2 discusses the background and justification of the study where I explain the motivations behind conducting this research. Section 1.3 addresses the aims of this research. Section 1.4 describes the research questions. The significance and importance of this study are discussed in section 1.4. My positionality occupies section 1.5 which includes my life history as well as my ontological and epistemological assumptions. Section 1.6 provides a brief conclusion and outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background and Justification of the Study

July the 6th of the year 2005 was my first day in life to visit an English speaking country. I was one of the Libyan teachers of English who had the chance to study an eight-week course about English language teaching in the University of Exeter. Being in a foreign country for the first time sometimes involves one to immediately find ways to overcome some communicative difficulties to keep the communication channel open. The following incident might be a good example of this. My Libyan colleagues and myself were shopping in the High street in the city centre of Exeter and at the same time searching for a shop that would provide photo printing facilities. We wanted to print some of our photos we had taken on our trips in the UK. Suddenly, we found one of those shops and a friend of mine asked me (in Arabic) to speak to the English shopkeeper. I really found it hard at that time to spontaneously find or recall the exact linguistic item (print/develop) to send my message to the shopkeeper. However, I did feel comfortable when I asked the shopkeeper "Can you please change this camera film into photos." The use of this simple definition, made me feel more comfortable when I realized that the shopkeeper understood what I asked for. The use of such strategies is known

in the literature as communication strategies. It was also during that time when I was interested to read about and collect some materials relevant to communication strategies which was the topic for my MA proposal at that time (see the positionality section for more details). My interests and motivations for the study of communication strategies also stemmed from my own experience with my students who used to insert Arabic words to bridge the gap they face in the English text. Some of my students during my teaching in some secondary schools in Libya, usually inserted Arabic words in their English writings to compensate for the linguistic items they do not know. When I asked any of those students about the reasons behind that, he/she simply answered, "I do not know the exact English word, so I wrote its equivalent in Arabic". This kind of response, I personally consider to fall under the category of negative strategies, simply because it may not work when the students and their teacher do not share the same native language. However, some teachers and researchers might disagree and argue that the learners' use of their native language words in the foreign language text, may seem to be an indication that learners are developing and learning the language.

In 2008, it was my second time to visit the UK again, but this time to study for a PhD research. The focus of my study still falls under the umbrella of communication strategies. However, this time an attempt is made to expand the scope of the field to look beyond students' level and environment (see the theoretical framework in section 2.9 in the literature review Chapter). The wider context of the field of communication strategies which is the specific concern of this study is to explore English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions about the teaching of communication strategies.

The focus of early studies on communication strategies was about identifying, defining and classifying communication strategies. However, recently, most researchers have become more interested in the pedagogical issues; consequently a divergence of points of views about the idea of the teaching of communication strategies has appeared (Kasper and Kellerman, 1997). Kellerman (1991) argues that learners develop their strategic competence in their native language and then

transfer that to the second language; therefore, there is no point in teaching communication strategies. Some researchers emphasise that learners should be taught the language not the strategies (Kellerman, 1991: Bialystok, 1990). On the other hand, researchers like Dörnyei (1995), Dörnyei and Thurrell, (1992), and Willems, (1987) support and recommend the pedagogical effectiveness of communication strategies. Yule and Tarone (1997, p. 17) use the terms "Cons" referring to the former group of researchers and "Pros" to the latter.

When the "Cons" as the "conservative" conducted studies to compare L2 learners' performance with their own L1, they found out that there are many similarities, therefore, the "Cons" do not advocate the teaching of CSs. On the other hand, the "Pros" as the "proponents" of the teaching of CSs, found out that there are many differences between the performance of L1 learners and the performance of L2 learners, so they recommend the benefits of the teaching of CSs (Faucette, 2001, p. 2). It is clear that researchers have different points of view regarding the teaching of communication strategies. Consequently, the intention of this study is to explore how EFL teachers in the UK perceive the issue of the teaching of communication strategies.

1.3   Aims of the Research

The issue of teaching communication strategies has been of considerable interest among different researchers. On the one hand, some researchers support and advocate the pedagogical effectiveness of the teaching of communication strategies. On the other hand, other researchers stand against this point of view. They claim that there is no point in teaching communication strategies because learners already have developed a set of strategies in their L1; therefore, they can transfer them to the second or foreign language context. Consequently, this study aims to explore some EFL teachers' perceptions of the teaching of communication strategies based on investigating their understanding of the concept of communication strategies and their positions on the implementation of communication strategies in their classrooms. This study also attempts to

investigate the kind of activities that teachers may use in order to teach communication strategies.

1.4   <u>Research Questions</u>

"A qualitative research project begins with the formulation of research questions" (Hennink et al, 2013, p. 33). Accordingly, in this introductory Chapter I would like to present my research questions addressed in this study. I always have been aware that "good research questions do not necessarily produce good research, but poorly conceived or constructed questions will likely create problems that affect all subsequent stages of a study" (Agee, 2009, p. 431). Therefore, I kept developing and refining my research questions throughout all the stages of this study.

In order to address the research aims in section 1.3, the following research questions were generated:

1. How do EFL teachers in the U.K understand the concept of communication strategies?

2. How do EFL teachers perceive the idea of teaching communication strategies?

3. What sort of activities do EFL teachers consider appropriate to use /if they are to teach communication strategies in their classrooms?

1.5   <u>The Significance and Importance of the Study</u>

The current study investigates EFL teachers' perceptions about the teaching of communication strategies. This study is significant theoretically and practically. Regarding the theoretical importance, firstly, it is the first of its kind (to the knowledge of the researcher) as it attempts to explore the teachability of communication strategies from the point of view of the teachers whereas most other studies such as Dörnyei (1995), Brett (2001) and Nakatani (2010) have been

only concerned with learner variables. Secondly, using a qualitative paradigm as a theoretical framework for this study gives it some uniqueness while most of the other studies have been experimentally conducted.

In terms of the practical significance or in other words, the pedagogical significance, the findings of this study may be helpful to people and educational institutions involved in EFL teaching and learning.

1.6   <u>Positionality</u>

The aim of this part is to give some information about my relevant historical background, beliefs, and philosophies, because these factors may influence my choice of the research topic and methodologies to this study. This view is supported by Sikes (2004, p. 19) who points out that it is crucial to understand "where the researcher is coming from" concerning their philosophical positions and basic assumptions, because these aspects have an influence on the choice and use of methodologies and procedures. Similarly, Wellington et al. (2005) highlighted:

> It is impossible to take the researcher out of any type of research or of any stage of the research process. The biography of researchers, how and where they are socially positioned, the consequent perspectives they hold and the assumptions which inform the sense they make of the world, have implications for their research interests, how they frame research questions, the paradigms, methodologies and methods they prefer, and the styles that they adopt when writing up their research (p. 21).

In the light of the above discussion, my choice of the topic of exploring teachers' perceptions of teaching communication strategies and the relevant research questions are influenced by my historical and cultural context as well as my personal experience and interests. These factors have great impact on my view about the nature of reality (ontology) and what can be known and the relationship between the known and the knower (epistemology) (Hatch, 2002). I will start with a brief description of my life history that has impacted on my choice of the field

of research, followed by a summary of my ontological and epistemological assumptions in relation to my research.

1.6.1 <u>My Life History</u>

I started as an English language teacher at Ibn Khaldoon Secondary School in Yefren (Libya) in 2000 just four months after I gained my BA from the department of English language, Faculty of Arts-Yefren Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University. Three years later, I decided to engage in an MA programme. Therefore, I joined the department of applied linguistics in The Academy of Postgraduate studies Tripoli. My MA research topic was "The use of paraphrase and circumlocution as communication strategies by intermediate-advanced learners of English". In 2006, I was appointed as a teaching assistant in the same faculty I graduated from and was asked to resign from my previous job as a secondary school teacher. During my first year in this faculty, I taught general English to non-English language specialised departments. However, as soon as I got my MA in 2007, I started teaching different subjects like grammatical structures, general linguistics to the students of the English language department. In 2008, I was awarded a scholarship for PhD study in the UK by The Ministry of Higher Education in Libya. Thus, on 13.11.2008, I arrived in the UK to pursue my PhD journey.

As a foreign language teacher and through the results from my MA research, I experienced that some students sometimes find it hard to give the exact word in English and some of them may or may not use alternative strategies in order to compensate for this gap. Furthermore, through my readings of the related literature, I noticed that there are some contradictory points of views among researchers in relation to the issue of the teaching of communication strategies. Consequently, I became more motivated and interested to explore how actually the EFL teachers in the UK perceive the teaching of communication strategies.

1.6.2 <u>My Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions</u>

"All social scientists approach their subject via explicit or implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and the way in which it may be investigated" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 1). As I mentioned earlier that my historical background has impacted on my ontological and epistemological assumptions, therefore, I thoroughly concur with the idea that knowledge is "socially constructed, subjectively experienced and the result of human thought as expressed through language" (Sikes, 2004, p. 20). Socially constructed means that individuals develop subjective meanings of their experience in the world they live, those meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to investigate the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or assumptions. "The goal of research then is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). Thus, this knowledge is open to developments or criticisms by the individuals of the society. Moreover, I believe that knowledge can be relatively shared between human beings using the intellectual organ 'mind'.

In association with the ontological perspectives, there is a set of second assumptions of an epistemological point of view. These kinds of assumptions relate to how human beings begin to understand the world and interpret this as knowledge that can be passed onto other human beings (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Epistemology includes a set of questions about knowledge: "what it is, how we get it, how we recognize it, how it relates to truth, how it is entangled with power...how we can know what theory of knowledge is the right one?" (Sikes, 1998, p. 35). Knowledge is viewed by positivists as hard, objective and tangible. On the other hand anti-positivists consider knowledge as personal, subjective and unique (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 7). I share the same point of view with the latter.

Regarding these two (ontological and epistemological assumptions), I view a research methodology that involves the collection of people's ideas and perceptions about a social phenomenon (the teaching of communication

strategies) as the most appropriate procedures of collecting and interpreting data in order to generate credible knowledge and gain trustworthiness.

1.7   <u>Organization and Structure of the Study</u>

This thesis consists of five chapters, of which this introduction is the first Chapter. This chapter has introduced the justification and background of this study. It illustrated how researchers became more and more interested in the pedagogical aspect of the teaching of communication strategies. It also showed aims of the study and the research questions that were explored. Furthermore, the significance of this study was discussed. I described my positionality and life history as well as my ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature on the communication strategies research. This chapter starts with the definitions and classifications of communication strategies. It also introduces the theoretical framework of my study aiming to make contribution to the body of knowledge within which my research is located. Then it surveys some learning theories and describes some English language teaching methods. Moreover, it describes individual learners' differences.

Chapter Three introduces the approach of the investigation and the instruments implemented in this study. In this chapter, I explain and justify the approaches used to address my research questions. It also presents the research paradigms and highlights the constructivist perspective as the basis for this study. At the final section of this chapter, I describe method of analysis.

Chapter Four provides the findings, analysis and discussions of the research. This is where I describe the themes that emerged in my interview and observations data. It also focuses on my participants' responses and field notes in relation to my research questions as well as developing these discussions with reference to the relevant literature.

Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study are located in Chapter Five. This chapter provides summaries of some important conclusions drawn from my research, including a discussion of their pedagogical and educational implications. References and appendixes are placed at the end of this thesis.

1.8   Conclusion of the Chapter

In this preliminary chapter, I introduced my research topic with a description of the background and justification of the study. I also discussed the research aims and research questions. The significance of my study was also discussed in this chapter focusing on the theoretical and practical contributions that my study may make. Furthermore, I presented my positionality highlighting the reasons and motivations behind choosing to pursue my research topic. The final section of the current chapter included the organization and structure of the study with a brief description of the contents of each chapter.

The main intention of the next chapter (Chapter Two) is to explore the literature of the field of communication strategies and to describe the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of my study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 <u>Introduction</u>

In the previous chapter of this thesis, I discussed the rational and background of this study. The current chapter aims to discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the conceptual framework of the present study. It also explains a review of the literature related to the topics under consideration in my study. In the words of Hart (1998), a literature review is:

> The selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed (p. 13).

Similarly, Hammond and Wellington (2013) state that reviewing the literature entails researchers to establish an overview of what has already been studied in the field or area under intention of the investigation. Moreover, they underline "it [the literature review] covers what has been said, who said it, and sets out prevailing theories and methodologies" (p. 99). Therefore, the importance of a literature review is to acquire an understanding of the chosen field of study (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). In line with this, Wellington (2015) explains that conducting a literature review allows researchers to:

- define what the field of study is, by identifying the theories, concepts, research and ideas with which the study connects.
- provide an historical and geographical context.
- establish what research has already been done which relates to the research question or field of study.
- identify and discuss methods and approaches that have been used by other researchers.
- identify the 'gaps' or further contribution that the present piece of research will make (note that the metaphor of a 'gap' can be a risky one) (p. 56).

I would like to comment on the last point about the identification of a 'gap'. In the literature, it might be described as identifying and filling the gap. However, Wellington (2015) is amongst those researchers who do not feel comfortable about using this description. For example, Flick (2009) argues that "at the start of the twenty-first century, after more than a century of social research and decades of rediscovering qualitative research, you will have more and more trouble finding a completely undiscovered field" (p. 48). Therefore, he suggests that there are several kinds of literature review that are important in the development of a qualitative research, namely: (1) The theoretical literature about the topic of the study. (2) Empirical research that involves discussing earlier research in the field of the study or similar fields. (3) Methodological literature about the methods used in conducting the study and justifying the reasons for a certain choice.

Nunan (1992) states that in a literature review, "the researcher extracts and synthesises the main points, issues, findings and research methods, which emerge from a critical review of the readings" (p. 217). Therefore, this chapter aims to "justify the particular approach to the topic, the selection of methods, and demonstration that this research contributes something new" (Hart, 1998, pp. 1-2). Consequently, part of my purpose in this chapter is to constitute a critical review of the theories and research studies in resonance with my research questions, which are:

1. How do EFL teachers in the UK understand the concept of communication strategies?

2. How do EFL teachers perceive the idea of teaching communication strategies?

3. What activities do the EFL teachers consider appropriate if they were to teach communication strategies in their classrooms?

Having presented a brief introduction about what is a literature review and its role in this thesis. In the next section, I will discuss the main topic of this thesis which is communication strategies.

2.2   <u>What are Communication Strategies?</u>

Here, by way of introduction to communication strategies, is a quotation from a book written by Bialystok (1990) called "Communication Strategies: A Psychological Analysis of Second Language Use". Bialystok is reporting about an incident that happened when she was living in Colombia:

> While living in Colombia, a friend of mine wanted to buy some silk. The Spanish word for silk, *seda*, however, is apparently also used for a variety of synthetic substitutes. Eager to have the genuine product, my friend went into the local shop and, roughly translated from Spanish, said something like the following to the shopkeeper: 'It's made by little animals, for their house, and then turned into material'. In addition to lacking an unambiguous word for silk, she found herself unable to find the Spanish words for silkworm or cocoon (p. 1).

The person described in the episode above was not able to know the exact word for silkworm or cocoon and consequently resorted to alternative ways to send her message across. She tried to describe how that item was made and also attempted to explain what it is used for. She clearly tried to define or explain the linguistic word she lacked during that situation: "The use of circumlocution such as this is known as communication strategy" (Gass and Selinker, 1994, p. 181). Having provided a general picture about what is meant by communication strategies, in the next section, I will explain how several researchers defined communication strategies.

Different researchers proposed different definitions for the term communication strategies. For example, Faerch and Kasper (1983) define them as "…potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (p. 36). In this *psycholinguistic* definition, communication strategies become distinguished from other verbal plans by two criteria: problem-orientedness and potential consciousness, (these two terms will be further discussed later in this chapter) (Faerch and Kasper, 1984, p. 47). In line with this, Tarone (1977) states that communication strategies

"…are used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual's thought" (p. 95).

Tarone (1980) points out that communication strategies have to fulfil the following criteria:

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-not attempt to communicate meaning x or,
  (b) Attempt alternative means to communicate meaning x. The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning (p. 420).

In light of the above example, Tarone explains the process of communication when a speaker wishes to send a certain message to a listener. However, the speaker realizes that there is a gap in the communication process. As a result, she/he may avoid bridging this gap or resorts to alternative ways to send her/his message. Communication strategies then "…relate to a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (Tarone, 1980, p. 420). In commenting particularly on this definition, Poulisse (1990) argues that this conceptualisation of communication strategies highlights the importance of the interlocutor. Moreover, Poulisse (1990) adds that: "both the speaker and the interlocutor are supposed to actively contribute to the negotiation of meaning" (p. 20). In other words, communication strategies are viewed as a means of meaning negotiation between two interlocutors that implies the *interactional perspective* of communication strategies (Dörnyei and Scott, 1997; Faerch and Kasper, 1984). However, Faerch and Kasper (1984, p. 53) claim that there are two versions of the interactional perspective, namely the weak and strong versions. On the one hand, the weak version of using interactiveness as a defining criterion in the definition of communication strategies "makes it impossible to apply this concept to types of discourse in which no feedback is given or feedback is delayed". In other words, Faerch and Kasper (1984) state that it is hard for the sender of the message to

obtain immediate positive or negative reaction from the receiver indicating the mutual understanding. This becomes obvious in written communication or in lectures for instance. On the other hand, Faerch and Kasper (1984) state that the strong version of the interactional perspective suggests the cooperation of the two interlocutors and "both are aware of the presence of a communicative problem which they then attempt to solve in a cooperative basis" (p. 54).

In line with the interactional perspective, Nakatani (2010) underlines that "communication strategies can be regarded as any attempts by learners to overcome their difficulties and generate the target language to achieve communicative goals in actual interaction" (p. 118). Furthermore, Nakatani (2010) states that communication strategies are employed when the linguistic or sociolinguistic information are not shared between the interlocutors. The interactional perspective of communication strategies also was stated by Corder (1983) who explains that the adoption of strategies depends on the interlocutors' linguistic abilities and their knowledge of the topic of interaction. Corder (1983) views communication strategies as "...a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty" (p. 16).

Other researchers like Bialystok (1990) and Kellerman (1991) adopt a different approach to the conceptualisation of communication strategies. They claim that the conceptualisation of communication strategies is cognitive and must be attributed to first language acquisition and communication. In the words of Bialystok (1990) "it would be odd if the cognitive mechanisms that produced communication strategies in a second language were fundamentally different from those responsible for the strategic use of a first language" (p. 2). In accordance with this idea, Kellerman (1991) states that strategies "should be psychologically plausible that is, they should be compatible with what we know about language production, cognitive processing and problem-solving behaviour" (p. 145).

Through this brief reviewing of the literature, I can recognize two main divergent views among researchers, namely the linguistic approach and the psychological approach. This diversity in perspectives has led the researchers to adopt different positions regarding the classification of communication strategies and their

pedagogical implications as well. These two topics will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Generally speaking, most researchers included the criterion of problems or difficulties in their definitions of communication strategies. This view is clearly supported by Bialystok (1990) who states that most of the communication strategy definitions converge on three criteria "problematicity", "consciousness" and "intentionality" (p. 3).

2.2.1 <u>Problematicity</u>

Bialystok (1990) points out that problematicity is included in most of the definitions of communication strategies. It indicates that speakers employ strategies only when they have realized that there is a problem which may break down the communication process. Similarly, Garcia (2011) states that problematicity is related to the scope of motivation of using communication strategies. Faerch and Kasper (1983) argue that the word 'problem' is sometimes mistakenly used as a synonym for 'task'. They underline that problems need to be related to the knowledge insufficiency in the learner's interlanguage system. Furthermore, Faerch and Kasper (1983) explain that this insufficiency cannot be attributed to first language users as they may face problems as a result of some psychological constraints from being exhausted or anxious. However, Dörnyei and Scott (1997) state that the study of communication strategies is limited to handle only one type of language problem "resource deficit gaps" (p. 183) in speakers' linguistic knowledge preventing them from sending their messages across. In other words, Dörnyei and Scott (1997) argue that many researchers have restricted their conceptualisations of communication strategies to only one type of problem and this restriction does not reflect the general meaning implied in the term communication strategies. Therefore, the term was extended to include the following three types of communication problems: "own-performance problems", "other performance problems" and processing time pressure.

2.2.1.1 <u>Own-performance problems</u>

This type of communication problems involves learners being aware of their own speech and requires " (a) the realization that one has said something incorrect, (b) the realization that what one has said was less than perfect, and (c) uncertainty about whether what one has said was correct or conveyed the intended message" (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995, p. 141) .

2.2.1.2 <u>Other performance problems</u>

This type of problem is due to the problems caused by the interlocutor's speech in the speaker and might be divided into " (a) something perceived to be incorrect, (b) lack or uncertainty of understanding something fully, or (c) a lack of some expected message/response" (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995, p. 141).

2.2.1.3 <u>Processing time pressure</u>

This refers to the second language learner's continued need for more time to think and plan to communicate their messages. This time span is usually higher than the time which is available in natural communication (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995).

Having described the criterion of problem orientedness and types of problem in communication, the next section discusses consciousness as another criterion that might be included in the definitions of communication strategies.

2.2.2 <u>Consciousness</u>

The second criterion that was implicitly indicated in most of the definitions of communication strategies is consciousness (Dörnyei, 1995; Bialystok, 1990; Faerch & Kasper, 1983). Consciousness implies that learners who employ communication strategies are aware of their communicative difficulties, and that is why they resort to such alternative ways (Bialystok, 1990). However, there is no evidence that learners are certainly aware that: "their utterances constitute

strategic uses of language" (Bialystok, 1990, p. 4). From a cognitive perspective, instruction is mainly aimed to give learners the opportunity in order to raise their awareness of a certain topic (Dörnyei, 1995). In this regard, McDonough (1995) further states the view that: "it is assumed that people are aware of strategic choices they make; but this is not necessarily so, nor can it be shown to be necessarily true" (p. 5). The issue of consciousness or non-consciousness is an important phenomenon in second or foreign language research. However, most of the researchers in this field have not yet researched a general agreement about the terminologies and concepts that unify the relevant discussions (Schmidt, 1994).

There are some problems associated with consciousness as a defining criterion of communication strategies. For example, consciousness is a relative concept (Faerch and Kasper, 1983). In other words, consciousness is a state which is not stable. The existence of consciousness depends on the individual and the situational variables as well as the linguistic materials and the psychological processes involved. Therefore, the metalinguistic awareness of learners who are exposed to L2 teaching generally is developed in a higher way than those who acquire L2s outside the formal context (Tarone, 1983). In this respect, Mariani (2010) explains that consciousness should be considered as a matter of degree. Similarly, Poulisse et al. (1990) prefer to use the term awareness instead of consciousness. This view is supported by Dörnyei and Scott (1997) who state that: "consciousness has, in fact, so many different connotations that one would best avoid it altogether" (p. 184). Moreover, consciousness as a criterion may have the indication that communication strategies are only applied by those who are conscious about them. This restriction excludes children as it has always been claimed that their consciousness processing is not possible (Bialystok, 1990).

I would agree that learners' consciousness is a relative concept. I mean it could indicate various connotations regarding if learners are completely conscious or partially conscious. Similarly, Benali (2013) states that: "the bulk of theoretical and empirical studies in the field acknowledge that the application of CSs might be either conscious or sub-conscious, but still there is a confusion concerning the mental stage in which this consciousness takes place" (p. 45).

Consciousness is also a changeable issue. This implies that plans which are firstly employed consciously might become *automatized* in later situations (Poulisse, 1993, p. 159). Schmidt (1994) suggests deconstructing consciousness into intentionality, attention, awareness and control. In the same way, Bialystok (1990) considers consciousness and intentionality to be separate entities.

2.2.3   Intentionality

Intentionality refers to the learner's control over a range of strategies, thus they may select certain strategies over others in order to apply them to reach certain communicative goals. This criterion is based on the assumption that the speaker has a control over the strategy that is selected and the choice is a response to the obstacle under consideration (Bialystok, 1990). Schmidt (1994) and Bialystok (1990) consider consciousness and intentionality as two different entities. However, this is not the case for Dörnyei and Scott (1997) who describe consciousness as intentionality. They argue that the intentional use of communication strategies distinguishes them from some systematic behaviour that is related to problems which speakers become aware of but they do not do intentionally. In other words, Dörnyei and Scott (1997) highlight that speakers may use pauses like "umming and erring" (p. 115) with an awareness of the difficulty faced but they always use them without a conscious decision. Generally speaking, Dörnyei and Scott (1997) highlight that: "there is no universally accepted definition of CSs" (p. 174). This view was also elaborated by Benali (2013) who pointed out:

> There is still controversy surrounding the definition or identification of CSs [communication strategies] as opposed to certain types of strategies like learning and production strategies. From this background of different definitions and approaches, we can conclude that no conclusive definition of this term can be provided due to the various terminologies (p. 39).

This diversity in the definitions and the absence of consistent descriptions of communication strategies, has led researchers in the field to classify and categorise communication strategies differently. This topic is under consideration in the next section.

2.3 Classifications of Communication Strategies

In the previous section, I discussed the different definitions of communication strategies proposed by different researchers. Moreover, we saw how several researchers define and view communication strategies. In other words, the two dominant approaches to communication strategies research are the psycholinguistic and interactional perspectives (Rampton, 1997). This divergence in the philosophies has led researchers to classify and categorize communication strategies differently. This section presents the different taxonomies and categorizations used to describe communication strategies. I will firstly discuss the typologies made by Faerch and Kasper (1983) and Tarone (1977) as their classifications are considered as the bases of many studies conducted in the field (Bongaerts & Poulisse, 1989) .

2.3.1 Tarone's Classification

According to Tarone (1977), "It is clear to me that any such attempt to establish an enlightening typology of clear cut mutually exclusive communication strategies is bound to run into trouble as soon as we begin to deal with real data" (p. 179). Therefore, she reorganized some of her taxonomies and produced a typology which she claims is the best tool to interpret her participants' behaviour. Commenting particularly on this taxonomy, Dörnyei and Scott (1997) highlight that it is "still one of the most influential in the field" (p. 175). Table (1) shows Tarone's typology of communication strategies.

Table 1: Tarone's Typology of Communication Strategies (1977/1983)

1- Avoidance
  a- Topic avoidance: the learner simply tries not to talk about concepts for which the TL item or structure is not known.
  b- Message abandonment: the learner begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue and stops in mid-utterance.
2- Paraphrase
  a- Approximation: use of single target language vocabulary item or structure, which the learner knows is not correct, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker (e.g. pipe for water pipe).
  b- Word coinage: the learner makes up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept (e.g., "airball" for "balloon").
  c- Circumlocution: the learner describes the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language item or structure (She is, uh, smoking something. I don't know what's its name. that's, uh, Persian, and we use in Turkey, a lot of)
3- Conscious transfer
  a- Literal translation: the learner translates word for word from the native language (e.g. He invites him to drink, for they toast one another).
  b- Language switch: the learner uses the native language term without bothering to translate (e.g. balon for balloon, tirtil for caterpillar)
4- Appeal for assistance: the learner asks for the correct term (e.g., what is this? What called?).
5- Mime: the learner uses non-verbal strategies in place of lexical item or action (e.g. clapping one's hands to illustrate applause).

Poulisse (1987) criticises Tarone's typology for being "product-oriented" (p. 143). Similar criticisms were made by Poulisse et al. (1990) who point out that Tarone's typology of communication strategies lacks the generality factor. They argue that Tarone's taxonomy is categorized to deal only with her data. As a result, most of the strategies used by her subjects were particularly referring to concrete linguistic items. Therefore, researchers who had different data faced some problems in the application of Tarone's taxonomy. (See the Nijmegen Group classification in the coming sections for similar criticisms).

Having described Tarone's classification of communication strategies, in the next section, I will discuss the taxonomy made by Faerch and Kasper.

2.3.2   Faerch and Kasper Classification

According to Faerch and Kasper (1983, p. 36), communication strategies can be firstly classified on the basis of two fundamental different ways in which learners might behave when faced with problems while they are communicating. They further explain that learners can overcome such problems by employing *'avoidance behaviour',* where they attempt to avoid the problem. For example, a learner avoids saying very long words containing many syllables in communication and uses only words that are easy to pronounce. Learners may also rely on *'achievement behaviour'* where they try to solve the problem by resorting to an alternative plan. Here learners may talk around or describe the words they do not know in order to send their messages through. Furthermore, Faerch and Kasper (1983, p. 36) distinguish between two major categories of strategies: *'reduction strategies',* governed by *'avoidance behaviour'*, and *'achievement strategies'*, governed by *'achievement behaviour'*. On the one hand learners communicate by means of a 'reduced' system in order to avoid producing incorrect utterances. On the other hand, learners attempt to solve the problem by expanding the communicative resources available for them. See Figure (1) where Faerch and Kasper (1983, p. 37) present the relationship between problem, type of behaviour and type of strategies.

Figure (1). Types of behaviour and strategies. Source: Faerch and Kasper (1983, p. 37).
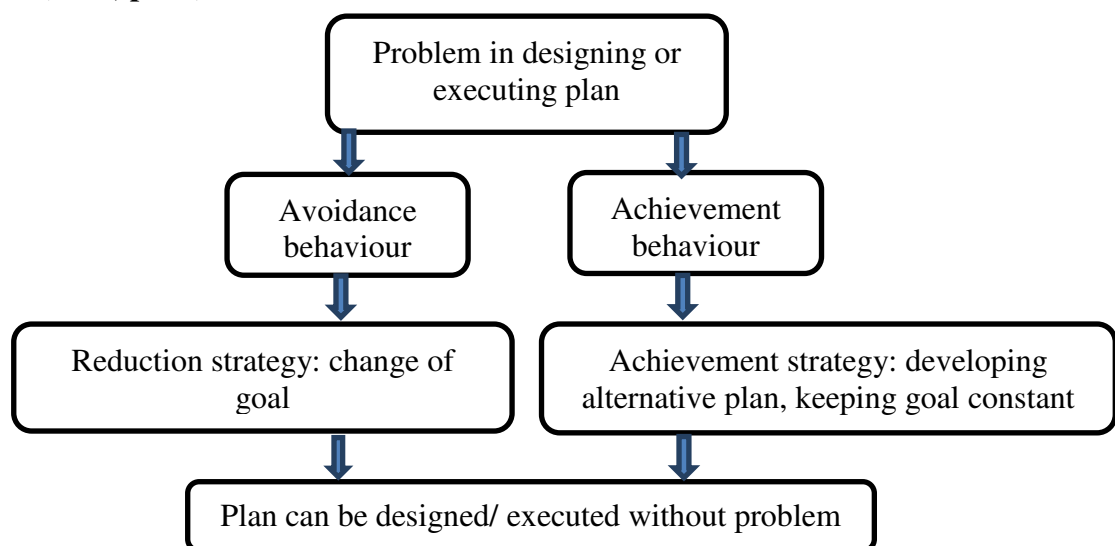
On the basis of the above discussions, Faerch and Kasper (1983) provide the following typology of communication strategies.

Table (2): Faerch and Kasper (1983) classification

Avoidance:

   1.1. Formal reduction strategies.
        1.1.1.   Phonological.
        1.1.2.   Morphological.
        1.1.3.   Syntactic.
   1.2. Functional reduction strategies.
        1.2.1.   Actional.
        1.2.2.   Modal.
        1.2.3.   Propositional.
   2.1. Achievement strategies.
   2.2. Compensatory strategies.
   2.3. Code switching.
   2.4. inter/intra-lingual transfer.
   2.5. IL based strategies.
        2.5.1.   Generalisations.
        2.5.2.   Paraphrase.
        2.5.3.   Word coinage.
        2.5.4.   Restructuring.
   2.6. Cooperative strategies.
   2.7. Non-linguistic strategies.
        2.7.1.   Mime.
        2.7.2.   Gesture.
        2.7.3.   Sound-imitation.

Faerch and Kasper's (1983) typology of communication strategies is systemic and provides a range of problem solving techniques that learners may select (Li & Wei, 2006).

The only CSs that are helpful for learners are those that motivate learners to produce language not avoiding it. Therefore, the recommended CSs to teach are the achievement strategies like approximation, circumlocution and word coinage (Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Faucette, 2001).

Having presented Faerch and Kasper's classifications of communication strategies, the following typology is suggested by the Nijmegen group of researchers.

2.3.3   <u>The Nijmegen Group Classification</u>

This typology is drawn from the results of a research project on communication strategies that is called the "Nijmegen Project" (see Poulisse et al, 1990 for more details).

Bongaerts and Poulisse (1989) criticise the existing taxonomies and suggest a new classification of communication strategies. Moreover, Bongaerts and Poulisse (1989) claim that their typologies are process oriented while the other taxonomies are product-oriented. This point is clearly supported by Kellerman et al. (1987) who further explain:

> It is difficult to analyse any learner text satisfactorily using existing, product-oriented, taxonomies. It is almost inevitable that the analysis will contain a number of arbitrary decisions as to what is or is not a communication strategy, and what sort of communication strategy has been located (p. 102).

Bongaerts and Poulisse (1990) criticise both Tarone's and Faerch and Kaspers' taxonomies of communication strategies as they lack explicit criteria to distinguish the different communication strategies types. Furthermore, Bongaerts and Poulisse (1990) state that some of the criteria that were used to distinguish the types of communication strategies were not defined explicitly enough. They also argue that Tarone as well as Faerch and Kasper used words like 'acceptable', 'appropriate' and 'well-formed' without reference to whether those interpretations were made by the learners or observers.

Bongaerts and Poulisse (1989) propose that language learners adopt one of two ways when they face communicative difficulties. Bongaerts and Poulisse (1989) state that learners either resort to 'conceptual' or 'linguistic' strategies in order to

achieve their communicative goal. The conceptual strategies can be subdivided into holistic and analytic. On the one hand, Bongaerts and Poulisse (1989) explain "…when the language user adopts a holistic strategy he or she names a referent which is similar to or reminiscent of the target referent" (p. 255). This sort of strategy is known as approximation in Tarone's (1977) typology. On the other hand, Bongaerts and Poulisse (1989) highlight that the analytic strategy involves the selection of some attributes for the referent so that the listener can identify the concept needed for communication.

The linguistic strategy is firstly divided into *morphological creativity* where the learner uses the L2 rules of morphological derivation. Secondly, it may take the form of s*trategy of transfer* that is adopted when there are similarities between the learner's own language and the target one (Bongaerts & Poulisse, 1989; Poulisse & Schils, 1987).

Figure (2) An overview of CpS (Poulisse and Schils, 1987, p. 23)

Linguistic
- Morphological creativity: to ironize (to iron: 209t3)
- Transfer: middle (waist, Du: middel 309t3)

Conceptual
- Analytic: this you use for a baby so uh, that it can't uh make uh, his clothes dirty (bib: 114t1)
- Holistic: vegetables (peas: 301t4)
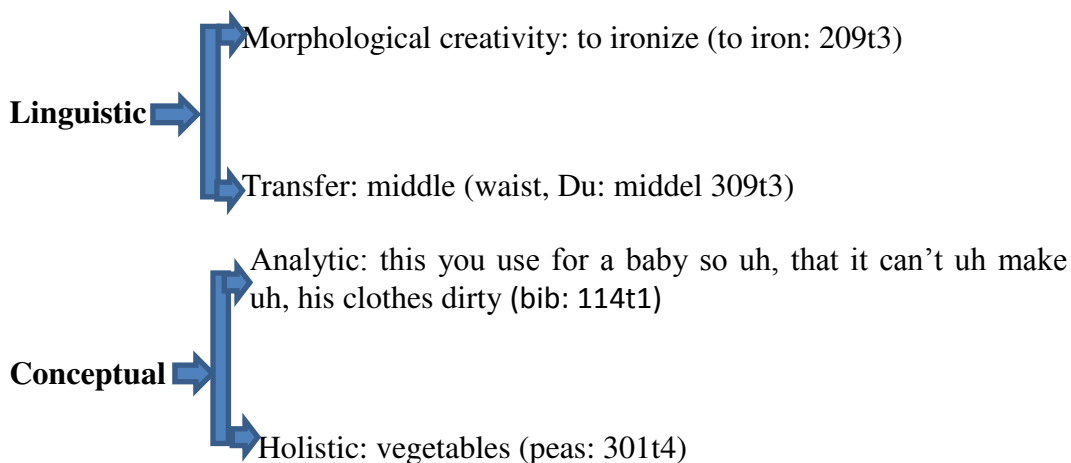
Having briefly described some of the taxonomies that were suggested by different researchers, the next section discusses the previous research in the field of communication strategies.

2.4 <u>Previous Studies</u>

In line with Wellington (2000, p. 3), it is important to locate your own study in what has been done before in the area of research. In the same way, Hart (1998) states that: "the researcher needs to know about the contributions others have made to knowledge pool relevant to their topic" (pp. 26-27). Hence, the purpose of this part is to provide a brief summary of some of the studies that have dealt with the issue of teaching CSs. The term CSs was first coined by Selinker (1972, p. 220) in his seminal paper about "Interlanguage", explaining that CSs are one of the central processes responsible for second language learning. However, Corder (1983) acknowledges that it was Varadi who was the first to investigate CSs experimentally. Varadi (1983) states that: "in assessing success in foreign language acquisition, the question of how close the learner comes to communicating what he wanted to say must not be disregarded" (p, 80). Therefore, he conducted a small-scale experiment with two groups of Hungarian learners of English at an intermediate level. The experiment was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, Group A was asked to describe a picture story in English. Group B was asked to describe it in Hungarian. Learners were not allowed to use any dictionaries during the experiment. The papers were collected and they were asked to describe the same picture again but in the other language. In the second phase of the experiment, learners were asked to translate their Hungarian versions into English and vice versa. Some of the findings of Varadi's experiment revealed that learners resorted to some communication strategies such as generalisation and approximation to help them overcome communicative problems.

Early studies of communication strategies have primarily focused on matters such as definitions, identification and classification (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997). Recently, most of the relevant literature attempts to link the use of CSs into pedagogy.

Dörnyei and Scott (1997) indicate that the real path of CSs strategies research began in the early 1980s. First, Canale and Swain (1980) included CSs as principal constituents of strategic competence, and second, Faerch and Kasper

(1983) published an edited volume which contained the most significant papers, e.g (Blum-Kulka and Levenston, 1983; Corder, 1983; Dechert, 1983; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Hasstrup and Phillipson, 1983; Tarone, 1983; Tarone et al, 1983; Varadi, 1983; Wagner, 1983; Bialystok, 1983).

Dörnyei (1995) conducted a quasi-experimental study to investigate how strategy training affects qualitative and quantitative aspects of strategy use. Some Hungarian students were involved in this study; they were divided into control and experimental groups. He conducted a six week strategy training course to assess the treatment using pre- and post-tests, comparing the results between the groups. His study focused on the training of three CSs (a) topic avoidance and replacement, (b) circumlocution, and (c) using fillers and hesitation devices. Dörnyei's findings revealed that there was an opportunity to develop the quantity and quality of learners' use of certain CSs through focused instruction. Dörnyei also concluded that students liked such training and the activities of such training are safe to use in the educational context. It is clear that Dörnyei adopted an experimental methodology in his study. I would like to discuss some of the problems of this approach here. According to Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007), the experimental design can be criticised for the following issues: firstly, it is very hard to genuinely randomise groups. Secondly, it is difficult to show that the difference was the result of the treatment. Finally, educational experiments can be regarded as unethical when a researcher favours one group over another.

Poulisse and Schils (1987) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the influence of foreign language learners' proficiency level on compensatory strategies. Their participants were 45 Dutch learners of English. They were categorised into three groups of beginners, intermediate and advanced. The subjects were tested on three tasks, a picture description task, a story retell task and an interview for 20 minutes with a native speaker. The results of their study indicated that the proficiency level is related to the number of compensatory strategies where the advanced learners used fewer strategies compared with the less proficient ones. However, it was found out that the learners' proficiency level had a limited effect on the choice of compensatory strategies.

Using an eight-week project of teaching CSs to beginners, Brett (2001) trained a class of beginners of German. They were instructed in several skills such as turn taking phrases, requests for help, clarification, greetings and pause fillers. She used two questionnaires as a data question technique, one before the communication strategies programme and one after. Brett (2001) found out that certain communication strategies can evidently be taught and subsequently utilised by many learners. She also concluded that the majority of beginner learners found strategies like openers, closers and turn taking very helpful and effective in their communication. In this study, Brett used questionnaires and recorded some of the conversations that students engaged in during the time of the project. I think the use of questionnaires does not always reflect the learners' use of communication strategies. However, the audio recordings might seem a useful tool to investigate communication strategies.

Maleki (2007) conducted a study to explore the effectiveness of the teaching of CSs. He divided a group of 60 students into two groups. One class was taught using a communication strategy book and the other class without. After a four-month teaching course, he invited both classes to sit oral and written tests and compared the results. The statistical results revealed that the teaching of CSs is pedagogically effective and language teaching materials which contain CSs are more effective than those without them. I think this type of study also might be questioned about whether the test results really reflect the impact of the intervention.

Faucette (2001) carried out a study to search for materials that are appropriate for the teaching of communication strategies. She selected about 40 English language course books to find out materials that are designed to teach communication strategies. She also considered 11 communication strategies to find in these teaching materials. She found only 17 text books that included materials relevant to the teaching of communication strategies. Faucette's study revealed that textbooks seem to offer few effective exercises about the teaching of

communication strategies. Furthermore, she highlighted the need for more materials designed to teach communication strategies.

In a recent study, Shih (2014) conducted research to explore the type of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that learners may use in a multimodal virtual environment. This study aimed at investigating how computer-mediated technologies affect English as an EFL learners' use of communication strategies. Shih conducted a longitudinal case study for one academic year. He formed a virtual community that built connections between a native English instructor and five Taiwanese students of English. All the learners interactions and conversations were videotaped. The findings of this study revealed that the participants preferred to resort to oral communication strategies whenever they faced communicative difficulties. Furthermore, learners were found to use more communication strategies in role-play tasks than in open discussions. It seems that some researchers prefer to investigate the use of communication strategies in different contexts. These interests may stem from the rapid growing of technological social-interaction media. I would also support this type of research. However, it may hard to be implemented in societies where technology is still not too advanced or where they prefer adopting more traditional educational systems.

In another recent study, Majd and Iran (2014) conducted a study to investigate the impact of teaching communication strategies on Iranian learners of English and to explore whether applying communication strategies in the classroom may motivate learners and lessen their anxiety levels and help them to be successful in learning English as a foreign language. Their findings revealed that teaching communication strategies helps to improve the learners' communication skills which can decrease learners' anxiety and increase learners' motivation as the learners feel more secure and comfortable when they are engaged in communication.

Generally speaking, throughout my readings of most of the literature on CSs, I found out that many researchers adopted quasi-experimental designs and mainly focused on the learners' use of communication strategies. And among the studies that do investigate the teaching of communication strategies, none of them

specifically considered the teachers' perceptions, as far as I know. My study will take this unique perspective. Therefore, the intention of this study is to qualitatively explore the teachers' beliefs and ideas about the issue of teaching communication strategies. I will discuss the motivation for this focus in more detail in the sections dealing with the controversial issue of teaching communication strategies and the theoretical or conceptual framework for my study.

Having critically reviewed some of the previous studies in the field of communication strategies, the next section discuss communicative competence and its subcomponents.

2.5   **Communicative Competence**

A normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others (Hymes, 1972, p. 277).

What Hymes attempts to say in the above quotation is that children have the ability to choose occasions and sentences as suitably as they process the language. This kind of competency has been referred to as communicative competence. The term communicative competence was a reaction to Chomsky's (1965) notion of linguistic competence as the latter has been described as too limited (Brown, 2000). In this respect, Munby (1978) maintains that: "communicative competence includes the ability to use linguistic forms to perform communicative acts and to understand the communicative functions of sentences and their relationships to other sentences" (p. 26). Savignon (1976) claims that communicative competence requires much more than a knowledge of the linguistic code. She highlights that: "The native speaker knows not only how to say something but what to say and when to say it" (p. 4).

It seems that communicative competence and communication strategies are closely related to each other. This point is supported by Lewis (2011) who points out that teachers need to raise their learners' awareness of the use of communication strategies in order to help them develop their communicative competence.

Researchers have attempted to divide up the notion of communicative competence into terms of different areas of knowledge and skill. For example, Canale and Swain (1980) explain that communicative competence can be composed of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Moreover, Canale (1983) includes a fourth component, namely 'discourse competence' in addition to the previous three sub-categories. Nevertheless, each component is crucial in the foreign language teaching that students need to develop in order to become skilful in using the language (Tarone, 1983). In the next sections, I will briefly discuss these components and their proposed definitions.

2.5.1   <u>**Grammatical Competence**</u>

Grammatical competence encompasses the knowledge of the lexical items and the rules of morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology of the language (Canale and Swain, 1980). It also includes the understanding of the language code such as how to form words or sentences and how to pronounce and spell these words (Canale, 1983). In the words of Alptekin (2002), "grammatical or formal competence…refers to the Chomskyan concept of linguistic competence…it provides the linguistic basis for the rules of usage which normally result in accuracy in performance" (p. 57). In the same way, Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) define communicative competence as "the knowledge of the language code (grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling…etc)" (p. 7). However, for Chen (1990), the concept of grammatical competence is not considered as a sub-component of communicative competence. He claims that each category has its respective position in linguistic theory. Grammatical competence was the aim

of language teaching and learning by many linguists and teachers before the development of communicative competence which has involved the influence of the cultural and social factors on language learning and teaching (Chen, 1990).

Having discussed grammatical competence as one of the subcomponents of communicative competence, the next section describes sociolinguistic competence as another subcomponent.

2.5.2   Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence includes "knowledge of rules governing the production and interpretation of language in different sociolinguistic contexts, including control of rules of meaning (how a particular utterance is to be interpreted in a particular context) … (which forms are appropriate in a given context)" (Bachman & Palmer, 1984, p. 36). In this respect, Tarone (1983) defines sociolinguistic competence as "knowledge of pragmatic and speech act conventions of a language, of stylistic appropriateness, and of the uses of the language in establishing and maintaining social relations" (p. 123). This view is supported by Alptekin (2002) who maintains that sociolinguistic competence involves the understanding of social context in which language is used. Moreover, Alptekin (2002) explains that this social context is influenced by several factors such as the role of the person involved in the interaction, his/her social status and the shared information they have in a given social setting. In the same way, Canale and Swain (1980) maintain that sociolinguistics is made up of two sets of rules: sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. Knowledge of these rules will be crucial in interpreting utterances for social meaning, particularly when there is a low level of transparency between the literal meaning of an utterance and the speaker's intention.

Both sociolinguistic competence and communication strategies are concerned with linguistic use of knowledge. However, the only difference is that communication strategies are used to compensate for linguistic deficiency in the learners' repertoire. Moreover, the main concern of using communication strategies is to find out other ways to overcome some communicative problems neglecting the importance of situational appropriateness. On the other hand, sociolinguistic competence indicates that there is a shared linguistic system among interlocutors and focusing on the appropriate usage of contextual and stylistic forms of the language (Tarone, 1983).

In the light of the previous quotation, Tarone tries to make a distinction between sociolinguistic competence and communication strategies. She points out that the aim of using communication strategies is to overcome some communicative problems that may appear in the course of communication. The only concern of the communication strategies users is to send their messages across without paying attention to the contextual or situational appropriateness of usage. However, sociolinguistic competence entails the situational and contextual appropriateness of using the language because of the shared knowledge between interlocutors. For me, I would also share the same point of view, but this may indicate the existence of some pedagogical dilemmas. In other words, English language teachers may find it difficult to make a balance between the two when it comes to teaching sociolinguistic competence and/or communication strategies. Teachers may face some difficulty in drawing a border line between these two entities in practice. For example, let's imagine that there is a learning task that aims at helping learners to use communication strategies in train stations. Here, teachers will find themselves focusing on teaching their learners how to overcome communicative problems at train stations within the appropriate use of contextual features. In other words, teachers will be involved to teach them communication strategies that also meet the contextual features of the place and time of interaction. Therefore, I see that breaking down these linguistic entities and finding different names or labels for each of them might not always be possible. I would suggest that teachers need to seek and search for the ways that they can apply in order to help their learners develop and communicate in the foreign language.

2.5.3 <u>Discourse Competence</u>

"Discourse competence concerns the selecting, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, sentences and utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written text" (Celece-Murcia et al, 1995, p. 13). According to Bachman and Palmer (1984), discourse competence entails the knowledge of how to produce a coherent and cohesive text. In line with this, Canale (1983) highlights that the main concern of discourse competence is how to combine grammatical forms and meanings in order to accomplish a unified written or oral text. In this respect, Brown (2000) states that: "It is the ability we have to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of utterances" (p. 247). This view is further stated by Alptekin (2002) who highlights that these connections are usually implicit where ideas and thoughts are connected on the basis of the knowledge of the world and the extent of the familiarity of a certain topic. Moreover, Alptekin (2002) stresses that people who may have any shortage of information or become unfamiliar with the language produced in similar contexts may find it hard to communicate appropriately and this may result in the production of erroneous expressions.

According to Celece-Murcia et al (1995, pp. 13-16), there are also many sub-areas that may contribute to the development of discourse competence: cohesion, coherence, generic structure and the conversational structure.

2.5.4 <u>Strategic Competence</u>

The fourth subcomponent of communicative competence is strategic competence. Canale and Swain (1980) describe strategic competence as:

> This component is composed of mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action for two main reasons: (a) to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to limiting conditions in actual communication (e.g. momentary inability to recall an idea or grammatical form) or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence; and (b) to enhance the effectiveness of communication (p. 30).

It seems that the term strategic competence is particularly linked to communication strategies. This view is supported by Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) who maintain that strategic competence encompasses "the ability to get one's meaning across successfully to communicative partners, especially when problems arise in the communicative process" (p. 17). In this respect, Brown (1987, p. 200) points out that definitions of strategic competence that are limited to the notion "competence strategies" fall short of encompassing the full spectrum of the construct. All communication strategies, he argues, arise out of a person's strategic competence. This view is also supported by Alptekin (2002) who emphasises that strategic competence requires the understanding of communication strategies that one can use to compensate for communicative difficulties and keep the communicative channel open.

It seems that strategic competence develops in the speaker's first language and can be transferable to the target language context (Paribakht, 1985). I will discuss the issue of transferability later in this chapter when the debate of teaching communication strategies is under consideration.

This component of communicative competence, as reported by Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991), has gained little attention by language course books and teachers. Moreover, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) insist that this sort of competence is very important for foreign language learners as it involves using strategies when communication is difficult, then they conclude that: "...there are learners who can communicate successfully with only one hundred words…they rely almost entirely on their strategic competence" Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991, p. 17). This view is elaborated by Faerch and Kasper (1986) who state that although both native and non-native users may rely on their strategic competence when they encounter communicative difficulties, foreign language learners seem to find that particularly crucial as they are more likely to find communicative problems than native speakers. Therefore, teachers can encourage their students to develop their communicative competence by building their strategic competence in order to use communication strategies whenever they face communicative problems (Chen, 1990).

Broadly speaking, foreign language learners not only need to acquire grammatical forms of the target language but they need also to know how to use these forms appropriately and strategically in different social situations (Alptekin, 2002). Therefore, learning a foreign language involves the knowledge of its cultural aspects. Consequently, foreign language teachers may need to focus on the development of the four competences of the learners to achieve such goals (Alptekin, 2002).

Having discussed the term communicative competence and its sub-components, in the next section, I will highlight the difference between communication and learning strategies.

2.6   Communication and Learning Strategies

One of the most common questions asked to me after I finish presenting my research topic at any research event is about the difference between communication strategies and learning strategies. Consequently, the readers of this study may also pose the same enquiry. Therefore, this issue is the main intention of this section.

According to Oxford (1990) learning strategies are defined as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (p. 8). In a similar way, Chamot (2004) views learning strategies as "the thoughts and actions that individuals use to accomplish a learning goal" (p. 14). Chamot (1987) views learning strategies as "techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information" (p. 71). For Bialystok (1990), learning strategies are the "optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language" (p. 71). Learning strategies may include techniques learners adopt to help them learn easily, for example categorizing vocabularies into different classifications such as nouns, verbs adjectives …etc. Therefore, second language learners find learning strategies important to improve their proficiency and build

their confidence (Cohen, 1998). In this respect, Ellis (1997) points out that there are different kinds of learning strategies. Cognitive strategies that occur in the analysis, synthesis or transformation of learning materials. For example, learners may recombine known elements of the second language in a new way. The second type of learning strategies is metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring and evaluating learning. For example, learners may select some social strategies where they choose to interact with other speakers by asking clarification questions or repetitions.

Terms such as learning strategies and communication strategies was not defined clearly in the relevant literature and usually researchers view them as controversial (Faerch and Kasper, 1986, Bialystok, 1983). This view is also elaborated by Tarone (1983) who highlights that "confusion persists on what is meant by the term communication strategy as it has appeared in the second-language acquisition literature, particularly when used interchangeably with terms like learning strategy…" (p. 285). However, Faucette (2001) maintains that learning strategies and communication strategies are different in research focus and purpose.

Regarding the distinction between learning strategies and communication strategies, the former is based on a feature of the learner while the latter is based on the feature of the language. In other words, learning strategies refer to attitude and ability whereas communication strategies refer to "attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication" (Bialystok, 1983, p. 102). In this respect, Tarone (1980) underlines that learners use communication strategies to simply communicate, while they use learning strategies to learn. In a similar vein, Rubin (1987) states that: "although use of communication strategies may lead to learning, the purpose for their use is better communication" (p. 26). In the same way, Poulisse et al. (1990) highlights that: "it should be noted that in practice the controversy need not cause problems. When conducting a study of CmS [communication strategy] it is irrelevant whether or not the use of a particular CmS happens to have an additional learning effect" (p. 8).

I would like to insert my own experience in this context. I remember once when I was studying doing my BA in English back home, I struggled to understand the sequence or how to put in order the adjectives that usually preceded a noun. For example, (a big old Libyan red wood chair). My classmates and I really had difficulty to know the right order of these adjectives; however, our teacher taught us a strategy to overcome this difficulty. He simply wrote (SAC-CM) on the board and asked us to memorise that and explained that the letter (S) stands for size, (A) age, (C) country, (C)colour, (M) material . He also asked us to categorize each adjective and put them in the same sequence of the letters. We really found that very helpful and it worked most of the time. I would comment and call this type of strategy as a learning strategy not a communication strategy.

Having provided some discussions about the difference between learning and communication strategies, the next section deals with communication strategies and learner autonomy.

2.7   <u>Communication Strategies and Learner Autonomy</u>

> Student autonomy is one of a number of closely related concepts within the general paradigm of learner-centred education. It underpins the individualism of instruction, the development of patterns of self-directed learning and of the methodology of self-access, as well as implying some degree of learner training (Johnson and Johnson, 1999, pp. 306-307).

In light of the above quotation, research on learners' autonomy is the result or product of the pedagogical shift from teacher centred approaches into learner centred approaches. This shift of focus highlights the importance of self-directed learning where learners find the opportunity to improve their skills and become independent in their learning process. The principle of learner autonomy implies that learners need to be encouraged to assume the maximum responsibility for their own learning (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). "Autonomous learning seeks to equip learners with tools that will best serve them once they are on their own and to facilitate their self-directed learning outside the classroom" (Faucette, 2001, p.

9). Autonomous learners are characteristically knowledgeable of the strategies and the efficient control over their use (Manchon, 2000). This implies that autonomous learners have the skills to help them overcome communicative problems that may appear in the flow of communication. In the same vein, Ellis (1997) pointes out that: "the idea of strategy training is attractive because it provides a way of helping learners to become autonomous (i.e. of enabling them to take responsibility for their own learning)" (Ellis, 1997, p. 87). In language education, the term learner autonomy is used in the following five ways:

1- For situations in which learners study entirely on their own;
2- For a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;
3- For an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;
4- For the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning;
5- For the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning (Benson & Voller, 1997, pp. 1-2).

Faerch and Kasper (1983) highlight that the use of communication strategies can help learners to "bridge" pedagogic and non-pedagogic situations (p. 56). In line with this, Faucette (2001) maintains that learner autonomy is the ability to bridge this gap which can be developed through instruction. It is worth mentioning that through my readings of the relevant literature, it appears that researchers have paid little or no attention to the relationship between learners' autonomy and communication strategies.

Having briefly discussed communication strategies and learner autonomy, the next section is one of the most important parts of this thesis as it presents arguments about the teaching of communication strategies which is the main focus of my research.

2.8   The Teachability of Communication Strategies

Second language learners may use effective communication strategies to overcome communicative problems. Therefore, they might find instructions on

how to use such strategies helpful (Faucette, 2001, Dörnyei, 1995). However, there are many different opinions about the teaching of communication strategies as some researchers have questioned the validity of strategy training (Dörnyei, 1995). This part of this chapter attempts to address the issue of the teachability of CSs and the arguments encountered.

Yule and Tarone (1997, p. 18) use the terms "Pros" and "Cons" to refer to the divergence of views on the pedagogical implications of research findings. The "Pros" characteristically favour and support the teaching of CSs. However, the "Cons" express their opposition to the teachability point of view.

2.8.1   <u>The Pros</u>

Researchers like Brett (2001), Corder (1983), Dörnyei and Thurrell. (1994), Faucette (2001), Nakatani (2010), Willems (1987), and Yule and Tarone (1997) advocate and recommend the pedagogic effectiveness of teaching CSs.

The underlying approach adopted by the 'Pros' focuses on the descriptions of the observable events of the second language learners output. Moreover, the 'Pros' are interested in the similarities and differences between the second language learners' productions and that of the native speakers (Yule and Tarone, 1997). The 'Pros' characteristically follow the traditional approach previously referred to as the interactional perspective (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997).

> If one wishes at this stage of the art to consider the pedagogical implications of studying communication strategies, then clearly it is part of good language teaching to encourage resource expansion strategies and, as we have seen, successful strategies of communication may eventually lead to language learning (Corder, 1983, p. 17).

It is clear from what Corder says that CSs are useful for language learners and he recommends including them in language teaching programmes. This view is supported by Faucette (2001) who points out that if language teaching is aimed at producing independent, skilful second language learners, then it is absolutely hard to ignore the importance of CSs in the second language lessons. This view is

elaborated by Faerch and Kasper (1986, p. 186) who recommend three types of activities to promote the activation of communication strategies, these are;

1- Communication games with full visual contact between the participants and full possibilities for immediate feedback.
2- Communication games with no visual contact between the participants but still full possibilities for immediate feedback (e.g. simulating a telephone conversation).
3- Monologue with limited or no possibilities for using visual support and with no possibilities for obtaining immediate feedback (e.g. two-minute talk).

Language learners may find themselves in unpredictable situations of communicative problems and therefore it is necessary to teach them the skills to overcome their communicative difficulties, "in short, we should give them the chance to develop a range of communication strategies…" (Willems, 1987, p. 351). Learners also should be told to use "whatever fillers they can to show the native speaker that they are really trying…and most important, the learner should be taught not to give up" (Hatch, 1978, p. 434). This view is also elaborated by Tarone (1983) who highlights that some of the existing teaching materials lack instructions on how to use communication strategies which are important for learners to convey their information when communicative problems are encountered.

Mariani (2010) states that strategies can be helpful for learners for the following reasons; firstly, communication strategies help learners continue their conversation and find more chances to develop their interlanguage systems. Secondly, communication strategies may lead to more successful performance which sometimes impacts positively on learners. Thirdly, communication strategies help learners to prompt their interlocutors to modify his or her utterance. Fourthly, communication strategies train learners to bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside reality. It also helps them to the opportunity to increase their control over the language use. Finally, communication strategies may overlap with learning strategies, so learners find them useful in learning the foreign language.

A similar argument is provided by Faucette (2001) who considers the teaching of communication strategies through different domains. I will briefly describe some of these points here. The first was from the perspective of the learning strategies research that indicated the benefits of the teaching of learning strategies. Faucette (2001) argues that the results of such studies are encouraging to support the teaching of communication strategies. Secondly, she considers the research that explores the training of listening strategies as encouraging to the teaching of communication strategies. Thirdly, Faucette (2001) explains that the transfer of L1 strategies might be helpful if teachers train their learners how to do as in a strategic behaviour in the L2 context.

According to O'Malley (1987) teachers need to understand that there are a number of strategies that they can include in their teaching materials in order to help students become effective learners. A similar discussion was raised by Oxford (1990) who explains that:

> Many language teachers advocate explicit training of language learners in the 'how to' of language study. The general goals of such training are to help make language learning more meaningful, to encourage a collaborative spirit between learners and teachers, to learn about options for language learning, and to learn and practise strategies that facilitate self reliance. Strategy training should not be abstract and theoretical but should be highly practical and useful for students (p. 200).

In the light of the above discussion, Oxford (1990) clearly supports the idea of the teaching of strategies to students and she advises teachers to explicitly introduce the strategies to learners. Furthermore, she highlights the importance of the practical side of learning a foreign language which students find very helpful. Students "cannot be spoon-fed if they desire and expect to reach an acceptable level of communicative competence" (Oxford, 1990, p. 200).

In this section, I discussed how some researchers support and advocate the teachability of communication strategies. The main purpose of the next section is to describe how other researchers stand against this point of view.

2.8.2   <u>The Cons</u>

"Teach the learners more language and let the strategies look after themselves" (Kellerman, 1991, p. 158). This was the concluding sentence of Kellerman's argument on the teachability of communication strategies. The underlying approach proposed by the "Cons" focuses on the psychological processes adopted by second language learners to research their communicative goals. In other words, their approach deals with the internal cognitive processing of language which emphasises the inherent similarities of the different linguistic forms (Yule & Tarone, 1997). Therefore, the "Cons" claim that the strategies observed to be effective for adults using a second language are relatively similar to those strategies adapted by children learning their first language (Kellerman et al, 1987). In this vein, Bialystok (1990) argues that: "the more language the learner knows, the more possibilities exist for the system to be flexible and to adjust itself to meet the demands of the learner. What one must teach students of a language is not strategy, but language" (p. 147). However, Faerch and Kasper (1986) seem not to agree with this point of view and they argue that learners who already have developed their own L1 communication strategies do not necessarily in advance know "what strategy types are most adequate under various communicative conditions" (p. 187). This view is further stated by Mariani (2010) who underlines that it is true that learners already have implicit knowledge of strategies of their first language though researchers are not aware of the actual use of strategies as a result of this. Therefore, learners need to be encouraged and instructed on how to apply such strategies. In line with this, Yule and Tarone (1997) point out "It should be noted that such statements are not made on the basis of an educational research project by the Cons to find out whether teaching has a beneficial effect or not". In the same vein, Mariani (2010) argues that the "cons" adopted an extreme position to assume that adult learners have already developed their cognitive abilities in their first language, so they can transfer their first language strategies to the second one, therefore there is no point in teaching them communication strategies. In this respect, Kellerman (1991) commenting specifically on Faerch and Kaspers' statements, stresses that there have been studies at Nijmegen which attempted to explore the strategy training or teaching issue. He emphasises that if

the results show that there are not any qualitative differences among strategy users and they are only different in the linguistic or lexical levels, then the strategy training "would not be vindicated" (p. 156).

According to Kellerman et al. (1987), it is doubtful whether there are any forms of second language strategic behaviour which do not have their analogue in communication typically involving only native speakers. Take the following situations:

(1) Teachers explaining words and expressions to children (or non-native learners);
(2) Experts explaining technical terms to laymen;
(3) Native speakers temporarily unable to retrieve a word;
(4) Native speakers having to describe some referent for which they do not have a name (perhaps because there isn't one);
(5) Native speakers taking part in TV quizzes where the object is to enable their partners to guess the word on a card without using the word under severe time constraint;
(6) Aphasics suffering from anomia (p. 101).

In all the above situations, these activities have some common features. A name for a certain referent is hard to retrieve or cannot be understood by the listener, so that the referent needs to be labelled or relabelled or described in a way to be understood by the listener (Kellerman et al. (1987).

The previous part of this section was an attempt to provide some of the arguments for those who call for the importance of teaching CSs and those who do not. Researchers who reject the idea basically assume that foreign language learners already are using CSs in their first language and are able to transfer that to the foreign language context. The aim of the next part is to present the theoretical or conceptual framework of my research. The reasons for inserting this framework here is I want to show the reader how I developed my understandings of the relevant research topic. Moreover, I would like to highlight how my study is positioned within the relevant literature.

2.9   Theoretical Framework of the Study

A theoretical or conceptual framework is a representation of the researcher's thoughts about a certain topic that helps in the development of relevant research questions (Maxwell, 1996). In line with this, Hammond and Wellington (2013) contend that: "within more inductive approaches, a conceptual framework may provide a general orientation to a topic using a mix of published literature, personal knowledge and speculations on the kind of relationships that might emerge in the main study" (p. 31). The conceptual framework illustrates "either graphically or in narrative from" the key constructs and issues to be studied (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 18). The key aim of a theoretical framework is "to relate your research project to the issues raised in previous work, in such a fashion as to demonstrate the need for and importance of your contribution" (Wellington et al, 2005, p. 196). Consequently, this section of this chapter provides a discussion of my theoretical framework in which I have drawn on some relevant theoretical perspectives.

> Communication strategies should indeed be central in L2 investigation, but that their full significance can only be understood if the domain of CS research is expanded beyond the particular kinds of psycholinguistic and interactional approach that currently dominate the field. More specifically, investigation could usefully look beyond grammar and lexis to other kinds of problematic knowledge, beyond referential to social and interpersonal meaning, beyond individuals and dyads to groups, and beyond experiments with undergraduate informants. Widened in this way, the notion of L2 communication strategies can be productively tied into a very larger literature outside SLA, and it becomes a rich site for the investigation of interactional, social and educational issues (Rampton, 1997, p. 279).

In accordance with the above quotation, I completely concur that the study of communication strategies needs to look at issues beyond the learners' variables and extend the exploration to consider other perspectives and attitudes. In the same vein, Williams et al. (1997) state that: "much of the research conducted on communication strategies (CSs) has been rather narrow in that it has focused predominantly on learners' gaps in lexis, and has been conducted almost exclusively using elicitation tasks" (p. 305). A point also addressed by Jidong (2011) who points out that: "research on CSs has a history of almost 40 years, but

there remains much room for exploration and improvement" (p. 101). Thus, I conclude that throughout my readings of the relevant literature, I realised that learners' perspectives were overemphasised whereas the teachers' perspectives gained less or no emphasis in regard to the teaching of communication strategies. However, I would also agree that: "research and theory in second language learning strongly suggest that good language learners use a variety of strategies to assist them in gaining command over new language skills" (O'Malley, 1987, p. 133). Consequently, in the context of the current study, I explored the teachers' perceptions about the idea of teaching communication strategies. It was previously indicated in this chapter that there are two opposing or contrasting points of view regarding the teachability of communication strategies. Therefore, the main purpose of the current inquiry was to understand how EFL teachers perceive the idea of teaching communication strategies. (See Figure (3) that explains the theoretical or conceptual framework of this study).

Figure (3) Theoretical Framework of the Study

Teachers' level

Teachers' perceptions about the teaching of CSs.

Learners' level

Learners' use of communication strategies.

Psycholinguistic Approach	Sociolinguistic Approach
"Process-oriented"	"Product-oriented"
"Internalists"	"Externalists"
"Cons"	"Pros"
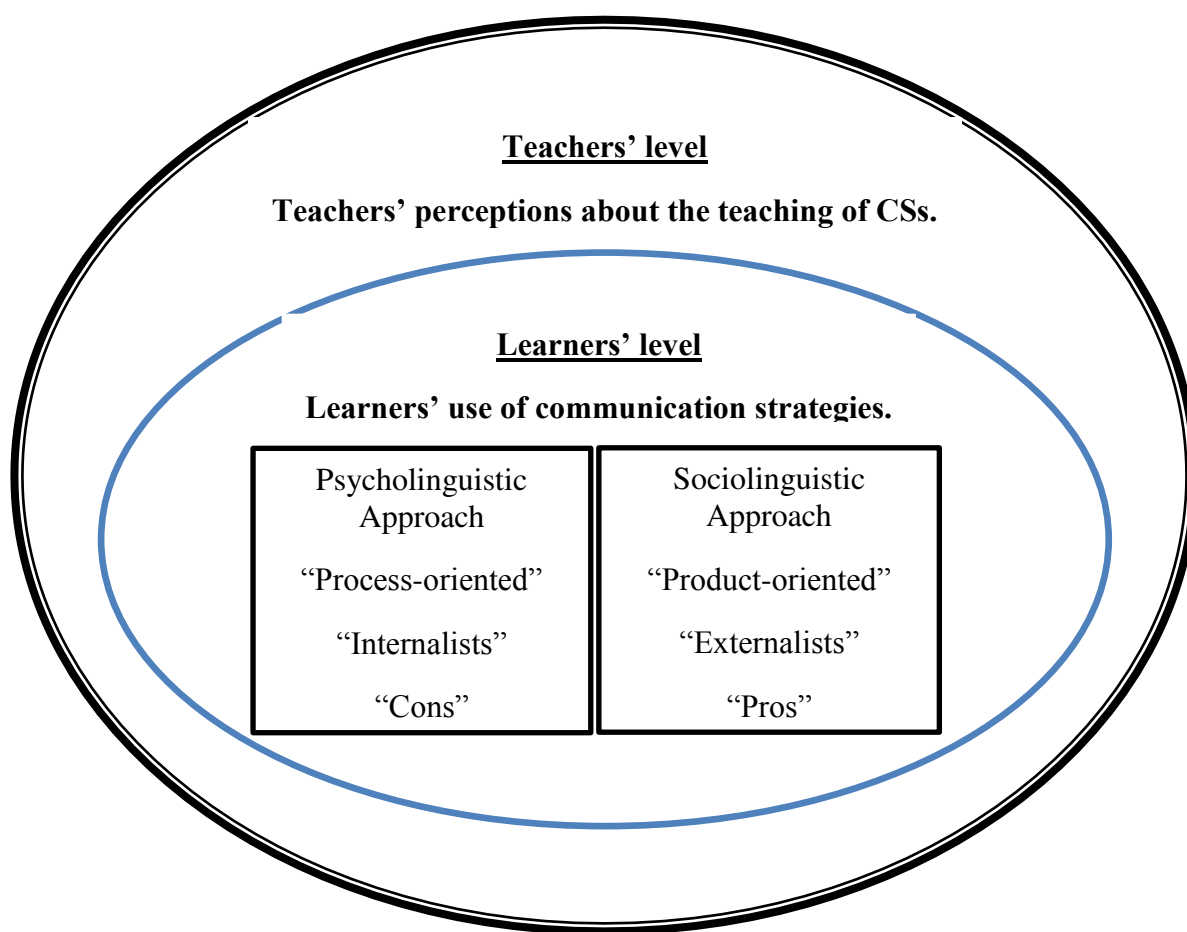
As can be seen in Figure (3) the two main approaches to the study of communication strategies were the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic. Researchers adopting the psycholinguistic approach are process-oriented and those who adopt the sociolinguistic perspective are product-oriented. The product-oriented researchers focus on the "external and interactive" issues (Yule & Tarone, 1997, p. 19). Consequently, the "Cons" are those who stand against the teaching of communication strategies and the "Pros" are those who recommend and advocate the pedagogical effectiveness of communication strategies. I also tried to insert my own description of those two camps of researchers. I call the "Cons" as the internalists and the "Pros" as the externalists. This brief description corresponds with the relevant literature on communication strategies that mainly focuses on the learners' level of exploration. The current study attempted to look beyond the learners' level and explored teachers' thoughts and ideas about the teaching of communication strategies.

Having presented my theoretical framework, the next section discusses theories of language learning. Readers of this thesis may question the reasons for discussing theories of language learning in a study concerned with exploring the teaching of communication strategies. However, I stress that even though the focus of this study is about 'teaching', there might be some opportunities where this study tackles 'learning' as well. For example, when a teacher explains how a student learns a specific language feature. Moreover, as the intention of the third research question is to look at activities and tasks teachers use in their classrooms to teach communication strategies, this may involves flagging some observations about learners' responses and/or feelings regarding certain tasks. Therefore, the main intention of the next section is to survey theories of language learning followed by a discussion of English language teaching methods.

2.10 <u>Theories of Language Learning</u>

Theories in social research help us understand events and to see them in a new or different way. "A theory may be a metaphor, a model or a framework for understanding or making sense of social events" (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007, p. 39).

This part aims to briefly discuss language-learning theories, to be more specific second/foreign language learning theories. According to Long (1993, p. 225), there are between 40 to 60 theories of second language acquisition; they differ in type, source and scope. However, I will only outline the most of the common ones.

2.10.1 <u>Behaviourism</u>

Behaviourism was one of the learning theories that had a strong reputation during the 1940s and 1950s, especially in the United States. The best-known proponent of this behaviourist perspective in the field of language learning is B. F. Skinner (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Behaviourists see language learning as any other kind of learning that involves formation of 'habits'. The behaviourist theory stems from work in psychology that saw the learning of any kind of behaviour as being based on the notions of 'stimulus' and 'response' (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 40). Learners imitate the patterns of the correct language and they receive positive reinforcement if they produce right models and negative reinforcement if they are incorrect (Ellis, 1997). Behaviourism formed the disciplinary framework for the audio-lingual method, an approach to language teaching that emphasises repetition and habit formation that was widely used in most of the world at least until the 1980s (Saville-Troike, 2006). However, in Britain, the oral method which was derived from the practical experience of a group of language educationalists (e.g. Palme, West and Homby), was promoted as a means of achieving real communicative skills (Ellis, 1992).

According to Jordan et al. (2008), the key points for the behaviourist theory are:

- Behaviourism focuses on observable learning events as demonstrated by stimulus and response relationships.
- Learning always involves a change in behaviour.
- Mental processes should be excluded from the scientific study of learning.
- The laws governing learning apply equally to all organisms, including human organisms.
- Organisms begin life as blank slates: there are no innate laws of behaviour.
- Learning results from external events in the environment.
- Behaviourism is a deterministic theory: the subject has no choice but to respond to appropriate stimuli (p. 33).

By the 1970s, many researchers were convinced that behaviourism was insufficient to provide explanations of second language acquisition. Some of the criticisms arose as a result of the growing influence of the role of the innate abilities of language acquisition (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Chomsky (1959) criticised the behaviourist approach and argues that:

> One would naturally expect that prediction of the behaviour of a complex organism (or machine) would require, in addition to information about external stimulation, knowledge of the internal structure of the organism, the ways in which it processes input information and recognizes its own behaviour (p. 14).

The behaviouristic tradition was highly criticised by many researchers, therefore the field of second language acquisition embraced the learner's mental abilities and the era of the cognitive theory had come into life (Johnson, 2004).

In this section, I briefly described the behaviouristic perspective of language learning. The aim of next section is to discuss the innatist perspective.

2.10.2   <u>The Innatist Perspective</u>

This theory of second language acquisition is heavily based on Noam Chomsky's linguistic theory of first language acquisition (Johnson, 2004). In his review of B.F Skinner's "Verbal Behaviour" book, Chomsky (1959, p. 58) argues that children are born with a built in structure of information processing system which helps them to acquire language. Moreover, Chomsky (1965) points out that : "to acquire language, a child must devise a hypothesis compatible with the available data at the moment of successful language acquisition" (p. 36). Chomsky explains that there must be a kind of internal core of abstract knowledge about language form which provides a framework for all natural languages. This core of knowledge is known as "Universal Grammar" (Mitchell and Myles, 2004, p. 12).

The main characteristics of the mentalist theory are:

1- Only human beings are capable of learning language.
2- The human mind is equipped with a faculty for learning language, referred to as language acquisition device. This is separate from the faculties responsible for other kinds of cognitive activity (for example, logical reasoning).
3- This faculty is the primary determinant of language acquisition.
4- Input is needed, but only to 'trigger' the operation of the language acquisition device (Ellis, 1997, p. 32).

Chomsky has been well known for his assumption that all languages share common structural basis (Christy, 2010). Chomsky (2006, p. 24) explains that the study of universal grammar involves studying the nature of human intellectual abilities. Its main aim is to formulate the satisfactory premises that a system should meet to be classified as a human language. Nevertheless, Lightbown and Spada (2006) point out that Chomsky did not make any specific assumptions about the availability of the universal grammar for the second language learner. However, Schachter (1990) argues that the idea of universal grammar in the first language acquisition might be a reasonable set of assumptions; however, it will not be available as a knowledge source for adult learners of a second language.

Similarly, Dekeyser and Juffs (2005) clarify that the controversy regarding the role of universal grammar in the second language environment arose because the results obtained from studies investigating knowledge of universals among second

language learners cannot prove that this knowledge is not the result of the influence of the first language.

In spite of the fact that the Chomskyan ideas have been widely adopted in the world, most researchers working in the field of linguistics "no longer" restrictively work with this paradigm (De Bot et al, 2005, p. 31).

When discussing the innatist perspective, the difference between acquisition and learning becomes worth mentioning. This is the main topic of the next discussion.

2.10.3 <u>The Acquisition/Learning Distinction</u>

The acquisition/learning distinction was made by Krashen (1982) as one of his five hypotheses about second language acquisition theory. He argues that language acquisition is very similar to the way children develop their native language in a subconscious way. Krashen (1982 p. 10) acknowledges that: "language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication". On the other hand, language learning refers to the conscious knowledge of a second language where learners know the rules of the target language and are able to use them. However, this distinction has faced criticisms such as problems of definition, the validity of the distinction, the lack of operationalizability and the quality of adduced evidence Krashen adduced in its support (Zobl, 1995). In this respect, Tricomi (1986) points out that Krashen's work cannot explain the difference between acquisition from oral language and from written and the pedagogical significance they have. Moreover, his work did not consider the students' different learning styles.

Even though Krashen's ideas have been criticised by both psychologists and linguists, his assumptions gave strong insights into the field of second language acquisition (De Bot et al, 2005; Johnson, 2004; Lightbown and Spada, 2006).

After briefly outlining the behaviourist and innatist models, the next part will provide a summary for the cognitive approaches to second language learning.

2.10.4 <u>Cognitive Approaches</u>

Cognitive researchers argue that there is no need to claim that human beings have a specific module in the brain; they also reject the idea of making a distinction between acquisition and learning (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Mitchell and Myles (2004) suggest that cognitive theorists follow two main approaches to language learning. *Processing approaches* and *constructionist or emergentist approaches*. Processing approaches investigate how second language learners process the second language and their main focus is on the computational perspective of language learning. On the other hand, constructionist or emergentist approaches emphasise the usage-based view of language development that is determined by communicative needs. Constructionists also reject the idea of an innate language acquisition device. They include approaches such as emergentism, connectionism, constructivism, functionalism.

In this part, I attempted to provide a brief outline for the most common language learning theories in the field of second language acquisition. In the next part, I will discuss the terminological difference between second/foreign language highlighting how I will be using them throughout my study.

2.11 <u>Second/Foreign Language</u>

In this section, I will discuss the difference in the terminological use of second and foreign language highlighting how they will be used in this study. On the one hand, a second language is usually a language which is used as a medium of communication in a country but it is not the native language. It can be also used alongside other language or languages. On the other hand, a foreign language is taught as a school subject but it is not used as a medium of communication. English is regarded as a foreign language in France, Japan, China, etc. (Richards et al, 1992, p. 143).

A target language means the language being learned either second or foreign (Cohen, 1998, p. 4). Similarly, Oxford (1990) states that the term second language

is usually applied to the language which has social and communicative functions within the community where it is learnt. For example, English in India is a second language because in these multilingual counties, people learn more than one language for social, economic, and professional reasons. On the other hand, the term foreign language does not imply the social and communicative function in the community where it is learnt. It is mainly learnt in order to be used in another country. An example of this might be my home country Libya where English is used only in education but not in everyday social or economic use. However, in the context of this study, I will be using such terms interchangeably but mostly using the term foreign language as it was the one the participants of this study preferably adopted. Furthermore, it is the one reflected in the title on the cover page of this thesis.

I started this section with a description of the different language theories followed by a discussion of the difference in terminological use of second and foreign language, the next section summarises English language teaching methods. I have already indicated in this chapter the reasons for this organization.

2.12 **<u>English Language Teaching Methods</u>**

For over a century, language educators have been focusing on the development of language teaching methods in order to solve language problems (Stern, 1983). The history of English language teaching has been characterised by a search for more effective methods of teaching English (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, language teaching theories have been advanced in conceptualising teaching in terms of teaching methods (Stern, 1983). The demand for English has been expanding among fields like politics, international relations, travel, and education. Therefore, the access to knowledge can be obtained through English. Consequently, the field of English language teaching has been one of the most developing disciplines around the world (Reddy, 2012).

Method is defined as "the process of planning, selection and grading language materials and items, techniques of teaching" (Patel & Jaim, 2008, p. 71). A

method "refers to a specific instructional design or system based on a particular theory of language and of language learning" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 245). In the same vein, Stern (1983) highlights that: "a method is more than a single strategy or a particular technique; it is a 'theory' of language teaching…which has resulted from practical and theoretical discussions in a given historical context" (pp. 452-453).

Teaching methods are very important in the teaching of EFL/ESL. They help teachers make their learners feel comfortable, satisfied and enjoy their lessons (Natsir, 2014).

In the following sections, I will survey the most common teaching methods of English and explain the underlying assumptions for each of them. I will start discussing the grammar translation method as it was the first method used in the history of teaching English.

2.12.1 <u>The Grammar Translation Method</u>

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is considered the oldest method in the history of teaching English. It was widely adopted between the 1840s and 1940s (Patel & Jaim, 2008). It also still used in some parts of the world today in its "modified form" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 6). The GTM, also known as the classical method, was a response to the traditional scholastic approach among individual learning in the nineteenth century. It was believed that the scholastic approach could only be used by individual educated learners. Therefore, the GTM was an attempt to adopt this approach to meet the needs and requirements of schools (Mondal, 2012).

The following principal characteristics of the Grammar-Translation Method are summarised as:

- The goal of foreign language study is to learn a language in order to read its literature.
- Reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening.

- Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts, and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization.
- The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice.
- Accuracy is emphasised. Students are expected to attain high standards in translation.
- Grammar is taught deductively.
- The student's native language is the medium of instruction. (Richards & Rodgers, 1998, pp. 3).

It is clear that the GTM is based on teaching the structural rules of second language in relation to the first language rules. An idea highlighted by Rivers (1968) who explains that the GTM aims at providing an understanding of the rules of the language, and at helping learners to write the foreign language by regular practice of translation from their first language (Rivers, 1968). Furthermore, the GTM aims to increase the complexity of the learning task by designing practice sentences presenting a number of rules simultaneously (Stern, 1983). In line with this, Natsir (2014) highlights that this method focuses only on the development of reading and writing skills. Therefore, students will develop their vocabulary and grammar. However, they may not become familiar with other elements such as pronunciation, phonology. I would also share the same idea that the GTM neglected these important aspects. Moreover, the GTM lacked the focus on communication as an important aim of language learning. A point further explained by Rivers (1968) who points out that the main shortcoming of the GTM is that it neglected communication skills as it mainly focuses on the rules and exceptions with little attention to the active use of language. Moreover, Rivers (1968) adds that students need to work very hard in doing written exercises but without the opportunities to express their own thoughts in the foreign language. Therefore, the role of the learner in the classroom is a passive one where she/he needs to absorb the information given by the teacher without much interaction. As a result, the GTM has been described as "a cold and lifeless approach to language teaching" (Stern, 1983. p. 454). It seems the GTM has gained less emphasis as a teaching method but I would like to highlight here that I personally was taught using this method. In other words, even though curriculum designers advise the use of other approaches like communicative language teaching (which will be discussed later in this chapter), the GTM was the main teaching method at my

school back home. This point is highlighted by Orafi and Borg (2009) who conducted a study to explore teachers' implementation of a new communicative English language curriculum in Libyan secondary schools. Their findings revealed that there are "considerable differences between the intentions of the curriculum and the instruction observed" (p. 243). Similarly, Stern (1983) argues that many text books are still based on the GTM and it is still applied in several language institutions (Stern, 1983).

Having briefly described the GTM, the next section discusses the Audio-lingual Method.

2.12.2 The Audio-lingual Method

The audio-lingual method, or sometimes the aural-oral method, was originally found in the work of the American structural linguists and cultural anthropologists who worked in line with behaviourist psychologists (Rivers, 1968). The term audio-lingual was coined by Nelson Brooks of Yale University (Mukatel, 1998). The emergence of this method resulted from the increased attention given to foreign language teaching and learning in the United states towards the end of 1950s. This method is based on the development of listening and speaking skills first and considers this as the foundation to build the skills of reading and writing (Rivers, 1968).

The main features of the audio-lingual method are as follows:

- The audio-lingual method treats each language skill separately: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- This method focuses primarily on the skills of listening and speaking.
- The skills of writing and reading are not neglected, but the focus throughout remains on listening and speaking.
- Dialogues are the main feature of the audio-lingual syllabus, and they are the chief means of presenting language items. They also provide learners with an opportunity to practise mimic and memorize bits of language.
- Pattern drills are an essential part of this method and used as an important technique for language teaching/learning.

- The language laboratory was introduced as an important teaching aid. It gave learners an opportunity to mimic a model and memorize language pattern.
- Like the direct method, the audio-lingual method too tried to avoid the use of the mother tongue, though perhaps not so rigidly (Rivers, 1968, pp. 79-80).

The audio-lingual method views the learning process as one of habituation and conditioning without any influence of the intellectual analysis. In other words, it emphasises an implicit rather than explicit way of teaching (Stern, 1983). Furthermore, the audio-lingual method has theoretical bases in linguistics and psychology (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The psychology of the audio-lingual method is "an interpretation of language learning in terms of stimulus and response, operant conditioning, and reinforcement with an emphasis on successful error-free learning in small well-prepared steps and stages" (Stern, 1983, p. 465).

The main teaching techniques used in the audio-lingual method are demonstration, dramatization, miming, verbal illustration, or pictorial illustration (Mukatel, 1998). Furthermore, dialogues and drills seem to be important in the audio-lingual method. Dialogues are for repetition and memorization. Moreover, it emphasises correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation. Students need firstly to memorize the dialogue and then focus on specific grammatical patterns from the dialogue in the form of drills and pattern practice exercises (Richards & Rodgers, 1998). The teacher directs and guides the students' behaviour and she/he needs to provide the students with a good model of imitation so they can follow their teacher rapidly and accurately (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

In the early sixties, the audio-lingual method was one of the most important teaching methods by teachers. However, in the late sixties, it faced many criticisms and teachers started to complain about the lack of the effective techniques that would help learners understand the foreign language (Stern, 1983). Nonetheless, one needs to remember that the audio-lingual method was among the first theories that recommended the development of language teaching theory based on linguistic and psychological principles. It also highlighted the

importance of syntactical progression while the other methods seemed to be preoccupied with vocabulary and morphology (Stern, 1983).

Having described the audiolingual method, the next section discusses the silent way.

2.12.3 <u>The Silent Way</u>

The silent way is the name of the teaching method developed by Galeb Gattengo (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). The silent way is based on the idea that the teacher needs to be silent as much as possible in the classroom and learners need to use the language as much as possible (Richards & Rodgers, 1998). Furthermore, students need to express their own thoughts and feelings in order to become dependent on their abilities. Teachers can only intervene when it is only necessary (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The silent way is characterized by:

- Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers or repeats what is to be learned.
- Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical objects.
- Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned (Richards and Rodgers, 2014, p. 291).

The silent way is different from other methods, because learners can monitor and correct their own production. Students in the silent way method should have the ability to correctly and easily answer questions related to themselves, their education, their family and everyday life. They also have to speak with good accent. Furthermore, they should answer general questions about the culture and literature of the native speakers of the target language. They should also perform appropriately in their speaking, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

In the silent way method, students can use their native language when necessary especially for helping them learn the correct pronunciation. Furthermore, teachers

can identify the similarities between the native and target language and can build on that in order to help learners acquire the language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

I have briefly described the silent way as one of language teaching methods, the next section discusses the direct method.

2.12.4 **The Direct Method**

The direct method or the natural method is based on the assumption of making second language learning similar to first language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 1998). Advocators of the direct method believe that students learn to understand a language by listening to a great deal of it and they learn to speak that language by speaking it (Rivers, 1968).

The direct method is characterized by the inductive teaching of grammatical structures, only everyday vocabulary and sentences need to be taught, concrete vocabulary is introduced with association with ideas, the emphasis of correct pronunciation and grammar, and the introducing any new teaching points orally (Richards & Rodgers, 1998).

Teachers using the direct method need to help their students associate meaning and the target language directly. For example, when teachers introduce a new target language item, they need to explain that using a picture or any other visual aid. Teachers must not use the native language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Students need to discover the grammatical structures in the text they are reading. They also spend much time on questions and answers on the text they read or on the pictures on the wall (Stern, 1983).

Larsen-Freeman (2000) points out that the relationship between the teacher and students in the direct method is like partners in the teaching/learning process.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1998) the direct method was difficult to implement in some state schools. They also highlighted that the founders of this method did not consider the realities of the classroom as they overemphasised the

similarities between L1 and L2 learning. Moreover, their assumptions were not based on a rigours linguistic theory.

Having briefly described the direct method, the next section presents a brief description of the total physical response method.

2.12.5 <u>Total Physical Response</u>

The Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed by James Asher that is based on the coordination of speech and action (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). For example, "two students sit on either side of their instructor. In Japanese the instructor says *tate* and immediately the students and the instructor stand-up" (Asher, 1969, p. 254). The Total Physical Response emphasises the importance of making learners enjoy learning and feel comfortable to communicate in the foreign language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The most common activities in the TPR classroom are imperative drills that require learners to perform physical actions as they listen to their teacher. Furthermore, teachers can encourage their learners to participate in role-play activities about everyday life and situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Having briefly described the total physical response, the method under consideration in the next section is suggestopedia.

2.12.6 <u>Suggestopedia</u>

Suggestopedia or Desuggestopedia is a method developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist-educator Georgi Lozanov (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Suggestopedia is based on helping students eliminate negative feelings about their success in learning the foreign language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). In line with this, Freeman (2000) highlights that: "one of the fundamental principles of the method is that if students are relaxed and confident, they will not need to try hard to learn the language. It will just come naturally and easily (p. 82). Classroom decoration

and arrangement, furniture and the use of music are some of the features of the Suggestopedia classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) . The type of activities used in the Suggestopedia classroom are question and answer, role play and listening. In the listening activities, students first look at and discuss the new text with the teacher, then they listen to their teacher reading the text (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

After this brief description of suggestopedia, the final method to be discussed in this chapter is communicative language teaching.

2.12.7 <u>Communicative Language Teaching</u>

In the 1970s, communicative language teaching (CLT) appeared as a reaction when the old methods like audio-lingual and situational language teaching fell into disfavour. The focus on language teaching and learning shifted from teaching grammatical structures to the teaching of knowledge and skills learners need to use the language appropriately in a communicative way (Richards, 2006). Communicative language teaching (CLT) mainly focuses on developing the learners' communicative competence (Richards, 2006; Savignon, 2002). However, I will not go into more detail about the term communicative competence as it was already discussed (see section 2.5).

The communicative approach gives learners the opportunity to develop their social skills as to what to say, how to say, when to say and where, in order to fulfil their daily needs (Patel and Jain, 2008). Richards (2006) points out that learners learn a language through the process of communicating in it, and they can get a better chance of learning a language rather than learning using the approaches that focus on grammatical structures. Richards (2006) also clarifies that communicative language teaching is based on the following principles:

1- Make real communication the focus of language learning.
2- Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know.
3- Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence.

4- Provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency.
5- Link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur as in the real world.
6- Let students induce or discover grammar rules (p. 13).

In communicative language classrooms, the role of the teacher is to facilitate and monitor the communicative process between all the participants in the classroom. This role is opposed to the role of teachers in the other methods where they act as controllers of the teaching process and they are models of correcting the speech and writing produced by learners aiming to achieve error-free structures. In communicative language classrooms, teachers need to develop a different understanding about the errors learners make in order to facilitate language learning (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Richards, 2006).

Learners in communicative classrooms need to adopt and readopt in the process of relating themselves to what is being learned, learners also need to construct and negotiate their own curriculum, learners need to join and participate in group activities where they are able to listen to each other rather than listening only to the teacher (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Richards, 2006).

Generally speaking, it seems that the most commonly used approach is the communicative language teaching amongst teachers in most of educational institutions in the world (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Having discussed some of the different teaching methods, the next section describes the individual learner differences. Again, the reasons for inserting the following section which describes issues related to learners in a thesis focuses on teachers because disusing teachers' perceptions sometimes involves describing learners' behaviours. Therefore, the main purpose of the next section is to discuss individual learner differences.

2.13 <u>Individual Learner Differences</u>

It has been observed that some second language learners make better progress in learning the foreign language than their classmates, even though they study under the same conditions (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). In the same vein, Rubin

(1987) states that both researchers and teachers have observed that some students are more successful than others in approaching language learning tasks. Some learners will be more successful even if they were in the same environment and they had the same native language. Rubin (1987) also adds that learners differ in their learning styles, some learners would prefer to use the written material in order to understand the foreign language. Others may find listening to the foreign language is very helpful to learn it. As the main concern of this study is to explore EFL teachers' perceptions about teaching communication strategies, I think it is worth mentioning the individual learners differences. In this section, I will address this issue from a psychological point of view; I will briefly discuss how intelligence, age, gender, aptitude, and motivation may affect the process of learning a second language.

2.13.1 <u>Intelligence</u>

Intelligence refers to the learners' performance over certain types of tests; IQ tests were traditionally a procedure of assessing the learner's intelligence. However, in recent years, this type of tests has been questioned for assessing a limited number of abilities. Therefore, proposals for the idea that learners have multiple intelligence have been launched (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Similarly, Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007, p. 43) point out that the main issue in criticising these kinds of tests is whether the tests did assess what they are intended to assess, i.e. "intelligence". For me, I think it is not easy to definitely assess or decide that one student is more intelligent than other students are. However, I would also agree that there are multi-abilities that help in the learning of new languages. In other words, I think people or students generally have different abilities or sub-intelligence categories that are not similar from one person to another. For example, one can find a person who is good at memorizing words but is not good at maths.

Having described the role of intelligence in foreign language learning, the next section discusses the role age.

2.13.2 Age

The issue of the influence of age on second language learners has been a major source of interest for different researchers. Leneberg (1967, p. 176) for example, suggests the hypothesis of the idea of the "critical period." Leneberg (1967) assumes that language learning abilities start to decrease as the learner reaches the age of puberty. However, Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 69) argue that some studies have shown that older learners are more successful language users than younger learners especially in terms of memory strategies and problem solving skills. In this respect, Sadeghi and Khonbi (2013) conducted a study to investigate the influence of the learners' age on their language learning strategies. They found out that the statement "the younger, the better" was not true. However, their results also revealed that the individual language learner differences in terms of their starting age of learning the second language did influence the learners' choices of language learning strategies. Sadeghi and Khonbi (2013) conclude that students who started learning English at different ages were found using different language learning strategies depending on their goals in learning English. The results of their study indicated that for learners who started learning English at a younger age, their learning goals were to communicate with foreigners. However, for learners who started learning at an older age, their learning goals were educational.

The age of learners in learning a foreign language seems to be one of the most important topics. However, the relation between age and the use of communication strategies has not gained enough attention in the relevant literature. Therefore, I think this area needs further research and investigations. The next topic of discussion is gender of learners and how this may influence foreign language learning.

2.13.3 Gender

There is a common belief particularly in western cultures that females are better second language learners than males. Nevertheless, this belief is only based on assumptions that reflect cultural and psychological assumptions (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 84). Kaylani (quoted in Dörnyei, 2005) confirms that there are significant sex differences in strategy use among Jordanian female and male students. In line

with this, Lai (2010) conducted a study to explore communication strategies used between Chinese female and male students. He found out that both groups of learners used the same frequencies and types of communication strategies but they were different in the effectiveness of communication strategies. Therefore, Lai (2010) concludes that teachers need to find ways to help their male learners improve their oral communication.

Having briefly discussed the role of gender, the next section describes language aptitude.

2.13.4 <u>Aptitude</u>

According to Dörnyei (2005), aptitude "means exactly the same as language ability and is typically meant to denote language learning ability" (p. 32). The study of language aptitude involves looking at the talent people have for learning language that is independent of intelligence. Moreover, it is innate and is not the result of previous experience. It is also relatively stable and varies among people (Skehan, 1991).

During the 1970s, the study of aptitude decreased and it was considered to be less relevant to communicative language teaching (Dörnyei, 2005). However, Harley and Hart (2002) report that some studies have supported the idea that language aptitude is relevant for second language learning. Furthermore, Skehan (2002) argues that there is "in principle" (p. 83) no longer any justification for this irrelevance. Moreover, Skehan (2002) concludes that traditional assumptions of aptitude are still relevant to second language research. On the other hand, Rubin (1975) highlights that some researchers argued that language aptitude can be improved through training. In this regard, Gardner (1985) highlights that language aptitude is crucial for second language learning. Learners who seem to be sensitive to grammatical structures in their own language may also have the same feeling when learning a second language. Gardner (1985) also concludes that language aptitude does influence language learning and he recommends that further research needs to be conducted in the area in order to clarify our understandings of the abilities that influence language learning. Similarly, Ellis (1997) points out that there is strong evidence that language aptitude is related to the learners' success in learning the foreign language. It was found that learners

who obtained high scores in language aptitude tests, were recognized to learn rapidly and achieve high levels of second language proficiency tests than learners who obtained low scores.

Discussions of language aptitude also leads to describing the role of motivation which is the main intention of the next section.

2.13.5 <u>Motivation</u>

According to Macintyre (2002, p. 46), studies investigating motivation tend to address two questions; (1) why is behaviour directed toward a specific goal, and (2) what determines the intensity or effort invested in pursing the goal. In line with this, Gardner (1985) argues that motivation involves the following four areas "a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to attain the goal and favourable attitudes toward activity in question" (p. 50). Gardner also adds that the goal is not a measurable component of motivation. However, individual learner differences can be recognized in the other three elements.

Motivation has been identified in terms of the learners' communicative needs and the learners' attitudes to a second language community. If learners wish to use the second language in a variety of social situations or for professional purposes, they will be motivated in learning that language. Similarly, learners will be motivated to learn the second language if they have favourable attitudes towards the speakers of that language and they desire more contact with it (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). According to Ellis (1997), there are various kinds of motivation; instrumental, integrative, resultative and intrinsic.

2.13.5.1 <u>Instrumental Motivation</u>

In this type of motivation, the goal of learning a foreign language is educational or economic. In other words, learners make efforts in learning the foreign language in order to pass an examination or to get a better job. In these contexts, the instrumental motivation is the major force determining the success in learning the foreign language.

2.13.5.2 <u>Integrative Motivation</u>

The major aim of learning a foreign language here is the learner's interest in the people and culture of the target language. Therefore, the learner is interested to interact with valued people of that community or learning about that community. Integrativeness can also be called "Openness to cultural identification" (Gardner, 2001, p. 44).

2.13.5.3 <u>Resultative Motivation</u>

In the two types of motivation mentioned above, motivation was the cause of foreign language achievement. However, it is also possible that motivation can be the result of learning. In other words, learners who experience success in learning a foreign language may feel more or sometimes less motivated to learn that language depending on the context.

2.13.5.4 <u>Intrinsic Motivation</u>

Learners sometimes do not have positive or negative attitudes towards the target language. They may find learning the foreign language as intrinsically motivating. "According to this view, motivation involves the arousal and maintenance of curiosity and can ebb and flow as a result of such factors as learners' particular interests and the extent to which they feel personally involved in learning activities" (Ellis, 1997, p. 76). Motivation is one of the highly complex phenomena that influence foreign language learning. The four types of motivations mentioned above need to be considered as complementary rather than distinct from or positional to each other. For example, a learner can be both integratively and instrumentally motivated at the same time. Furthermore, motivation can cause learning and it can also be the result of learning as well (Ellis, 1997).

2.14 <u>Conclusion</u>

This chapter has discussed the research literature about communication strategies. I presented how some researchers defined communication strategies. Furthermore, several typologies and classifications of communication strategies were outlined. Moreover, this chapter included a brief survey of some of the practical research studies and explained the controversial issue of the teaching of communication strategies. This chapter has also described the different language learning theories. Then, the different terminologies in relation to second and foreign language were discussed followed by a survey of some of the English language teaching methods. The final section of this chapter occupied individual learner differences.

All in all, I thoroughly agree that good researchers need to select methods and methodologies which are "congruent with the theoretical framework of the study" (Ruttenberg, 2010, p. 4). Therefore, I understand the choice of a qualitative methodology to explore and elicit EFL teachers' ideas and thoughts about communication strategies teaching as the most suitable methodology for the current study. This issue will be discussed in the next methodology chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 <u>Introduction</u>

This study is an attempt to understand how English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in the UK perceive the idea of teaching communication strategies based on exploring their own interpretations of and positions in relation to this term. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is to illuminate the research design and methodology, and the data collection procedures used in this study. I will also attempt to portray my theoretical affiliation to the qualitative constructivist position and the research methodology that underpins this enquiry attempting to justify the reasons behind this choice. The point of departure in this chapter is to manifest the reasons behind selecting or adopting a qualitative constructivist perspective to conduct this piece of research.

3.2 <u>Research Justification</u>

"You always need to justify your choice of a certain methodology"; this has constantly been my sincere answer when I was asked about the important aspect of the research methodology chapter by many new students starting to write their upgrade-research paper in our department of education at the University of Sheffield. This issue is always highlighted by Wellington (2015) who mentions: "indeed, the latter is an essential feature of any written report or thesis, i.e. justifying the decisions we have made on methods" (p. 34). Therefore, this section is concerned with providing the reasons behind my theoretical affiliations for the choice of the qualitative constructivist approach.

The reasons for adopting a qualitative constructivist research approach to my study are explained in the following discussion. Firstly, qualitative data provide 'thick descriptions' for the phenomenon under investigation in its real context (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 10). Even though the concept 'thick descriptions' was always associated with Clifford Geertz, it was Gilbert Ryle who firstly coined the term as highlighted by Geertz (1973). Some researchers might ask what is really meant by the term 'thick descriptions'. Ryle (1971) provides the following example to explain the meaning of this:

> Strolling across a golf course, we see a lot of pairs and fours of golfers playing one hole after another in a regular sequence. But now we see a single golfer, with six golf balls in front of him, hitting each of them, one after another, towards one and the same green. He then goes and collects the balls, comes back to where he was before, and does it again. What is he doing? (p. 488).

Any description of the above incident might have the format that a man is repeatedly hitting six white round objects towards a green. However, this description may not fall under the category of 'thick'. "The 'thick description' of what he is engaged in requires reference to his thoughts" (Ryle, 1971, p. 489). Therefore, it is important to explore the peoples' thoughts in order to reach the level of 'thick description' of their behaviour. As a result, I am adopting a qualitative constructivist approach because it will help me describe and interpret my participants' behaviour to reach an understanding of their perceptions about the teaching of communication strategies.

The second reason for selecting a qualitative constructivist paradigm stems from the idea that the collection of participants' views and ideas (EFL teachers' perceptions in this study) about a social phenomenon (the teaching of communication strategies) seems to be a valuable way to generate credibility and gain trustworthiness. The issue of trustworthiness will be further discussed in section 3.8 when I explain the quality criteria for my research.

The third reason is related to my ontological and epistemological assumptions. I already explained in section 1.6.2 that there is no one single reality and interaction is very important in the research process. I also believe that human beings have intellectual organs (minds) to help them construct this reality. Therefore, the adaptation of a qualitative constructivist research paradigm seems to run parallel with my own ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Reason number four originates from the fact that this study was carried out in natural settings using natural research procedures. Furthermore, as the aim of my study was to seek the EFL teachers' perceptions about teaching communication strategies, thus this involved eliciting some stories about their experience regarding this issue. A view that is highlighted by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) who further state "people almost always talk about their experience in a storied form. Thus, qualitative research is based on textual data rather than quantitative data, on stories rather than numbers" (p. 24).

The final reason I would like to discuss here is that many social sciences researchers such as Hammersley (1992), and Stake (2010) argue that certain research positions are selected to fit the research question being posed by the study. As a result, this kind of stance seems to be the most suitable approach to address the relevant research questions. Moreover, the research questions combined with the ontological and epistemological assumptions of constructivism have led me to exploit a qualitative methodology.

Having started with a justification for adopting a qualitative constructivist paradigm, the next section provides more details about the relevant research stance adopted in this study.

3.3   <u>Research Paradigm</u>

"Paradigm, from the Greek 'paradigma', meaning pattern, is a theoretical structure or a framework of thought that acts as a template or an example to be followed" (Miller and Brewer, 2003, p220). In this respect, Hammond and Wellington describe it as "the dominant framework in which research takes place" (2013, p. 116). Correspondingly, Given (2008) defines paradigm as "a set of assumptions and perceptual orientations by members of a research community" (p. 591). In the same way, Bassey (1999, p. 42) explains that a research paradigm "is a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions". Any research paradigm "represents a world view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts…" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). The history of social science research is full of attempts to understand the world; this curiosity has led to the emergence of different paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Therefore, our actions we take in the world and our actions as researchers cannot occur without reference to those paradigms (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, these paradigms are characterised by the way their advocators responded to the following three basic questions:

1- Ontological: What is the nature of the "Knowable"? Or, what is the nature of "reality"?
2- Epistemological: what is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?
3- Methodological: How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge? (Guba, 1990, p. 18).

All research is guided by theoretical orientation and good researchers are aware of those positions that they use to help them collect and analyse their data (Biklen, 1992). Accordingly, in the following section, I will briefly delineate the main research paradigms as well as highlighting the constructivist stance that is adopted in this study.

3.3.1   The Positivistic Paradigm

From about the nineteenth-century onwards, the scientific stance, also known as the positivistic paradigm, adopted by the natural and physical sciences, biology, physics and chemistry, quickly became appropriated to investigate the social world (Graham & David, 1995). August Comte, the French writer was the one who introduced the term (positivist philosophy) and whose work was clearly related to the positivist stance   (Cohen et al, 2007; Wellington, 2000; Crotty, 1998 ; Hughes and Sharrock, 1997 ; Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Comte sought to investigate reality through an evaluation of facts available in experience. Moreover, he assumed that there is no difference between the methods used in the physical and human sciences. Therefore, from Comte's point of view, sociology is to be modelled after biology. Furthermore, human beings and their institutions must be viewed as "neutral objects" which can be investigated and studied in the same manner as investigating any physical object (Held, 1980, p. 161). In the same vein, Malcolm and May (1998, p .82) point out that positivists consider concepts such as "causality," "explanation" and "prediction" are just as appropriate in the social sciences as in the physical sciences.

The positivist paradigm is always considered as the scientific approach to research. Positivism forms the basis for the natural sciences and for experimental research and quantitative studies in the social sciences (Hennink et al, 2011). Some of the key assumptions that positivists hold are:

1) Human behaviour is predictable, caused and subject to both internal pressures (for behaviourist psychologists) and external forces (for positivistic sociologists).
2) These aspects of behaviour can be observed and measured.
3) There is no qualitative difference between the natural and social world (Graham and David, 1995, p. 22).

Positivism emphasises the objective measurement of the social phenomenon with the assumption that reality is composed of facts, and the researchers can observe and measure reality in an unbiased way without influencing the process of data collection (Hennink et al, 2011). Therefore, researchers can make sense of their

ideas only if they can put them in empirical experience that needs to be related to facts about the world in order to obtain generalisations known as scientific laws (Gray, 2009, p. 19).

Discussions about any research paradigm, necessarily involves discussions about its ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. However, in section 1.6.2 of this thesis, I generally mentioned terms like ontology and epistemology. In this chapter, I will attempt to describe the meaning of such concepts and illustrate the ontological and epistemological positions of each paradigm.

3.3.1.1 <u>Ontology</u>

Ontology is about "what is there that can be known?" Ontology is the branch of philosophy that is related to issues of existence or being (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 83). Main ontological questions are related to: whether social reality exists independently of human understandings or not; whether this social reality is common and shared or just multiple context-specific realities; and whether or not social behaviour is governed by laws that can be seen as immutable or generalisable (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 11). In this respect, Given (2008) contends "ontology was not concerned with the specific nature of empirical entities, but rather with more basic questions of the universal forms of existence" (p. 577). Positivists view knowledge as hard, objective and tangible, which requires the researcher to have an observer role during the research process (Cohen & Manion 1985, p. 7). Different positivist researchers investigating the same phenomenon should come up with the same conclusions (David & Usher, 2011).

Positivist designs provide researchers with clear road maps as they attempt to predict all the problems that may arise during the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Positivists also aim to establish "rational edifice," a universal theory, to describe human and social behaviour (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 22). Adherents of the positivistic philosophical position believe that the world is

composed of "facts", or "sense data" (or "atoms"). These facts are given directly or indirectly, in sensory experience and are the only objects of knowledge (Held, 1980, p. 164).

3.3.1.2 <u>Epistemology</u>

Epistemology encompasses "how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Epistemological assumptions involve issues about the sources of knowledge, the ways in which knowledge can be acquired and communicated to others and the relationship between the knower and the known (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Snape and Spencer, 2003; Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989).

Positivists claim to be objective in their search for the truth. Investigators and their samples are mutually independent, so researchers have no influence on the phenomena under investigation (Hatch, 2002). Therefore, the "inquirer can, in short, be objective and value-free" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 87).

3.3.1.3 <u>Methodology</u>

"What are the ways of finding out knowledge?" this type of question is called a methodological question (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 83). I view research methodology as the procedures and methods used to conceptualise, collect and analyse certain kinds of data in order to justify the approaches adopted to address certain research questions. Methodology is defined by Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007, p. 33) as "the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use". Methodology is defined in The Dictionary of Key Social Science Research Concepts as "a set of rules and procedures to guide research and against which its claims can be evaluated" (2003, p. 192). Moreover, "Methodology takes its place in the middle of a hierarchy of considerations when carrying out research." (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 109).

> Positivistic research is characterized by experiments, quasi-experiments, correlational studies and surveys. Moreover, the choice of statistical techniques is significant in order to ensure reliability, validity, and generalisability (Hatch, 2002, p. 14).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the ontological and epistemological bases of positivism were the focus of some criticism in spite of the significant success that positivists had achieved especially in the natural sciences (Cohen et al, 2007). Similarly, Wellington (2000) states that it is extremely hard to determine a clear cause-effect relationship and it is hardly ever possible to be objective and value free. In this respect, Bryman (2012) lists four critical points:

> 1. Quantitative researchers fail to distinguish people and institutions from "the world of nature".
>
> 2. The measurement process possesses an artificial and spurious sense of precision and accuracy.
>
> 3. The reliance on instruments and procedures hinders the connection between research and everyday life.
>
> 4. The analysis of relationships between variables creates a static view of social life that is independent of people's lives (pp. 188-189).

In addition, researchers within the positivist paradigm do not focus on the contextual impacts on the people's lives. They only account for the capturing of relevant facts that represent the phenomenon under investigation.

> The researchers from a positivist background fancy that the environment of the objects they study will stay constant. We know as teachers that the learning environment of children is constantly changing. To attempt a study of educational influence of a particular learning environment is quite an ambitious task, for the situation changes from day to day in a multitude of ways. A laboratory situation in chemistry is very different from a laboratory school. To study both phenomena in the same way constitutes a basic conceptual mistake (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 80).

In the light of the above quotation, it is clear that adopting a positivist stance for an educational phenomenon might seem inappropriate. One of the basic reasons is

the instability of human behaviour. Furthermore, people's ideas and perceptions are different and keep changing all the time. Therefore, I would also share the same point of view as Kincheloe's. Consequently, as the main focus of my study is to explore the EFL teachers' perceptions about the teaching of communication strategies, this research may not critically address its inquiry if it adopts a positivist perspective.

Having briefly described the positivistic stance, in the following section, I will discuss the constructivist paradigm which forms the basis of my study.

3.3.2 Constructivist Paradigm

Constructivist, constructivism, interpretive and interpretivism are very common concepts in the social science methodologies. Advocators of these positions believe that in order to study certain phenomena, you need to understand the point of view of the people who live it (Schwandt, 2007). Anderson and Arsenault (1998) assert that the basic assumption of the qualitative research paradigm is that a thoughtful interpretation of the world can be gained through conversation and observation in natural environments rather than through experiments. This contrasts with positivists who are interested in proving or disproving certain assumptions in search for the "truth"; qualitative researchers are interested in understanding social events from multiple perspectives. Likewise, Kincheloe (2003) argues that: "knowledge of human beings involves the understanding of qualities which cannot be described through the exclusive use of numbers" (p.188). According to Denscombe (2007), qualitative research is characterised by:

> • The use of text and images as their basic data (rather than numbers);
> • An interpretive approach that regards knowledge as socially constructed;
> • A concern with meanings and the way people understand things;
> •An interest in patterns of behaviour, its cultural norms and types of language (p. 333).

In a similar context, Wellington (2015) provides the following features of qualitative research:

> 1. It is usually an exploratory activity.
>
> 2. Data are usually collected in a real-life, natural setting and are therefore often rich, descriptive and extensive.
>
> 3. The human being or beings involved are the main research 'instrument'.
>
> 4. The design of a study emerges or evolves 'as you go along' – sometimes leading to a broadening or blurring of focus, at other times leading to a narrowing or sharpening focus.
>
> 5. The typical methods used are observation, focus groups, interviews, collection of documents and sometimes photography or video recording (p. 259).

Like most other qualitative research paradigms, constructivism emphasises the world of experience as it is lived and assessed by social actors. Moreover, it rejects a priori theory and embraces an inductive process of analysis (Klenke, 2008, p. 22). Researchers adopting the constructivist position are oriented to the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world. Furthermore, they use terms such as "trustworthiness" and "authenticity" to replace the traditional positivist criteria of internal and external validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 184). Human beings, in the constructivist view, do not find or discover knowledge much as construct or make it. They formulate some concepts to make sense of experience and continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience (Schwandt, 2007, p. 38). Consequently, the goal of research is to rely as much as possible on participants' views of the situation as investigators need to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing them down into simple ideas (Creswell, 2005, p. 20).

3.3.2.1 <u>Ontology</u>

Constructivists view reality as relative, multiple and intangible mental constructions that are socially and experientially based. Their form and content depend on the individual persons or groups holding these constructions (Guba & Linclon, 1994). In other words, this position implies that social properties are the result of the interactions between the individuals rather than the phenomenon disconnected from those involved in its construction (Bryman, 2012).

3.3.2.2 <u>Epistemology</u>

"If realities exist only in respondents' minds, subjective interaction seems to be the only way to access them" (Guba, 1990, p. 26). My own interpretation of that is in order to explore participants' ideas and thoughts, one needs to interact with them. This interaction means eliciting the participants' ideas and thoughts through interviews, or any other qualitative method. In this respect, Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111) highlight that: "the investigator and the objects of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked, so the "findings" are literally created as the investigation proceeds". In this case, it seems to be hard for the investigator to be objective and the findings of the research are either mediated through the researchers or negotiated and agreed with the research participants. Other qualitative researchers propose the neutral position where research cannot be value free but researchers have to make their assumption transparent (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 13). I would rather concur that the researcher's values and beliefs may influence the research process. However, it remains the researcher's job to be alert and aware of such impacts.

3.3.2.3 <u>Methodology</u>

"The constructivist methodology always attempts to keep the channels of communication open in order to improve any sophistication" (Guba, 1990, pp. 26-27). Constructivism, thus intends neither to predict and control the "real"

world nor to reconstruct the "world" at the only point at which it exists in the minds of constructors. It is the mind that is to be transformed not the "real" world" (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Positivist investigators begin an inquiry knowing what they do not know. On the other hand, constructivist researchers characteristically face the prospect of not knowing what it is they do not know (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 175). This view is also supported by Creswell (2005, p. 21) who states that constructivist explorers approach the research process with an inductive theorizing of meaning rather than adopting a certain theory. However, it is the job of the positivist researcher to start with theory and hypotheses. Creswell (2005) also highlights that constructivist researchers generate meanings and understandings because of interactions with their participants and through the culture and histories the participants experience.

Generally speaking, the constructivist paradigm seems to be more appropriate to guide my research as the main exploration of the study is to look at the EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching communication strategies.

Having discussed the constructivist paradigm which is the stance for this research, in the next section, I will describe the data collection procedures.

3.4   Data Collection Procedures

> Describe the data collection methods and procedures in sufficient detail to enable the reader to replicate your study. Provide references to all research instruments. If you use an original, as yet unpublished instrument (e.g. your own questionnaire) consider reproducing it in its entirety in an appendix to your report (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007, p. 175).

I would also agree with the above quotation that it is important for researchers to describe their data collection methods in detail. They also need to provide readers with information about the whole research journey.

Researchers are unlikely to suffer from a lack of choosing methods when it comes to data collection (Rugg & Petre, 2007). Choosing data collection methods is a

matter of 'horses for courses' (Denscombe, 2007). The most common methods in qualitative research are asking participants questions or making observations (Silverman, 2010). This section focuses on the methods used to generate data for this study. I will also explain the reasons behind selecting these methods.

I would strongly agree with Denscombe (2007) who points out that: "none of the possible methods for data collection can be regarded as perfect and none can be regarded as utterly useless" (p. 134). Therefore, my choice of the general methodology of this study and the methods adopted is always open to any critiques or comments.

3.4.1   Interviewing

According to Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007), "interviewing allows a researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe. We can probe interviewees' thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings, and perspectives" (p. 81). In the same vein, Tuckman (1972, p. 173) points out that interviews help researchers to access what is "inside a person's head", which makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). Therefore, the purpose of the interviews is "to allow us to enter into the person's perspective" (Patton, 2002, p. 341). A view supported by Wellington (2015) who argues that "it offers people, whether they be employers, teachers, young pupils or students, an opportunity to make their perspectives known, i.e. to go public" (p. 140).

As the main concern of this study is to inductively explore teachers' perceptions of the idea teaching CSs, I think using semi-structured interviews will be helpful to understand how EFL teachers perceive the idea of the teaching of communication strategies. This view is supported by Smith (1995) who highlights that: "researchers use semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of a respondents' beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic" (p. 9). Moreover, I agree that: "your job is to talk only enough to facilitate

someone else's ability to answer. It is your interviewee's voice that you are seeking and it is their voice that needs to be drawn out" (O'Leary, 2010, p. 194). Therefore, during the interviews I conducted with my participants, I was looking at the meaning they make and the experiences they had about the teaching of communication strategies.

There are a number of factors that may affect the quality of the interview data. The first of these factors is the influence of the "power relations" between the interviewer and interviewee, a point further explained by Henn et al. (2006) who state that: "the power of certain people and groups to resist a researcher's investigations is also likely to affect the outcome of any research study" (p. 74). In other words, if the researcher experiences some power in the way participants responded to questions, the research findings might not be as trustworthy as they need to be. It also could be the same result when the participants experience some power posed by the researcher.

The second point is ambiguity in questions which can cause the disagreement about the meaning of the terms used. Another factor that may affect interviews is the use of leading questions (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007, p. 85). In the context of my interviews, I attempted to overcome these factors by establishing rapport with my participants during the informal meetings with my participants for arrangements either for interviews or for observations. Regarding the unclear or ambiguous questions, I have always been aware to make my questions understandable to my interviewees and try to clarify any misunderstanding that may occur. However, I would point out that my participants easily understood my interview questions which might be the result of their educational background and experience. In terms of the leading questions, I can highlight that my participants had the flexibility to talk about relevant topics without imposing any tight form of questions during all my interviews.

The final point I would like to discuss is my own interview skills. I have already admitted it was the first time in life to conduct a qualitative study. Accordingly, it was my first time to use interviews. When I decided to use interviews in my research, I really started thinking about my own skills in interviewing other

people. I also thought of any problems that may occur during the course of the interviews. Therefore, I developed my interview skills during the pilot study that was conducted before the main study; see section 3.6 for more details.

3.4.1.1 <u>Semi Structured Interviews</u>

Before going to discuss semi-structured interviews, I will first briefly describe the other two types of interviews the structured and unstructured interviews respectively. The structured interview is used when the research aims to provide quantitative data with standardized questions (Gray, 2009). The researcher, in the structured interview, needs to carefully prepare a list of interview questions and each interviewee is asked the same questions (Patton, 2002). On the other hand, the unstructured interview is located at the opposite extreme of structured interview. In this type of interviews, the researcher does not need to prepare specific list of questions but she/he has some notes or topics to discuss. The job of the interviewer is to encourage the participants to lead the interview where the conversation varies according to the response of the interviewee (Berg & Lune, 2012).

The third type of interview is the semi-structured interview which is a compromise between the structured and un-structured. Researchers usually use semi-structured interviews to explore the views and opinions of their participants (Gray, 2009). Researchers also usually have a list of topics and ideas that sometimes are not all covered in one interview, and the aim is to expand the interviewee's answers (Gray, 2009). In the semi-structured interviews, the researcher has more flexibility in terms of the ordering and organization of ideas and topics to be covered. The answers need to be open-ended to give the interviewee more chances to develop ideas and thoughts (Denscombe, 2001). In line with the discussions above, some of my interview questions helped me to elicit information about the teachers' perceptions and experiences of the teaching of communication strategies. In the current study, the type of the interviews adopted was semi-structured. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews based on my epistemological and ontological assumptions that interviews are a form of

human interaction between the interviewer and interviewee where "knowledge evolves through a dialogue" (Kvale, 1996, p. 125). Secondly, "semi-structured interviews may be more manageable than unstructured ones, while avoiding the inflexibility of the fully structured approach" (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 93). I would also point out that the questions I asked were open-ended and my interviewee had the flexibility to talk about the topics in the interview questions. Furthermore, my interview guide "reflects the concepts that are embedded within the research questions and the conceptual framework of the study" (Hennink et al, 2013, p. 117).

3.4.1.1.1 <u>The interview context</u>

All the semi-structured interviews were from individual face-to-face conversations with English language teachers from University 1 and University 2 (see Appendix 6 for an example of an interview transcript). All these interviews were held in quiet rooms which provided a comfortable environment for us. The time of the interview was also decided on the teachers' preferences. "The interviewer must establish an atmosphere in which the subjects feel safe enough to talk freely about his or her experiences and feelings" (Kvale, 1996, p. 125). All teachers had the opportunity to read the information sheet which described the motivation for the research and what it involves (See Appendix 3 for more details). Teachers were also invited to sign in the relevant consent forms (see Appendix 2). I used an Olympus digital voice recorder which produced a high quality recording of all my interviews.

3.4.2 <u>Observations</u>

According to Hennink et al. (2013), "observation is a research method that enables researchers to systematically observe and record people's behaviour, actions and interactions. The method also allows researchers to obtain a detailed description of social settings or events in order to situate people's behaviour within their socio-cultural context" (p. 170).

The purpose of observations is to enable researchers "to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations" (Cohen et al, 2000, p. 306). In this respect, Anderson and Arsenault (1998) explain that: "Observational data bring the analysis and interpretation of a setting a type of information which cannot be any other way" (p. 135). Therefore, as one of my research questions explores the activities and tasks teachers may adopt to teach communication strategies, I observed some of the teaching sessions of my participants. The aim of the observations was to explore what actually happens in the classroom regarding the teaching of communication strategies.

Researchers can adopt either participatory or non-participatory roles in the research environment (Given, 2008). In the role of the participant observer, "the researcher engages in the regular activities of the community to a degree, then periodically withdraws from the setting to check perceptions, record field notes and analyse data" (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998, p. 136). On the other hand, researchers in the non-participant observations, are not part of the observed community (O'Leary, 2010). Non-participant observation means, "conducting an observation without participating in the activities that you are observing. In order to do this you often observe people, activities or events from a distance, so that you are not part of the situation you are observing" (Hennink et al, 2013, p. 185). Accordingly, I can describe my role as a non-participant observer. The purpose of the observations was to provide the reader with background about the setting observed (Patton, 2002). The aim also was to record any non-verbal data such as gestures or feelings (Cohen, 1998).

It has been argued that the presence of the observer in the observed environment might affect those observed and they might behave in a different manner (Cohen, 1998; Patton, 2002). In the same vein, Hennink et al. (2013) highlight that researchers need to be careful with their positionality and the effect they can have on the situation.

Hennink et al. (2013) recommend that researchers need to reflect on the following issues before and during the observation process:

- How do I enter the community and introduce myself to community members?
- What are possible questions that the group/community may ask me?
- What will they think of me and how will they react to my presence? What were my personal impressions of them when I started the observation?
- What are my personal impressions of them after the observation? (p. 191).

In the light of the above points, I understood that I need to take into my consideration the influence of my own positionality on my research and on my observations in particular. Therefore, through all my observations, I sat in the back of the classroom and tried not to distract the teaching process. "Researchers need to identify an appropriate place to conduct observation" (Hennink et al, 2013, p. 191). The teachers also introduced me and the reason for my presence in their classrooms. I also tried to leave the classroom after the teachers had finished their teaching session of that particular class. Moreover, I had been always aware that "non-participant observation is not observing through deception but is observing with a purpose and from a distance" (Hennink et al, 2013, p. 185).

I would agree that "the observer is always affected by priori expectations" (Cohen, 1998, p. 33). Moreover, researchers usually do not approach the field as a "mechanical recording machine" (Patton, 2002, p. 304). Therefore, I attempted not to impose early assumptions or conceptualizations about the field under consideration. The exploratory data generated from the field notes indicated the emergence of some interesting themes which I had not come across before.

Observational data can be written in the form of field notes (Hatch, 2002). Although there is "no universal prescriptions about the mechanics of and the procedures of taking field notes" (Patton, 2002, p. 302), I found it very helpful to record my observational data while I was in the classroom. The field notes were "descriptions of contexts, actions, and conversations" (Hatch, 2002, p. 77). They also included everything "worth noting" (Patton, 2002, p. 302). Additionally, the field notes contained my own feelings and reflections. This view is supported by

Patton (2002) who highlight that: "field notes also contain the observer's own feelings, reactions to the experience, and reflections about the personal meaning and significance of what has been observed" (Patton, 2002, p. 303). Therefore, each observation for each participant was described and interpreted. See section 4.5 for more details about the observational data.

Having discussed data collection methods, the next section describes sampling.

3.5 <u>Sampling</u>

Sampling or a sample is "the smaller number of cases, units or sites selected from a much larger population. Some samples are assumed to be representative of the wider population" (Hammond and Wellington, 2013, p. 174). Rigours research is not only the product of rapport presented by methodologies and methods researchers adopt in a research study, sampling is another important issue that researchers need to pay attention to (Cohen et al, 2000).

Qualitative researchers usually select purposive non-probability sampling as it helps in the understanding of the ideas and perceptions of the participants in a given context in a particular time (Patton, 2002).

3.5.1 <u>Purposive Sampling</u>

Purposive sampling involves the selection of a sample that the researcher already knows something about where he/she selects particular participants that are likely to provide the most valuable data (Denscombe, 2007). "The advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to home in on people or events which there are good grounds for believing will be critical for research" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 17). In the same vein, Patton (1990) stresses that: "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are those which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of research" (p. 169). In line

with this, I used purposive sampling in my study. I chose teachers from University 1 and University 2 respectively. I would also highlight that a snowball sampling was also helpful in my study. Snowball sampling involves the identification of a small number of participants who will help in recommending other participants of the population (Gray, 2009). Snowball sampling starts by asking questions like "who should I talk to?" (Patton, 2002, p. 237). In the context of my study, some of my participants were referred to by other teachers. "The sample emerges through a process of reference from one person to the next" (Denscombe, 2007). I found this process very helpful to contact participants and invite them to voluntarily take part in my study. Regarding the sample size, seven teachers accepted to participate in my study from University One and six from University Two (see Appendix 7 for participants' profile). This sample might be considered as small. However, I would highlight that the nature of this study is an exploratory one and I found this number of teachers very helpful to obtain the data that would enhance addressing my research questions. This point was further stated by Patton (2002) who stresses that

> There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry. What's at stake. What will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources (p. 244).

In the light of the above quotation, it is clear that qualitative researchers do not accept certain rules on the number of participants in a study. The sample size depends on the nature of the research and its aims. It also depends on the reasons and motivations behind doing a particular study. Moreover, sample size also relates to the contribution of the study and the time plan of the phases of the research.

Having described the sampling and the sample size of my study. The next section discusses the pilot study which was conducted before the main study.

3.6   Pilot Study

Teijlingen et al. (2001) explain that. "well-designed and well-conducted pilot studies can inform us about the research process and occasionally about likely outcomes" (294). In this respect, Borg and Gall (1983) point out that: "It [the pilot study] often provides the research worker with ideas, approaches, and clues not foreseen prior to the pilot study. Such ideas and clues greatly increase the chances of obtaining clear-cut findings in the main study" (p. 101). In a similar vein, Burton and Merrill (1977) highlight that: "Pilot testing of new instruments may help identify unexpected problems" (p. 35). Therefore, a smaller version of this study was implemented as a pilot study before conducting the main study in order to probe any inadequacies in the design tools. The pilot study took place in 21/07/2011 in a higher education institution for teaching English as a foreign language. The participants were three English language teachers (one male and two females) who had different teaching experiences. (See Table 3 for more details). After they expressed their interests to voluntarily take part in the pilot study, I invited them to sign the consent forms prior to the interview and observations. They also had the opportunity to read the information sheet regarding my research. All the interviews were held in very convenient and quiet rooms based on the participants' preferences. All the three interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Two teachers accepted to be observed as the third one was not teaching at the time of the pilot study. During the observations, I attempted not to distract the teaching process by any means. After the data was collected, I started transcribing and at the same time analysing and reflecting on the ideas and themes emerging in the data. This pilot study was very helpful for me because I was able to have the opportunity to reflect on and refine my interview questions and it also provided me with a picture about observing an English language classroom. This pilot study also helped me to obtain some interesting results or findings. For example, teacher A defined communication strategies as "Communication strategies are ways in which people fight to communicate like using gestures, mime, etc." This participant highlighted that gestures can be considered a communication strategy. Another definition given by the teacher B was "communication can be verbally or body language, spoken or

written and it is between people and how you make other people aware of your ideas and strategies are ways of doing it". This participant also pointed out that communication strategies may exist in the non-verbal form. I could also understand that these participants supported the idea of the teaching of communication strategies as they described some classroom activities that may help learners develop their communication strategies. The activities included guessing games, using dictionaries to find word associates, and asking the learners to write sentences with different words in a certain time limit.

Generally speaking, the pilot study was a significant stage in my research which I found helpful and supportive when conducting the main study.

TABLE (3): PILOT STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
Date	21/07/2011	21/07/2011	25/07/2011
Qualifications	MA in English Language CELTA teaching certificate	MA in Film Studies Trinity TESOL teacher education PGCE course	BA in International Tourism Trinity TESOL teacher education Level 5 ESL specialization
Teaching experience	16 years	7 years	9 years

Having described the pilot study, the next section discusses the research ethics.

3.7   <u>Ethical Considerations</u>

In the words of O'Leary (2010) "ethics refer to principles or rules of behaviour that act to dictate what is actually acceptable or allowed within a profession" (p. 41). Social science researchers need to conduct research ethically even though the relevant participants seem to be not concerned about ethics (Neuman, 2007).

The guidelines for research ethics generally include "ensuring respondents have given informed consent…ensuring no harm comes to respondents'…ensuring confidentiality and, if appropriate, anonymity" (O'Leary, 2010, p. 41). In the same vein, Hammond and Wellington (2013) add that the conduct of research needs also to be ethical and the following aspects considered:

- The design or planning of the research involves treating particular individuals or groups unfairly, for example, by using an experimental and a control group and unethically rewarding or mistreating one;
- The methods employed involve subterfuge, for example, by using covert terms of access or if consent is forced;
- The analysis (or manipulation) of the data ignores certain results or observations or selectively filters out qualitative data if they do not 'fit' a hypothesis;
- The presentation or reporting of the research is disrespectful, for example, revealing names or portraying a group of respondents using inflammatory language;
- The findings or conclusions of the research go beyond the data in order to reflect the researcher's own opinion and values" (p. 60).

In light of the discussions above and based on the University of Sheffield's Code of Practice on Research ethics, I made relevant ethical considerations to conduct my study. These practises involved seeking permission and informed consent, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality and participant well-being. The next section discusses these principles with particular emphasis on how they were applied in the context of my study.

3.7.1   Seeking Permission

Researchers need to "compose a proposal or research protocol" when they are embarking on research to be evaluated by a relevant ethics committee (Gray, 2009, p. 81). Consequently, I put forward my ethical application to be considered by the ethical committee of the University of Sheffield through the School of Education. In the application, I made all the research aims explicit as well as how the research is to be conducted. Then, my proposal was approved by the ethics committee. (See Appendix 1 for the research ethics approval letter).

3.7.2   Informed Consent

One of the essential ethical principles is "never coerce anyone into participating; participation must be voluntary at all times" (Neuman, 2007, p. 51). Moreover, researchers need to inform their informants that their participation does not involve any element of deception or harm (Berg & Lune, 2012). Furthermore, researchers need to ask participants to sign the written consent form before they are able to take part (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). Accordingly, all my participants were provided with an information sheet that included details about the nature and purpose of my research. I also gave them the chance to ask any questions which I clarified before they took part in my study. Each participant was invited to sign two copies of the consent form (one of which is retained by them) followed by my signature. (See Appendix 2 for the consent form model).

3.7.3   Confidentiality and Anonymity

Qualitative research is sensitive to issues of confidentiality and anonymity as it involves the description of social events of participants (Willing, 2008). Consequently, researchers need to change their participants' identities or institutions in order not to be identified by readers (Flick, 2006). Moreover, researchers need to make their participants aware of the storage and access of the data (Gray, 2009). As a result, I used pseudonyms for all my participants and their

institutions. Furthermore, I made my participants aware that all data would not be accessible to third parties apart from my supervisor and/or the examiners without their consent to do so. I also explained that all the audio files would be destroyed after the completion of this study. See Appendix (3) for information sheet for teachers.

3.7.4 <u>Avoiding Harm</u>

According to Neuman (2007), "social research can harm a research participant in several ways: physical, physiological, and legal harm, as well as harm to a person's career, reputation, or income" (p. 51). Research also is considered as unethical if the participants felt any form of stress or anxiety because of their participation (Flick, 2006). Therefore, "the researcher needs to take responsibility for the effects that the study is having on the participant" (Willing, 2008, p. 86). As a result, during the conduct of my research, I was always aware that my participants might feel that they are under investigation that may influence the participants themselves or the research. Therefore, I made my participants understand that the purpose of the study is to explore their experiences and ideas which implies that there is no right or wrong answers to this inquiry. Moreover, I made them aware of the confidentiality and anonymity procedures that will be followed in this study. I would like to emphasise here also that during my observations, I did not distract or interrupt the teaching process in general or the students who were involved in these classes. I also introduced myself and the purpose of my study to students at the beginning of the teaching session.

3.8 <u>Quality Criteria of the Study Inquiry</u>

This section discusses the quality criteria for a study conducted with a constructivist knowledge framework that forms the basis of the current study. Methodologists have been looking for guidance to help in the judgement of the quality of qualitative research (Seale, 1999). Holders of the conventional

paradigm judge the quality of the research against terms like 'internal validity,' 'external validity,' 'reliability,' and 'objectivity' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Internal validity is concerned to the extent to which researchers can reach conclusions that one variable has really affected the other variable/s. Internal validity is concerned with the generalisability issue of results. Reliability relates to the extent in which the results of the study can be repeated. Objectivity means the conduct of research without the impact of values of the researcher/s on the research process (Bryman, 2012).These criteria were considered as inappropriate for the judgement of the naturalistic inquiry and the term trustworthiness was coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as an alternative. Trustworthiness has four parts: credibility as parallel to internal validity, transferability as parallel to external validity, dependability as parallel to reliability and conformability as parallel to objectivity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These four aspects will be discussed below in relation to my research.

Credibility refers to "the extent to which a document (or indeed an interview) is sincere and undistorted" (Wellington, 2015, p. 214). For this criterion to be met in my study, I had several meetings with my supervisor where he reviewed my chapters and provided me with comments and feedback. I also enhanced the credibility of my data when I submitted the interview transcripts to my participants for verification. See the section about confirmability for more details.

Transferability entails the idea that the findings of the study may be contextualized and significant in the environment where the research was conducted (Patton, 2002). In other words, qualitative researchers conduct research in order to obtain findings that might only be applicable in that site in that time (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore, researchers develop thick descriptions in order to give their readers opportunities to transfer the conclusions to other contexts (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Consequently, I believe the readers can assess and judge this study in order to "increase the relatability" of my work (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 82).

Dependability is closely related to credibility and the presentation of the latter is sufficient of the former (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, dependability can be enhanced by an 'auditing' system where researchers keep records of their research process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In the context of my study, I believe the dependability was enhanced when I had the opportunity to present my research to other researchers. Firstly, it was at the student seminar in the University of Sheffield, School of Education (18/03/2010) where I presented the first stages in the design of my study. Secondly, in 09/05/2013 I participated in the 10th School of Education Research student's Annual Conference (RSAC) 2013, University of Leeds. A month later, I was also involved to discuss my research in the School of Education 1st Research Students' Conference, University of Sheffield. During those two conference events, I had a very good opportunity to discuss my research and the findings obtained. I also had valuable comments and feedback. Finally, it was in the 1st Inaugural Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics, University of Sheffield in (04/02/2014) where I found it very helpful to share my research findings and have relevant feedback from different researchers and academics.

Conformability entails that researchers need to show that their personal values and theoretical affiliations did not explicitly impact on their research (Patton, 2002). In a similar vein, Hammond and Wellington (2013) further state that the conformability criterion of the qualitative study involves the extent to which the data support the findings of the study. They also highlight that this aspect of trustworthiness can be addressed by "the use of member checking and participant validation" (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 163). Member checking "is a process whereby a researcher provides the people on whom he or she has conducted research with an account of his or her findings" (Bryman, 2012, p. 391).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) acknowledge that member checking is very helpful because:

- It provides the opportunity to assess intentionality-what it is that the respondent intended by acting in a certain way or providing certain information.
- It gives the respondent an immediate opportunity to correct errors of fact and challenge what are perceived to be wrong interpretations.
- It provides the respondent the opportunity to volunteer additional information; indeed, the act of "playing back" may stimulate the respondent to recall additional things that were not mentioned the first time around.
- It puts the respondent on record as having said certain things and having agreed to the correctness of the investigator's recording of them, thereby making it more difficult later for the respondent to claim misunderstanding or investigator error.
- It provides an opportunity to summarize-the first step along the way to data analysis.
- It provides the respondent an opportunity to give an assessment of overall adequacy in addition to confirming individual data points (p. 314).

In light of the above discussions, all my participants had the opportunity to feedback and reflect on their interview transcripts, "the researcher provides each research participant with an account of what he or she has said to the researcher in an interview and conversations" (Patton, 2002, p. 391). (See Appendix 5 for an example of the email I sent to all of my participants).

In addition to the above mentioned points, Yin (2011) explains that one of the most important objectives for building trustworthiness in research is to make the research study accessible for others. In other words, researchers need to describe and document their studies in order to give others an opportunity to review, understand, and scrutinize the content of that work. This feature is referred to as *transparency* by Flick (2007) who states that researchers need to show their readers how they proceeded their research and how they arrived at their findings and conclusions. This transparent representation will help in increasing the quality of qualitative research.

In accordance with the above discussions, I aim to give detailed descriptions for all the stages of my study where I explain the data collection procedures and explained how I arrived at the relevant conclusions. Furthermore, I always have been aware that "readers should be given enough information to decide whether they would have done the same and arrived at the same conclusions as the researchers or not" (Flick, 2007, p. 66).

Having discussed how the quality criteria were addressed in this study, the main concern of the following section is to explain the software used to help in the analysis of the findings of my data.

3.9 <u>Nvivo</u>

In this thesis, analysis of the semi-structured interview data was carried out using Nvivo 09/10, "a software designed to aid the analysis of qualitative data, which is the most recent version of NUD*IST (non-numerical unstructured data, indexing searching and theorizing" (Basit, 2003, p. 148). The reasons for choosing this software is for its features that enable users to organize, categorize and retrieve their data easily. Richards (1999) also supports this when he pointed out "Nvivo has tools for recording and linking ideas in many ways, and for searching and exploring the patterns of data and ideas" (p. 4). Moreover, it enables users to move things around and use different coding categories and groupings (Rademaker et al, 2012, p. 7). Finally, I found it a cost-effective option and easily accessible to download Nvivo from the university website for free.

It has been argued that computer softwares used to analyse qualitative data may distance researchers from the data they are analysing (Fielding and Lee, 2002). Furthermore, another risk was highlighted by Yin (2011) who cautions "One risk in using software is the added attention needed to follow the software's procedures and terminology. Such attention may detract from the desired analytic thinking, energy, and decisions that are needed to carry out a strong analysis" (p. 176). However, I entirely concur that: "Some aspects of QDA [Qualitative data analysis] software programmes, such as the ability to generate coding

automatically or search text for key words, phrases or patterns of words, can save a considerable amount of time" (Johnston, 2006, p. 385). Furthermore, using qualitative computer data analysis software can make the data more "transparent" (Ryan, 2009, p. 142). Moreover, I have always been aware that: "the computer and the text analysis packages do not do the analysis for the researcher" (Basit, 2003, p. 145). A view highlighted by Wellington (2015) who point out:

> CAQDAS (Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software) can be helpful in case-study research but one should always remember that the software will not do the analysis for you. It may be a useful tool, for example, in searching for words and phrases, counting the incidence of those and thus helping to develop the codes and themes that you have conceived (p. 172).

In the same vein, "computers do not analyse data; people do" (Weitzman & Miles, 1995, p. 3) Thus, my own experience with Nvivo gave me the opportunity to realize that computer softwares "…are not a substitute for thought, but they are a strong aid to thought" (Weitzman & Miles, 1995, p. 3).

As soon as I installed Nvivo on my personal computer, I started exploring and structuring the different features of this software. I also attended some relevant workshops in order to be more familiar with its use. As a result, I felt that I was confident enough to exploit this software to enhance the analysis of my data. All the audio files of the interview data were first imported and then transcribed using this software. Having discussed how I used the Nvivo software, the next section describes two different issues about the role of theory in qualitative research.

3.10 <u>Deductive and Inductive Approaches</u>

Researchers may approach their data in two different ways either deductively or inductively (Dewey, 1910). . In this section, I will discuss these two terms and attempt to highlight the one adopted in this study. In deductive approaches, researchers usually work from the more general to the more specific. They might begin with a theory about the topic of interest which is then narrowed down into

specific hypotheses to be tested (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). Figure (4) presents a schematic representation of the deductive approaches.

When researchers generate their data deductively, themes or categories do not emerge from the data but rather from research questions, relevant literature or the researcher/s' own experience (Given, 2008).
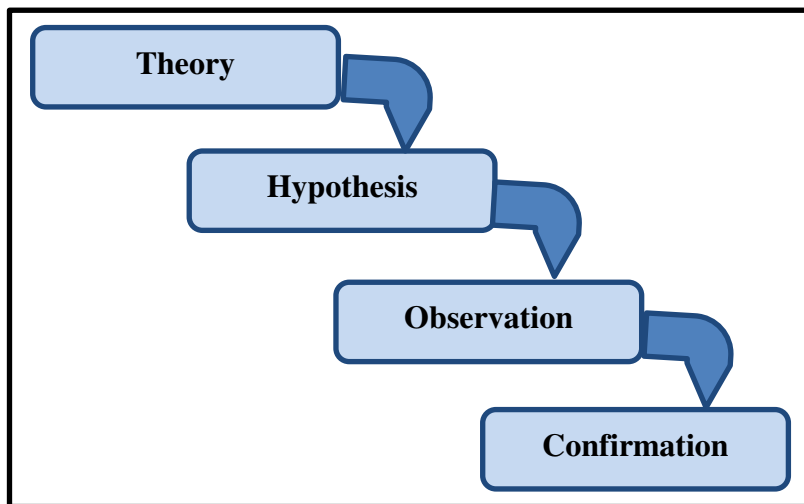
Figure (4) Schematic Representation of Deductive Reasoning, taken from
(Trochim & Donnelly, 2006, p. 17)

In inductive approaches, researchers move from specific observations to broader generalisations and theories. Researchers may begin with specific observations and start exploring the area in order to develop general conclusions or theories (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). Figure (5) provides a schematic representation of the inductive approaches.
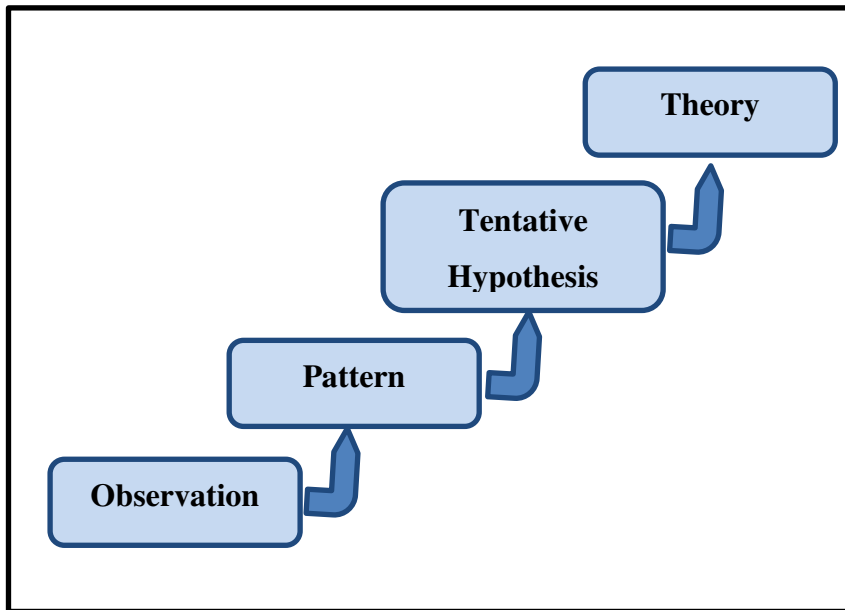
Figure (4) Schematic Representation of Inductive Reasoning, taken from
(Trochim & Donnelly, 2006, p. 17)

The inductive approach was also highlighted by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who state: "we suggest as the best approach an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research. Then one can be relatively sure that the theory will fit and work" (p. 3). This was highlighted in their grounded theory model where they advised discovering a theory or theories from data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that generating theory from data helps show that a certain theory fits an empirical situation and is understandable to both researchers and laymen.

In the context of my study, I would like to highlight that I was able to adopt an inductive approach because the nature of this study was exploratory. The use of inductive approaches is reflected in the methods I used for collecting the relevant data. The use of semi-structured interviews and observations gave the opportunity to follow the leads gained from my view of the data, "not from the careful and exhaustive literature review of the traditional research design" (Charmaz, 1996, p. 47). However, I would agree that there are some limitations for this approach because "no researcher enters into the process with a completely blank and empty mind" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 294). Moreover, I also share the idea that "it

would not be true to say that the inductive process takes absolutely no note of pre-existing theories or ideas when approaching a problem" (Gray, 2009, p. 15). This might also be reflected in Charmaz's words who highlighted that "certainly any observer's world view, disciplinary assumptions, theoretical proclivities and research interests will influence his or her observations and emerging categories" (p. 32). Therefore, the inductive aspect of my study stems from the idea that I did not aim to prove or disprove any sort of theory throughout all the stages of my research.

Having described the deductive and inductive approaches, the next section describes the method of analysis that I adopted to help me arrive at understanding my data.

3.11 <u>Method of Analysis: Thematic Analysis</u>

The word analysis literary means "breaking down of a topic or object into its component parts and understanding how those parts fit together" (Wellington, 2013, p. 9). Although many researchers agree that there is one right way of manipulating data analysis (Patton, 2002; Wellington, 2015), I had always been aware that "the task is to do one's best to make sense of things" (Patton, 2002, p. 570). In this sense, 'thematic analysis' was seen as one of the possible ways of analysing and making sense of my data. In this final section of this chapter, I will discuss this method of analysis.

As thematic analysis does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of approaches such as grounded theory and DA [Discourse Analysis], it can offer a more accessible form of analysis particularly for those early in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 8-9).

Thematic analysis is an exploratory approach where analysts code or mark their sections of a text according to their patterns contributing to some relevant themes (Schwandt, 2007). In the same vein, Braun and Clarke (2006) define it as "… a method for identifying, analysing and reporting (themes) within data" (p. 79).

At the early stages of the analytic process when I was exploring and searching for themes in the interview transcriptions, I found it a hard task to decide what criteria I should use in order to code something as a theme or in Boyatzis' (1998) words "indicators on how to (flag) the theme" (p. 31). This is further stated by Bryman (2012) who explains that a theme is:

> A category identified by the analyst through his/her data; that relates to his/her research focus (and quite possibly the research questions); that builds on codes identified in transcripts and/or field notes; and that provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his or her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus (p. 580).

In light of the above quotation, Bryman describes a theme as category that is related to the focus of the study and may also relate to the research questions. However, I would partially agree with Bryman in this context for the following reasons; a researcher may flag a theme as he/she finds interesting or relates to the relevant literature but not necessarily to the research questions. Secondly, some researchers may choose methodological designs that do not necessarily have research questions, for instance grounded theory. In these designs, the research questions usually take their final shape after they emerge from data. Therefore, I think a theme needs to be related to either one or three perspectives; the literature review, the researcher's own interests or judgement, "the researcher's judgement is necessary to determine what a theme is" Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 10), and the research questions.

"A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 10). This definition also focuses on the research questions as the main perspective to highlight a theme in the data.

Bryman and Burgess (1994) question using the frequency of certain words or phrases as a critical factor for the selection of relevant themes as a determining factor for selecting themes. In line with this, Smith (1995) highlights the qualitative analysis aims to "capture the richness of the themes emerging from the

respondent's talk rather than reduce the responses to quantitative categories" (p. 9). However, I found reading the two articles "Using thematic analysis in psychology" by Braun and Clarke (2006) and "Techniques to Identify Themes" by Ryan and Russell (2003) very helpful to start to identify some of my themes. In other words, these researchers were explicit enough about their approaches to thematic analysis which I found easy to apply and correspond to my analysis. Furthermore, I found the six stages outlined by Braun and Clark (2006) for using thematic analysis helpful and comfortable in analysing and interpreting my data. They have described the process of thematic analysis in six phases. Moreover, in Table 4, Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 78) illustrated the different six stages of the application of thematic analysis to interview data with a brief description of each phase.

Braun and Clarke (2006) stress that the main goal of the write-up of a thematic analysis is "to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis" (p. 23). Thus, I will now attempt to clarify the way I adopted this framework in relation to my research. However, I share the same idea that: "Our initial guidance around this is that you need to retain flexibility, and rigid rules really do not work" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 10). The same view is supported by Coffey & Atkinson (1996) who comment that "analysis is not about adhering to any one correct approach or set of right techniques" (p.10). Therefore, flexibility in my analysis was adopted throughout the whole process. However, I have always been aware that analysis "should also be methodical, scholarly, and intellectually rigorous" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 10).

TABLE (4): PHASES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p 87)

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

3.11.1 <u>Familiarising Yourself with Your Data</u>

Familiarisation is the stage where the 'immersion' process takes place. It includes "getting an overall sense of data" (Wellington, 2000, p. 135). This process is seen by Hennink et al. (2013) as "it involves a process of discovery that enables you to remain close to the data and form an evidence-based understanding of the research issues" (p. 205). In line with this, Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight that one needs to be immersed into their data in order to become familiar with its scope and boundaries.

This stage is also the first phase of the compiling process described by Yin (2011) who points out that researchers in this phase familiarize themselves with their interviews and field notes by the continuous reviewing and re-listening to the recorded data. I started obtaining the familiarity aspect of my data as soon as I began listening to my interviews for transcription. Moreover, the transcription process gave me the opportunity to be more engaged with my data. I also found this very helpful to highlight and consider some of the ideas and themes emerging in the data. "It is a good idea to start taking notes or making ideas for coding that you will then go back to in subsequent phases" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 17). Therefore, I found this stage as an interesting and exciting experience because it is my first time to deal with qualitative data and attempt to understand the meaning my participants attached to my interview questions.

Familiarisation for me is one of the most important stages when dealing with qualitative data because it gives the researcher/s the opportunity to start thinking about the general idea and aims of the data collection methods applied. It is also as I indicated previously the exciting moment of the research because it is the time when the researcher/s begin flagging the first ideas that seem interesting for the research inquiry. Furthermore, I share the same idea that: "the time spent in transcription is not wasted, as it informs the early stages of analysis, and you will develop a far more thorough understanding of your data through having transcribed it" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 18).

3.11.2 <u>Generating Initial Coding</u>

This phase actually starts when one has become familiarised with the data, and has developed a list of ideas that capture interesting meanings about segments of the text (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This is further highlighted by Miles and Huberman (1994) who state "this part of analysis involves how you differentiate and combine the data you have retrieved and the reflections you make about this information" (p. 56). Furthermore, Miles and Huberman (1994) define coding as "…attaching key words or tags to segments of text to permit later retrieval" (p. 44). In Nvivo, "…coding is carried out by applying nodes to segments of text"

(Bryman, 2012, p. 601). As I have already indicated in the familiarisation phase, I highlighted (using Nvivo) the chunks of data that carry attention-grabbing meanings. "Sorting out the structure of significance" (Geertz, 1973, p. 9). In other words, I looked for expressions that may/will have reference to the relevant research inquiry. This view is further stated by Bryman (2012) who advises "…jot down a few general notes about what struck you as especially interesting, important, or significant" (p. 576). Accordingly, I attached some notes to the segments of texts in my interview transcriptions that appeared to be interesting for the relevant research. For example, in Figure (6), I highlighted the phrase articulated by the teacher Sarah[1] "…they might try to define it by purpose for example, quite often, 'this is what you do with it... this is what it is for'…" (49-50)[2], and applied the "circumlocution" code/node to it.

Figure (6) Nvivo coding

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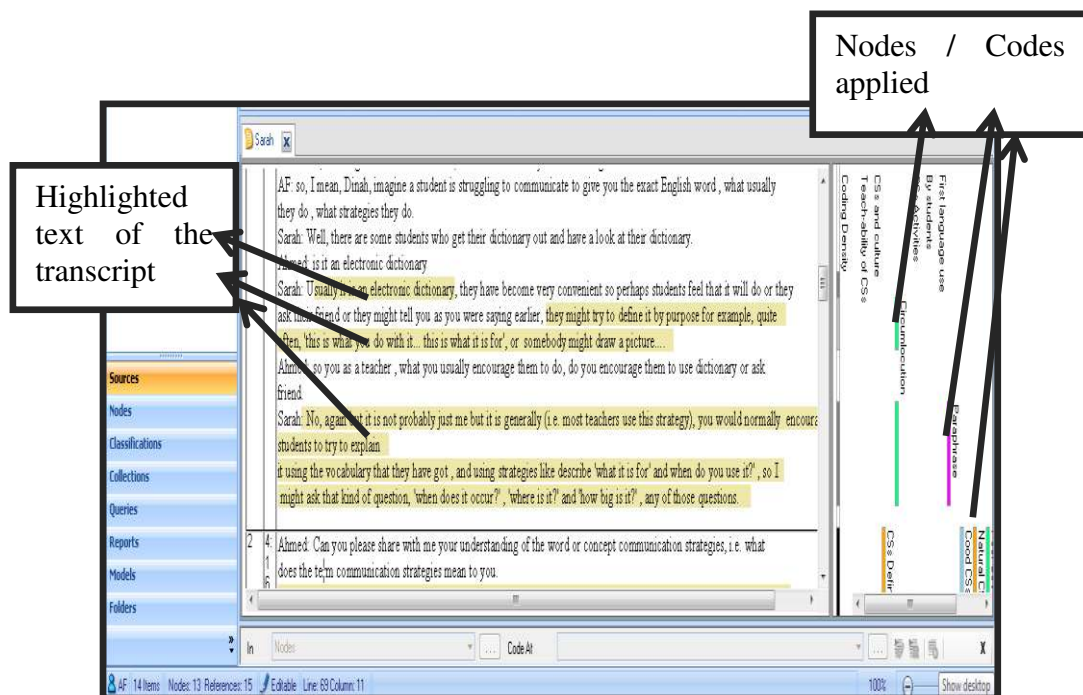
[1] Sarah is a pseudonym.
[2] The numbers refer to the extract location in the relevant NVIVO file.

Bryman (2012) states that: "For some writers a theme is more or less the same as a code, whereas for others it transcends any one code and is built up out of groups of codes" (p. 578). In the same way, I sometimes consider a certain code as a theme on its own and sometimes a particular theme emerges from different codes. An idea highlighted by Hammond and Wellington (2013) who explain "there is no single agreed approach to coding or even the terminology to describe the process so that terms such as 'codes', 'themes', 'categories' and 'labels' may be used interchangeably" (p. 22). However, my main intention always was "…it is not the words themselves but their meaning that matters" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Thus, I paid less attention to the differences in the labels used and avoided to consider a certain label as the most correct one. My only concern was to look for the meaning my participants make about their understanding of the phenomenon under investigation in this study. In other words, I maintained flexibility and did not follow rigid rules either throughout the whole research or in this specific process of labelling. I believe that the core of qualitative research is looking for the meaning people make about any social phenomenon.

3.11.3 <u>Searching for Themes</u>

This stage involves categorizing the different codes into potential themes and assigning the relevant coded extracts to the specific themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This view is stated by Stirling (2001) who highlights "go through the text segments in each code (or group of related codes) and extract the salient, common or significant themes in the coded text segments" (p. 392). In this respect, Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 12) state: "…researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum". Similarly, I felt that my research questions as well as my readings of the relevant literature to the study of communication strategies have impacted on the coding of my data. Therefore, I looked at my data using three theoretical lenses (see Figure 7). The first of these is the research questions lens which is used to magnify the information related to my research questions. Second, the literature review lens, this one flags the meanings that are either

similar or different to what other researchers have investigated in this field. The third is my own lens as a researcher in the field that is used to underline that data which I consider to have some unique or interesting significance. In addition to that, I always attempted to refer to any impact or theoretical affiliation when inserting my own interpretation or writings throughout all the stages of my study. This issue was also stressed by Yin (2011) who states:

> You should try hard to identify the features of your lens that are in any way likely to influence the findings made by your declarative self. Depending on your audience, you can present all of these features in a friendly and insightful manner or as a methodic discussion of strengths, weaknesses, and caveats (271).
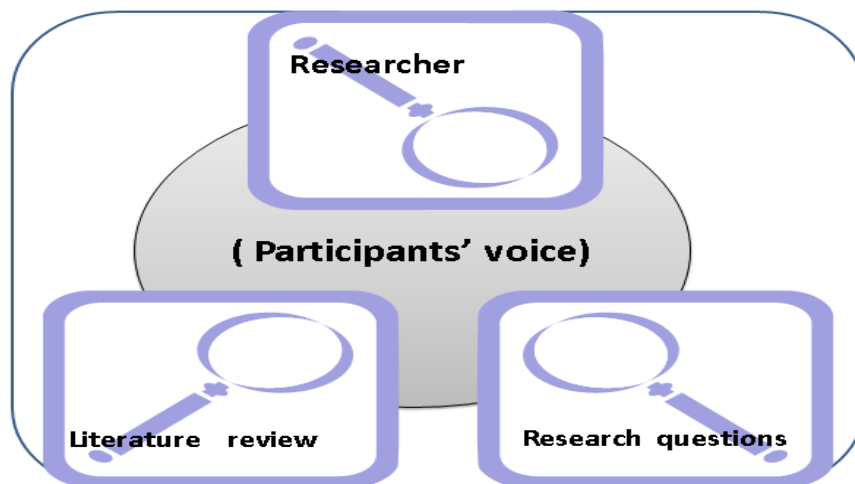
Figure (7) the three perspectives impacted on the selection of codes.

The three lens/perspectives were used to explore my participants' voices in order to understand their positions about communication strategies. I think the idea of "socially constructed" knowledge can be simply stated here. See section 1.6.2 where this view is broadly discussed.

This phase ends when a set of themes and sub themes have been linked to the extracts of data that have been related to them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Accordingly, I started thinking about the importance of the individual meaning for each theme but I always have been aware that: "without looking at all the extracts in detail (the next phase) it is uncertain whether the themes hold as they are, or whether some need to be combined, refined and separated, or discarded" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 20).

3.11.4 <u>Reviewing Themes</u>

The goal of this phase is to review and refine the different themes and consider whether they cohere with the coded extracts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The same view is explained by Boyatzis (1998) who stresses that: "It is essential to check their [the themes] compatibility with the raw information of your study" (p. 36). Accordingly, I read through all my themes and checked that they match the segments of text they were attached to. In this stage, the thematic map starts to take its shape. However, either in this phase or the one that follows, I sometimes decide to revise and adapt or adjust my coding which created some discomfort when I had to revisit the stage that I thought just completed. Nevertheless, Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) maintain that researchers should not feel disappointed about this because "It is actually a positive step, because it means that you are learning about your participants' subjective experience in a more nuanced way" (p. 62).

Braun and Clarke (2006) warn that researchers need to know when to stop because the coding may become endless. Therefore, "when your refinements are not adding anything substantial, stop!" (p. 21). Accordingly, I stopped coding my data when I felt that no more themes emerge and the same ideas are repeated.

3.11.5 <u>Defining and Naming Themes</u>

The fifth phase starts when researcher/s has/have developed a satisfactory thematic map of the data, then they need to define the themes that will be presented for the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Similarly, Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) advise "Name the themes with an easily understood phrase that expresses this common thread" (p. 65). In line with this, Boyatzis (1998) stresses that the name should be: " (a) conceptually meaningful to the phenomenon studied; (b) clear and concise, communicating the essence of the theme in fewer words possible; and (c) close to data" (p. 31). In the same vein, I attempted to define and conceptualise each theme in order to help me present them to the reader. Moreover, I tried to keep the themes simple and clear in order to avoid any

jargon. This view is supported by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) who state "the research participants should be able to recognize the themes as something they might have said" (p. 65).

The following two tables explain a list of all the nodes that were found in each interview and/or observation with my participants in the two venues namely University One and University Two.

TABLE (5): NODES FOUND IN INTERVIEWS/OBERVATIONS OF UNIVERSITY 1 PARTICIPANTS.

University One	
Pseudonyms	**Nodes/themes**
Lisa	Problem orientedness, negotiation of meaning, strategies or skills, teachability of CSs, culture, CSs and power, card games, words games, avoidance strategies, gestures.
Ann	Strategies or skills, teachability of CSs, confidence, culture, consciousness, card games, gestures.
Jack	Problem orientedness, negotiation of meaning, teachability of CSs, culture, consciousness, paraphrase and circumlocution.
Hilda	Problem orientedness, teachability of CSs, culture, consciousness, paraphrase and circumlocution.
Gary	Negotiation of meaning, strategies or skills, teachability of CSs, confidence, culture, mobile-phones, backs to the board, card games, video-recording, paraphrase and circumlocution.
William	Problem orientedness, confidence, card games, paraphrase and circumlocution, avoidance strategies.
Sarah	Teachability of CSs, confidence, learners' willingness to communicate.

**TABLE (6): NODES FOUND IN INTERVIEWS/OBSERVATIONS OF
UNIVERSITY 2 PARTICIPANTS.**

University Two	
Pseudonyms	**Nodes/themes**
Robert	Negotiation of meaning, teachability of CSs, confidence, culture, learners' willingness to communicate, paraphrase, and circumlocution.
Sue	Strategies or skills, teachability of CSs, confidence, communicative competence, card games, word games.
Rebecca	Negotiation of meaning, confidence, consciousness, communication strategies and power, word games.
Sally	Confidence, mobile phones, paraphrase and circumlocution, gestures.
Tom	Problem orientedness, strategies or skills, culture, mobile phones, consciousness, communicative competence, communication strategies and power.
Karen	Teachability of CSs, confidence, culture, mobile phones.

3.11.6 <u>Producing the Report</u>

This stage involves producing the final report where the researcher/s select/s vivid, compelling extract examples and relating that to research questions and relevant literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Finally, I would like to conclude this chapter with a description of the method of analysis used for analysing my field notes obtained from the classroom observations.

As I already mentioned (see section 3.4.2) and indicated in the information sheet, I needed to observe some of the EFL teachers' classes as part of my fieldwork. Accordingly, some of the teachers kindly accepted to participate and gave me the opportunity to join some of their teaching sessions.

My role during the observations was as a non-participant observer (Hennink et al, 2013) where I sat in the back of the classroom without distracting or disturbing the learning/teaching environment at any stage. All the teachers observed also participated in the interviews and this gave me the opportunity to establish some rapport with my participants as "building and maintaining rapport is a key component of observational research" (Marvasti, 2013, p. 357).

Based on the exploratory nature of my research in general and on the aim of my observations in particular, I was selective when writing my field notes. In other words, I attempted to describe or capture the incidents that may/will have some attention-grabbing factors to the topic under consideration in this study. This view is particularly supported by Miles & Huberman (1994) who elaborate: "Observation is also selective: The researcher is constantly making choices about what to register and what to leave out, without necessarily realizing that-or why-one exchange or incident is being noted but another is not" (p. 56).

The method adopted to analyse my field notes was also thematic analysis. I found the adoption of the conceptual framework of Braun & Clarke (2006) very helpful. However, I would like to emphasise that in the analysis process generally and in analysing my observations in particular, I have completely concurred with Coffey & Atkinson (1996) who state:

> The process of analysis should not be seen as a distinct stage of research; rather, it is a reflexive activity that should inform data collection, writing, further data collection, and so forth. Analysis is not, then, the last phase of the research process. It should be seen as part of the research design and of the data collection. The research process, of which analysis is one aspect, is a cyclical one (p. 6).

In accordance with the above quotation, I considered the recording of my field notes as a part of my analysis because as I mentioned earlier, I have been selective of what to write down. Moreover, these field notes were not treated as raw data because they represent my reflections and conceptual understanding of the context being observed. A view supported by Marvasti (2013) who claims "to some extent there is no such thing as 'raw data'" (p. 359).

When I decided to use Nvivo to help in the analysis of my interview data, I was thinking about how this software can help me to analyse my observational data as well. As a consequence, "memos" seemed to be the most suitable location to upload my field notes. Memos "capture the thoughts of the inquirer while he or she is engaged in the process of analysis" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 189). In the same way, Glaser & Strauss (1967) point out that: "memo writing on the field note provides an immediate illustration for an idea" (p. 108). Consequently, I found memos very helpful for me to register my field notes from the classroom observations and clearly underline the themes and patterns that emerged from my data. Memos were good locations which I found very helpful to reflect on my data. The process of memo writing is described by Yin (2011) as:

> You will continually go back and forth between your initial ideas about how to disassemble the data and the actual data, potentially leading to modifications to your initial ideas. These kinds of thoughts should themselves be recorded as part of a series of memos kept throughout your analysis (p. 186).

3.12 <u>Chapter Conclusion</u>

In this chapter, I have discussed the research design and methodology adopted in this study. I started with the research justification where I explained the reasons and motivations for adopting a constructivist qualitative approach. I also described the main research paradigms highlighting the qualitative constructivist perspective as the basis of this study. This chapter also included the semi-structured interviews and observations as the main data collection procedures used to gather the relevant data. I also presented the pilot study which was conducted before the main study. Ethical issues of my study, quality criteria, Nvivo software and the deductive and inductive approaches also were discussed. The final section of this chapter presented the method of analysis that helped me to arrive at the understanding of the relevant data. The main concern of the next chapter is to present and discuss the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS

AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1   <u>Introduction</u>

In the previous chapter, I presented the research design and methodology used in this study. The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyse, and discuss the findings obtained through conducting semi-structured interviews and observations in relation to exploring English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers` perceptions about teaching communication strategies in the UK. I retained some flexibility regarding the headings of my chapters, a view supported by Smith (1995) who states that there is flexibility regarding chapter headings "depending on the particular slant you are taking and the emphasis you are making" (p. 24). Consequently, this chapter encapsulates findings, analysis, and discussions of the study as a heading whereas the heading of the next chapter is conclusions and recommendations.

In this chapter, I will attempt to discuss the responses to the research questions drawing on the findings of this study and the relevant literature explained in Chapter Two. The analysis and discussions are generated from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations under the relevant themes associated with a particular research question. I will also present some of extracts from my data to support the point under consideration, a view highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2006) who stress, "choose particularly vivid examples, or extracts which capture the essence of the point you are demonstrating" (p. 23). This is further stated by Hatch (2002) who highlights that: "researchers should provide excerpts from their data to give the reader a real sense of how what was learned played out in the actual settings examined" (p. 225). Moreover, in the following discussion, I will "weave references to relevant literature" (Hatch, 2002, p. 231), because "…such connections will help readers make sense of findings as they are being presented" (Hatch, 2002, p. 231). Furthermore, I tried to establish an appropriate

interoperation of my participants' voices taking into consideration the following points addressed by Yin (2001):

- Completeness (Does your interpretation have a beginning, middle, and end?)
- Fairness (Given your interpretive stance, would others with the same stance arrive at the same interpretation?)
- Empirical accuracy (Does your interpretation fairly represent your data?) Value-added (Is the interpretation new, or is it mainly a repetition of your topic's literature?)
- Credibility (Independent of its creativity, how would the most esteemed peers in your field critique or accept your interpretation?) (p. 207).

One of the most important aims in this chapter is to address the 'rigor' aspect in my research, an idea further explained by Yin (2011) who highlights that rigor derives from exercising three precautions:

1. Checking and rechecking the accuracy of your data;

2. Making your analysis as thorough and complete as possible rather than cutting corners; and

3. Continually acknowledging the unwanted biases imposed by your own values when you are analysing your data (p. 177).

Once again, I will start firstly by restating the research questions addressed in this study:

1. How do EFL teachers in the UK understand the concept of communication strategies?

2. How do EFL teachers perceive the idea of teaching communication strategies?

3. What activities do the EFL teachers consider appropriate if they were to teach communication strategies in their classrooms?

4.2   Responses to Research Question 1

How do EFL teachers in the UK understand the concept of communication strategies?

My participants' views showed some diverse understandings of the concept of communication strategies. This diversity in the definitions can be described under the following themes that clearly were constructed in the data. They are problem orientedness, negotiation of meaning, and strategies or skills.

4.2.1   Problem Orientedness

Language users sometimes find it difficult to retrieve or use certain linguistic knowledge. In such cases, they may find themselves with a communication problem that can be solved by resorting to a particular strategic plan (Faerch & Kasper, 1984). This view of communication strategies implies a shortage or shortcoming in the language learners or users as their current linguistic resources do not meet the intended communicative requirements which may urge them to resort to some strategies in order to overcome this difficulty (Mariani, 2010). I already described this criterion of communication strategies in the literature review chapter (see section 2.2.1). However, it also seems crucial to reinsert some of the literature here and weave my participants' voices through it.

Problem-orientedness or in Bialystok's (1990, p. 3) expression 'Problematicity' has been a basic criterion of the definitions of communication strategies. Bialystok (1990) also adds that, "it is the idea that strategies are used only when a speaker perceives that there is a problem which may interrupt communication" (p. 3). In this respect, Faerch and Kasper (1983) define communication strategies as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (36). This definition makes a distinction between communication strategies and other verbal plans by two conditions, problem-orientedness and potential consciousness. In other words, problem-orientedness presumes a difference between goals that people face no

difficulty to reach, and goals that are considered problematic to achieve (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). They also highlight that: "only plans that relate to the latter type of goals will be considered as strategies" (p. 33). Sharing the same view, Mariani (2010) maintains that strategic language use always indicates that learners realise their engagement in an effort to overcome a communicative problem by resorting to ways which are not "ready-made formulae" (p. 17). Jack, one of my participants, included the problem-orientedness factor in his definition of communication strategies and commented that:

> Communication strategies are about how someone is able to explain what they mean when they cannot find the word. They can also use a definition similar to the one used in the first language…how someone is able to explain what they mean when they cannot find the word…when they are not sure of the concept or they might have forgotten a word or a term (Jack, 62-64).

Jack's description of communication strategies indicates that the learners who use communication strategies realise or understand that they face some communicative difficulty which hinders them in sending their messages across. This implies that the learner might become aware of the linguistic difficulty she/he is facing and alternative ways of communicating need to be looked for. The same view is supported by Lisa who maintained that language users use communication strategies when they lack the word they need to enhance their communication with others. "I do not know the word for this thing in Arabic…" (Lisa, 52). Hilda also shared the same idea and viewed communication strategies as "what we do when we do not know the word" (89). During my interview with Hilda, she indicated that learners resort to the use of communication strategies when they become aware that their linguistic items are limited and they need to find or use alternative means to bridge the gap in their communication. The same view is supported by William who defined communication strategies as "making the most with very little means and using it effectively in an efficient way to overcome problems in communication" (97-98). Furthermore, William explained that communication strategies mean making the most of what you have and try to build on that. Communication strategies also mean different ways of

communicating with people and getting what you want to say or understand. Another interesting idea described by William was that one's communication strategies depend on the kind of listener involved in the conversation. He explained that critical listeners are completely different from uncritical ones. He pointed out that any linguistic system is complex and difficult. Native speakers also do not know everything about their languages, so you might find them using communication strategies to overcome communicative problems.

So far, in this discussion, it seems that communication strategies researchers and some of my participants view the problem-orientedness factor as an important criterion for the use of communication strategies.

In the early days of communication strategies research, there had been some opposition against problematicity as a defining criterion (Kasper & Kellerman 1999). Moreover, Kasper and Kellerman (1999) point out that those who voiced their disagreement about the problem-orientedness factor claimed that language use was always strategic as learners deliberately select the cost-effective techniques to reach their communicative goals. Similarly, Rampton (1997) maintains that throughout all these debates, there seems to be a controversy about the identification and explanation of language problems. The source of these problems as described by Mariani (2010) can be:

> Linguistic (i.e. we lack the necessary knowledge of the language), cultural (i.e. we are not aware of or can't cope with the cultural demands of the situation) or even contextual (i.e. someone or something makes it difficult for us to follow a conversation, e.g. because of a very noisy environment or the particular way our partner articulates her or his speech) (p. 1).

In line with this, Rampton (1997) points out that, it is not easy to distinguish among the linguistic, cognitive and the sociolinguistic problems, and students, teachers, school systems and indeed researchers are responsible for the difficulty. Similarly, Poulisse et al. (1990) point out that 'problem' is an ambiguous term. Some researchers use the term to refer to 'difficulty', others use it to indicate the technical meaning of 'task'.

Kellerman (1991) gives less emphasis to the problem-orientedness factor and comments that the definition of compensatory strategies in relation to the consciousness or problematicity, "may artificially distinguish between processes where there is no metacognitive awareness and those where there is… it would be better to see consciousness and problematicity as epiphenomena, serendipitous by-products of the adult use of compensatory strategies" (Kellerman, 1991, p. 155).

Some of my participants contended that the term communication strategies has broad meanings. Lisa for example, maintained that communicative problems should not be restricted to the learners' shortage of vocabulary but also should include other kinds of problems as well. In the same vein, Dörnyei and Scott (1997) highlight that communication strategies were traditionally seen to handle only one type of language problem in the speaker's linguistic ability that makes it hard for them to communicate. However, they highlight that this restriction to one kind of problem is not indicated in the name given to communication strategies. Therefore, several researchers extend the term to deal with other kinds of communication problems as well. In this respect, Mariani (2010) highlights that the concept of problem-orientedness not only includes the difficulties faced by the speaker who feels there are some communicative problems to overcome, but also "the perception of difficulties on the interlocutor's part (e.g. her/his own incorrect or ambiguous production or her/his inability to understand), which, once again, may lead to various kinds of negotiated strategies" (p. 13). In this respect, Hilda explained that the term communication strategies is too broad and may imply many things such as the ability to understand someone on the bus or on the train for instance. It can also mean that one needs to respond effectively when communication takes place. Hilda also pointed out that some of the problems that learners face in communication can only be solved when learners spend more time with native speakers and practise the language.

Generally speaking, some of my participants seemed to view problem-orientedness as an important criterion in the definition of communication strategies. However, other participants preferred to include other implicit factors

such as "interpersonal skills". "There is something missing that needs to be included in communication strategies which are the interpersonal skills that are implicit not explicit in the learner's language" (Tom, 72). I would like also to insert my own view regarding the problem-orientedness criterion. I would certainly agree with those who claim that communication strategies are used as the language user becomes aware of the problem to overcome. However, I would also concur that, it is not the only criterion to flag the use of a communication strategy. In other words, one can resort to or adopt a communication strategy as a technique to make their language simple and easy to understand. For example, EFL teachers sometimes use strategies like paraphrase and circumlocution to explain the difficult vocabulary to their students. Another example where communication strategies may not always be the result of the "problematicity" criterion was when I listened to a dialogue between two shopkeepers in one of the supermarkets. The conversation was as follows:

A: "Is that a pair ?"

B: "Yes".

A: "So, they come together".

B. "Yes".

The use of the phrase "so they come together" is simply a definition of a "pair". This type of description is a communication strategy. However, it is clear that speaker A did not resort to this definition as a matter of lacking the exact linguistic item which already was mentioned as a "pair". In this basic example, the reasons for using these descriptions might be for clarifications or double-assurance. The reasons are hardly to be the result of an existing "problem" to overcome. Therefore, I can conclude that "problematicity" is one of the features of communication strategies but not the only one.

Another point worth mentioning here is regarding the criterion or theme consciousness. I discussed in the literature review chapter (see section 2.2.2). This feature or theme was not clearly presented (or I found it difficult to flag) in the definitions of communication strategies provided by my participants when I asked

them to define communication strategies. However, this theme will be discussed when I present the responses for the second research question (see section 4.3.6).

Having described and discussed the problem-orientedness factor, the next theme of discussion is negotiation of meaning that some of my participants included in their definitions of communication strategies.

4.2.2 <u>Negotiation of Meaning</u>

I previously indicated (see section 2.6) that researchers like Tarone (1980) define communication strategies as a way of meaning negotiation between the two interlocutors. In the words of Tarone (1980), communication strategies "are seen as tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communicative goal" (p. 420). In this view, communication strategies not only are indications of problem solving devices to compensate for communication breakdowns, but they are also signals of pragmatic discourse for message enhancement (Nakatani, 2010). In line with this, some of my participants also indicated the negotiation of meaning factor in their definitions. For example, Gary highlighted that communication strategies may occur in the form of meaning negotiation between the speaker and listener especially when one is asking clarification questions or eliciting further information to arrive at mutual understanding. This view was also supported by Lisa who indicated that language users also need to be active listeners in order to keep the communication channel open.

Communication between two interlocutors can be enhanced when they share a common background. Some factors like linguistic, cultural, or social may lead to breakdown in communication when they become ambiguous to one of the interlocutors. Therefore, both interlocutors need to negotiate such breakdowns before their conversation proceeds. Moreover, "negotiation may strengthen the social or interpersonal dimension of interaction by acting as a conversation continuant" (Varonis & Gass, 1985, p. 86). In the same way, learners who employ meaning negotiation strategies can receive comprehensible input and produce or

modify their output. Therefore, they will have the opportunity to understand and develop messages beyond their current interlanguage (Nakatani, 2010).

Another example of meaning negotiation was presented by Jack when he described the people who like to dominate the conversation with others:

> Bad communicators would like to dominate a conversation and not to let other persons speak. Some people do like to dominate the conversation and they do not listen. They only talk whereas other people cannot have the chance to talk or express themselves clearly (Jack, 74).

Jack pointed out that communication strategies encompass that one should not dominate the conversation but involve others to participate in the interaction or discussion. Jack also suggested that learners could enhance and develop their communication and interaction with others when they can learn the following skills:

> The ability to listen, the ability not to give one word answers, asking questions. For example, if I ask 'where are you from', the answer needs to be like 'I am from Tripoli, Tripoli is the capital of Libya. Recently, Tripoli has been a very dangerous place. The war happened because of'…. and you get a lecture about that (Jack, 67-68).

It is obvious that Jack highlighted the importance of "interaction" between the speaker and listener when they both are involved in communication with each other.

My participant Gary also highlighted the importance of 'negotiation of meaning' when learners communicate. He stated:

> I tend to encourage expressions of negotiating of meaning. If my students do not understand something or they cannot give the meaning across, I tell them that they can negotiate with the other person while they are speaking. They can use a variety of questions, clarification strategies, for example. I think these sort of communication strategies can make students become effective communicators even if they do not necessarily understand everything or have complete range of vocabulary to express themselves (Gary, 112-113).

The interactional perspective is clearly reflected in Tarone's (1983) definition of communication strategies. This perspective gives the opportunity to include several repair mechanisms (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). (See Section 2.2 in the literature review chapter that provides details regarding this).

Before I go on to discuss the next theme, I would like to highlight a theme raised by my participant Rebecca that is 'context of interaction'. I asked Rebecca a question about what her students usually do when they have difficulty in communicating; she responded that it depends on the context of interaction. In other words, if students are in a large group, they would usually ask each other to find out the meaning. However, if the group is small, then there is more personal contact with the teacher and they would try to pronounce what they want to say. According to Ellis and Roberts (1987) the term context is:

> Often defined with reference to the actual situation in which a communicative event takes place. Clearly not everything present in the situation is likely to affect language choice, so from a sociolinguist's point of view the 'context' consists of those aspects of the situation which activate choice (p. 6).

Rebecca usually attempts to elicit the context of what her students are struggling to say in order to help them find the meaning for the difficult words and become able to send their messages through. For example, she once had a student who asked her about a word that people use a lot in the UK especially, when someone is being helpful. The student was asking about the word (cheers) but he pronounced it as (chairs) and Rebecca was confused and attempted to elicit the context of the word and asked him "when do you hear this?" (Rebecca, 40), and the student effectively explained the context of that word. Accordingly, Rebecca was able to realise that the word is (cheers) and not (chairs).

Generally speaking, some of my participants seemed to share the same idea about meaning negotiation strategies which is also reflected in the relevant literature.

The theme under consideration in the next section is the use of the terms strategies or skills.

4.2.3   Strategies or Skills

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1992), the term or word *strategy* is defined as "the art of planning in advance the movements of armies of forces in war" (p. 1045). Whereas the term or word *skill* is defined as a "special ability to do something well, especially as gained by learning and practice" (p. 985). In this respect, McDonough (1995) underlines that the term strategy implies four broad categories of meaning, "an organizing principle or policy, an alternative to calculations by rule, compensation…plans" (pp. 4-5). On the other hand, McDonough (1995) explains that: "if someone is skilled at something, we tend to think of them as being able to do whatever it is faster, more smoothly, and more successfully than someone who is unskilled" (pp. 2-3).

One of the themes that was constructed in my data is the use of the word "skills" when some of my participants defined communication strategies. I felt that they had a tendency to use the term (skills) instead of (strategies) in the conceptualisation of their own definitions of communication strategies. For example, when I asked Gary about his definition of communication strategies, he simply replied, "I think it covers a broad range of skills…" (59). In the same way, Ann said "if you expose your students to skills like paraphrasing…" (94). During my interview with Ann, I realised that she preferred to use the term skills instead of strategies when she explained her experience about the teaching of communication strategies. In this respect, Tom explained: "the definition of communication strategies is involving all communication skills, reading the signs and reading between the lines and knowing the social skills that go with it" (203-204). Moreover, Tom highlighted that the use of communication skills needs to meet the context of the conversation in order for one to send their messages effectively. Another participant said, "I find that encouraging them to develop the skills of circumlocution…" (Sue, 43-44). Sue obviously used the term skill with the communication strategy circumlocution. In this respect, Faerch and Kasper (1983) argue that in the literature of communication strategies, researchers sometimes use certain terms interchangeably to indicate they all refer to the same phenomenon.

Regarding the terms strategies and skills, Johnson and Johnson (1999) also explain that they are usually used interchangeably in the relevant literature. They attempt to make a distinction between these two terms by defining reading skills and reading strategies. On the one hand, reading strategies are conscious and deliberate processes that the reader applies in order to overcome a problem. On the other hand, reading skills are the components of the reading comprehension. They are less conscious than reading strategies and they probably can be teachable and testable.

Generally speaking, throughout my readings of the relevant literature, different researchers used different labels in their definitions of communication strategies. For example, Corder (1983) and Stern (1983) call them "techniques", Tarone (1980) use the term "attempts", and Faerch and Kasper (1983) prefer to call them "plans". In this section, I have discussed how some of my participants conceptualized their definitions of communication strategies and tended to substitute 'strategies' with 'skills'. Moreover, I attempted to provide some examples of the diversity in selecting certain terminologies.

In summary, this was a presentation of how the first research question was addressed. I have discussed how my participants responded to this question and attempted to include the relevant literature and some of my own reflections and interpretations. The discussion was mainly divided into three main themes regarding the definitions of communication strategies; 'problem-orientedness', 'negotiation of meaning' and 'strategies or skills'. The main concern of the next section is to look at how EFL teachers view the idea of teaching communication strategies that is the main purpose of the second research question.

4.3   <u>Responses to Research Question 2</u>

How do EFL teachers perceive the idea of teaching communication strategies?

I previously indicated in the literature review chapter (see section 2.8) that there is a debate among researchers regarding the teachability of communication

strategies. The debate stems from contrasting points of view about the teaching of communication strategies. On the one hand, a group of researchers recommend and advocate the teaching of communication strategies. On the other hand, other researchers stand against the teaching of communication strategies. Thus, one of the main purposes of this study is to explore teachers' insights and experiences about the teaching of communication strategies. Therefore, this section discusses the teachers' perceptions of teaching communication strategies. I will discuss this topic under the following themes or headings: To teach of not to teach communication strategies, communication strategies help learners build their confidence, culture impacts on learners using communication strategies, learners' willingness to communicate, learners' use of mobile phones in the classroom, teachers' and learners'' consciousness of communication strategies, communicative competence, and communication strategies and power.

4.3.1   <u>To Teach or not to Teach Communication Strategies</u>

One of the main aims of this study is to look at how teachers view the idea of teaching communication strategies. In the literature review chapter, I indicated that researchers characteristically follow one of the two camps, either the camp of the 'Pros' and the 'Cons'. The Pros, or the proponents of teaching, often conduct studies that compare the actual L2 performance to the native speaker's performance. They found many differences between the two and based on these results, they support the idea of the teaching of communication strategies (Faucette, 2001). On the other hand, the Cons, or those who stand against teaching, conducted studies on learners that compare the L2 performance with their first language performance. They found similarities between the two. Based on the focus on the cognitive procedures and the similarities between the L1 and L2 communication strategy use, they do not support the teaching of communication strategies (Faucette, 2001). Regarding the point of view of my participants, they seem to agree with the 'Pros' that communication strategies can be taught and can also help learners develop their communication skills. This was clearly supported by my participant Ann who commented that:

> I think to a certain extent that the teacher is a key here. If you expose your students to skills like paraphrase and translation or referring to a dictionary whatever description of things, they eventually will come to embrace these kinds of skills because they have been drilled almost every day, so they get accustomed to this style (Ann, 94-96).

Furthermore, Ann concluded that: "I think communication strategies could be one of the potential tools to help students overcome the barrier of acquiring the second language, they should be taught" (Ann, 101). This view is also supported by many researchers like Dörnyei (1997), Nakatani (2010) and Faucette (2001). In line with the above, Gary also supports the teaching of communication strategies and he highlighted that he encourages his students to explain the meaning of the words they do not know.

> I think communication strategies mean that students need to be able to maintain the conversation with other people. This happens particularly when students do not know the words or they face some gaps in their linguistic range. For example, in our classroom, I encourage my students that they can ask other people to repeat themselves if they do not understand, ask other people to clarify themselves, ask people to slow down when they speak (Gary, 115).

Gary also pointed out that he usually asks his students to work in groups where one group looks at the words and tries to explain their meanings to the other group. I think this task helps the learners develop their communication strategies as they learn different ways to describe the words they do not know. This issue will be discussed in more detail when I present the responses for the third research question where the tasks and activities that help in the development of communications strategies are discussed.

Regarding the teaching issue of communication strategies, Jack clearly advocates the idea but he assumed that teachers firstly need to address the reasons behind why learners need to learn English. "If it is someone who needs to be able to communicate in a seminar at university, you need to teach the strategies for being an effective communicator within the context of a seminar" (Jack, 44). He also added that teachers need to focus on teaching strategies that are related to correct vocabulary and grammar. Furthermore, he stressed that teachers can teach

strategies like turn taking and paraphrase. However, Jack believes that, it is not possible for teachers to change the personality of their students.

I would partially agree with Jack's last point. I think teachers indirectly influence their students' personality. In other words, some students get affected by the personality of their teachers particularly if they liked their method of teaching. For example, you may find students who try to behave like their teachers when they are at home. They even try to imitate their actions or the way they speak. I remember one of my relatives always tried to behave like her teacher and she often commented that she wanted to be like her teacher in future.

I can also share my own experience when I used to teach English at one of the secondary schools back home. One day, a parent of two of my students visited me at the school to review the achievements his son and daughter had made in the school. When the meeting started, he told me that he always hears my name in his house. He commented that his children like behaving and even talking like me. I was not surprised to hear that because I know that students sometimes become affected by their teachers which may result in influencing their behaviours and skills. Therefore, I can argue that teachers may affect their students' personalities particularly if the students liked the subject and methods of their teachers. An idea supported by Kheruniah (2013) who highlights that "to improve a student's study motivation and discipline can be reached by the good quality of a teacher's competence" (p. 111).

My participant Lisa was also one of those who support the teaching of communication strategies. Lisa stated that people use communication strategies in their first language intuitively or automatically (but they are not always aware of that). Furthermore, she claimed that learners perhaps are not aware of that and they try to adopt them into other languages. Nevertheless, teachers do understand that: "I mean, I am recommending we do make these things explicit to students and we do try to help them learn communication strategies" (Lisa, 140-141). Lisa clearly advocated the idea of teaching communication strategies to learners. Lisa has described her own experience about teaching communication strategies. She stated that:

> If one was teaching communication, then they often begin their lessons by pre-teaching some vocabulary. I found also myself teaching the idea of paraphrase and sharing that with students, 'I can never remember the name of this thing in Arabic or Spanish or whatever', 'you know this thing that we write with', 'what is the name of ...'. So teaching students to ask or to use other words, so paraphrase or ask for help can be helpful (Lisa, 38-43).

Furthermore, Lisa highlighted that her learners feel panic if they are unable to communicate, so she encourages them to focus on the vocabulary they know. "I think my students feel panic when they do not know the word, and focusing on what they do know, is something that I do try to encourage them to do" (Lisa. 92). I would rather agree with Lisa about encouraging learners to focus on and use the vocabulary they know. I think this can help in building the learners' confidence as they become more able to communicate in foreign language. The theme 'learners' confidence' will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

In this respect, Sarah indicated that she encourages her students to describe and define the words they usually do not know:

> You would normally encourage students to try to explain it using the vocabulary that they have, and use strategies like describing what it is for and when do they use it, so I might ask the kind of questions: 'where does it occur?', 'how big is it?'" (Sarah, 37-39).

I can clearly understand that Sarah urges her students to use communication strategies in order to help them send their messages to their listeners. However, Sarah argued that she would not plan the whole lesson to train students on the use of communication strategies. She further explained:

> You cannot use the dictionary in the exercise in which in a way it is not teaching directly communication strategies but it is sort of forcing them, because it is telling you need to find another way to get your meaning across (Sarah, 92-94).

My participant Jack also explained that when his students struggle to give the exact English word, he usually encourages them to find alternative ways to communicate what they intend to say. I think one of the helpful ways to make

learners communicate successfully in English is to make them aware that there is more than one way of expressing themselves. In other words, teachers need to help their students practise using different structures to describe the same thing. This will give them the opportunity to understand that there are many ways to express themselves and they can overcome communicative problems very easily.

Robert also advocated the teaching of communication strategies and he commented that:

> I think students who are at lower levels are not confident enough. They often do not say anything and what you hear is lots of hesitation and panic. However, we try to give them strategies, maybe circumlocution, talking around the word, and paraphrase. We encourage them to try and find some ways to explain it even if they do not have the exact vocabulary they are looking for and they may not have the IELTS 3 level (Robert, 37-39).

Another interesting issue discussed in the interview with Robert was the idea of learning vocabulary. Robert also highlighted that teachers do not need to focus on teaching every single word in the language.

> Languages are evolving and changing all the time and there are thousands of English words that I do not know and that is probably the first thing. Students often need to focus only on the more frequent words that they need for communication (Robert, 70-72).

I would also seem to agree with Robert that learning every single word in any language is impossible. Let me share with you some of my own experience about this. Being a student in the UK, sometimes I stay for long periods of time without travelling back home. When I do, one of the things that always surprises me is the use of new words and expressions that I have no clue of what they mean. This always occurs in the Libyan slang or youth language. I remember asking my relatives and friends "do you mean that?" and they start explaining what they really meant.

Robert also shared with me his own experience when he was doing his teaching Diploma. "There was a focus on communication strategies and repairing

breakdowns in language communication that students can use" (Robert, 78). He highlighted that the course was mainly designed to teach them how to use different teaching methods and the teaching of communication strategies was one of the topics involved. He pointed out that the role of the teacher needs to become that of a facilitator rather than as an instructor, a teacher who encourages students to engage in pair and group work in the classroom.

Another participant supporting this idea was Karen. She elaborated that those students who usually get stuck or freeze in communication, usually feel frustrated in learning the foreign language. However, she underlined that teachers need to help their students "go around the obstacle" (50). It is clear that Karen was one of the teachers who encourage the teaching of communication strategies to students. Karen also mentioned that communicating a certain meaning is more important than the grammar learners usually use. She stated:

> Encouraging students to communicate, albeit grammatically incorrect, they still manage to communicate. We also try to put less emphasis on grammatical accuracy. Even if it is grammatically not correct, they are still communicating the meaning. I think that is great because they are experimenting with the language to a certain degree. They are showing that they are thinking and processing the language (45-47).

Karen also explained that she only puts emphasis on accuracy when her students insist on that: "It is also responding to the students' needs, because sometimes you do need to be much more accurate and as a teacher, I like them to be more accurate. However, I don't want that to be on the expense of their speaking skills" (Karen, 59). Karen highlighted that if she frequently focuses on accuracy, her students will lose their confidence in learning the foreign language. Therefore, she always tells her students "I am not going to correct every mistake when you are speaking, and I explain why and how demoralizing it can be when you tell someone that you are wrong all the time" (Karen, 60). A similar view supported by Lee (2005) who highlights that: "excessive attention to errors may prove frustrating for students and exhausting for teachers. When teachers treat errors comprehensively, the onus for error correction is inevitably on themselves, which makes students reliant on teachers" (p. 2).

I would also agree that learners may feel disappointed if their teachers frequently correct their mistakes and tell them that their answers are incorrect. I can remember when I was a student during the secondary school level back home, I always felt afraid to give wrong answers. Producing a wrong answer meant committing a crime for me; therefore, I preferred either to give a correct answer which I was sure about or remain silent. I would like to highlight also that I am sure it was the same case for many classmates.

Sue also clearly supported and advocated that. She explained that her students sometimes find it difficult to give the exact linguistic word. Therefore, she encourages them to describe what they want to say. In other words, Sue helps her students describe the colour, size, material or function of the items students lack the exact English label for. I think this task is very helpful when the unknown word is a concrete item. However, the task may seem harder when students are dealing with abstract words. This point was further stated by Kellerman et al, (1987) who explain, "most concrete objects have functions, and its function which usually differentiate one concrete object from another. If the task consists of communicating abstract concepts such as 'faith', 'hope' and 'charity', descriptions of function are unlikely to surface in large numbers" (p. 77). Sue added that she sometimes asks her students to draw what they cannot say. Furthermore, Sue pointed out that she asks her students to work in pairs and groups where they are involved in guessing the difficult words they are learning. Sue explained that this type of activity is helpful for learners to improve their communicative abilities in the foreign language. I would also share the same point of view regarding the guessing activity. This involves one or a group of students choosing a certain word and asking the other students to guess that word by asking different questions. The questions also usually are about the size, colour, or function of that word. I will discuss the classroom activities that help learners develop their communication strategies when I present the responses for the third research question.

My participant Hilda was another supporter of the teachability idea. She highlighted that teachers need to encourage their students to use communication strategies and especially if teachers realised that their students lack them. Moreover, Hilda pointed out that students can also improve their communication strategies if they are given the opportunity to communicate with native speakers of the language they are learning.

It is worth mentioning here that my participants appeared to be unhappy about the transfer of first language strategies to the second language context proposed by the Cons. For example, Gary clarified that what we do in our first language is not directly transferable to the second language. Gary emphasised that this is also applicable to many other skills and not just to communication strategies. "People say we do not need to teach or we do not need to encourage things like skimming and scanning, because learners can naturally do that in a second language. This is not true" (Gary, 169-170). Gary reported that when he used to underline some of the words that his students usually did not know; students promptly resorted to their dictionaries and found out their meanings. Gary explained that if he was in the same situation in his first language which is English, he would try to skim over and scan the text for a wider meaning for the words that he could not understand. However, he stated that when it comes to the second language, learners become less confident about their ability and they prefer to abandon the habits that naturally occur in their first languages. Furthermore, the same thing happens with communication strategies. Learners abandon strategies because of fear and confidence, when they are involved in real life communication. Consequently, learners find themselves unable to send their messages through; they freeze because they are not confident enough and feel afraid to cope in the conversation. Gary concluded that we need to encourage students to apply them in real life situations where they really need them.

L1 refers to the first language and L2 the second language. The L1 in the context of this study refers to the specific learners' first language whether it is Chinese, Arabic, Persian etc., and the L2 means English. Jack has commented that learners do have communication strategies in their first language. However, those communication strategies are different from one culture to another. Furthermore,

Jack argued that even in one culture, one may find some differences among individuals. Learners may transfer their first language strategies to the second language context, but this may not always be appropriate.

Regarding the transfer of first language strategies, Robert highlighted that first language strategies are adopted in an unconscious way. In other words, learners are not aware of the strategies they use in their first language. "First language learning is not something of a conscious process" (Robert, 128). This is similar to what Ellis (1997) refers to as first language transfer. He indicated that the learner's first language may impact on the acquisition of the second one. Moreover, Ellis (1997) explains that this transfer is called negative transfer if some errors resulted due to the inappropriate transfer between the two languages. He also refers to the successful or appropriate transfer as positive when it helps learners learning the foreign language. In this respect, Robert pointed out that learning a second language is completely different from learning a first one. He added that learning a second language is similar to the learning of any other skills. One needs to be conscious about what he/she is doing. Robert then concluded that:

> I think, teachers have to focus on how to improve students' communication in an effective way. Things that students did when they were learning their first language will not automatically be transferred to the process of learning a second language. (Robert, 132-135).

Sue also was unhappy about the idea that first language strategies can or may be transferable to the second language. "I would say the fact that everyone has communication strategies, but what works in one language may not work in another. Furthermore, I do not think that they are culturally universal" (Sue, 94-95). Sue also added that this is also applicable to gestures as well. In other words, gestures can have different meanings from one culture to another. I will not go into more detail about the use of gestures here, because this theme will be discussed later in this chapter.

Robert emphasised that first language and second language learning are two different processes, so the transfer of strategies may not always be successful. The same point of view was highlighted by Hilda who stated that "it is hard to assume that first language strategies can be transferred to the second language" (77).

I indicated in (section 2.12) in the literature review chapter that researchers have different positions regarding the transferability of communication strategies from first to the second language. Jack stressed that if we assumed that strategies are transferable from L1 to L2, this process may result in some kind of inappropriateness of usage. I would also share the same point of view here. I think learners who can transfer their first language strategies to the second language context, may face some clashes between the two languages especially in terms of cultural differences.

Generally speaking, regarding the teachability of communication strategies, my participants believe that communication strategies are pedagogically effective as they help learners find alternative ways to express their intended messages. This view is supported by the 'Pros' like Dörnyei (2005); Faucette (2001) and Nakatani (2010). My participants also did not agree with the transferability of strategies between the first and second language. They highlighted that if students attempt to transfer strategies, they may clash or result in an inappropriate use of the language. They explained this contradiction might be the result of the cultural differences between the two languages.

Having described and discussed how my participants responded to the teachability of communication strategies, the next theme under consideration is about how communication strategies help learners build their confidence.

4.3.2   Communication Strategies Help Learners Build Their Confidence

Some of my participants stated that learners sometimes feel frustrated when they find it hard to send their messages through. "Occasionally, students just give up because they find it too frustrating to continue in a conversation" (Karen, 39-40). During my interview with Karen, she told me about her experience with her

students who feel disappointed when they realise that they are unable to communicate effectively and say what they want to. This view is also reflected in Gary's experience of teaching communication strategies: "I thought that is the same with communication strategies, students feel disappointed when they find it difficult to use them" (176-178). Gary identified that learners who are not confident enough about their communicative abilities, often use no strategies to compensate for the words they do not know in real life communication. As a result, this type of learners chooses to stop or cut off the communication channel before they achieve their communicative goals. In this respect, Masakatsu (1998) highlights that: "experiencing this kind of situations several times, the student gradually loses interest in learning English and finally becomes disappointed" (p. 1). This is also viewed by the participant William who stressed that some students may face communicative difficulties when attempting to send their messages through and they "…do not have the confidence to apply these sort of strategies" (161). Similarly, Karen states that learning a foreign language can be frustrating. Learners, who are not able to express their ideas and thoughts, have the potential to feel alienated from people around them.

> …not being able to express who you are not just what you want to say, to express your personality, is highly frustrating and limiting so the more that we can equip students for strategies to be able to do that, then the better… (Karen, 190-192).

I would also share the same point of view about feeling frustrated when learning a foreign language or in particular, when one becomes unable to send their messages through. I had experienced such feeling when I first started learning English. I really felt disappointed when I found myself lacking the vocabulary to help me communicate. I remember how I felt frustrated when my English Language teacher asked questions which I knew the answers to, but in my native language, not in English.

Robert believed that learners, especially those with a strong academic background in their own countries, feel disappointed when they find it difficult to send their points across.

> If they have a very low level of vocabulary, they might struggle to communicate and explain what they intend to say. I think it is quite frustrating. Often, there are students with a very strong academic background in their own country and they feel stupid particularly when they are unable to communicate. I think when they have been here for a certain amount of time and they pick up some vocabulary, they become a bit more comfortable with the strategies so they can apply them to some extent (87-88).

I also agree with Robert about his point of view regarding this. I would like to insert my own experience when I first came to the UK. It was in 2005 when I joined the University of Exeter for a language course for Libyan teachers of English. It was also my first time ever to be in an English speaking country. Being a teacher of English for nearly six years involved in teaching students from different levels motivated me to relatively trust my communicative abilities in this foreign language. I thought when I visited the UK, I would be able to understand every single word and speak fluently and smoothly. However, I really struggled to understand every single word said in English, let alone the slang or the language spoken in the streets. I still remember the feeling of frustration whenever I found myself in such situations. I was completely disappointed when I found it hard to speak as fast as native speakers do. Therefore, I completely agree with Robert when he commented that students coming from strong academic background usually feel disappointed about their communicative abilities. However, for me, this feeling started to diminish after the completion of my language course at Sheffield and I started doing my PhD. Furthermore, I found dealing with my supervisor who was very friendly and supportive all the time very helpful to improve my communication skills.

Other examples regarding this topic I would like to mention are the comments I always hear from my friends (who usually are university lecturers) who feel unhappy when they become unable to speak or write in English. They always

complain about the communicative gaps that sometimes occur in their conversation or writing. They always comment about their inabilities to either understand or send their messages to a native speaker. Some of them even decided to drop their courses or gave up studying in an English speaking country and looked to start their PhDs in Arabic-language countries where the language problems seem to disappear. I know quite a few students who finished their language courses and are still not confident about their level of English, so they decided to go to Egypt to commence their studies where Arabic is the official language. I think language is one of the greatest obstacles students face when they choose to study in a foreign country and especially when the L1 and L2 are very different which is the case between Arabic and English for instance.

My participants believe that there is a relationship between the learners' confidence and their communicative abilities. This reinforces Nakatani's (2010) views when he suggests that: "it was easy for them [learners] to lose confidence when faced with a communication problem" (p. 126). However, those learners may feel more confident if they use alternative techniques to overcome the communicative difficulties that may occur. This also corroborates my participant Karen's ideas "…so, I think when students always try to go around the obstacle and I am thinking of it in the physical way, then it is a reward for their frustration" (Karen, 49-51). Karen clearly wanted to tell me that her students feel frustrated when they cannot communicate in English. However, they feel more confident when they find alternative ways to overcome their communicative difficulties. This view is also held by William who argued "if you are confident, it works" (108). William tried to point out that learners' confidence is very important in communication. He emphasised that students need to focus on the positive side of their language and what they can do, not on the negative side which will impact on their communicative skills and as a result, they may feel less confident and stop communicating in the foreign language. Rebecca also shares the same point of view and she commented that "I found that if you give students the necessary information to communicate correctly, it gives them so much confidence" (78). In this respect, Lewis (2011) highlights that teachers can help their learners build their confidence by encouraging them to use communication strategies

appropriately. In line with this, Graham (1997) points out that: "there is room for teaching strategies such as language paraphrasing, which are likely to reinforce the effect of building students' confidence, the aim of the initial strategy teaching" (p. 143). In the same way, Rebecca explained, "it is the way that you say it, if you believe that the way you say it is understandable to a native speaker, it gives you a lot of confidence, and that kind of confidence can override grammatical accuracy" (96-99). Similarly, Sue describes the relationship between communication strategies and confidence as:

> I think it [communication strategy] gives students the confidence to speak more clearly, even if they are not sure about their language. When they can play around the language, they become more confident about their abilities to communicate (34-38 Sue).

Sue is clearly maintaining that learners who attempt to find alternative techniques to overcome communicative difficulties feel more confident about themselves to use the target language. Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994) stress that the ability to compensate for linguistic gaps generally helps learners increase their communicative confidence. This view is also shared by Mariani (2010) who clarifies that the use of communication strategies successfully may have positive impacts on learning because the successful performance is easy to be stored in memory. I would also share the same point of view, from my own learning experience as a language learner, I agree that language learners easily remember the successful learning experience which they feel proud of. I remember how happy I was as a student when I could speak in English without interruptions or gaps. Therefore, I believe that learners will find these situations helpful in their learning process. Jones et al. (1987) conclude that "one of the principal goals of strategy training is to alter students' beliefs about themselves by teaching them that their failures can be attributed to the lack of effective strategies rather than to the lack of ability or to laziness" (p. 56). In this respect, O'Malley and Chamot (1995) discuss that students can benefit from strategy training programmes and become motivated as they experience using them successfully. This view is also elaborated by Manchon (2000) who states that learners might feel motivated if

they become aware that there are alternative ways to compensate for the words they do not know.

I would say that describing or discussing the learners' confidence in the use of leads to the theme or topic of motivation as well. Throughout my readings of the relevant literature and the interpretations of my participants' voices, it was suggested that there is a relationship between communication strategies and the learners' confidence. I would also insert here that the learners' motivation is an interesting phenomenon in communication strategies studies. Some of my participants indicated that there is a relationship between the use of communication strategies and the learners' motivation. According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) motivation refers to "what moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, to expand effort and persist in action" (p. 3). One of my participants who supports the teachability idea, said "for me, I think it is quite important for learners to know what they are doing so when they are aware of what they are doing, they can understand and they can be more positive or motivated" (Ann, 117-119).

Motivation for Sally seems to be the most important aspect when teaching foreign languages. Sally always seeks the learners' needs in order to help them communicate.

> I usually find something that they want. Therefore, they have to have the motivation and the desire. It could be a cup of tea, a cup of coffee, a book, or a job, so I look for something they want that helps to increase their motivation to communicate in English (Sally, 67-69).

I would agree with Sally about her ideas about motivation and desires of learners as being crucial aspects for learning a foreign language. For me, the motivation issue is a significant milestone in the learning of a foreign language. If learners are motivated to learn, then it becomes easier for them to acquire the foreign language. This idea is supported by Dörnyei (1998) who highlights that "motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (p. 117).

Once, my second language acquisition tutor back home asked us about what a teacher essentially needs in order to make students learn the foreign language, and then one of my classmates answered 'the only thing teachers need is students who have the desire to learn'. I really felt that I completely share the same point of view.

Another example worth mentioning here was during my classroom observation of Ann's lesson. I noticed that most students were showing high interest and where motivated to communicate and sent their messages across. It seems that students felt comfortable and enthusiastic to find alternative ways in order to deliver their ideas. For me, one of the difficult challenges for any EFL teacher is how to make students active participants in a regular classroom activity. Students may feel bored or unmotivated in involving themselves in some activities which consequently may impact on their language development. Therefore, increasing the learners' motivation to participate in classroom activities seems to be one of the most important goals of any EFL teacher. As a result, learners who use alternative ways of overcoming communicative problems, may feel motivated and enthusiastic to engage and participate in the foreign language classroom activities.

The relationship between communication strategies and learners' motivation was encouraged by Nakatani (2010) in his study which investigated whether the use of specific communication strategies would help in the development of the learners' proficiency of English. He concluded that some of his learners who were trained to use communication strategies developed their motivation to talk in English. In the same vein, Rabab'ah (2005) highlights that: "motivation plays an important part in improving and developing learners' communicative ability" (p. 188).

Generally speaking, my participants and some of the researchers in the field believe that learners feel frustrated and disappointed when they are unable to keep the communication channel open. Nevertheless, they advocate and support the idea that communication strategies help learners become more confident about their linguistic abilities. I would like also to point out that the theme 'learners' motivation' was not discussed in enough details here as it was only constructed or emerged in my data at the final stages of the analysis. However, this topic might

seem an interesting area for future research. (See section 6.5 where recommendations for future research are discussed).

In this section, I discussed the relationship between the learners' confidence and use of communication strategies. I also briefly described the learners' motivation. The next section deals with the role of culture on the use of communication strategies.

4.3.3   Cultural Impacts on Learners Using Communication Strategies

One of the emergent themes in my study is the relationship between culture and communication strategies. "The concept of culture as seen in the CS [communication strategy] research is usually accidentally derived from data analysis" (Wongsawang, 2001, p. 115). In this section, I will discuss how my participants responded to the question about the relationship between culture and communication strategies as well as drawing on the relevant literature. It is hard to separate communication from language and culture. Successful cross-cultural communication needs cultural fluency. "In order to communicate effectively in English, students need more than just competence in English grammar and vocabulary. They must also have an awareness of culturally-determined patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication which speakers of English follow" (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1994). As recounted above, "In my culture, it is wrong and rude to change what other people have said" (168). This was the answer of one of Ann's students when she asked him about the reasons for completely copying his homework from the website "Wikipedia". The influence of culture was another emergent theme in my study: "culture is seen to include everything people learn to do" (Seelye, 1997, p. 14). Ann stated that culture might affect education, communication, and learning styles of the learners. She brought up a very interesting story about one of her students from Iraq. This student plagiarized his writing task from Wikipedia and submitted it to Ann. As a result, Ann asked that student about the reasons for copying everything from Wikipedia instead of paraphrasing the work. He claimed that it is considered wrong and rude, in his own culture, to change other peoples' words and expressions. That is one aspect

of culture coming to study skills. Ann's student tried to transfer his first language strategies to the second language context. However, it was an unsuccessful process to meet the requirements of writing in the second language and the student's work would not be considered.

This is a clear example of how culture has impacted on the communication of that student. This view was also highlighted by McDonough (1995) who maintains that the notion of *intellectual property* carries different connotations to staff and students. He underlines that submitting unacknowledged works is seen by staff in the Western context as "essentially a stolen good" (p. 127). However, people who move from one culture to study in another, view using other people's ideas as the best way of expressing the relevant thoughts as written by the people who initially produced them (McDonough, 1995). In this respect, Ann maintained that culture has an important influence on learners' use of communication strategies, a point further explained by Khenoune (2012) who describes her students as "coming from a culture in which people use a wide range of gestures and facial expressions either as an aid or as a substitute to their linguistic output" (p. 775). It seems that some students in certain cultures depend a lot on their gestures and body language to compensate for the words they do not know. I will discuss the use of gestures later in this chapter.

Moreover, Ann highlighted that she is not making any generalisations but this is based on her observations in her own classrooms. Ann stated that some Arab students:

> Tend to be more aggressive regardless of whether they are males or females. They tend to be more aggressive, not physically of course, aggressive in class and because of this aggressiveness not in a bad way, it is a positive way, aggressiveness, they tend to dominate communication, they tend to be able to describe things using examples or paraphrasing (Ann, 175-178).

In line with this, I completely concur with Ann about her view regarding Arab learners. We attempt to be active and try to communicate either with each other or with other students. For example, whenever we meet on the bus here in the UK,

we promptly start greeting each other, and then the conversation carries on throughout the whole journey. I anticipate that this willingness to socially interact stems from our own culture where it is highly appreciated if people start greeting and talking to others. It is also considered unacceptable if someone just ignores others even if they meet for the first time. Moreover, I notice that Arab students attempt to transfer those strategies to the L2 context. It seems that such factors may need further research and investigations, a view stated by Yousef et al. (2013) who emphasise the need to explore the various factors including communication strategies that play an important role in the students' willingness to communicate in the L2 context. (See the next section for more discussions about this).

Another cultural phenomenon Ann described during the interview was about asking questions.

> In our educational system, if you question your teacher, you are considered rude, not in the sense that questioning the authority that is different in learning for example, if I say something and students asked me what do you mean, are you sure that this right, that is considered rude (Ann, 100-103).

Ann described that in her own educational system (Ann is an EFL teacher who came from abroad to teach English in the UK) it is not acceptable for one to start asking questions especially to the teacher. The teacher's role is the source of knowledge which cannot be questioned for any reason.

I would also share the same experience about this. In my home country Libya, students may be criticised if they started questioning their teachers. The number of questions and topics that students are allowed to ask is extremely limited. I think this cultural aspect is not helpful in learning the foreign language because students need always to monitor their questions and they also will not have much practice in the foreign language as the teacher will be the source of the knowledge in the classroom.

Lisa stated that learners also need to understand what is culturally acceptable in order to communicate effectively in the target language context. She gave an example about that. She explained that:

> English people are often seen as rather polite, because we often say "excuse me" all the time or "would you mind?" Somebody else might say "close the door, I am cold", but English people might say, "Is anybody else feeling cold?", and the culture is important here, so it is knowing , I guess, what you want to say, what is the best way to communicate in the context to the audience that you have (Lisa, 60-64).

Lisa pointed out that communication strategies can be affected by many factors. It is clear that Lisa tried to link communication strategies usage with cultural appropriateness. Moreover, Lisa described the communicative difficulty that learners may face in their communication as a 'gap'. I would share the same point of view about describing the communicative difficulty as a 'gap'. For me, this gap hinders the communication process and learners need to find alternative ways to fill it in order to keep the communication channel open.

As most EFL teachers, Jack was involved in teaching students from different cultures and some of those students use different strategies. Jack explained that this diversity in the use of strategies might be related to learners' personality and social group. Therefore, he explained that such strategies are hard to be taught at schools in the formal teaching fashion. Jack gave the following example about the impact of culture on communication if one asks a Japanese student a question, he or she would firstly pause and then give their answers. Jack further stated:

> I mentioned previously the stereotypical Japanese learners or Chinese learners. They tend to be quite thoughtful before they speak. They do not seem to say very much. For example, in a university context or seminar, they would come across as either not understanding or having nothing to say, where probably they would understand (Jack, 165-168).

Jack highlighted that it is quite polite in the Japanese culture to show such behaviour. However, this may indicate some shortage of the required vocabulary in other cultures. I would also share the same point of view, in my Libyan culture,

if somebody deliberately pauses for a while before they respond to others, this might be considered as impolite or it could result in some misunderstanding.

Regarding the link between culture and communication strategies, Hilda believes that students from different cultures use different communication strategies. She explained that: "people like Arabic speakers tend to talk all the time, whereas Chinese speakers tend to be quiet" (Hilda, 87). Hilda explained that the attitude of Arabic learners makes communication important to use the foreign language. However, Chinese learners seem to devalue the importance of communication that needs any strategies and their main goal is to obtain the required qualification. So, learning English for them is a means to an end. Moreover, Hilda identified the similarities or differences between English and other languages. She stated:

> So, if you are a European, then a lot of the words that you come across in English are probably quite similar to your own language. So, most of the times, it is possible to guess, but also you know, you are aware that you are closer to the people you are speaking to (Hilda, 93-95).

Furthermore, Hilda added that if the two languages are very different, then it becomes difficult to learn and transfer strategies. Hilda highlighted that teachers need to be aware of the cultural impacts on the communication of their learners.

Gary also highlighted the role of culture when talking about communication strategies. He observed that students coming from a European background are more comfortable when teachers encourage them to work independently in the classroom. The teacher-student relationship is collaborative. Therefore, they are more willing to engage in communication strategies.

> In European cultures, it is a slightly different model where it is a bit more collaborative in the classroom. There is less difference between students and teachers in which case they are more willing to engage in these communication strategies (Gary, 146-148).

On the other hand, Gary indicated that in the Asian cultures, there is a hierarchy of teacher-student relationship. Teachers seem to be the only source of

information and they know everything. I would also concur that students coming from a European background are more willing to communicate than other nationalities including Arabic nationalities which I have already mentioned that they are also more willing to communicate. I think the main reason is the educational systems of those countries which focus on the development of the skills of students. In other words, they are student centred approaches.

Sarah explained that "there seem to be some nationalities and cultures where people are more prepared to have a go and other nationalities and cultures where people are more resistant to speak" (Sarah, 101-103). She also highlighted that there are some nationalities where people seem to be relaxed about speaking and communicating with others. Those learners also are not afraid of making mistakes while they speak. Moreover, Sarah stressed that this diversity in communication stems from the educational system of those countries. I would also share the same point of view that there are differences in the way people communicate from one culture to another.

Sarah recommended that teachers need to pair learners from different backgrounds in order to not give the chance to speak English and stop them using their native language in the classroom. Students also can read passages and try to explain their content to others in order to practise communication strategies.

Tom believes that there is a link between culture and the use of communication strategies. He told me about his experience in Thailand and said that the first thing people there ask about when they meet or call a friend is whether one has eaten or not. Furthermore, people in Thailand would normally ask you where you are going if they meet someone they know. I would like to insert my own experience here: in my Libyan culture, many people will feel unhappy if someone asks them particularly the question "where they are going"? Some would prefer to keep silent instead of giving an answer for this type of questions.

Tom pointed out that culture is very influential on the learners' communication strategies and some of them would feel embarrassed or give up communicating if they provide an inappropriate answer. Tom concluded that:

> So, we need to understand the role of culture in language learning. I think, students need only to be aware of that role but they do not necessarily have to change their own cultures. (23-24).

Karen stated that learners from the Middle Eastern cultures contribute a lot in the classroom. Moreover, they feel confident when they are speaking in front of other students, "I guess it is part to do with their culture and part to do with their educational background" (Karen, 208). In other words, Arab students seem to have better grounding to learn English than many Chinese students, "I am not saying that is a representation of all Chinese students at British universities" (Karen, 213). I also feel that culture is a very influential aspect on the learning of a foreign language in general and communication strategies in particular. Another example where culture plays a role in language learning was presented by Karen when she pointed out "I have a general idea that in Arabic, one can use so many words because you come to the main point while English is being much more focused and linear and does not use redundant information or phrases" (Karen, 88). I also agreed with this point of view. It is very common in my language that writers need to write many sentences in order to express their intended meaning. This also can be found in messages or emails where the text needs to have a very good introduction before mentioning the key point in the text. This style is different in English where it is preferable to write the main point of the message straight away. I remember my English language tutors telling me that it is important to write the main point of the text immediately and try to avoid writing irrelevant information.

During my interview with Robert, he clearly pointed out that some of his students seem to be more active than others. More interestingly, this type of student usually came from the same or similar cultures. The idea of finding students who tend to be more active than others is clearly supported by Mariani (2010) who

states that some people tend to communicate through in spite of their limited linguistic or sociolinguistic abilities. Mariani (2010) also stresses that those people are expected to use a variety of strategies to keep the conversation channel open. Thus, it seems very crucial for foreign language teachers to become aware of such differences especially if they were involved in teaching students from different cultural backgrounds. The same view was reinforced by Littlemore (2009) who highlights that teachers need to understand that students who come from different cultures may interpret the content of the lesson or lecture according to their own values. In the same vein, McDonough (1995) explains that the difficulty stems from the fact that "L2 [second language] text books are usually written within the cultural assumptions of the speakers of that language, not within those of the reader's first language" (p. 42). I would also share the same point of view regarding this. However, I think material designers may purposely produce text books based upon the target culture because they want the reader to have the opportunity to learn about the target cultures. It seems that culture is an interesting topic when it comes to the teaching of a foreign language because if teachers only focus on culture when teaching the foreign language, students might end up with acquiring the target culture and neglect to learn the language. Learners may also forget or lose their own identity as a result of focusing on the target one.

There is no doubt that "there are so many culture-specific do's and don'ts that a language learner is constantly walking through a cultural minefield" (Dörnyei & Thurrell., 1994, p. 47). Similarly, Tomalin and Stempleski (1994) explain:

> Countries such as Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand have very different traditions and cultural behaviours from the traditional ELT heartlands of Europe and North America. As increasing number of students have travelled abroad to learn English, there has been a re-evaluation of teaching content to take account of the need to explore and explain cultural differences in greater detail (p. 5).

This is also shared by Littlemore (2009) who indicates that: "students are perhaps more likely to notice clues that correspond to their cultural expectations than ones

that do not" (p. 274). Moreover, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994) stress that language learners sometimes are not aware of the cultural differences which may result in some sensitivity, which may cause breakdowns in communication. A view highlighted by Tomalin and Stempleski (1994) who comment:

> Culturally different patterns of communication are a common cause of misunderstanding and can be a source of discomfort in cross-cultural situations. For example, a student who comes from a culture in which students are not expected to ask questions or give opinions in class may feel uncomfortable interacting in English-speaking situations, students need to develop an understanding of the differences in communication styles between their own and English-speaking cultures (p. 105).

Faucette (2001) gives an example about this when she said that: "the Japanese 'eh?' meaning 'huh?' which could be used as a global appeal for assistance, might be seen as impolite in some cultures" (p. 8). Respectively, Rost and Ross (1991) explain "questions are often viewed negatively in Japanese educational settings as admissions of ignorance or inattention" (p. 255). The same view is supported by Mariani (2010) who highlights that it is necessary to consider the intercultural dimension of strategy use. She states that: "the use of fillers to (gain time) and fill in gaps between speech turns can be felt as a need by some speakers, but can also sound irritating or even insulting in some cultures" (p. 30). This view is further stated by Dörnyei (1995) who argues that some communication strategies in certain languages might be considered as "indicators of bad style" if they were inappropriately used because of the cultural differences between the two languages (pp. 63-64). This view is clearly supported by my participant Tom when he told me about his teaching experience in Japan and said:

> A good example is when I taught in Japan, and I said to a student 'hello' 'how are you today?' and she answered 'I am fine and you can see I am fine' 'why do you ask?'. They understand the language perfectly, but it is not the language, it is the cultural aspect, I thought there is something wrong with her. Another example from Japan is where you might say 'you look very fat today', so it is healthy and wellbeing to look fat (220-224).

The second example about "being fat" described by Tom above, is also considered acceptable in my own Libyan culture. It is acceptable to tell other people that they are getting fat or have gained some weight. I would like to insert a situation from my own experience regarding this. This happened when I first arrived in Sheffield and I was doing an academic English language course. One of our classmates who had just arrived from a holiday had recognizably gained some weight. I spontaneously commented "you put on weight" and my teacher was very surprised about my comment as she did not expect me to say that. Then, I realised that it is unacceptable to use such expressions in certain cultures.

According to Littlemore (2003), this sort of misunderstanding between cultures is unlikely to happen when describing the physical properties of a certain object. She argues that "a slug is always a sticky, featureless, dull-coloured creature, regardless of the culture of the person describing it" (p. 8). Furthermore, Littlemore (2003) maintains that strategies used to describe items' properties and functions seem to be more effective when the cultural perceptions of the native and target languages are required to have some degree of shared understandings. In this respect, Mariani (2010) states that it is important to become sensitive and accept differences between cultures in order to improve the effectiveness of communication strategies not only as a problem-solving device but also as aids to promote intra- and inter-cultural dialogue.

Foreign language learners sometimes avoid referring to their native culture as they understand it may clash with the listener's culture. This view was captured by Tarone and Yule (1987, p. 63) who highlight that some speakers prefer not to use 'culturally loaded' references. For example, one of their participants decided in the middle of the conversation to abandon describing 'a sardine can key' to a friend when he/she realized that the listener was expected not to share the same information. Moreover, the speaker had taken into consideration the identity of the listener when using communication strategies.

It seems that culture is very influential on the learners' education in general and the use of communication strategies in particular. The relevant literature in

accordance with my participants' positions seem to emphasise the impact of culture on learners. A view supported by Mariani (2010) who states that:

> There is no (universal norm) in managing interactions. This has strong implications for strategy choice and use: ways of taking turns in conversation, holding the floor, interrupting or changing topics, for instance, are all culture-sensitive, and require responsible handling of situations" (pp. 18-19).

Consequently, "effective training in culturally appropriate CS [communication strategy] use would be beneficial to students from all languages and cultures" (Faucette, 2001, p. 8). Therefore, teachers need to do a sort of "cultural needs analysis" to select the relevant models and instructions to be taught to certain groups of learners (Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1994, Faucette, 2001).

Generally speaking, the field of communication strategies research seems to lack studies exploring the relationship between communication strategies and culture. This view was further stated by Wongsawang (2001) who points out that only one research study explored this factor. In this respect, Seelye (1997) highlights that: "in short, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the study of language cannot be divorced from the study of culture, and vice-versa" (p. 22). Therefore, there seems to be a need for further studies to look at this, a view already addressed by Tarone and Yule (1987) who emphasise that future research needed to explore "to what extent do speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds use communication strategies differently?" (p. 64). (See Chapter Six for more discussions about the recommendations which this study makes).

Having discussed the impact of culture on the learners' use of communication strategies, the topic under consideration in the next section is 'learners' willingness to communicate'.

4.3.4 <u>Learners' Willingness to Communicate</u>

One of the emergent themes in this study is learners' willingness to communicate. Willingness to communicate is an emerging concept added to the affective variables that influence foreign language learning like motivation, attitudes and language anxiety (Yashima, 2002). Some of my participants highlighted that there are differences among second language learners in their willingness to communicate in the target language. Some learners are more willing to communicate than other learners. My participant Robert stated that:

> I guess there is a link between communication strategies and learners' willingness to communicates. We have many, that is only an example, many Chinese students who are perhaps in their own culture used to think of their teacher as standing at the board and doing everything. I find it very difficult to make this type of student engages in classroom presentations. Whereas, I suppose Libyan students have more confidence and are more willing to give of themselves and show their emotions, try things out they perhaps pick communication strategies or learn them and apply them more readily than other nationalities (137-138).

Students from Chinese cultures, as Robert declares, find it difficult to engage in classroom presentations in a dynamic way. Robert highlighted that this difficulty stems from their educational system where the teacher is doing everything and students sit quietly in the classroom. However, Robert describes Libyan students as being more confident and more willing to communicate. Therefore, they may learn some communication strategies and apply them.

I have already commented that I would agree that in the Libyan culture, people like to communicate. In other terms, Libyans seem to be more sociable and active in communication either with each other or with other people from different cultures. I would also stress that it is the same case in our first language and the strategy transfer issue may seem to have some significance here.

"The willingness to communicate can be conceptualized as a readiness to speak in the L2 at a particular moment with a specific person, and as such, is the final psychological step to the initiation of L2 communication" (Macintyre & Doucette, 2010, p. 162). In this respect, Yashima (2012) points out that willingness to

communicate is considered as a personality trait that seems to be stable among individuals and across time. However, this point of view seems to gain less support by Macintyre et al. (1998) who state "many learners have noticed that their willingness to communicate varies considerably over time and across situations" (p. 545). Cao and Philp (2006) conducted a study to investigate the learners' perceptions of factors influencing their willingness to communicate. They found out that factors like group size, familiarity with interlocutors and self-confidence are very influential on the learners' willingness to communicate. Regarding the link between willingness to communicate and culture, Yashima (2002) points out that: "in order to encourage students to be more willing to communicate in English, EFL lessons should be designed to enhance students' interest in different cultures" (p. 63). I would also agree that there are differences among learners in their willingness to communicate. Some students are found to be more willing to communicate than their classmates. This type of learner recognizably tends to speak more and seems to acquire different skills.

Sarah identified that learners with good communication strategies are those who usually attempt to make an effort to send their points across without directly resorting to their dictionaries. They try to find alternative ways to describe what they want to say when they find it hard to give the exact vocabulary. On the other hand, learners with poor communication strategies easily give up when they face communicative difficulty or they just rely on other friends to help them describe what they intend to say. I think that teachers often come across students who differ in their learning styles. As a result, some students may become good communication strategy users, and others poor strategy users. I believe that teachers need to focus more on the students with poor communication strategies in order to help them perform better in the foreign language.

Generally speaking, the topic of learners' willingness to communicate might be related to the personality of that learner. However, this seems another interesting area for future research. (See section 6.5 in Chapter Six for more details about this).

Having discussed the theme 'learners' willingness to communicate', the next topic of discussion is the learners' use of mobile phones in the classroom and how this impacts on their communication strategies.

4.3.5   <u>The Learners' Use of Mobile Phones in the Classroom</u>

Through my classroom observations and according to the responses of participants, some students were found to resort to their smart phones in order to translate the words they did not know. In other words, students were becoming highly dependent on the translation applications installed on their smart phones. The same view is held by Cui and Wang (2008) who state that: "cell phones as ML [Mobile Learning] devices are more prevalent and the most popular of mobile devices" (p. 71). Learners may also resort to their electronic dictionaries as well, a view that was highlighted by Williams (2006) who describes his students as "excessively relying on their electronic dictionaries during in-class communicative activities". In this section, the discussion of the topic of students' reliance on their electronic gadgets refers to all the electronic devices they resort to when they find it hard to know English vocabulary. However, I used 'mobile phones' as a heading for this section because it was the device most students used either during my classroom observations or as reported by my participants.

In response to my question, "can you tell me what your students usually do when they find it hard to give the exact word in English?" Hilda stated that the level of the learner is very important here. Learners at higher levels tend to paraphrase or describe the words they do not know and they are good at that. However, other students at lower levels usually attempt to reach for their electronic dictionaries or ask a friend who is able to speak their own mother tongue. Hilda described the use of the electronic dictionaries in the classrooms as an "impediment to communication" (Hilda, 22).

Gary claims that students who are in the pre-intermediate or intermediate and above levels of English usually attempt to employ paraphrasing skills to talk around or describe the words they do not know. Nevertheless, students at lower

levels lack these skills and usually resort to consulting their dictionaries. Gary advised that: "I would probably discourage that particularly when we are talking, to try to encourage them to use the communication strategies a bit more. Students always rely on their electronic dictionaries and things like that to help them translate the words they do not know" (32-35). Gary asserted that resorting to electronic devices for translating might be helpful for them in the classroom but this is not possible when they are communicating with other people outside their classrooms. In real communication, people usually are not patient and tolerant to wait for someone to consult their dictionaries and try to look for the meaning of the words they do not know.

Sally commented that her students recognisably use their mobile phones to help them translate the words they do not know. "They will put the information in their phones, translate it and give me the translation in text on their phones. They use technology a lot, they use technology more than you think" (Sally, 53-54). However, Sally explained the fact that many teachers are not happy with their students' excessive use of electronic dictionaries and any similar technologies in classrooms. Therefore, they have forbidden that because it may negatively influence the learning process of students. Nonetheless, Sally has a different point of view about the learners' use of mobile phones in the classroom and she permits these but with restrictions. I would like also to highlight that the students' reliance on their mobile phones was observed in Sally's classroom. Sally asked her students to write one full sentence about two different topics. While students were working on this task, most of them promptly used their smart phones to translate the words they wanted to write. It seemed that students automatically resorted to their mobile phones to help them write their intended messages. For me, this may have negative consequences on the students' learning because students may just find look for the meaning of words without using any guessing skills or thinking about it.

Tom argued that teachers traditionally discourage learners from using their mobile phones in the classroom because teachers do not always know what students

actually are doing with them. However, Tom regularly permits the use of mobile phones in the classroom.

> I would say 'OK', check on your telephone, but one person in the group, I think there is no point in everybody doing it but one person in the group, and then discuss the meaning, find out from your friend, something like that (Tom, 114-117).

Tom stated that if students discuss word meanings in the group, then they will find that helpful and effective for them. However, if each student uses his or her own mobile phone to find out the meaning without discussing that with other students, then it is "a reach without process" (Tom, 122-123). Tom explained that: "we should take advantage of mobile phones as a medium of study because all have got an iphone" (Tom, 129).Tom highlighted that learners are becoming highly dependent on the use of their mobile phones in classrooms, so teachers need to make this helpful for the learning/teaching process. He explained:

> I do try to encourage students to discuss a topic in order to communicate a meaning rather than insistently skipping the strategies they know because I think students use the telephone and it is there for one minute and forgotten (Tom, 130-131).

It is clear that Tom tries to explain that smart phones provide temporary solutions for learners to overcome their communicative problems. I also share the same idea about the use of mobile phones in the classroom. The majority of the teachers I interviewed and witnessed during my classroom observations indicated that learners are becoming dependent on their mobile phones to help them translate unknown vocabulary. During my observation of Tom's classroom, A student pointed out that he used an electronic dictionary to help him in the translation of unknown words. From my own experience during classroom observations, students were becoming highly dependent on their smart phones to find out meanings of the vocabulary they did not know. For example, when Tom asked his students about the word "franchise", a student started reading out the definition of the word directly from his phone. It is apparent that some students find those

devices very accessible. I also observed how students directly started picking up their phones when the teacher asked for an example of "franchise". I previously indicated that some students are becoming dependent on their phones to help them translate difficult words. For me, students seem to unconsciously resort to their mobile phones.

When I asked Karen about what her students usually do when they find it hard to communicate, she said that depends on the level of students.

> I think students of the different levels do try to paraphrase as well to just try and get another way around it and do that in English. Most people try to do that so they just think in a very linear way and get blocked and cannot go any further. They try to get around the block (Karen, 28-30).

Karen explained that if students were at lower levels, they would immediately resort to their dictionaries which are usually electronic ones. Nonetheless, Karen tries to encourage them to stop that for a while and think of an alternative way rather than directly consulting their dictionaries. Karen observed that the direct resort to electronic dictionaries seemed to be like a "reflexive action" when students find it hard to understand some vocabulary: "I am trying to break it as it is becoming a reflex habit. If they do that, they are not thinking of other strategies, they just try to go directly to their phones" (Karen, 38). Karen discourages her students from the immediate consultation of electronic dictionaries as that may not help in the development of their thinking and strategy skills.

The use of mobile phones is recognizably an issue of concern for EFL teachers. "I do not like the fact that people, and I could be one of them if I were in a foreign country I might use one, they think it gives them the access they want" (Karen, 63-64). Karen explained that her students are becoming highly dependent on their smart phones to help them find the meaning of the difficult words. "Some of them will just immediately go to their electronic equipment. Therefore, I tell them just stop a minute and I like you to try and think of another way of doing this than immediately going to your electronic dictionaries" (Karen, 87). Karen expressed her concerns about her students being dependent all the time on their smart

phones. "I do not want them to do use their smart phones for translations…if they do that, they are not thinking of other strategies. They just try to go straight to their smart phones" (Karen, 93). Another issue Karen raised during her interview was about the quality of the translation that these applications provide. She clearly stated that the quality is very variable and sometimes unreliable. She told me about two situations where this variability was clearly identified. One of her students who was an Iranian teenager once showed Karen a list of nearly 20 translated adjectives for a Persian word and asked her which one was appropriate to use. Surprisingly, Karen reported that one or two of these adjectives might be right while the others were not accurate and even not related to the main word. Another student did not understand the phrase "hitch-hike", so he looked it up in his electronic dictionary and unfortunately the meaning was completely out of context. Karen just showed the gestures of hitch-hiking without any reference to its context in order to help that student to understand its meaning. Karen has great concerns about the accuracy of those electronic devices as students are becoming more dependent on them:

> I also have great concerns about the accuracy of the electronic dictionaries and students are becoming dependent on them because they are easy to use and are always on their phones, so they are always with them. But, as I say it becomes a bit of crutch for some people, they are not using the parts of the brain to try to work things out (Karen, 73-75).

It seems that Karen is concerned about her students' overuse of their smart phones or in other words, the translation applications installed on them. She mentioned that she is unhappy about her students becoming highly dependent on their mobile phones whenever they have communicative problems. She thinks that if students continually resort to their translation applications on their mobile phones, this will negatively impact on their thinking skills because the learners immediately look up the meaning of words they do not know effortlessly.

Regarding the learners' use of their electronic dictionaries in the classroom, Tang (1997) states:

> Many of the teachers feel that if they allow the students to use the ED [electronic dictionary], they are not encouraging them to learn through text, and that they are not providing for the students to move away from word level to sentence level and discourse level (p. 54).

I would also concur with this point of view that the learners' use of technology in the classroom especially without the supervision of the teachers, may result in negative consequences and learners could become unproductive. I would like to insert my own experience in this respect. I remember when I first started learning English, I had no access to any technology or computer devices. During that time, I can confirm my spelling skills were excellent and I rarely made spelling errors. However, as soon as I started learning to type using the Microsoft software and resorting to the fascinating help of the spelling checker whenever I faced spelling problem, I felt my own spelling skills were not becoming as efficient as they used to be. I immediately resort to the spelling checker help whenever the word I am typing becomes underlined in red. This action sometimes becomes spontaneous and without thinking of the correct spelling. Consequently, when it comes to handwriting, I find myself struggling to produce the correct spelling of some words and sometimes write them incorrectly. Therefore, I believe the use of technology in the classroom may not always be very helpful to the teaching and learning process, so teachers need to watch and monitor their students' use of such devices.

Another point raised by Karen regarding the quality of the translation applications is the influence of the out of context meaning on the reading skills as well. I already explained that Karen is concerned about the quality of the translation given by these applications. She highlighted that they provide learners with out-of-context meanings. Karen pointed out that the influence of this is not only restricted to the learner's speaking and writing skills, it can also affect their reading skills as well. She stated:

> I find it more or less during the writing sessions that they tend to produce expressions that are completely out of context. They cannot apply them into the situation and so again it is with reading, some students do not look at the context and do not even look at the whole sentence. They just focus on the word they can understand so they are under developing their reading skills (Karen, 100-101).

It is apparent that the issue of using mobile phones in classrooms is a worrying phenomenon for Karen. Students were found to promptly consult their electronic dictionaries to give them the translation they look for. This was reflected in Boonmoh's (2010) study conducted to investigate how university students use pocket electronic dictionaries in their classrooms and found that some of her students did not employ any reading strategies such as looking at the titles, skimming or guessing words from context, " the lack of reading strategies had led the subjects to rely heavily on searching for equivalent meanings from the PEDs [Pocket Electronic Dictionaries]" (p. 687). Boonmoh (2010) also concludes that his participants did not select the appropriate words in terms of word class. The inappropriate word choice of the quality of the translation apps is becoming a concerning issue for EFL teachers.

According to Cui and Wang (2008), educational institutions worry about the use of mobile phones in classrooms. They are concerned because students may misuse them by playing games or become more addicted to those devices. My participants also showed their concerns about this. Students' reliance on their electronic dictionaries may distract them from learning and participating in the classroom activities (Cui & Wang, 2008). In this respect, Tang (1997) indicates that the teachers' perceptions about the use of electronic dictionaries can be divided into social and academic. Socially, teachers consider the use of the electronic dictionaries develops the antisocial behaviour of learners because of their interaction with the machine rather than with their friends and they may feel unwilling to participate in the classroom. Academically, teachers are concerned about the quality of the translations that those electronic dictionaries or applications provide. For example, "Incomplete entry, incorrect entry, and artificial pronunciation" (p. 54). In the same vein, Nesi (2000) also claims that the

academic and contextual product of those electronic devices is not totally guaranteed. This view is also supported by Hamoudai (2013) who advises that many educators do not advocate the use of electronic dictionaries because they believe that it encourages the learners to focus on individual words and ignore the comprehensive understanding of texts. He also added that resorting to dictionaries may slow down reading and hinder second language learners from reading as much as possible. In this respect, Williams (2006) comments on his own classroom students who rely too much on their electronic dictionaries:

> I soon noticed that the amount and length of student discourse decreased. I also noticed that students began to only talk about familiar topics (e.g. family, sports, travel…) and avoided new or more complicated topics. They were more reluctant to speak out of fear of not understanding or being understood without their dictionaries. I needed to find a way to help them realize that they did not have to have their dictionaries or avoid certain topics in order to effectively communicate.

It is clear that Williams (2006) is concerned about the behaviour of his students as they are becoming over dependent on their electronic dictionaries. It seems that they are developing their anti-social behaviour and becoming less academic as they are unable to speak about advanced or complicated issues. In other words, their linguistic repertoire is becoming limited. Therefore, William (2006) is encouraging them to become less dependent on their phones and try not to avoid speaking about complicated topics.

The use of electronic dictionaries in classrooms is apparently becoming an issue of concern for EFL teachers. Therefore, "the teachers have forbidden the use of electronic dictionaries in classrooms and any technology like that" Sally (56-57).

For me, it seems impossible to prevent learners from resorting to their electronic "helpers" especially when they are in urgent need to do so. Thus, I would thoroughly agree with Sally when she emphasised that we need to allow students to consult their electronic dictionaries but "…only with restricted use (63), or as Tom stressed "check that on the telephone but only one person in the group" (101). Tom allows his students to use their phones but it must be only one student

in the group. I also share the same point of view of making one student look up the meaning of the word and then discuss it with the rest of the class. I think this strategy gives the opportunity for each student in the class to attempt and guess the meaning of that word. Moreover, students will be encouraged to use different expressions and structures to describe that word. More importantly, it may become very hard to forget the meaning of that word as it was mainly discussed and described by a few students. I can conclude from my readings of the relevant literature and through the responses of my participants and my own classroom observations that the use of technology (mobile phones, electronic dictionaries…etc.) in the EFL classroom seems to be a double-edged sword. "We [teachers] need to learn more about our students' dictionary-using habits and preferences, and more about the contents of the dictionaries they use" (Nesi, 2003). If teachers leave their learners to consult their electronic devices without any supervisions or restrictions during their teaching sessions, I think that may result in negative consequences. Therefore, teachers need to control and supervise the use of mobile phones in their classrooms in order to meet the learning objectives of the learning/teaching process.

All in all, I already indicated that the use of smart phones is an emergent theme in my study. In other words, it was not mainly addressed in my research questions. Therefore, this study may not be in the position to give the full picture about the link between the use of mobile phones and the learners' communication strategies at this stage. However, this might seem an interesting area of investigation for future research. (See section 6.5 about the suggestions for future research for more details).

In this section, I discussed the topic of learners' reliance on their mobile phones to translate difficult words. The theme under discussion in the following section is teachers' and learners' consciousness of communication strategies.

4.3.6 <u>Teachers' and Learners' Consciousness of Communication Strategies</u>

In this section, I will discuss the term "consciousness" from two perspectives. The first is the learners' consciousness and the second is the teachers' consciousness about communication strategies.

Before defining the learners' consciousness in this section, it is worth making a distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge. The term implicit learning was first introduced by Reber (1967) in his paper entitled "Implicit Learning of Artificial Grammars", who states that implicit learning is "rudimentary inductive process which is intrinsic in such phenomena as language learning and pattern perception" (p. 863). In the same way, Bialystok (1978) explains that explicit linguistic knowledge encompasses all the conscious facts about the language and the ability to master these facts is the condition to be included in this category. These facts may include some grammatical rules, vocabulary items, pronunciation rules and so on. Implicit linguistic knowledge entails the intuitive information that a language learner has to help in comprehending and producing the language. This includes the automatic and spontaneous use of language. In the same vein, Rebuschat (2013) explains that implicit learning involves knowledge about complex rule-governed features of language and the learner is not aware of the knowledge being acquired. On the contrary, explicit learning happens when the learner is instructed to look for patterns of language in a conscious process. Ellis (2005) provides the following seven criteria for the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge:

> *Degree of awareness*: This criterion refers to the extent to which learners are aware of their own linguistic knowledge. This clearly represents a continuum but can be measured by asking learners to report retrospectively about whether they made use of feel or rule in responding to a task.

> *Time available*: This criterion is concerned with whether learners are pressured to perform a task online or whether they have an opportunity to plan their response carefully. Operationally, this involves distinguishing tasks that make significant demands on learners' short-term memories and those that lie comfortably within their L2 processing capacity.

> *Focus of attention*: Does the task prioritize fluency or accuracy? Fluency entails a primary focus on message creation in order to convey information

or attitudes, as in an information or opinion-gap task. Accuracy entails a primary focus on form, as in a traditional grammar exercise.

Systematicity: This criterion requires examination of whether learners are consistent or variable in their response to a task. Learners should be more consistent in a task that taps their implicit knowledge than in a task that elicits explicit knowledge.

Certainty: How certain are learners that the linguistic forms they have produced conform to target language norms? Given that learners' explicit knowledge has been shown to be often anomalous, some learners are likely to express more confidence in their responses to a task if they have drawn on their implicit knowledge. However, other learners might place considerable confidence in their explicit rules. Thus, this criterion of explicit knowledge needs to be treated with circumspection.

Metalanguage: This criterion focuses on the relationship between metalanguage and explicit knowledge. Learners' knowledge of metalingual terms will be related to their explicit (analysed) knowledge but not to their implicit knowledge.

Learnability: This final criterion relates to the learnability of implicit and explicit knowledge. Learners who began learning the L2 as a child are more likely to display high levels of implicit knowledge, whereas those who began as adolescents or adults—especially if they were reliant on instruction—are more likely to display high levels of explicit knowledge (pp. 151-152).

Learners can find their explicit knowledge very helpful in the development of their implicit knowledge in a number of ways. Firstly, learners can only convert their explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge when they reach the right stage of development. Secondly, learners find the explicit knowledge facilitative in the process of language input. For example, a learner who understands the subjective in a certain language, can easily recognize that more than other learners. Thirdly, learners may move from intake to acquisition by the help of their explicit knowledge. Therefore, it can be concluded that even if explicit knowledge does not directly contribute to the development of implicit knowledge, it may do so indirectly by helping learners process their input and intake (Ellis, 1997).

The term implicit is defined by Kirkpatrick (1993) as "implied; understood or inferable; tacitly contained but not expressed; depending upon complete belief or trust in another; hence, unquestioned, unreserved" (p. 684). This is a very similar

definition or meaning I also attach to this theme. Tom is one of the teachers who prefers to teach communication strategies in an implicit way like the teaching of grammar inductively. Tom usually introduces a question to the students and they start asking each other about it. Tom explains that in this activity, students are using "self-discovery" where they are finding out information but are not aware that they are learning. It seems that Tom encourages the implicit approach when teaching communication strategies.

Tom also stated that younger learners need to be taught communication strategies. Moreover, teachers need to give learners the tools to scaffold their learning:

> So, we give learners the tools to construct their own learning. It is not just about the language, it is education studies and by giving them the tools such as communication strategies or giving them the knowledge so they can hopefully move from one zone to another zone of development (Tom, 260-263).

Tom added that communication strategies will develop more naturally in an emergent environment. Moreover, Tom highlighted that students who are learning a foreign language need to know some techniques in order to communicate. He used the term "scaffolding" techniques for that. Tom mentioned that these techniques could be in the form of asking questions or clarifications. However, he added that: "I do not think we teach that enough" (Tom, 48). Furthermore, Tom pointed out that these techniques develop as one has spent some time in learning the language.

Another example of implicit teaching happened during my observation of Jack's classroom. Jack asked his students to do two different writing tasks. Even though the aim of the tasks was mainly to help students develop their grammatical skills, students were actually practising some communication strategies such as circumlocution or paraphrase.

After this brief explanations of the terms implicit and explicit learning, I will discuss the learners' consciousness followed by the teachers' consciousness.

Children when they acquire their first language do so, but are not conscious of their learning process. In contrast, second language learners and particularly adults need to work very hard and study the language patterns consciously in order to learn that language (Ellis, 1997).

Learners' consciousness has been defined as "the deliberate attempt to draw the learner's attention specifically to the formal properties of the target language" (Rutherford & Smith, 1985). In this respect, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994) comment that: "consciousness-raising is based on the belief that making learners aware of structural regularities of the language will enable them to learn it faster" (p. 47). In line with this, Rubin (1987) points out that: "it is assumed that making learning decisions conscious can lead both poorer and better learners to improve in obtaining, storing, retrieving and using information, that is, can lead them to learn better" (p. 16). In this respect, Oxford (1990) explains that consciousness raising means that students become aware of and familiar with the general idea of language learning strategies and how strategies can help them in learning the foreign language. Furthermore, Oxford (1990) emphasises that the consciousness raising should be fun and motivating for students. Students also can expand their knowledge of strategies to help them learn the foreign language. Some of my participants also support the idea that learners need to be made aware of their learning processes. In other words, they claim that it is important to tell students about the teaching objectives and aims of a certain learning task. For example, my participant Sue maintained that:

> For me, I think it is quite important for learners to know what they are doing. When they are aware of what they are doing, they can understand and they can be more positive and motivated. They know what they are doing, so they know the reason for doing it (Sue, 117-120).

In respect of the learners' consciousness about communication strategies, Sue highlighted the importance of this. She believes that teachers need to tell their students about the teaching aims of lessons and the expected learning outcomes afterwards. Sue also added that teachers also need to focus on the learners' consciousness as this helps the learners to become motivated and confident about

using the foreign language. Brown et al. (1981) who advocate the avoidance of "blind training techniques" (p. 20) further support this view. They argue that it is crucial to make learners more aware of the active nature of learning and the importance of using techniques to overcome problems. Therefore, Brown et al. (1981) state that learners need to be made aware about their learning of the foreign language.

Ann also emphasised that teachers should make learners aware about the use of communication strategies. She also added "I think process is more important than product, they need to know what they are doing because when you are aware of things that you do, you will understand and become more motivated" (141-142). Moreover, Ann claimed that when learners become aware of what they are doing, it becomes a life skill for them as well. This view is further stated by Mariani (2010) who explains that:

> Attention to form does play a role in developing proficiency, in the sense that if we become more aware of certain language features, we stand a better chance of noticing these features in the language input we are exposed to; in other words, we may become more receptive to them, and can therefore hope to gradually make them part of our own active repertoire, i.e. internalize them (p. 47).

Discussing the same topics, Rebecca claimed that: "so it is not a matter of teaching them, it is raising their awareness so they can discover their own, because what might work in one situation might not be so effective in another" (134-135). Likewise, Dörnyei (1995) believes that teachers need to make their learners conscious about strategies they already have and attempt to use them appropriately. Williams (2006) declares that raising learners' awareness means giving them the opportunity to understand the motives behind using them which may include explicit teaching as well. Moreover, Williams (2006) adds that learners need to reflect on and evaluate the practice of strategies effectively. In line with this, Rabab'ah (2005) asserts that raising the learners' awareness of some communication strategies is important for three reasons; firstly, communication strategies can lead to learning, especially when learners start asking their

interlocutors about unknown linguistic items. Secondly, communication strategies seem to be part of language use as native speakers also use them to solve communicative problems. Finally, communication strategies are not an indication of linguistic deficiency as learners adopt them to keep the communication channel open.

The second perspective is the teachers' consciousness. In other words, some of the teachers are teaching communication strategies but are not aware of that. For example Ann described her teaching experience of communication strategies as:

> In terms of communication strategies, I might use, I might not use it. I am not aware of that. I sometimes use clues or something like that to help my students overcome communicative problems, but I do not have the specific label in my mind that we are doing communication strategies; it is just subconsciously (100-102).

In the beginning of my interview with Ann, she seemed surprised and not sure about the term communication strategies. However, as the conversation proceeded, she highlighted that she usually teaches communication strategies but she was not aware of the academic label of such activities or techniques. "I know I am doing that at the same time I am not conscious that this is communication strategies" (Ann, 106). (See section 2.2.2 in the literature review chapter for more details about consciousness).

By and large, it seems that both my participants and some of the relevant literature support the idea of raising the learners' awareness of the importance of communication strategies. However, other researchers emphasise that: "consciousness is perhaps a matter of degree than of either-or" (Faerch and Kasper, 1983, p. 35). Moreover, some warned of its different meanings "consciousness has, in fact, so many different connotations that one would best avoid it altogether" (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997, p. 184). I also concur with Mariani (2010) when she stresses that we need to consider consciousness as "a matter of degree…speakers can be aware of problems and their solutions, but in very different ways according to the type of problem, the context and the personality of the speakers themselves" (p. 16).

Having discussed the consciousness issue from the perspective of learners and teachers, the theme under consideration in the next section is communicative competence.

4.3.7   <u>Communicative Competence</u>

The term communicative competence has been broadly discussed in the literature review chapter. However, I will attempt here to discuss it in relation to the responses of my participants. Communicative competence has been defined as "The ability not only to know the rules of the target language, but also to know how to use the language appropriately in different contexts" (Littlemore, 2013, p. 671).

Sue was one of the teachers who used the term communicative competence during our interview. As a result, I become very interested to know more about this, so I asked her, "let's go back to the concept that you just mentioned right now, about communicative competence. Can you explain what you mean by communicative competence?" (Sue, 56-66). Sue seemed to be quite sure about her definition and commented that:

> To me, it is this ability to get your listener to understand what you want. It does not matter if the grammar is not right. It does not matter what your accent sounds like. It is just about how someone can get their point across successfully to their interlocutor or interlocutors (Sue, 58-60).

It is clear that Sue attempted to tell me that communicative competence is about sending one's message to the listener without breakdowns in the communication process. The ultimate aim is to make the listener understand the aim of the message without any emphasis on pronunciation or grammar. Sue also reported that she had some students who had very good language but they were lacking that communicative competence. On the other hand, some students were mangling the language but they would get their ideas across. She added, "it is really about getting your point across, not about how you get it across" (Sue, 64-65). I would

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also agree with Sue that the most important thing in communication is sending our messages to our listeners and help them understand what we try to say. My own interpretation of this also is that Sue tries to encourage teachers that they do not need to put much emphasis on the learners' errors or mistakes. Teachers need to be tolerant with the language of their learners.

As our conversation proceeded, I became curious to know more about communicative competence and asked her "so do you think that we can teach communicative competence". Sue looked quite unsure about her answer and she shared with me her experience saying:

> Yes, we can improve people's ability to do it, but some people are naturally better than others. For example, my sister and I are very similar in many ways, but she is just one of those people who can communicate in many languages quite quickly. I am not one of those people. She runs around, she has twelve languages and she is not graded in any of them, but you can throw her down in Afghanistan or in Indonesia and she will find her way around. Therefore, can we teach communicative competence, we can improve it but we cannot teach that part, it is a mix (Sue, 71-76).

In the light of the example mentioned above, Sue obviously highlighted that people are different in their capabilities in learning the foreign language. In other words, some people are naturally better than others in developing their communication skills. She described the ability that people usually have as a talent and it is hard to teach this. I would partially agree with Sue in this context. I personally think that some people can learn faster than others. This is a result of the individual differences among them. However, I think teachers can encourage their students to develop this communicative competence. For example, designing tasks that focus on communication may help in the development of communicative competence. Communicative competence seems a very crucial aspect of the second language learner that teachers need to pay attention to.

Sue acknowledged that the term communication strategies is "about communicative competence" (53). Correspondingly, this view was clearly supported by Canale and Swain (1980) who stress that: "we consider such strategies [communication strategies] to be an important aspect of communicative

competence that must be integrated with the other components in an adequate theory of communicative competence" (p. 25). Zhang (2007) concludes that communication strategies promote learners' communicative competence. This was reinforced by Chen's (1990) findings that the development of communication strategies can increase the learners' commutative competence. My participant Sue also highlighted that communicative competence is about making listeners understand your point regardless of the grammar or the accent used in the conversation. "It is just the case of getting your point across successfully" (Sue.58). Furthermore, Sue described two types of her students regarding the communicative competence issue. She explained that some of her students had a good bank of vocabulary but they lacked the communicative competence that will help them speak or write in English successfully. The other type of students had less vocabulary but they had the communicative competence that enhanced their speaking and writing in English. I would share the same point of view that learners with limited vocabulary and good communicative competence sometimes perform better than learners who know more vocabulary but they lack communicative competence.

Tom stated that communicative competence involves the use of all communication skills. "…reading the signs and reading between the lines and knowing the social skills that go with it" (Tom, 204). Tom pointed out that students who "stay in the bubble" (208) may lack the appropriate contextual use of the language. Tom further stated that students need to be aware of the cultural appropriateness of their expressions. Furthermore, Tom described some of his students who do not communicate effectively in his classroom as: "…having no communicative competence" (188). Moreover, Tom explained that teachers need to develop their learners' communicative competence in order to use the language appropriately. In line with this, Wannaruk, (2003) and Zhang (2007) maintain that communicative competence seems to be an important factor of communication strategies and language teachers need to encourage learners to develop it.

Generally speaking, some of my participants in accordance with the relevant literature seem to support the role of communicative competence to help learners communicate in the foreign language. It also seems that teachers need to encourage their students to focus on and develop their communicative competence in order to help them communicate in the foreign language.

In this section, I discussed how my participants viewed the role of communicative competence to develop the learners' communication skills. The aim of the next section is to describe the relationship between communication strategies and the role of power.

4.3.8   Communication Strategies and Power

One of the emergent themes in my data was 'power'. For example, during my interview with Lisa, she emphasised the influence of the power issues when students are communicating. For example, the way a student communicates with his or her supervisor is completely different from the way they speak to their friends. As a result, students might feel intimidated or hesitant to communicate confidently in certain situations. She commented:

> Some of it is how societies and cultures work in different social situations. I am aware of that. There is also a power thing in some communication where if you communicate or talk with your supervisor is not the same way you are talking with your interviewees or friends. It can be a sort of intimidation in communication, can't it (Lisa, 99-100).

Regarding the issue of power in communication, I would like to insert my own experience regarding this. In my country Libya, it is obligatory to formally address your tutors and one should not call them using their first names only. When I first came to Sheffield, I was completely surprised when my supervisor (Dr. Mark Payne) continually asked me to remove any titles whenever I contact or send him emails. My own experience of that is when I address people with their first names only I become confident in communication. I think this feeling stems

from the less formal environment that develops through the elimination of these formal titles.

According to Lloyd (1997), some people use the language differently in different interpersonal and physical contexts. He states that: "we do not usually speak to the bank manager in the manner and tone that we do to our children. Dialogue in the court room is different from that round a dinner table" (p. 131). In the same vein, during my interview with Tom, he argued that learners need to be aware of the social context in which they are using the language. The same point was also raised by Rebecca who highlighted the importance of the power of the context of the interaction. "They usually try strategies to communicate. It highly depends on the context of the interaction" (77).

I would also agree with the influence of power on the use of communication strategies by learners. This power could be the result of the social context where the communication process takes place. It seems also that teachers need to know this in order to help their students develop their communication strategies. The influence of power on the learners' use of communication strategies is one of the themes that emerged from my data. Moreover, through my readings of the relevant literature, it seems that this topic has gained little consideration.

The relationship between communication strategies and power is the last theme discussed in relation to the responses of my participants to the second research question.

All in all, In this section I have discussed how my participants responded to the second research question. I also inserted some of my field notes during the classroom observations, moreover, referring back to any literature when it became relevant. I also tried to insert some of my personal experiences when I felt they corresponded with the topic of discussion.

The purpose of the next section is to discuss the responses to the third and final research question.

4.4   Responses to Research Question 3

What activities do the EFL teachers consider appropriate if they were to teach communication strategies in their classrooms?

The main intention of this research question is to know the activities and tasks that the teachers use to help their students learn communication strategies. In this section, I will describe my field notes obtained from the classroom observations, show how my participants responded to this inquiry, and attempt to draw some discussions from the relevant literature. The themes discussed here are backs to the board, card games, word games, video-recording, paraphrase and circumlocution, avoidance strategies, and the use of gestures.

4.4.1   Backs to the Board

'Backs to the board' was the name of the activity that Gary used in his classroom to help students practise paraphrasing skills. In this activity, one student is required to stand up with his or her back facing the board. The teacher writes one word on the board which can be seen by other students. Then, students start explaining the meaning of that word without directly using that particular word to help the student who cannot see the word to guess what it is. Gary explains:

> I am trying to use quite a few of those activities [Backs to the board] particularly with lower levels to encourage these sort of communication strategies or negotiation strategies for getting meaning across in the field of not knowing the word to explain (43-45).

Mariani (2010) also describes a similar activity which she calls "Back to back" (p. 81). In this activity, students work in pairs where they sit back to back and student (A) needs to describe a complicated picture to student (B). Student (B) is required to draw a picture based on the information given by student (A). Gary explains that the main purpose of this activity is to make learners experience the fact that they need to carry out the task using all the possible resources to send their messages through. I also agree that this is one of the activities that help learners develop their communication strategies. Gary also stated that students enjoy this

type of activity. When he was describing this activity to me, my memories went on to recall one of my favourite activities I engaged in when I first arrived in Sheffield to start my language course. I remember my English tutor used similar activities in our classroom. It was really helpful for me to retrieve and remember word associates and synonyms.

Gary also added "…I think clarification strategies and communication strategies make people effective communicators even if they do not necessarily understand everything or have a complete range of vocabulary to express themselves" (64-66). Furthermore, Gary highlights that when teachers do not share the same native language as their learners, the classroom environment creates a natural condition for communication strategies to occur.

By and large, in this section, I discussed the activity 'Backs to the Board' that Gary used with his students during my classroom observation. It was clear that this activity might help learners develop their communication strategies. The next activity under consideration is card games.

4.4.2   Card Games

Another activity Gary used with his students when I observed his classroom was 'Card games'. This activity is similar to one of the activities introduced in the IELTS 7 book of the Cambridge official examinations. Candidates of the speaking test are given some instructions on how to do this task:

> The candidate is given a task card with prompts and is asked to talk on a particular topic. The candidate has one minute to prepare and they can make some notes if they wish, before speaking for between one and two minutes. The examiner then asks one or two rounding-off questions (p. 6).

Gary used a similar activity in his classroom. He divided his students into pairs where one student is an IELTS candidate and the other is an examiner. The role of the examiner is to give the candidate a card about a certain topic for two minutes. Students also needed to swap roles after they finish the activity. For me, most of

students effectively performed the two roles with recognizable developments of their English. Apparently, the aim of this task was to give learners the opportunity of knowing what to expect in the IELTS test which is one of the requirements for most international students before they pursue their academic studies. I would like to insert one of my observations here. While I was browsing one of the IELTS books, I came across some instructions for candidates recommending them to use communication strategies when they find some words difficult to talk about. The instructions simply were:

- If you can't think of a word, simply **paraphrase it**.

- He's a reliable person.

- He's the sort of person <u>you can always trust/depend on</u>.

- She's so punctual.

- She's <u>never late: always on time</u> (Alireza, 2008, p. 3)

It is clear that the author of this book advises learners to paraphrase words they do not know which is typically one of the communication strategies. He also put the phrase *paraphrase it* in bold which implies the emphasis of the importance of the this technique. Furthermore, the author underlined the corresponding definitions of the key words to make them distinctive from the other structures which I think had an educational purpose as well.

Sue also used the activity 'card games' with her students to help them practise communication strategies. She uses a game called "life" which is a board game that encourages learners to answer some bizarre questions as they go through that imaginary life. Students can describe what they are doing now and what they wish or intend to do in their future lives. Sue believes that the teaching of communication strategies can be successful through play and less structured language. This view is further highlighted by Williams (2006) who provides the following exercise to help learners use communication strategies:

> Provide students with word cards that have the following: an unfamiliar English word or expression, its definition (for reference) and a model

sentence. Model the following with a student. Select one card and read the sentence written on it, stressing the target word. Encourage the student to signal that she does not understand. Explain the word on the card using any communication strategy but without using the definition on the card. Encourage the student to then signal whether or not she understood and then to confirm her understanding. Have the students repeat the activity in pairs. Ask students to use each strategy at least once during this practice.

Sue also told me about her own learning experience when she was a student doing her teaching certificate. She reported that the teaching materials were designed to help them learn the techniques to make students communicate more clearly and encourage them to overcome communicative problems they may face.

My participant Ann also told me about one of the most important activities she used in her classroom. She sometimes provides a photograph or picture of a difficult item to her students. "I use different ways, sometimes I use a photograph, I google it and show it to my students" (Ann, 66). She explained that she gives the photo to her students and tries to elicit information from them about the item in the picture. She usually asks questions like, what is it used for?, when does it happens?, and so on. I would also agree with Ann that this is one of the crucial activities in the classroom. These types of activities give the students the freedom to try different language structures. It also motivates students to communicate in the foreign language.

My participants William used similar activities with his students to practise communication strategies which involved one learner to take a picture in his/her hand and talks about that picture without mentioning the name of the item in the picture and other students start asking questions around the object in the picture. Students can ask questions about the size, colour, or usage of that item until they successfully know that item. Students can work in pairs or groups, they also can be divided into teams. Similarly, Lisa helps her students to practise the use of communication strategies in her classroom. Lisa stated that we could help students to use communication strategies by using the following activities: one student takes a certain picture and starts describing it without directly saying its name and other students try to guess what it was. She also commented that students might

find Yes/No questions helpful in communication:

> So learning to ask Yes/No questions in order to get a clear answer. For example, I might be able to ask in Chinese 'where is the airport,' but I might not understand the answer. However, if I say 'airport, this bus?', then I can get 'yes or no', 'which bus to get on', so this sort of teaching students that kind of strategy (Lisa, 189-192).

Generally speaking, in this section, I have discussed the activity 'card games' and tried to show how some of my participants described the importance of these activities to help learners communicate in the foreign language. 'Word games' is the topic of the next discussion.

4.4.3 <u>Word Games</u>

'Word games' was one of the activities Sue likes using at her classroom when she was teaching in China. She commented that:

> One of the things I played a lot with my students when I used to teach in China was word games. It is playing with words for finding how students can describe some items when they play. Therefore, the sort of games they learn to describe are the words that they cannot actually say. The ability to get around those gaps is crucial for students to develop their communication skills (23-26).

Sue also pointed out that students usually feel frustrated when they are unable to send their messages across. She added that this type of activity helps learners to build their confidence to speak more clearly and freely. She also maintained that students who develop their circumlocution skills seem happier when they are engaged in activities such as giving presentations or seminars. I also believe in the same idea about feeling frustrated when one is unable to send their messages across. Being a language learner myself, sometimes I feel frustrated and disappointed when the facial expressions of my interlocutor are saying "your message is still undelivered because of the linguistic gaps that you need to fill in". However, I become very confident about my speech when I find alternative ways

to navigate my own way through communicative difficulties. I would also agree that this type of activities helps learners improve their communication strategies. Being a language learner myself, I enjoyed participating in such activities and found them very helpful to improve my communication skills. I remember one of my teachers used such activities in our classroom and I found that very helpful to remember the meaning of the words and it was good practice for using different structures of the language.

Another similar activity that might be related to word games was described by Rebecca. Rebecca wanted to share her own strategy that she usually uses in the classroom to help her students learn new vocabulary. She pointed out that some students easily forget new words they learn in the classroom. Therefore, Rebecca encourages her students to repeat the word a few times in order to help them memorise it. One of her students used to repeat the word very quickly five times so that it becomes easy to recap. Rebecca added that she herself likes using this activity when she learns a foreign language. For me, I would partly agree with this idea, I think repeating a certain word for five times or more, helps in the memorisation of the pronunciation of that word but not its meaning. Therefore, this strategy seems to help in the memorisation of words but not in communication.

Finally, I would like to insert that some students were recognized to create new words while they are communicating. This was highlighted by Lisa who told me about a strategy her students sometimes adopt when they are writing. She said that her students occasionally invent new words in order to keep the communication channel open. She described the way her students do this as the poets try to play around with the words and insert new words in. "they will invent it because it is going to say what they want to say" (Lisa, 122). Lisa commented that her students sometimes think:

> I can make a noun by adding (ness) or (ment) or something you know, the wrong suffix or something like that or put "un" at the front, thinking it will make the word mean the opposite or something like, or they will import a word from their own language or an expression (Lisa, 127).

Strategies such as these are called word coinage in the literature of communication strategies research. "If learners use their IL interlanguage system for the creative construction of a new word, this strategy is termed word coinage" (Faerch and Kasper, 1984, p. 51). "Word coinages are really descriptions which are realized grammatically as compound or derived nouns" (Kellerman et al, 1987, p. 104). (See Chapter Two for more details about the word coinage strategy).

In this section, I have described how the activity word game was used to help learners improve their communication skills. The next section describes the 'video recording' activity.

4.4.4   <u>Video Recording</u>

The use of digital cameras attracted my attention in Gary's classroom. During this task, Gary divided the class into pairs and gave one student a digital camera to record his/her partner speaking about a certain topic. The aim of this activity was to give students the opportunity to watch themselves speaking and get feedback about their performance either from other classmates or their teacher. Students engaged in this activity were happy and seemed very motivated to participate. I think this type of activity is helpful for students and may develop their communication strategies. Moreover, it might be considered as a multi-purpose task in terms of the feedback the student gets from others. The feedback can be about grammar, pronunciation, use of expressions, eye contact, body language etc. I would highlight here that teachers need to ask students before they are being recorded as some of them may not like the idea, for cultural reasons for instance.

Here I have briefly described how 'video recording' was used as an activity to help learners improve their communication skills. The next section discusses the activities used to help learners develop their paraphrase and circumlocution strategies.

4.4.5   __Paraphrase / Circumlocution__

This theme refers to activities that my participants sometimes use to help their students develop their paraphrase and/or circumlocution strategies.

Circumlocution is a type of communication strategy that learners may or may not use when they have difficulty in getting their messages through. According to Tarone (1977), circumlocution sometimes involves describing the colour or size of an item. It also could mean the functions that this item might have (see section 2.3 for more details). My participant William described his own experience as a language learner and said:

> It was quite a long time some 20 years abroad and I had to learn several languages from scratch, from the beginning. Arabic was one of them, Sinhalese the language of Sri Lanka was another, and German. I can also speak French and Japanese. Therefore, I know more or less the problems but also I know short cuts of how to learn. When my students or myself become not able to know how to put the word, we use circumlocution, we go around the word, we talk about it, something like that (William, 31-35).

It is clear that William has different experience from other teachers because he was involved in learning many different languages. The most interesting idea he highlighted is the use of some communication strategies to help him learn those languages. William also stressed that it is crucial for learners to be able to ask different questions in the language they are learning because that will be very helpful to overcome communicative problems. I would also argue that communication strategies are not language specific. In other words, communication strategies can be found in any human language. However, it is hard to assume that they can be used in certain languages more than others.

My participant Robert point out that paraphrase in academic writing is also a communication strategy as well. He pointed out that:

> It is a question of looking at the structure of language and how the same thing can be expressed using different structures. It is useful for students to be able to take a particular phrase, say a noun phrase, and translate it to a verb phrase and I suppose that is a communication strategy insofar as giving them different ways of expressing their point of view… (Robert, 61-66).

It is clear that Robert considers paraphrase in academic writing as a communication strategy. For me, I would partially agree with this point of view for the following reason. Students consciously use paraphrase in academic writing in order to produce a piece of work in their own words sometimes to avoid plagiarism. On the other hand, students employ communication strategies in order to overcome communicative problems. The only similarity that I can see between these two techniques is that the learning of one may also influence the other. In other words, students who learn how to write different structures in their own words in the foreign language may find this helpful to use when they look for alternative ways to overcome communicative difficulties. Similarity, students who learn about using different techniques to compensate for their linguistic shortage may find that also helpful in writing phrases in their own words in order to avoid "copy and paste" techniques.

> A lot of learning of course comes from vocabulary. It is not just about writing down a list of words every day, but actually taking these words and make sense of them in different ways. As a result, they have schemata of words and phrases around a particular topic (Robert, 68-72).

Robert stressed that teachers need to help their students how to use different vocabularies in different contexts. I would personally partially agree that learners need or should have schemata of words around a particular topic. From my own experience as a language learner and then a language teacher, it seems hard to tell students that they need to have a bank of words about different topics. I think and I myself experienced that if one starts thinking about their linguistic repertoire or the number of words they have, it may result in feeling worried or concerned about that. I think it is extremely difficult for someone to know the number or range of words they have for two main reasons. Firstly, it is hard to remember every single word we have. Secondly, the number of words in our linguistic store is always capable of either declining or increasing. For example, we easily forget the words that we no longer use in communication. Therefore, I think learners need to be encouraged not to worry about the number of words they have but they need to be taught how to overcome communicative problems and send their

messages to their interlocutors in learning a foreign language.

Robert does not totally support the idea that learners need to only focus on their linguistic repertoire, he explained:

> For many reasons the language is evolving all the time and changing and there are thousands of English words that I do not know and that is probably the first thing, students often need to focus on the more frequent word that they need (Robert, 72).

Regarding vocabulary learning and the teaching of communication strategies, Faucette (2001) emphasises the importance of vocabulary learning to help students improve their communication strategies and she concludes "…another value of CS instruction would be the extra benefit of vocabulary learning, specifically useful vocabulary that effectively furthers communication and learning" (p. 7). Similarly, William highlighted that students who learn communication strategies are not only provided with the tools to communicate effectively, but also with opportunities to expand their vocabulary.

Sally pointed out that: "I do not think that you can substitute much vocabulary, you can paraphrase an action, but you could not paraphrase everything, something you can but a lot of things you cannot" (83-84). Sally was clear about her point of view about paraphrase as communication strategy. In other words, she highlighted that at lower levels, one needs to teach more vocabulary than the teaching of paraphrase. Nevertheless, in higher levels where students are required to demonstrate conceptual understanding, then the teaching of paraphrase is possible.

During my classroom observation of Jack's classroom. He gave his students two written tasks. Task (1) included six different questions. Students were asked to insert the correct punctuation in short sentences. The exercise also indicated the kind of punctuation students needed in each sentence. For example, at the end of one of the sentences there was an indication for 'exclamation mark' needed. Students apparently did not spend much time doing this task and most of their answers were correct. In task (2) students were invited to apply the correct

punctuation to a text that had no punctuation. The teacher asked his students to read the written passage and check the punctuation mistakes involved in ten minutes. Students were required to put the correct punctuation such as capital letters, full-stops, commas, hyphens, and semi-colons. While students were working in groups to perform this task, the teacher continually checked that his students understood any difficult words in the text and helped them identify those words. For example, Jack described the word "foreign" with "anywhere outside your country". It seems that Jack sometimes describes or gives definitions for the difficult words that learners struggle to understand. This implies that some teachers sometimes either consciously or unconsciously offer activities or techniques that may help in the development of communication strategies. As a result of my observation in Jack's class, I understood that he preferred to use circumlocution and paraphrase to help his students understand the meaning of the words they did not know. More interestingly, students seemed to be familiar with this technique and promptly comprehended what their teacher said.

Another interesting observation was in Hilda's classroom. She gave out a sheet of paper to her students. She asked her students to work in a group of four and write about a story or an article they had read during their weekend. In the task, some questions were about the title of the story or article, its main idea, and about writing a brief conclusion. Furthermore, every student was asked to write 3-5 new words that they had learnt and provide their definitions in English. They also were asked to discuss them with their partners. Students seemed quite engaged in this activity and they recognizably applied some communication strategies. For example, one of the students used the phrase "It is like a bird" to describe the word "bat". This kind of description is usually referred to as circumduction or paraphrase. I could notice the students were feeling comfortable and they understood the definitions of words given by their classmates. This type of task not only gives the learners the opportunity to learn the new words, but also it helps students to use different structures for the same word or linguistic item. It might be helpful when it comes to paraphrasing skills in their academic work to avoid adopting 'copy and paste' techniques or being accused of applying any sort of unfair means like 'plagiarism' for instance.

During my observation of Hilda's class, she continually moved around her students and checked that they were working in pairs. Moreover, she encouraged and supported her students to understand any difficult vocabulary, for instance she drew a 'barrel' on the board to help them comprehend its meaning when she realised that they had some difficulty in knowing that word. It was apparent to me that students were quite involved and engaged with their exercise. Furthermore, the students appeared familiar with and used to these techniques where their teacher helped them understand difficult words by giving simple descriptions of these items like colour, size, material, shape etc. Hilda also switched on the projector and showed her students some new vocabulary. Hilda provided dictionary-like definitions for each new word. Then, she divided her students into groups and asked each group to think about a word and give its definition in a similar structure to the one she provided. Students started giving different words and attempted to define each word to their classmates. For me, students were successful in giving dictionary-like definitions for their words. They also seemed happy and motivated to interact either with their teacher or other classmates. The use of dictionary like-definitions in this classroom, simply indicates that Hilda used to teach her students these skills and the students' familiarity with this was another implication as well. Sometimes, dictionary-like definitions are considered as 'circumlocution' because it is a round-about or talk about expressions as defined by Brown and Jim (2013) in the Cambridge Dictionary of Linguistics as "A round-about way, typically complex, of expressing some idea. (Latin circum 'around', locutio 'something said')" (p. 75).

Another activity that Hilda used with her students was describing a graph. Hilda divided students into pairs and gave one student a graph that she/he was required to describe to his/her partner. The other student tries to draw the graph according to the information given by the first student. For me, students appeared to like this activity especially when they swapped their roles. My own reflection about this task is that it helped students to develop their communication skills and strategies

because the learner who describes the graph needs to use her/his own vocabulary and expressions to describe the graph. Moreover, the student needs to know how to use alternative ways to overcome communicative difficulties because she/he may come under time pressure to give information to the other student. The student who draws the graph may engage in some negotiations and asking for help strategies as she/he checks the information or instructions given. More interestingly, even though the aim of the describing the graph activity was to help students improve their writing skills for task 1 in IELTS, it also seemed to enhance the learners' communication strategies and especially paraphrase and circumlocution.

Gary also used some tasks to help learners develop their phrase and circumlocution skills. For example, when he started introducing the topic of the lesson which was 'talking about films'. He asked his students about the meaning of the word 'director'. One student simply answered: "he is the person who tells the actors what to do or to do again". For me, I could easily understand this definition as it sufficiently described the target word. The other students also seemed to understand the meaning of that word. Another strategy or technique Gary continually used in the classroom was providing dictionary-like definitions for the difficult words that students did not understand. Most of the students actively participated in this activity and seemed to enjoy it.

'Word opposites' was another task Gary used in his classroom. For example, on one occasion, he asked "what is the opposite of the word 'stupid'? '' Gary also described the word "trailer" as "before you go to the cinema, you watch some good bits of a film for two minutes". Students seem to be familiar with their teacher's technique of explaining the words they did not know. They promptly understood the meaning of difficult words as defined by their teacher. My own interpretation of this occasional observation is that Gary did encourage his students to find alternative ways to describe words. I could also notice Gary urged and supported his students to use dictionary-like definitions for the new words they come across.

Sally is also one of the teachers who encourages the use of dictionary-like definitions for the difficult words. During my observation of her class, she continually supported her students with these structures to help them communicate the words they did not know. She also asked them to look at their paper dictionaries and read out the definitions of some words. Apparently, this activity is very common among EFL teachers. This implies that teachers either consciously or unconsciously help their students improve their communication strategies in the classroom.

Having discussed some of the techniques or activities that may help learners develop their paraphrase and circumlocution strategies, the theme under consideration in the next section is 'avoidance strategies'.

4.4.6   Avoidance Strategies

This theme refers to how my participants encourage their students to develop avoidance strategies and the activities encountered.

Lisa told me about her own communication strategy that she used in learning Chinese whenever she faces communicative difficulty: "I avoid the word I do not know and try to use others" (Lisa, 53). Learners employ avoidance strategies when they try to avoid difficult linguistic items and attempt to produce the ones they are confident about. According to Ellis (1997), avoidance sometimes is the result of first language transfer. He explained that Chinese and Japanese learners of English sometimes avoid the use of relative clauses due to their native languages not containing such structures. Therefore, those learners were found to commit fewer errors in using relative clauses compared to Arabic learners who usually have some errors in using relative clauses as they have relative clauses in their first language. I would also agree with Ellis about his observation of Arabic learners of English. We also have relative clauses in Arabic that are very similar to English relative clauses. I also remember in one of my classroom observations that there were two Libyan students who were quietly commenting (in Arabic) about the relative clauses lesson. One of them told his friend who struggled to

understand the structure of relative clauses in English that it is the same as their first language or literally, the student said "we have it in Arabic. It is absolutely the same".

The importance of avoidance strategies was also highlighted by William who underlined that it is significantly important for foreign language learners to avoid some complicated and difficult words. Avoidance strategies occur when learners attempt to avoid talking about items they do not know in the target language (Tarone, 1983). "Avoidance" for William is an important strategy as well. "You won't tackle things which you are not ready for at elementary and pre-intermediate, you do not do things over which you may not have complete control or grasp" (William, 44). William further explained that learners need to become aware of such strategies.

For me, I do not completely agree with those who highlight the importance of avoidance strategies. I share the same idea that the only CSs that are helpful for learners are those that motivate learners to produce language, not avoiding it. Therefore, the recommended CSs to teach are the achievement strategies like approximation, circumlocution and word coinage (Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Faucette, 2001).

In this section, I have briefly discussed how my participants viewed how avoidance strategies can be helpful for learners to develop their communication skills. The next final section discusses the use of gestures.

4.4.7   The Use of Gestures

In this final section, I discuss the theme of using gestures and how this can help in developing the learners' communication skills.

Sally mentioned that: "I teach such a diverse range from the pre-elementary students, from completely no English and from different cultures and students from every part of the world" (Sally, 123). Therefore, Sally recognized that the use of gestures is different from one culture to another; "I mean sort of body language is different in every culture" (Sally, 112).

During my observation of Ann's classroom, I realised that this theme is interesting to reflect on and describe. The teacher started the lesson asking her students about the meaning of 'signposting'. It only took a few seconds to see a female student using her hands and attempting to describe the meaning of 'signposting'. Apparently, I could see that the student was successful to send her message to the teacher even though she did not use any vocabulary. More interestingly, the other students in the classroom seemed to understand the descriptions made by their classmate. I could also realise that students appeared to be familiar with the use of gestures as a communication strategy to help them overcome communicative problems. This corresponds with Tomalin and Stempleski (1994) who argue that: "studies of the communication of attitudes and emotions in the United States have shown that up to 93 per cent of a message may be transmitted non-verbally. Apparently, the body language we use is at least as important as words we actually speak" (p. 106). For me, I think that the use of body language or gestures is a non-separable phenomenon of language learning. Language learners depend highly on their gestures in their classrooms or even in real-time communication. Furthermore, one can find many first language users (surely, I am one of them) who always resort to gestures in communication even though we know most of our first language words.

In Ann's classroom, it was clear for me that she also looked familiar with the use of gestures and did some acting in order to help the students who struggled to communicate. On more than one occasion, I could find her using her body language or gestures to explain the words students did not know. In addition to that, in one of the activities the teacher drew some pictures on the board to help her students understand the words they found difficult to understand. For example, she drew a bird on the board to show her students its beak as students had some difficulty in understanding the meaning of the word "beak". Similarly, the teacher looked at the window to describe the verb "peek". Ann explained that she uses many gestures to help her students understand difficult words "I tend to use gestures, physical movement, sometimes facial expression as well" (Ann, 55).

Lisa argued that the term communication strategy encapsulates a wide range of techniques of dealing with communicative difficulties. Lisa further states this when she commented that:

> I mean students in the university who are studying in English. I have heard comments or I have observed myself that they used Power Point or videos, posters, presentations like that to support them when they are talking about their subjects, so that's another communication strategy (Lisa, 105-107).

Lisa indicated that this process is similar to the use of gestures, because it is a type of visual method to send their messages and ideas to their audience. She also added that students find using facilities like YouTube videos or posters in their presentations helpful and effective ways to explain complicated processes.

Most recent research has focused on the use of gesture as a compensation strategy (Littlemore, 2013). The use of gestures has also different meanings between cultures. Therefore, one needs to take great care when using them: shaking the head may and may not mean agreement or disagreement all the time (Mariani, 2010). However, this relatively conflicts with my participant Lisa's view who advocated the idea that shaking someone's head is always a good indication of whether someone is saying "yes" or "no". (See interview 1 with Lisa in the previous chapter for more detail). In this respect, Gullberg (2001) argues: "Gestures must have a communicative value for listeners. This in turn implies that gestures can be performed for the benefit of the interlocutor, such that speakers can exploit them to enhance their performance, i.e. that gestures can be used strategically" (p. 59).

I would like to insert my own experience about the use of gestures as a communication strategy. I will describe this using an incident that happened while I was in the hospital for a medical appointment for my son Mohamed. I was sitting on a chair in the corridor of the hospital and my son Mohamed was playing next to me. Mohamed was 18 months old. He had just started saying a few words in our native language (Arabic). For example, he very often says some words which mean 'give it to me' for things that looked interesting to him. Many people

were walking along that corridor as we were waiting to collect some Eczema creams for my son. Mohamed was not paying too much intention to the people who were walking by, but suddenly he saw an English boy who was holding a nice toy. Mohamed promptly said (in Arabic) "Give it to me" (putting his hand out) asking that nice boy for his toy. The boy who was nearly 3-4 years old firmly hugged his own toy and replied "No!". At this time, Mohamed looked at me as if he was saying, "Daddy, I want that toy", I only smiled but Mohamed realized it was impossible for him to have that toy and so started screaming and crying. That was one of the interesting incidents in my life, I told this story to my family members or friends. But more interestingly was the idea of relating this story to my own research. Apparently, the English boy and my son were able to communicate even though both come from a different cultural background and have a completely different language. Let alone their very young age. It was easy for them to understand each other's gestures. The reason for weaving this story here is that I would like to highlight that gestures can mean different things in different languages and cultures but they can be an effective way for communication between people of different cultures or at different ages. In other words, the use of gestures can be universally transmitted between humans.

Generally speaking. These were the responses to the third research questions which addressed the kind of activities and tasks teachers use to help their learners develop their communication strategies. I divided this discussion into seven themes where I described my participants' responses, the relevant literature and sometimes followed by my own reflections about the topic of discussion. Konishi and Tarone (2004) recommend the interactional perspective of communication strategies activities. They maintain that EFL teachers need to choose tasks and activities that promote interactive communication strategy use because "CSs [communication strategies] are inherently interactive" (p. 177).

Having said all that, my participants in accordance with some of the relevant literature seem in support of the idea that certain classroom activities may help in the development of some communication strategies used by learners. I would like to conclude this section with the points highlighted by Mariani (2010) regarding

the features of activities needed for strategy teaching which include:

- Providing a problem-based activity.

- Giving the learners the opportunity to test.

- Providing examples of strategy use by native and non-native speakers.

- Involving learners in exploring the strategy examples in order to identify strategies and describe them.

- Providing opportunities to put strategies to use in tasks which require and promote interaction and meaning negotiation.

- Inviting learners to reflect on their use of strategies.

- Raising learners' awareness of the rationale for strategy use (pp. 52-53).

I would also share the same point of view about these features especially the last two points. I think teachers need to ask their students to give them feedback about the strategy they use because this will give the learner the opportunity to freely discuss the types of strategies that work for them and they find helpful in communication. Teachers can, for example, ask their students about the strategies they prefer to use when they find it hard to give the exact word in English. Furthermore, teachers need to make their learners aware of the importance of strategies in their language. They also need to clarify that the use of these strategies is considered as a skill and not a shortage in their linguistic abilities. Teachers can also explain to their learners that these strategies are used by native speakers when they have difficulty finding some words in English.

Having discussed the responses of my participants and the relevant literature regarding the activities and tasks that may help learners develop their communication strategies, the next section provides a summary of the current chapter.

4.5 <u>Chapter Summary and Conclusions</u>

The main concern of the chapter was to present the findings and discuss the analysis of my data. I presented and discussed the responses of my participants and my field notes in relation to the relevant research questions. I also attempted to draw and link these discussions to the relevant literature. I will conclude this chapter with the following three main points:

Firstly, regarding the first research question that is concerned with definitions of communication strategies, there seems to be variations among my participants. The responses to this research question were discussed under three themes. The problem-orientedness issue, negotiation of meaning and strategies or skills.

Secondly, I discussed the participants' perceptions about the teaching of communication strategies which is the focus of the second research question. This research question was discussed according to eight themes. The themes included to teach or not to teach communication strategies, communication strategies help learners build their confidence, culture impacts on learners using communication strategies, learners' willingness to communicate, learners' use of mobile phones in the classroom, teachers' and learners' consciousness of communication strategies, communicative competence, and communication strategies and power.

Thirdly, I discussed the activities and tasks that help learners practise communication strategies which is the focus of the third research question. This final question was discussed in relation to seven themes. These themes included backs to the board, card games, word games, video recording, paraphrase/circumlocution, avoidance strategies, and the use of gestures.

All in all, this study is fundamentally an exploratory research. Thus, the observational data was not the main method of data collection and it was as an additional method associated with the semi-structured interviews. As a result, I felt that the data obtained through the semi-structured interviews were richer than my observational data. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the limitations of the study (see section 5.4). I became aware that my "interpretation

of the data will be only one of several 'right ways' in which data can be interpreted" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 32).

In the subsequent chapter, Chapter 5, I will discuss the conclusions, limitations and contributions of the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 <u>Introduction</u>

The aim of this study is to explore EFL teachers' perceptions about the teaching of communication strategies. Semi structured interviews were used to collect and analyse the views of my participants. I also observed some of their teaching sessions. The structure of this thesis is outlined in Chapter One, consisting of five chapters with a summary of their content. In the previous chapter, I discussed and interpreted the findings obtained in this study. The main purpose of this final chapter is to provide a summary of the important conclusions drawn from my study. I will also discuss the contribution and educational implications generated from the findings of the study including recommendations for future research. I will also outline the strengths and limitations of my research. My reflexivity will be discussed at the end of this chapter. I will firstly start with a summary of the study.

5.2 <u>Summary of the Study</u>

There are two main purposes for this summary. The first one is to provide the reader with brief conclusions for all the chapters of this thesis. Secondly, it is to highlight how my research questions were addressed as they are the main focus of this study. I would like also to highlight that these conclusions remain subject to my interpretations and understandings of the findings in light of my knowledge and experience of research and the relevant literature.

I began this study with an introductory chapter which described the background and justification of this research. It also included the aims of the research and the

research questions. The significance of the study and my positionality also were discussed.

Chapter Two included the literature review part of the study. It started with presenting the different definitions and classifications of communication strategies. It also discussed the previous research and the controversial issue of the teaching of communication strategies. Then I discussed the theoretical framework of my study followed by theories of second language learning and surveyed the different teaching methods. Individual learner differences were also discussed at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Three covered the research methodology adopted in this study. I discussed the different research paradigms and highlighted the one guiding this study which is a constructivist perspective. I also described data collection procedures. This chapter also included the ethical considerations and quality criteria for this study. In the final part of this chapter, I described the method of analysis adopted to analyse my data.

Chapter Four contained findings, analysis, and discussions. I structured this chapter according to the responses of my participants to the three research questions. I described and discussed the responses of my participants and my field notes followed by discussions from the relevant literature and/or my own experience and reflections on the topic under discussion.

I have briefly outlined above the summaries for each chapter in my thesis. Moreover, I would like to present a summary in accordance to the three research questions addressed in this study. Let me first restate them once again.

1. How do EFL teachers in the UK understand the concept of communication strategies?

2. How do EFL teachers perceive the idea of teaching communication strategies?

3. What sort of activities do EFL teachers consider appropriate use /if they are to teach communication strategies in their classrooms?

Regarding the first research question, the participants of my study provided diverse definitions of communication strategies. Some of those definitions reported that learners use communication strategies because of the communicative difficulty encountered. In other words, they believed that communication strategies could be identified when learners face problems in their communication process. This criterion has been referred to as 'problematicity' which I addressed in the literature review chapter. Moreover, some of my participants included the interactional aspect of communication strategies in their definitions. They included the aspect of negotiation of meaning in their definitions. Furthermore, some of my participants preferred to use the term 'skills' instead of 'strategies'. It seems that some of the teachers had a tendency to label 'communication strategies' as 'communication skills'.

The second research question was addressed in order to probe the teachers' perceptions and experiences about teaching communication strategies. I indicated in Chapter Two that there is a controversy among some researchers regarding the teaching of communication strategies. Researchers seemed to adopt two different approaches regarding the conceptualization of communication strategies which impacted on their ideas about the pedagogical perspective of communication strategies. Regarding the perceptions' of my participants, they seemed to welcome and support the teaching of communication strategies. Some of them were also found to teach communication strategies in their classroom but they were not aware of that. Furthermore, some of my participants indicated that the communication strategies may help foreign language learners build their confidence in communication. My participants also highlighted the role of cultural impacts on the use of communication strategies. They also reported that some students are more willing to communicate than others. Some teachers voiced their concerns about the excessive use of the translating applications installed on students' mobile phones. They also highlighted the importance of raising learners' awareness or consciousness of communication strategies. Some of my participants also highlighted the importance of developing learners' communicative competence. Finally, some of my participants emphasised the role of 'power' in communication.

The main concern of the third research question was to look at the type of activities and tasks teachers usually use in their classrooms to encourage the teaching of communication strategies. Through my interviews and classroom observations, the findings of this study revealed that communication strategies can be developed using some classroom activities like 'backs to the board', 'card games', 'word games', and 'video recording'. It was also found that there are some activities that may help learners develop their paraphrase and circumlocution strategies. Some teachers also highlighted the importance of avoidance strategies in communication. Finally, the findings of this study also highlight the role of gestures in communication.

As an overall conclusion, the present research on EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching of communication strategies suggests that communication strategies can be taught to foreign language learners and help them become more confident in their communication.

Having presented a summary of my research, the next section discusses the contribution of this study.

5.3   The Contribution of This Study

In this section, I will outline the main contributions which I hope my research could make in relation to language teaching and learning in the context under investigation.

I indicated in Chapter Two that there is a debate in the relevant literature about the teachability of communication strategies. Thus, this study constitutes both a theoretical and practical contribution. This is the first time (to the knowledge of the researcher) that teachers were asked about their views regarding the teaching of communication strategies. In this regard, my study is making a contribution to the relevant literature as indicated in Chapter Two where I presented the theoretical framework of this study and the body of knowledge within which my research is located.

This thesis will also be available in the public domain so EFL teachers and educators are likely to be interested in the findings of this study. Moreover, the findings of this study may seem significant to syllabus designers particularly when developing topics related to communication strategies teaching.

I also intend to disseminate the findings through the publication of different sections in journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, and proceedings.

In this section, I discussed the contribution of this study, the main concern of the next section is to present limitations of this research.

5.4   <u>Limitations of the Study</u>

Any research is subject to limitations. Research is always conducted within contextual and methodological constrains. In this section, I will reflect on the limitations of my study and how I could do things differently were I to conduct research in future. I will discuss the limitations in the three areas below.

I would like to admit that I am relatively new to the area of qualitative research. Therefore, it could be considered as a limitation that a considerable time was spent on learning and training on how to collect and analyse my data. However, I found the piloting phase of my study (see section 3.7 for this) very helpful to refine and develop my research skills. This view is further stated by Flick (2009) who advises: "this competence may be increased by practical experience of making decisions necessary in interview situations, in rehearsal interviews, and in interview training" (p. 145).

Another limitation stems from the argument that qualitative research "is often criticised for not meeting the quality standards of quantitative research" (Flick, 2009, p. 31). Therefore, in (section 3.9) I discussed the quality criteria for my research explaining how I attempted to meet these criteria in the context of my study.

The final limitation I would like to present here is about the third research question. I would like to admit that data obtained for addressing this research question was not as rich as data obtained for the other two research questions. In other words, I obtained more depth data from my interviews than my classroom observation. I think the reasons for that may stem from the fact that I got less classroom observations than interviews.

Having discussed limitations of this study, the next section presents some suggestions for future research.

5.5   Suggestions for Future Research

As previously mentioned, the participants of this study seem to support the teaching of communication strategies. However, as I stated above, this study also has some limitations. I will try in this section to discuss some of the suggestions for future research. I indicated in the literature review chapter that some researchers like Rampton (1997) emphasised that the scope of communication strategies should be expanded to look at areas beyond SLA. Similarly, I would share the same point of view and the following suggestions are based on this.

Firstly, one of the emergent themes in this study was the relationship between culture and communication strategies. My participants highlighted the role of culture in the way students communicate in the foreign language. Therefore, future researchers may attempt to explore the impacts of culture on the learners' communication strategies.

Secondly, another important finding in this study was learners' reliance on their translations apps installed on their electronic devices whenever they face communicative difficulties. I would like to highlight as I already mentioned that preventing students from using these gadgets might be sometimes unhelpful. Therefore, the role of future research is to investigate the influence of these devices on the learners' communication strategies and vocabulary learning.

Consequently, future studies may help in the effective use of technology in classrooms.

The theme 'learners' motivation' and the use of communication strategies seems to be an interesting area of investigation for suture research.

Another area that might seem interesting for social researchers is the relationship between learners' autonomy and communication strategies. Throughout my readings of the relevant literature, there were few studies that investigated this issue, therefore I think future research needs to look at this area.

The final theme that might be considered for future research is the learner's willingness to communicate and how this influences the use of communication strategies. This also seems an interesting area for future research.

In this section, I have discussed some suggestions for future research, the main concern of the following final section in this thesis is to describe my reflexivity and reflectivity.

5.6 Reflexivity and Reflectivity

In Chapter One (see section 1.6), I described my positionality where I discussed the motivations and experiences that may influence the research process. The main concern of this section is to address my reflexivity and reflectivity through my research journey. Reflexivity "requires the researchers to be critically conscious through personal accounting of how the researcher's self-location (across for example, gender, race, class, sexuality and nationality), position, and interests influence all stages of the research process" (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). To reflect means, "to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock for intelligent dealing with further experiences. It is the heart of intellectual organization and disciplined mind" (Dewey, 1938, p. 87). "Reflexivity thus assumes that researchers are explicitly aware of their own values, self-identities, or ideologies. However, these may be ingrained within individuals, and so the reflexive process is important to bring

forth a greater sense of self-awareness within qualitative research" (Hennink et al, 2013). Reflexivity is further explained by Wellington (2015) who points out:

> Being 'reflexive' is part of a more general approach to research – being 'reflective'. The former is a subset of the latter. Being reflective involves thinking critically about the research process; how it was done and why, and how it could have been improved. Reflection is an important part at every stage, i.e. in formulating questions, deciding on methods, thinking about sampling, deciding on presentation, etc. Most writers on research (in education and the sciences) would agree on its importance and many would argue that these reflections and evaluations should be put into print in reporting the research and going public (p. 101).

My reflexivity therefore requires my reflection on my own influence on the research process particularly on my data collection, analysis, and interpretations during all the stages of my research. This reflection, I hope, will also help to minimise any potential bias that may occur during this study. Moreover, I will briefly discuss what I learned from this research process. I would like also to highlight that even though this reflexivity section occupies the final chapter, I had been reflective throughout all the stages of my research. I remember in the supervision meetings with my supervisor, he often asks me to reflect on my ideas at the very beginning stages of this study.

First of all, I would like to make a 'helicopter view' for my PhD journey. This adventure was one of the most exciting moments in my life. I would also highlight that I learned many lessons, either theoretically or practically. I always define the PhD course as "a journey you know when it starts but you never know when it finishes". When I told my PhD colleagues about this definition, they firstly seemed to disagree with me. However, most of them shared the same point of view after spending some time thinking about how to embark on the world of a PhD study. I deliberately positioned the reflexivity section at the end of this thesis because I want to look back along this journey and attempt to make picture of this journey clear to my readers.

My PhD experience was a new opportunity for me to conduct a study with a qualitative methodology because back home the quantitative studies were the most favourable designs among social science researchers. Therefore, the skills and experience in dealing with qualitative data enabled me to become confident enough about conducting similar projects in future. One of the most important skills I learnt is the role of the interviewer that involved asking English language teachers about their perceptions and experience of teaching communication strategies. I would admit dealing with native speakers and teachers of English language in particular was not an easy task in terms of cultural and educational background. In other words, the power relations between myself as a student conducting his PhD and English language teachers. However, the supervision meetings with my supervisor Dr. Mark Payne had increased my knowledge and information about the target culture and background of my participants, let alone everyday contact either with colleagues in our department or my English teachers during the language course in Sheffield before the start of this PhD journey. Regarding the data analysis, I really found the first stages of making sense of my data as challenging. However, through my supervisor's guidance and my own readings of the different data analysis methods, I realised that thematic analysis is the most appropriate way to help in the interpretation of my findings. It was a unique experience for me to categorize and find themes in my data. I would also declare that the knowledge gained from using the Nvivo software is valuable. There is no any shadow of doubt that I will be using this software for future research and studies especially back home where such techniques are considered innovative. Another important skill that I found fruitful in this research is the ethical issue related to my research and in doing research in general. This was new for me as in my previous research or methodology courses back home did not emphasise the role of research ethics. Therefore, I found the University of Sheffield ethical review guidelines and some of the relevant seminars very helpful to improve my thinking to conduct my study ethically.

This doctorate journey has also significantly increased my knowledge about the field of communication strategies. Throughout my readings of the relevant literature, I reached the conclusion that communication strategies research is one

of the most interesting areas that both teachers and researchers need to focus on. I would emphasise that studies conducted in this area will undoubtedly be both theoretically and practically significant.

Another valuable skill obtained during this experience is being critical. In other words, I learnt being critical in reading other people's work is appreciated and sometimes necessary for researchers. It is absolutely the opposite back home, any published materials are hard and unacceptable to be criticised especially if the source of these criticisms comes from Master or PhD students. Students are in the position to believe that what is written and published is the most truthful knowledge that must not be criticised. Consequently, I found my PhD experience and my supervision meetings with my supervisor very helpful to improve my critical thinking and reading skills.

All in all, every human being in this world goes through different experiences in their lives either academically, professionally or socially. Each experience has its own impacts and influences. The PhD experience for me had countless effects and challenges on me but I would underline that it positively and constructively impacted on me.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Ethics Approval Letter

The University Of Sheffield.

The School Of Education.

Ahmed Frewan

Head of School
Professor Jackie Marsh

Department of Educational Studies
The Education Building
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JA

13 July 2011

Telephone: +44 (0114) 222 8096
Fax: +44 (0114) 279 6236
Email: jacquie.gillott@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Ahmed

Re: Exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of the teaching of communication strategies

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project. The reviewers have now considered this and have agreed that your application be approved

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jacquie Gillott
Programme Secretary

Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form

University of Sheffield

Model Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: "Exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of the teaching of communication strategies"

Name of Researcher: Ahmed Frewan

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated *2012* for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, *contact Ahmed Frewan on* edp09amf@sheffield.ac.uk *or 07883841601.*

3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.

4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature
(*or legal representative*)

_____   _____   _____
Name of person taking consent   Date   Signature
(*if different from lead researcher*)
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

_____   _____   _____
 Lead Researcher   Date   Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:
Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy for the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Appendix 3: Information Sheet for Teachers

Information Sheet for Teachers

Research Project Title: Exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of the teaching of communication strategies"

You are being invited to take part in a PhD research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done, and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please, ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

1.   What is the project's purpose?
This project is in partial fulfilment of my doctorate studies at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. This study aims to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching communication strategies.

2.   Why have I been chosen?
I think you have some unique insight and special contribution to make to this study. You are one of the EFL teachers in the ……….

3.   Do I have to take part?
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, so it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep, and I will ask you, as part of the university regulations; to sign a consent form to prove that you have voluntarily consented to participate in this study. However, if at any time or for any reason you feel you want to withdraw or do not want to participate, you are free to do so. You do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

4.   What will happen to me if I take part?
After your permission, I will attend and observe some of your EFL classes and you will be requested to participate in a one-to-one interview, there may be some follow up questions.

7.   What do I have to do?
You will be optionally requested to take part in interviews that aim to explore your points of view about teaching communication strategies.

8.   What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There are no possible dangers or risks of participating in this study. However, if any unexpected discomforts or risks arise during the research, please let me know immediately.

Date: 2012   1
Name of Applicant: Ahmed Frewan

9.   What are the possible benefits of taking part?
Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in this study, it is hoped that it may offer some exploratory insights into the teaching of English as a foreign language.

10.   What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?   If this is the case, the reason (s) will be explained fully.

11.   What if something goes wrong?
If you feel unhappy about any aspect of my research at any time, please let me know immediately. I will address any concern as soon as possible. Feel free to contact me on 07883841601 or on edp09amf@sheffield.ac.uk . In the event of you still not being satisfied, your enquiry can be investigated by my supervisor Dr. Mark Payne, at mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk . If your enquiry has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the University's Register and Secretary.

12.   Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that I collect during this research will be strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications for any reasons. Furthermore, the data will be stored in secure places. If at the conclusion of the project you would like your data to be erased, please inform me.

13.   What will happen to the results of the research project?
The results of this research will be used purposely for my doctorial thesis which will be available at the University of Sheffield library and as an e-thesis after completion. It may also be that some part of the thesis be published in a peer review academic or professional publication. Reports on the research may also be shared at conferences or for additional or subsequent research projects. You or your university will not be identified in any such publication.

14.   Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is part of my doctorate scholarship granted by The Libyan General People's Committee of Education.

15.   Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This research has been ethically reviewed in accordance with the University of Sheffield Ethics Review Procedure as operated in the School of Education.
16.   Contact for further information
The contact point for further information: Dr. Mark Payne, lecturer in the department of Educational Studies, School of Education, University of Sheffield, room 3.06, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield, S10 2JA, Tel: (+44) (0)114 222 8170, email: mark.payne@Sheffield.ac.uk .

Date: 2012   2
Name of Applicant: Ahmed Frewan

Appendix 4: Access Letter

Ahmed M Frewan <edp09amf@sheffield.ac.uk>

Field Study

Ahmed M Frewan <edp09amf@sheffield.ac.uk>   3 October 2011 at 12:21

Dear

My name is Ahmed Frewan, a PhD research student at the Educational Research Department of the University of Sheffield. I passed my upgrade Viva in April. My research is supervised by Dr. Mark Payne and was examined by Dr. David Hyatt. I am attempting to explore the EFL teachers' perceptions of the teaching of communication strategies. This study has been piloted at the [ ] and now I need to collect the main data. Therefore, The [ ] seems to be an appropriate environment for my research which requires some observations of different teaching sessions and interviewing teachers to investigate their perceptions about the teaching of communication strategies. This study has been ethically approved by the University of Sheffield. Thus I would be very grateful if I would be allowed to conduct my study in your institution and would welcome the opportunity to come and discuss my research with you.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Frewan

<u>Appendix 5: Submission Letter of Transcript to Participant Validation</u>

The University Of Sheffield.

Ahmed M Frewan <edp09amf@sheffield.ac.uk>

Communication Strategies/ transcript

Ahmed M Frewan <edp09amf@sheffield.ac.uk>   10 June 2013 at 13:30
To:

Dear

I would like to thank you again for your time and the information you provided during our interview about "communication strategies". Please find attached a copy of the transcript of the interview. As part of my efforts to validate and ensure the quality reliability of my data, I would be very grateful if you would have some time to look at the transcript and feel free to (adjust, delete, add to, rectify) any of the statements provided if you wish.

Your contributions to this research are highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Frewan

Appendix 6: Interview Transcript

	Timespan	Content
1	0:00.0 - 7:40.0	Ahmed: Thank you very much for taking part in this interview. Can you please briefly describe your educational back ground? William: Yes, my first degree was in art and graphic design at (X) university, then I did a master in sociology in visual perception then I did a teacher training course in both arts and English as a useful combination because using pictures for teaching is crucial. Today, I remember I was looking at the graphic things, I know the principles behind them and I know how information can be used, and diagrams and things like that, so after that I did a masters in applied linguistics and also English language teaching, so a joined degree. I did it at (X), then I did my PhD. I started in 1995 and I finished in 1999 in the department of Asian studies, and I also I did a part time course in international politics. Ahmed: so how long have you been teaching? William: All together. Ahmed: Yes Ahmed: since I went to Egypt since 1977, so that would be thirty five years , Ahmed: 35 years teaching English as a foreign language. William: Yes. I got training from the British council and from the service oversees a lot of good training from the oversees developments, I went to Egypt and Seri Lanka as a volunteer. Ahmed: So this is why you said (Khalas) which is an Arabic word that means (enough). William: I was in the south of Egypt and I speak Masrey (Egyptian). Ahmed: So, since you were engaged with students and teaching, can you tell me what your students usually do when

they find it hard to give the exact English word.

William: Let me put this way, because my background abroad. It was quite a long time some 20 years abroad and I had to learn several languages from scratch, from the beginning. Arabic was one of them, Sinhalese the language of Sri Lanka was another, and German. I can also speak French and Japanese. Therefore, I know more or less the problems but also I know short cuts of how to learn. When my students or myself become not able to know how to put the word, we use circumlocution, we go around the word, we talk about it, something like that... but a strategy you rely on other people in truly situation. So, in Japanese I can say (jana nan ga) I forget ..What is it again ..I used to carry mini dictionary and I told students to do that as well to learn the foreign language. I always had this mini dictionary at any time at any place. I could look at the words. For example, the word for a light bulb in Arabic, I remember the word for a clock, this is it, I remember these words, so using a little dictionary or writing down the words you need in one day is crucial, so you monitor yourself and you know what you do not know. If the word is difficult, it is avoided.

Ahmed: OK, so avoidance is a strategy as well.

William: Of course, you won't tackle things which you are not ready for at elementary and pre-intermediate. You do not do things that you may not have complete control or grasp. Therefore, that is another strategy you will be interested in as a learner. There is always especially if you are in the country discrepancy between the knowledge of the native speaker and you, but if you are good at asking questions at in any language, you can control the information. Right, so you look at it this way, so that in Arabic (betamal aeh, Ea dah ,Ana mshfahem ...) (what are you doing, what is this, I do not know..) All these sort of words, can you tell me what is this, what is that, these questions and you control the source and if you do not understand, you can also ask repeat it or ask another one. The first thing I teach to beginners when they start learning a foreign language is how to ask questions.

Ahmed: Do not you think that if we keep questioning others they might feel bored or annoyed?

William: No, it is not a non-stop process. It is now and again. It is like playing a football. The football players got different skills. It doesn't take all the time. Asking too many questions can cause problems. You need to be careful and it is useful to

confirm that. For example, I just remember a question, (min houna ou min hounak) (Arabic sentence means this way or that way) So, what strategy I would imagine and use. Controlling the questions and also how to confirm information and avoidance to keep your utterance shorter than long, and learn how to pause. So, .I remember in Japanese, they use it quite a lot, the phase is quite slow sometimes, and you can easily pick the message up.

Ahmed: Do you mean that we need to pause in order to reflect on what we have or what want to ask

William: Yes, it depends on the context actually. If you want the direct information quickly in a train station or market for example. Other times you can use this pausing, it is natural, and I have not seen a research done around that. A Japanese researcher was looking at the Japanese language proficiency for a young Australian. This was only when he analysed his language, he taught she was really good as a speaker. It was quite simple and it would give the impression as if she was a good speaker. She was fluent but she took time and kept distance, so these little things may become helpful in communication.

| 2 | 7:40.3 - 10:09.0 | Ahmed: let's go back to the previous point about avoidance strategy. One the one hand, circumlocution and paraphrase are called production strategies. On the other hand, avoidance strategy is not a production strategy, it is just to avoid difficult words. So, in your point of view, which is more effective than the other in teaching.

William: If they need them, they do not avoid them. It is essential and if you look at how you teach grammar, if you look at a grammar book, it is a one hundred units and lots saying I am not bothered teaching but there is time. For example, using 'which', or 'whereby' or 'things like that'. I just never bother these things. They are not really that important. So, whether it would be used I do not know. Just avoid it, but you can mix these things up, and also you are not always aware of your inability to compete with native speakers if you are in that environment all the time. You can keep up with it but you can use very little language very effectively.

Ahmed: I remember one of scholars said, we can speak any language with only one hundred words. Do you agree with that? |

		William: That is right.
		Ahmed: So, how can we do that then,
		William: you just ...as I said there are some key question forms and segments and phrases that you can use again and again in different situations. Also, If you are flexible enough to change that. This can be found in Arabic. However, it is amazing what you can do with it. So, as you shout in Arabic, it means rejection, they all shout like that, so that is another point I think.
3	10:08.8 - 16:30.0	Ahmed: Can you please share with me your understanding of the concept communication strategies, i.e. what does the term communication strategies mean to you.

William: As a teacher.

Ahmed: yes

William: To me, if you look at any kind of linguistic system is very complex and very difficult, even native speakers never become completely knowledgeable. Therefore, for me communication strategy is making the most with very little means and using it effectively in efficient way to overcome problems in communication.

Ahmed: Making the most ….

William: making the most of what you have got and you can build on that. It also depends on what you need though. Another thing is that your communicative strategy can be dependent on kind of listener. Is he a sympathetic listener for example. For me, I have my wife who is very unsympathetic critical Japanese...never mind, even friends. Another thing in Arabic and other languages, it was not learnt from the people. I just remember people who help me learn the language and sort things out in my conversation with them. So, it was not me learning, teaching me sometimes. Communication strategies means different ways of communicating with people and getting the information you need or want at any way, then maybe with the most even with a limited knowledge or proficiency as you said hundred or a thousand or two thousand words intermediate it depends on what your needs are, but there is a lot as I said and it comes out of confidence. If you are confident, it works. People say my English is rubbish looking at the wrong way. What can you do with language? You can swear at people you can tell |

people how we are. You can tell people the food is rubbish. You can say all things. So, some students do not have the confidence to apply these sorts of strategies when they face problems in communication.

Ahmed: When you were a student and said that you have learned several languages. Did your teachers teach you how to use paraphrase or circumlocution and those strategies?

William: No, for most of the language it was survival. Survival Arabic which was three weeks in York. Egyptian Arabic when I went to Egypt and some background phrases, and in Seri Lanka it was survival Sinhalese because I lived in a remote area in the jungle which I named Jungle George. So, it was crucial so if you were ill or if you have been bitten by a snake, you just say (sneh) a snake. You have to cut the head and say this person has been bitten by this snake Alonga, Alyia or any different kind. Yes, I know this and happened before, so I was survival, it was real and it was like that.

Ahmed: When you had your teacher training, did they train you as a teacher to use strategies like those? Did they train how to teach communication strategies?

William: Yes, first of all, how to reduce teacher talking time on of the main things I remember. How to organize and use materials to a specific group? How to build up the next phases and sequences? How to deal with people who do not learn quickly? the repetition, not exactly the same repetition but doing it in a different form to acquire with other things the semantics, grammar phonology and phonetics of the language, so we got all this training before.

Ahmed: Let's go back to the one hundred words idea, and what we do with little vocabulary. What kind of activities you think help students to communicate? I mean to learn paraphrase and circumlocution or those communication strategies for instance.

William: One of them, for example I use with my students I give them the opportunity to watch and practise fluency, listen for example and just want you to talk about explaining things, showing the relationship, causing, reasoning, I want physical description of objects of things. Then you have to compare, for example, you can pick up a picture and just show you a shore. There are two ways you can do that. One person asking questions, then depending on the information given, the other person asks the next question. Asking

		questions and how to use requests to get information. So, I say is it big, yes, is it small...you do that, could you tell something about the size, the weight, tell something about the colour. Speak, tell me about it, and saying what is the difference between this and something else. So, you always you are putting these strategies to help you. I use my examples of army knife to give many different question, that is one way. The other way is that you know what the thing is and you talk about it without giving it away and the others try to guess. That is a question also to say what it is and what it is not. Why you use it and why you do not use it then you talk about the relationship of that. So, it can be done in very simple level. let's say at elementary, you can use the adjectives, it is something ..., do you have it, can I eat it, it is simple. You can use that, so there are different strategies to elicit information.
4	16:30.3 - 26:22.0	Ahmed: I wrote this question on a piece of paper. Some researchers say that we do not need to teach communication strategies because learners already have them in their first language and can transfer that to the second language. On the other hand, others advocate and recommend the teaching of communication strategies. Can you tell me where you stand from this debate? William: You have to teach communication strategies for simple reason. Ahmed: so you do not agree with the first idea William: we do have it but I know because living in different cultures there are ways of saying things, which do these things. For example, in Japanese you can use the wrong pronoun. You can use the wrong word because it is not polite. You can use formal words, you may think what works in your own language simply may not work in others. You may be doing the same thing and asking for information, giving information but the way could be in many ways cultural bound. So, you need to be very careful. So, you cannot simply separate this. In Arabic it can be quite clear. For example, an Egyptian comes to you and stands close to you and starts shouting something. Ahmed: Your pronunciation in Arabic is perfect. William: Really? Ahmed: Absolutely, you have 100% Egyptian accent.

William: It is nice, a lot of the time I have to stick out of myself (anta atrash wela aeh) Arabic means (are you deaf).. (meen waledk) means (who is you father). I used to play football with kids, and they were much more quiet and relaxed easy going and I had a class where they say (hada yedwash kather) Arabic means (this makes a lot of noise). They say (anta aswed) Arabic means (you are black). (ana mish aswed) Arabic means (I am not black).It was great fun but yes it can be good strategy if you did not stick out yourself. In the Saeed, people greet each other differently. I was walking in a beautiful town in Edfou. It was in the afternoon, I was walking alone, and it was very quiet. This beautiful old city and everybody was very hot and a guy turned up and he was real Saede and he just hit me on the back, so (leh betamel dah) Arabic means (why did you do that), he said (ana min Aswan) Arabic means (I am from Aswan) why, because I know you I did that. That will be silly in England isn't, yes communication strategies. Even things about what socially is acceptable. In Seri Lanka, I just want to mention something, body language and speaking at the same time, you do not do this in other words. You have to be careful, it maybe swear. It was different from English, I met a guy and he was in Thailand and was living in a homestead family and spoke Thai language. It was bloody difficult and he was speaking all the times referring to the grandfather. He was using very honour word like (banhee) actually what he was saying was all not good. The following day he did not say anything. Strategies are embarrassing and another example about body language in Japan, people used to make the sound with the nose. I am sorry I did not know your answer. I do not know what you are saying. I don't have what you want. It is a sign of discomfort which Japanese can see straight away without saying anything, that is the guy, have you got this and he said (making the sound with nose - sniffing) have you got it or not? and the Serlikaian just did not know when they move their head what they are saying, she go this way or that way, they keep moving their head , so do I go this way or this way , ahhhhh, they just move the head,

Ahmed: discussing this, I think we also covered a question about culture that is about any link between culture and communication strategies.

William: Yes definitely, words you can talk about, names of directness, and notions on politeness. I used to find it hard for a Japanese to learn English. It was really rude, he thinks he is more direct. My wife especially when she says things which

are always softer, are completely different. So, look at this, do you agree with this? It is a cultural thing. There are cultural norms for language learning, for scientific English or journals styles. There are cultural convention where you expect, I know, I used when I used to read Arabic, I was really lost. It is complex language. I know from being in India and Seri Lanka that communication strategies if those people spoke too quickly in English. It was too much. They told me everything at the beginning (bla bla bla) so what you want, just tell me, their ideas are to give all the background information. They may ask 'can you do that', and even they may not say it, they want you to guess what it is. So, they give the background. For example, there has been a lot of rain in my area in my town and has been bad flooding which means can I go home to. They say yes so it depends on the context. I used to find that quite a lot. I was always learning what to say and what not to say. Little things I remember with apology, a village in Seri Lanka called the Mores, nice people in isolated area and this guy was teaching the Quran and I could read some. I love the script and he used to talk to me and he did this and he is an anthropologist from California University and never seen it before it is interesting never done it before. It seems no one knows about that, maybe because...so you got where I stand.

Ahmed: Yes absolutely I did, I think we have covered all the questions now.

William: good , how you are going to code and index this ,

Ahmed: I will be using a software which is for qualitative data analysis, it is called NVIVO

5	26:22.6 - 27:40.0	Ahmed: Is there anything you would like to add. William: No just I would be very interested to read your research, you know, it is worth doing and maybe you go about learning a language and could cover many different things but as you know it is not just the knowledge of the words so all these are the complex issue. Ahmed: It will be in Sheffield University Library after I finish it. So is there anything you would like to ask me about. William: Have you ever been to Egypt Ahmed: No, to be honest, but have met many Egyptians in Libya and have many friends so I can speak Egyptian accent.

		Ahmed: I really appreciate your contribution for this research and all the information will be anonymous and confidential as already mentioned, so I need to switch this recorder off.

Appendix 7: Participants' Profile

Pseudonym	Sex	Date of interview	Qualifications	Teaching experience	University	Classroom Observation
Lisa	F	21/12/11	Masters in French, PGCE, Diploma in teaching English as a foreign language, and a degree in social sciences	Since 1970	1	No
Ann	F	21/02/12	PhD in Applied Linguistics	Since 1997	1	Yes
Jack	M	08/02/12	Bachelor degree in History, Certificate and diploma in ELT and a Maters in TESOL	Since 1998	1	Yes
Hilda	F	16/03/12	Degree in Spanish and Politics, Diploma in TEFL and a PGCE in Further Education	Since 1997	1	Yes
Gary	M	20/03/12	Degree in Philosophy, a Trinity Certificate and Diploma in ELT and a Master in TESOL.	Since 1993	1	Yes
William	M	12/03/12	Degree in Graphic design, an MA in Applied Linguistics and language teaching, an MA in Sociology and a PhD in Asian Studies.	Since 1997	1	Yes
Sarah	F	02/04/12	MA in English Literature	Since 2000	1	No
Robert	M	29/03/12	Certificate and Diploma in TEFL, BSc in Sociology and an MSc in Computer Assisted Language Learning.	Since 1995	2	No
Sue	F	14/09/12	Withheld by participant	Since 1997	2	No
Rebecca	F	14/09/12	A CELTA Certificate, a Diploma in TEFL, BA in Environmental Sciences and an MA in Applied Linguistics.	Since 1992	2	No
Sally	F	09/11/12	TESOL certificate	Since 2008	2	Yes
Tom	F	13/11/12	CELTA, and an MA in TESOL and Applied Linguistics.	Since 1997	2	Yes

Karen	F	16/11/12	A degree in English Language and Sociology, PGCE and Diploma.	Since 2002	2	No