

The Study of Communication strategies in Teacher Talk

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Abstract

The focus of the present study is the use of communication strategies in teacher talk in ESL/EFL classrooms. Communication strategies consist of adjustments made by speakers to the formulation of their talk in order to facilitate communication, and these are clearly a potentially important aspect of teacher talk. The study uses a mixed method design to investigate firstly the type and frequency of communication strategies and their patterns of relationship across teachers grouped in terms of language background and teaching institution; and secondly the type and frequency of strategy use in relation to the focus of talk across the different phases of a standard lesson. The participants were three native speaker and six non-native speaker teachers, across three different ESL/EFL instructional settings. The data consist of a total of twenty seven recordings, made up of three lessons with each teacher. The detailed examination of the database revealed that the participant teachers used both conversational modifications and lexical-compensatory strategies in their talk with students. The quantitative analysis showed that the two types of strategy occurred with different-frequencies. No important differences were found between NS and NNS teachers. However, significant task-related differences were detected. Finally, a case study of three teachers revealed a relationship between the focus of talk and the incidence of communication strategies across the phases of the analysed lesson. The implications of these results are firstly that communication strategies are indeed a central element of teacher talk; secondly, that lexical-compensatory strategies and meaning negotiation strategies both contribute significantly to the construct; thirdly, that their use is important for both native speaker and non-native speaker teachers; fourthly, that they are used with significantly different frequencies and functions; and finally, that their use is influenced by teaching focus and activity type.

Key words: communication strategies, teacher talk, ESL/EFL classes, native/non-native teachers

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970's (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) teacher talk (TT) has been of considerable interest in understanding and attempting to develop second language teaching pedagogy. Its importance has been seen partly because of its potential role as a source of L2 input, and partly as a key interactional constituent of the language learning context. The implications are of interest generally in contemporary language teaching, and of course for teacher education and teacher development. This interest is motivated by the growing recognition of the role of teacher talk in determining the patterns of interaction and in effect the learning opportunities provided for the learners. The consensus is that through the investigation of teacher talk and classroom interaction we can come to a better understanding of the teaching-learning process.

TT has normally been seen in terms of features such as types of teacher questions, amount of turns, potential interaction patterns, and teachers' correction types. All these elements are important for the development of language pedagogy. Little attention, however, has been paid to what is potentially a very significant aspect of TT, that is communication strategies (CSs). For the purposes of the present study CSs are defined as the adjustments speakers make to the expression of their message in order to achieve communication. Typically, second language teaching involves teachers in adjusting their talk so that their learners can understand them. This implies flexibility in communication which may help learners to enter the discourse and remain involved in its progression. In addition, CSs are also important because many language teachers are themselves second language speakers. CSs then are central for two main reasons: as a support to facilitate the understanding of the second language learner; and as a resource to help the second language speaking teacher.

In handling communication problems, teachers - like any speaker - are probably constantly planning ahead, making on-line adjustments and monitoring or responding to problems as they become manifest. The adjustments involve the use of devices which have so far been the focus of two strands of research; the study of CSs used by learners to compensate for their linguistic problems in production, and the study

of the discourse level interactional adjustments (negotiated input) made by native speakers to negotiate their understanding of the learners' utterances. Only the former have been associated with the concept of CSs, but as the following example shows, in classroom interaction, both types of adjustments are integratively involved.

Example

S:

- 1 err I don't watch TV often of course,
- 2 because I don't know,
- 3 we can't,
- 4 I don't know what it means,
- 5 we can't ah have good quality

T:

- 6 you mean the quality of the programmes!
- 7- you don't- you DISAPPROVE of the programmes? =

S:

- 8 [no no

T:

- 9 = what?

S:

- 10 we can't- about the getting the pro-

T:

- 11 [the reception is not good
- 12 on your television the rec:
- 13 where do you live?

In lines 3 and 4, the student abandons his message and signals an upcoming communication strategy which is an *approximation* in line 5. In response, the teacher uses a comprehension check which is then reformulated in line 7. As the teacher's interpretation is rejected, he requests for clarification of the intended meaning in line 9. The student again uses an approximation in line 10 which succeeds in getting the teacher's interpretation right in line 11.

The negotiation sequence starts with the student using a compensatory strategy. The analysis of the excerpt using the current

typologies of CSs would go no further than saying that the student used a strategy to compensate for a gap in his lexical knowledge. Examination of the next turn reveals that in addition to its role in lexical compensation, the student's strategy had a discourse value in signalling to the teacher a communication problem which is then sorted out co-operatively over the next turns. This indicates that compensatory strategies play a dual role by helping out with production problems and at the same time lining up the interlocutor's inferential processes in establishing mutual comprehension. The analysis of the negotiation process would not be complete if we do not take the teacher's moves into consideration. It is through the use of a *comprehension check* and a *clarification request* (examples of meaning negotiation strategies in this study) that the teacher matches his understanding of the message with that of the student.

As the above example shows, neither the framework of interlanguage CSs nor the negotiated input by itself can capture the way meaning is negotiated by both sides. Both types are integratively involved in the above meaning negotiation episode. The integration is substantiated by the fact that the teacher also offers *paraphrases* ('quality of the programme', 'disapprove of the programme'), as compensatory strategies, embedded in his *confirmation checks* before he gets at the intended concept referred to as 'reception' in his *reformulation*. The example also suggests that the two types of strategies perform different functions in meaning negotiation. The teacher uses discourse moves to negotiate the student's intended meaning while the student uses communication strategies to compensate for a gap in his lexical knowledge and at the same time to negotiate his own intended meaning.

The conceptual framework used in this study to investigate the teachers' use of CSs is informed by three strands of research; the interlanguage CSs, negotiated input, and repair in classroom interaction. Below is a brief review of the issues involved in these fields.

Background

Communication strategies

The earliest studies in this field were focused on the formulations of defining criteria for the description and identification of CSs. These studies were informed by a theoretical interest in delimiting the strategic aspects of communicative competence assumed to be essential in coping with the demands of unforeseen communicative situations and the practical considerations of controlling these aspects for pedagogic purposes (Faerch and Kasper 1984). Accordingly, 'problem-orientation' and 'consciousness' with its associated concept of 'intentionality' were assumed to be the defining criteria of CSs. The theoretical and practical issues surrounding these criteria have left the original conceptualisation in an untenable situation and therefore led to alternative perspectives in defining CSs. The major theoretical issue is the narrow focus of the study of CSs on the learners' lexical problems in speech production and comprehension. The argument is that problematicity and consciousness set limits on the range of strategies which are normally used in non-problematic moments for example by native speakers without their conscious awareness (c.f. Bialystok 1990). In practical terms, these criteria leave the CSs used by native speakers out of the scope of the field and even in the case of learners they limit the CSs to those which are explicitly signalled by disfluency markers.

To resolve the issues, the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives which have lately emerged in the field have tried to extend the concept with the intention to avoid the limitations imposed by the original defining criteria. For example, the psycholinguistic perspective developed by the Nijmegen group (see Bongaerts & Poulisse 1989; Kellerman 1991; Poulisse 1990; Bialystok 1990) locates CSs in the broader context of communication in general by shifting the focus from the formal realisation of CSs to their underlying processes. The findings of the psycholinguistic perspective have enabled the field to make relations with the findings in the fields of language processing, cognition, and problem-solving behaviour (for the application of the principles of clarity and economy to CS use see Poulisse 1997).

The interactive definitions of CSs which have ties with the sociolinguistic studies of language in social interaction have tried to locate CSs in the context of social interaction. These types of studies have identified different roles for CSs in social interaction which largely depend on the analytic framework adopted by the researcher(s). For example using a critical sociolinguistic framework of analysis, Rampton (1997) defines CSs as devices used by the interlocutors to negotiate role and identity in an attempt to maintain, restore, or change the social order. The conversational analysis framework has also been used to study the role of CSs in the dynamics of social interaction (c.f. Williams et al 1997). Here again CSs are reconceptualised in consonant with the premises of the analytic framework as problems in interaction which demand the joint efforts of both interlocutors. Both frameworks keep the original concept of CSs as alternative meaning structures but give it an interactive role which changes the concept from an intra-personal phenomenon into an inter-personal one.

In contrast to the above-mentioned psychological and sociological perspectives to the study of CSs, the interactive interpretation of the early pedagogically-oriented definition of CSs (see Tarone 1981) implicates a role for both social and cognitive processes. Tarone (1981: 288) defines CSs as 'a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared'. The assumptions made in this definition about the shared nature of problems of talk and the orientation of CSs toward cognitive meaning structures seem to serve the study of instructional talk whose major purpose is learning in the sense of establishing mutual understanding between the interlocutors.

There are disputes over the theoretical and methodological formalisation of the interactive definition developed by Tarone. First, it extends the concept of CSs to include meaning negotiation; however, its orientation is still toward the learner since what is assumed to trigger meaning negotiation is the learner's use of a CS. This is also reflected by the current typologies of CSs which are still confined to the learner's categories. The second issue relates to the way CSs are to be identified in the stream of speech. From a

psycholinguistic perspective, CSs are production processes; therefore, it is the speaker's point of view which matters in the identification and classification of CSs. This assumption is the basis for the distinction made between appeal for assistance and the other categories of CSs. Based on this distinction, it is the speaker who decides whether to use his own resources in dealing with a problem or ask for help from the interlocutor. However, it is argued (see Scholfield 1987) that from an interactive point of view which considers CSs as tools for meaning negotiation the consequences of using a strategy in terms of its effect on the interlocutor should logically be more important than the speaker's point of view since it is the hearer's interpretation of the speaker's strategy which determines its success or failure in communicating the intended meaning. Based on this argument, the distinction between appeal for assistance and the other categories cannot be maintained since it is possible that the use of the latter categories elicit the same reaction from the hearer.

A similar interactive perspective which maintains close ties with the psycholinguistic definition of CSs has been introduced by Bygate (1987). He refers to CSs as the adaptations speakers need to make in order to deal with the internal conditions under which speaking takes place. These conditions which he describes as the time constraints and reciprocal nature of speaking due to the availability of feedback from the hearer make adaptations an inevitable part of oral communication. Speakers may use devices such as formulations, repetitions, and paraphrases to repair their speech by making alterations to what they have already produced or produce its gist in order to reduce their memory load. The reciprocity condition involves the use of the same devices along with the checking procedures often referred to as interactional modifications to ensure mutual understanding. Within this framework, CSs form a subcategory of production and negotiation skills to compensate for ambiguities in production and to add to the precision of the message exchanged between the speaker and the hearer. Bygate's definition incorporates the meaning negotiation devices which have been left out of the scope of this phenomenon in the previous definitions referred to above. It also manages to release the concept from its learner-oriented implications by giving it a more

universal role in speaking. The implication of Bygate's definition is that CSs are used both in L1 and L2. What makes their use by non-native speakers distinct from their use by native speakers is their higher frequency in this type of speech due to proficiency deferential which makes communication less achievable.

Negotiated Input

In the field of SLA, the interactional modifications, which result in negotiated input, refer to the changes which occur in conversations between native speakers and learners, teachers and learners or between more proficient and less proficient non-native speakers. The aim of these studies is to identify the differences between these types of interactions with the ones involving native speakers. The interactional modifications include a range of discourse procedures used by the proficient side of interaction to understand and being understood. The most important discourse procedures are clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, self- and other-repetition/reformulation (cf. Long, 1983). Long makes a distinction between the discourse procedures used to avoid communication problems (strategies) and those used to repair troubles after their occurrence (tactics).

The negotiated input studies have mostly concerned themselves with the relationship between interactional modifications and language learning. This has probably the reason why the details of the different functions performed by these categories have not been examined in detail (for an exception see Pica et al. 1989 and Pica, 1996). This is clearly a drawback since as is clearly shown by Aston (1986) some of the categories of negotiate input perform different functions, some of which do not necessarily lead to more negotiation of meaning and in effect to clearer speech comprehension. As an example, Aston refers to 'other repetition' with rising intonation used to check interpretation of the previous speaker's utterance. The problem is that the basis upon which such utterances could be assigned to either category (comprehension check and other repetition) has not been made clear by the negotiated input researchers. As the study of CSs is more concerned with the functions

of interactional modifications, we are here more interested in the potential function of these categories in the overall framework of speech in making speech comprehensible to both interlocutors than their pedagogic significance.

Repair in Classroom Interaction

Studies done on repair in classroom discourse have used the types of repair suggested by Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) as a starting point to find the similarities and differences in the way repair is dealt with in pedagogic discourse as compared with discourse in non-instructional settings. Their findings (see Van Lier, 1988; and Kasper, 1985) show that first, repair in L2 classroom pedagogic discourse refers both to the correction of formal errors and the attempts to resolve communication impasses due to prospective and retrospective problems of talk. It should be emphasised here that due to the pedagogic nature of classroom discourse, repair in the form of error correction is exercised on quite comprehensible utterances. However, as Van Lier has rightly mentioned, even in this case repair could be accomplished in a conversational manner giving the pedagogic discourse a sense of naturalness. Second, repair might aim at helping and supporting through reformulating, modelling, and clueing or problematising the speaker's utterances to elicit repair instead of doing the repair for the speaker. Third, the trouble-sources might show up in both the teacher's and the learners' utterances.

Toward a typology of communication strategies

The aim in the previous sections was to relate the work on CSs to the work on interactional modifications and repair. The common feature which relates the three frameworks of research is their focus on meaning negotiation. The difference between these frameworks of research lies in the way they conceptualise and analyse meaning negotiation in interactive talk. The review of the common features of the frameworks of research which have focused on meaning negotiation provides a basis upon which we can introduce a provisional typology of CSs, which is assumed to capture the different negotiation devices used by both interlocutors in interactive talk. This

typology is basically developed based on theoretical considerations, though some of the conclusions upon which the categorisation is done are supported by empirical research evidence. We have based the definition of compensatory strategies on work done by Tarone (1977) and Poulisse et al. (1984). To define the meaning negotiation strategies we have consulted Long (1983b) and Pica and Doughty (1985). In these studies, no distinction is made between repetition and reformulation. As the distinction is considered important in term of the role it play in meaning negotiation we have made that distinction and defined the categories accordingly.

In the following categorisation of CSs, distinctions are made between two types of problems, and in effect between two types of linguistic or discourse procedures used to deal with them. First are the own-performance problems which are resolved using compensatory strategies in production and comprehension. Second are the other-performance problems caused by the limited proficiency of one's interlocutor requiring devices for adaptation to these needs. It is to be noted that meaning negotiation strategies are often used by language learners in their later stages of their language learning process. However, the important point is that when they are used for compensatory purposes by learners they are labelled appeal for assistance.

Own-performance problems (Compensatory Strategies)

Production strategies

L2-based

- Circumlocution: the description of the characteristics or elements of the subject or action instead of using the appropriate target language structure
- Approximation: the use of a substitute word which shares some of the critical semantic features with the target item
- Word coinage: making a new target language word to communicate the target item

L1-based

- Code-switching: switching to a language other than L2 www.SID.ir

- Literal translation: a word-for-word translation of an idiom, idiomatic phrase or compound word
- Foreignising: the use of an L1 word with L2 pronunciation

Mime: the use of mimetic gestures to illustrate the target concept

Appeal for assistance: to seek direct or indirect help from one's interlocutor in resolving receptive or productive problems

- a) Implicit appeal for assistance: disfluency marker realised in one's speech signalling linguistic problems in production
- b) Explicit appeal for assistance: giving up one's efforts to express meaning and asking the interlocutor to help

Reception strategies

- Perception strategies: the use of inferential strategies taking advantage of redundant elements in target language speech
- Appeal for assistance: admitting non-understanding, or using the meaning negotiation strategies such as repetitions, reformulations, comprehension checks, confirmation checks and clarification requests to involve the interlocutor in resolving one's own receptive problems

Other-performance problems

Compensatory strategies

(Lexical explication)

- Circumlocution: using a superordinate term plus post modification describing the key semantic features of the target item or using simply a description without relating it to a superordinate term
- Approximation: the use of a substitute word which shares some of the critical semantic features with the target item
- Code switching: switching to a language other than L2
- Mime: the use of mimetic gestures to illustrate the target concept

Meaning negotiation strategies

- Clarification request: all different types of expressions used to elicit clarification of the preceding utterance
- Confirmation check: putting forward the exact or semantic repetition of the part or whole of the preceding utterance as to check whether it has been correctly heard or understood
- Comprehension check: expressions designed to check whether one's own previous utterance(s) are understood by the addressee
- Self-reformulation: to reformulate ones own utterance in a simplified form to help the addressee with its comprehension
- Self repetition: to repeat one's own utterance to provide more time processing for its understanding by the addressee
- Other-reformulation: to reformulate the previous speaker's utterance to move it closer to correspondence with its intended meaning
- Other-repetition: to repeat the previous speaker's utterance to confirm an agreement on its meaning or to use it as an indication of a problem

METHOD

The present project was designed as a case study with a multi-method design using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The analysis was guided by the following research questions.

1. What are the different types and frequencies of CSs adopted by language teachers in teacher-led phases of their lessons?
2. Is there any relationship between the teachers' language background and their patterns of strategy use?
3. Is there any relationship between the institutions in which the teachers are performing their teaching duties and their patterns of strategy use?
4. Is there any relationship between the type and frequency of CSs used by language teachers and the focus of talk in terms of the participants' orientation toward topic and activity?

5. Is there any relationship between the different phases of a lesson and the type and frequency of CSs?

To answer these questions, first we set out to identify the type of CSs in classroom discourse. Second, we focused on the distribution of strategies among native and non-native teachers to explore the scope of this phenomenon and the possible effect of the teachers' language background and the institutional arrangements on its patterns of use. Third, the possible relationship between the use of CSs and the focus of talk was explored.

Teaching contexts: Institutions and types of courses

The data for the present study were collected in two different teaching contexts: the ESL context in the UK and the EFL context in Iran. The observed classes in the UK were located in a Community Language Centre offering conversational courses as a community service and a University Language Centre which offered intensive pre-sessional courses to overseas students who had registered for degree programmes at the university; both in a large city in the northern part of the country. The classes observed in Iran were located in two private Language Institutes offering general English language courses to the public; both in Tehran. The classes were either at the lower or higher intermediate. The class size varied from 7 to 10 in the Community Language Centre, 10 to 15 in the University Language Centre and 15 to 20 in the two private Language Institutes in Iran. The type of courses offered varied greatly in terms of scope, materials, presentation, and the type of activity structures. The information related to each of these elements is depicted in Table 1.

With regard to scope, the teachers were asked to estimate the emphasis given to each of the oral (listening and speaking), reading, and writing skills on a rating scale of 1 to 6, and the proportion of time spent on activities related to these skills. The teachers' ratings of the degree of emphasis given to language skills are mapped onto three bands reported in the table as average (A), more than average (M), and less than average (L).

Table 1. Course specifications

Teaching Context	Scope			Materials	Presentation	Activity Structure
	Listing & Speaking	Reading	Writing			
CLC	70%(M)	20%(A)	10%(L)	Not fixed	Skill-based	Pair/group (50%)
ULC	20%(A)	30%(A)	50%(A)	Not fixed	Skill-based	Pair/group (40%)
IA*	40%(M)	40%(A)	20%(L)	Headway	Skill-based	Pair/group (40%)
IB*	(60%)(A)	(30%)(M)	(10%)(A)	Local	Form-based	Pair/group (20%)

*Institute A *Institute B

Data collection and analysis

The data collected were audio- and video-recording of two normal and one specially-designed lessons of each teacher over three consecutive sessions. The specially-designed lesson was a grammar practice task adapted from Riggensbach and Samuda (1997). A quantitative analysis was carried out on the 27 lessons which had already been transcribed, segmented and coded. The aim of the analysis was two-fold. First, the identification of the basic patterns of strategy use among native and non-native speaker teachers could reveal similarities and differences across the two groups and also across individual teachers in the same group. Second, it could also reveal similarities and differences in patterns of strategy use across the different institutions where the two groups of non-native speaker teachers were performing their teaching duties.

To relate the patterns of strategy use identified in the quantitative analysis to the pedagogic focus of talk in different phases of a lesson a microanalysis was done on the third lesson taught by three selected teachers. The three participant teachers, one native and two non-natives, came from three different teaching institutions. The analysis was focused on three different but interrelated aspects of classroom discourse thought to characterise the focus of the talk in each phase of the lesson. One measure which has traditionally been used to characterise the quality and quantity of the teacher and student talk is the proportions of teachers' question types. The purpose of this aspect of the analysis was to examine the balance of the focus on form and

meaning as reflected by the types of questions. Following Van Lier (1988), the second measure was the indexes of teacher control and student participation, using a procedure which combined teacher's control of turn-taking and topic and activity initiation and change with the students' participation in terms of self-selection and initiation of exchanges and sequences to introduce new topics or change the current ones. The third measure was a number of discourse processes used by teachers to orient toward activity or topic1 (For the description of the categories of the three phases of analysis see appendix A).

RESULTS

To answer question 1, we did a frequency count of the CSs used by individual teachers. Table 2 displays the frequencies of CSs in the three lessons.

Table 2: Comparison of frequency of all CSs across teachers and lessons

Teacher	L1	L2	L3	Mean	SD
T1	32.1	20.7	23.2	25.3	6.0
T2	15.3	24.1	19.4	19.6	4.4
T3	11.8	7.0	23.1	14.0	8.3
T4	21.7	25.9	23.5	23.7	2.1
T5	31.1	33.1	23.5	29.2	5.1
T6	9.0	16.5	18.2	14.6	4.9
T7	11.4	22.7	17.5	17.2	5.7
T8	13.6	21.9	19.8	18.4	4.3
T9	18.5	13.4	13.9	15.3	2.8
Mean	18.3	20.6	20.2		
SD	8.5	7.6	3.4		

Frequencies calculated per 100 teacher's utterances

At least three observations can be made on the basis of these figures. First, the means show a similar level of strategy use across the three lessons. Second, they also indicate that the strategies constitute almost 20% of teacher talk in the database, that is one utterance in five. Third, with the SD of 3.4 versus 8.5 and 7.6, lesson 3 has generated the least amount of variation among teachers. This might be the result of the

controlling factor of the use of the same task in this lesson by all teachers.

To answer question 2, we compared the results of the frequency counts conducted on the transcripts of the lessons taught by group 1 with those of groups 2 and 3. The purpose was to find out the similarities and differences of patterns of strategy use between native speaker teachers (group 1) with non-native speaker teachers (groups 2 and 3). Table 3 and its associated graph (figure 1) show the distribution of meaning negotiation strategies in terms of the mean of relative frequencies and their percentages across the three groups.

Table 3. Frequencies of meaning negotiation strategies across the three groups

Lesson 1,2,3	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
	SF	%	SF	%	SF	%
M. N.						
Strategies						
CLR REQ	3.3	20%	3.4	18%	2.5	19%
CON CHK	1.8	11%	2.2	12%	1.4	10%
COM CHK	0.4	2%	0.5	3%	1	8%
SLF REF	3.5	21%	3.4	18%	2.2	17%
OTR REF	2.6	15%	3.2	17%	1.6	12%
OTR REP	3.6	22%	4.8	26%	3.1	24%
T C	0.3	2%	0.5	3%	0.7	5%
CUE	1	6%	0.6	3%	0.6	5%
Total	16.6	100%	18.7	100%	13.2	100%

Frequencies calculated per 100 teacher's utterances

Percentages expressed as a proportion of the total frequency of strategies

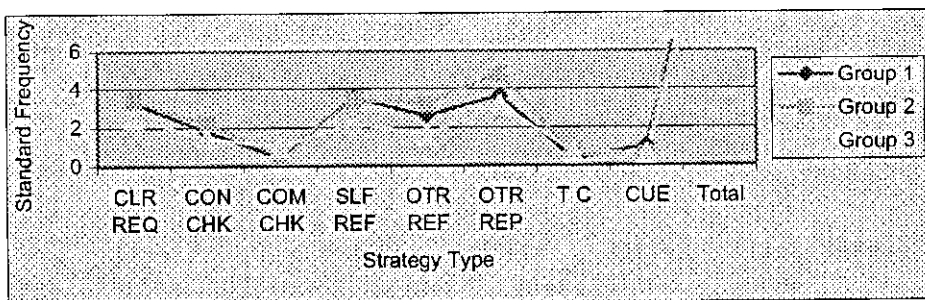


Figure 1. Comparison of the frequency of meaning negotiation strategies across groups

The first and most salient result of the comparison of the three groups is the close resemblance of the percentages of the categories of meaning negotiation strategies. That is, the various meaning negotiation strategies have been used with similar proportions across the three groups. Redistributing the categories in terms of the degree of responsibility which goes either to the teacher or the students in avoiding or dealing with communication problems, the results show an overall distribution of responsibility in favour of the teacher. In using self- and other-repetition/reformulation, comprehension checks, turn completions and cues, which constitute 70% of the total number of meaning negotiation strategies, it is the teacher who simplifies the input to avoid problems, helps out in the production of utterances and finally repairs or confirms the students' utterances.

Within the patterns described above across the three groups, there are, however, substantial differences between the groups of teachers in terms of the total standard frequencies of strategies. The difference is most in evidence in the totals represented in table 3 between group 3 and the other two groups (13.2 versus 18.7 and 16.6). As the data represented in table 3 and the graph in figure 1 show, group 3's standard frequencies of meaning negotiation strategies are on the whole lower than those of the other two groups in all types of strategies except the two categories of comprehension check (1.0 versus 0.5 and 0.4) and turn completion (0.7 versus 0.5 and 0.3).

Table 4. Comparison of frequencies of lexical-compensatory strategies across groups

Lesson 1,2,3		Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
L-C Strategies	ST. F	%	ST. F.	%	ST. F.	%	
DES	1.5	39%	2.5	54%	2.1	46%	
CON DES	1	26%	0.5	12%	0.5	11%	
APR	0.6	16%	1.1	25%	1.2	27%	
APR (EMB)	0.5	13%	0.1	3%	0.6	13%	
COD SWT	0	0%	0.2	4%	0	0%	
MIM	0.1	3%	0.1	1%	0.1	2%	
APL AUT	0.1	3%	0.1	1%	0	0%	
Total	3.6	100%	4.6	100%	4.6	100%	

Now, we turn to examine the lexical-compensatory strategies across the three lessons. The summary data of the lexical-compensatory strategies across the three lessons are reported in table 4 and its associated graph in figure 2.

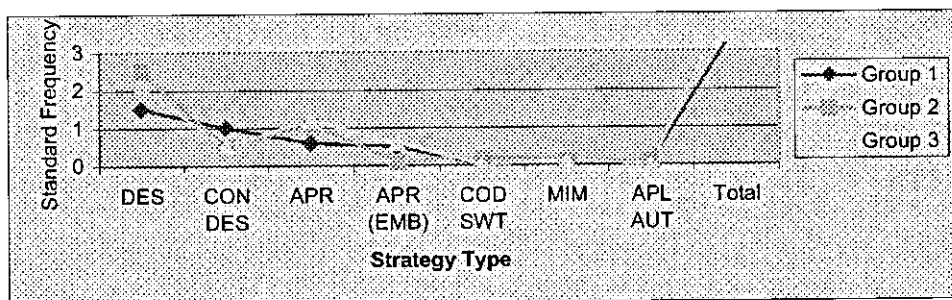


Figure 2. Comparison of frequencies of lexical-compensatory strategies across groups

As can be seen from the total standard frequencies in table 4, altogether groups 2 and 3 have used lexical-compensatory strategies more frequently than group 1 (4.6, 4.6 versus 3.6). Comparison of the percentages of individual strategies across the three groups demonstrates that the most frequent strategies are description and contextualised descriptions (group 1: 39%, 26%; group 2: 54%, 12%; group 3: 46%, 11%). The aggregate figure for these two categories are 65%, 66%, 57% respectively. The second in terms of frequency in the rank order are approximation and embedded approximation (group 1: 16%, 13%; group 2: 25%, 3%; group 3: 27%, 13%). The aggregate figures are 29%, 28%, 40% respectively. The remaining three categories, that is, code switching, mime, and appeal to authority constitute 2% to 6% of the total proportions. These figures indicate that description and approximation were the major tools used by the teachers for lexical compensation.

To summarise, the results reveal that both major types of CSs have been used by all teachers with broadly similar patterns of distribution. The distribution of meaning negotiation strategies lends itself to a new categorisation based on the functions performed by this type of strategies. The first category which encompasses the set of meaning negotiation strategies constituting 70% of the total frequency reflects

the teachers' propensity to adapt the discourse to the students' needs. With regard to lexical-compensatory strategies, the results showed that circumlocution (description, approximation, contextualised description, embedded approximation) was consistently used by all teachers in more than 90% of the cases where a lexical-compensatory strategy was required. The description types of this strategy were used more frequently than the approximation types. The categories of mime, appeal to authority and code switching were very few in the data and were used by some teachers in one or two lessons. As to the impact of language background on the patterns of strategy use, the analysis revealed very few differences between the native speaker and non-native speaker teachers. However, the curricular arrangement had its impact since institution B (group 3) was to a large extent different from institution A (group 2) and the institutions where the native speakers were teaching (group 1).

To answer questions 4 and 5, a microanalysis was done on lesson three taught by three teachers (T 3, T 4, T 7). The results are reported below. The frequencies and percentages of the type of questions are displayed in table 5. Comparing the proportions of referential and content-oriented questions on the one hand and the proportion of display and form-oriented questions on the other, we can conclude that the referential/display distinction reliably predict the orientation of the questions toward form or meaning.

Table 5. The percentage of teachers' question types

	T 3	T 4	T 7
Referential/Display	44%, 56%	82%, 18%	2%, 98%
Content/form	46%, 54%	82%, 18%	5%, 95%
Open/Closed	14%, 86%	12%, 88%	0%, 100%

The teachers are consistently distinguished along the lines of the referential/display and content- and form-oriented distinctions. Teacher 4's and teacher 7's questioning behaviour is quite the opposite. While teacher 4's majority of questions were referential and content-oriented; display and form-oriented questions constituted the majority of questions asked by teacher 7. Teacher 4's questions are almost equally distributed showing little difference between the

percentage of referential and content-oriented questions on the one hand and the display and form-oriented questions on the other. On the other hand, all three teachers asked more closed than open questions.

The results of the quantification process to estimate the students' level of participation are shown in table 6. The question is to what extent the students' contributions are the result of their active participation through volunteered responses and topic initiation and change.

Table 6. Comparison of level of participation among teachers and students

	TCT		% of TCT		TNC		PL		PI	
	T	Ss	T	Ss	T	Ss	T	Ss	T	Ss
Teacher 3	149	101	59	41	380	137	2.55	1.35	364	74.7
Teacher 4	182	221	45	55	478	379	2.62	1.71	308.9	160.8
Teacher 7	79	47	63	37	205	71	2.59	0.85	422.7	34.7

TCT: Total Coded Turns

TNC: Total Number of Codings

PL: Participation Level

PI: Participation Index

As was expected, the teachers' level of participation is generally much higher than the students'; however, the difference varies greatly across teachers. For example, if we look at the last two columns we can see that the participation index of teacher 4 is twice as much as that of the students; while for teachers 3 and 7 the participation indexes are five and twelve times higher respectively. This suggests that teacher 7 may have exercised the highest level of control and teacher 4 the lowest. Teacher 3 takes a middle position with regard to index of participation. By implication, the rank of students' figures is the reverse, suggesting an inverse correlation between the level of control exercised by the teacher and the extent of the students' initiative.

Table 7 shows the frequency of the descriptors of orientation toward activity and topic in relation to teacher 3. To start with, we focus on phase 1 (setting up 1 & summing up 1) compared with phase 2 (setting up 2 and summing up 2). The total frequency and percentage of activity (A) and topic (T) orientation devices show that, in phase 1, the participants oriented toward both activity and topic (10 : 14 / 59 : 94) though topic orientation was clearly more frequent than

activity orientation here and throughout the first phase; while in phase 2 they almost exclusively oriented toward activity (6 : 0 / 31 : 4).

Table 7. Distribution of T 3's discourse devices in lesson phases

Setting up 1			Summing up 1		Setting up 2		Summing up 2		Total	
A1	1	T1	A1	T1	A1	T1	A1	T1	A1 6	T1 6
		0	3	6	0	0	2	0		
A2	8	T2	A2	T2	A2	T2	A2	T2	A2	T2
		7	4	14	6	0	5	0	23	21
A3	0	T3	A3	T3	A3	T3	A3	T3	A3 9	T3
		3	9	39	0	0	0	4		46
A4	1	T4	A4	T4	A4	T4	A4	T4	A4	T4
		3	23	10	0	0	14	0	38	13
A5	0	T5	A5	T5	A5	T5	A5	T5	A5	T5
		1	13	10	0	0	0	0	13	11
A6	0	T6	A6	T6	A6	T6	A6	T6	A6	T6
		0	7	15	0	0	10	0	17	15
(T) 10		14	59	94	6	0	31	4	106	112
*(%)12.19	17.07		13.50	21.51	12.24	0	38.27	4.93	17.01	17.97

*The percentages are calculated as a proportion of the teacher's total utterances

The results suggest that the talk in the second phase was basically instructional and focused on activity; while in the first phase a mixture of conversational and instructional talk was used. In spite of the different frequencies of the orientations over the two phases of the lesson, the small difference between their total frequencies (106 versus 112 at the foot of the right hand columns) reflects the results of the analysis done on types of questions and participation indexes, which showed T 3's well balanced proportions of question types and his middle position in relation to participation indexes in comparison with the other two teachers. Overall, that is, T 3 seems to show a balance between the two. But this is the result of quite distinct patterns in the different phases.

We now turn to consider the teacher's use of CSs against this background. The type and frequency of CSs adopted by teacher 3 in different phases of the lesson are depicted in Table 8.

As can be seen, the frequency of CSs used in the first phase is almost twice as much as in the second phase (21-24 per 100 utterances compared with 8-11 per 100 utterances). Remembering the patterns of

distribution of topic and activity orientation over the two phases of the lesson in table 8 which suggested that the focus was on both accuracy and fluency in the first phase and only on accuracy in the second phase, it may not be difficult to make a relationship between the focus of talk and the use of CSs. The very small number of strategies used in phase 2 compared with phase 1 (4, 9 versus 18, 106) shows that the orientation toward activity, which is characterised with a focus on accuracy practice is associated with a decreased frequency of CSs. It is interesting to note that the majority of strategies are used in summing up 1 (106), which constituted the bulk of the lesson. Although this result reflects the length of this step, it also confirms the results of the previous analysis, which showed that the opportunities for fluency practice were provided most frequently in this step. This conclusion is also supported by the distribution of CSs in this step which includes all types of CSs.

Table 8. Meaning negotiation strategies adopted by T 3 in different phases of lesson 3

	Setting up 1	Summing up 1	Setting up 2	Summing up
CLR REQ	4	19	0	1
CON CHK	0	15	0	0
COM CHK	5	5	2	0
SLF REF	3	30	2	3
OTR REF	1	8	0	1
OTR REP	5	23	0	2
T C	0	2	0	0
CUE	0	4	0	2
Total	18	106	4	9
Per 100	21.95	24.25	8.16	11.11

We now turn to teacher 4. The results of the analysis of activity and topic orientation devices are displayed in table 9.

To start with, we first look at the total frequencies and percentages of the discourse devices over both phases of the lesson. The results show that the teacher's orientation was pre-eminently on topic in summing up 1 (9:62) and on activity in summing up 2 (27:8). The same pattern can be detected in setting up 1 (14:41) and setting up 2 (13:4). The pattern suggests a dichotomy between the first and second

phases of the lesson, which may be related to the design of the task and of the lesson.

Table 9. Distribution of T 4's discourse devices in lesson phases

Setting up 1		Summing up 1			Setting up 2		Summing up 2		Total	
A1	T1	A1	T1	3	A1	T1	A1	T1	A1	T1
0	1	1			0	0	2	1	3	
A2	T2	A2	T2	6	A2	T2	A2	T2	A2	T2
3	7	1			9	0	4	0	17	13
A3	T3	A3	T3		A3	T3	A3	T3	A3	T3
0	22	0		23	0	2	0	3	0	50
A4	T4	A4	T4	6	A4	T4	A4	T4	A4	T4
0	0	1			0	1	1	3	2	10
A5	T5	A5	T5		A5	T5	A5	T5	A5	T5
0	8	0		11	1	0	1	1	2	20
A6	T6	A6	T6		A6	T6	A6	T6	A6	T6
11	3	6		13	3	1	19	0	39	17
Total	41	9		62	13	4	27	8	63	115
14										
SF	13.99	2.77		19.13	7.51	2.31	16.77	4.96	6.62	12.09
4.77										

SF (Standard Frequency) calculated in 100 teacher's utterances.

These results then suggest that form-focused talk and accuracy focus were largely limited to the second phase of the lesson. Over the first phase, the talk was predominantly conversational providing opportunities for fluency practice. This is demonstrated by the big difference between the total and standard frequencies of the activity and topic orientation devices (63:6.62 versus 115:12.9 at the foot of the last two columns in Table 9).

Looking at the percentages of strategies used in the phases of the lesson (table 10), as with T 3, we can see that the frequency of strategies is much higher in the first phase than the second phase (23.89, 30.55 versus 11.56, 11.18). The frequency of strategies in summing up 1 is more than five times as much as the corresponding figure in summing up 2 and three times as much in setting up 1 as in setting up 2. In contrast, the distribution in the first phase shows little difference, that is between setting up 1 and summing up 1. This may reflect the similarity of talk orientation across steps. To be more

specific, the higher frequency and more extended distribution of CSs in the first phase may be interpreted as an indication of the focus of talk on meaning and the use of a variety of talk which was closer to natural discourse.

Table 10. Meaning negotiation strategies adopted by T 4 in different phases of lesson 3

	Setting up 1	Summing up 1	Setting up 2	Summing up 2
CLR REQ	11	20	0	0
CON CHK	11	17	0	3
COM CHK	2	0	0	0
SLF REF	5	5	5	6
OTR REF	22	22	2	4
OTR REP	17	31	5	4
T C	2	4	0	0
CUE	0	0	5	1
Total	70	99	20	18
Per 100	23.89	30.55	11.56	11.18

We now turn to teacher 7 to analyse the activity and topic orientation devices. Table 11 shows the total frequencies and the percentages of these measures in both phases of the lesson.

Table 11. Distribution of T 7's discourse devices in lesson phases

Setting up 1		Summing up 1		Setting up 2		Summing up 2		Total	
A1	T1	A1	T1	A1	T1	A1	T1	A1	T1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A2	T2	A2	T2	A2	T2	A2	T2	A2	T2
6	1	3	1	9	0	1	0	19	2
A3	T3	A3	T3	A3	T3	A3	T3	A3	T3
6	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	10	1
A4	T4	A4	T4	A4	T4	A4	T4	A4	T4
0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	0
A5	T5	A5	T5	A5	T5	A5	T5	A5	T5
0	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	9	1
A6	T6	A6	T6	A6	T6	A6	T6	A6	T6
1	0	8	0	1	0	13	0	23	0
Total	1	21	3	11	0	26	0	72	4
14									
SF	0.61	16.66	2.38	11.34	0	44.82	0	16.10	0.89
8.69									

SF (Standard Frequency) expressed in 100 teacher's utterances

We can see that overall topic-orientation devices were scarcely used: in phase 2 they were not used at all, and in the first phase their frequency is negligible. The results suggest that the teacher and students overwhelmingly oriented themselves toward activity in both phases of the lesson. It is notable that, in comparison with the other two teachers, the overall frequencies of the discourse devices used by this teacher are relatively low (72, 4).

To consider the relationship between the overall and local focus of talk and patterns of CSs, we now focus on T 7's use of CSs against this background (Table 12).

Table 12. Meaning negotiation strategies adopted by T 7 in different phases of lesson 3

	Setting up 1	Summing up 1	Setting up 2	Summing up 2
CLR REQ	5	0	0	0
CON CHK	0	2	0	0
COM CHK	2	1	2	1
SLF REF	3	2	0	1
OTR REF	2	1	1	1
OTR REP	1	6	3	0
T C	0	0	1	0
CUE	0	0	0	1
Total	13	12	7	4
Per 100	8.07	9.52	7.21	8.89

The frequency of CSs in 100 teacher's utterances shows very little variation across the phases and their associated steps (8.07, 9.52, 7.21, 8.89 respectively). As would naturally be expected, there are some differences in frequencies between the various steps. Strategies tended to be used more frequently in the latter steps due to the nature of the activity, which demanded a more interactive style of discourse. However, the differences are very small.

To summarise the analysis showed that the distinction between the first and second phases of the lesson was clear-cut in relation to teachers 3 and 4. Both teachers oriented toward 'activity' over the second phase of the lesson. However, over the first phase, a mixture of topic and activity orientation characterised the lesson taught by

teacher 3, and an exclusive topic orientation was the major characteristic of the lesson taught by teacher 4. There was no major difference between the phases of the lesson taught by teacher 7. At the level of steps, again the topic/activity orientation was the factor which distinguished between setting up and summing up steps of each phase. A higher degree of activity orientation was detected in the setting up step and a higher degree of topic orientation over the summing up step. This pattern was more evident in relation to teachers 3 and 4. Overall the mapping of the patterns of CSs use over the phases and steps of the lesson revealed a strong relationship between the use of CSs and the pedagogic aims of the lesson as represented by patterns of focus on activity or topic.

DISCUSSION

The results reported above raise a number of interesting issues. First is the teacher's higher share of responsibility in managing discourse reflected through the percentages (70% versus 30%) of meaning negotiation strategies. This could be attributed to the asymmetrical nature of the talk between the teacher and the students due to their difference in proficiency. In situations where a proficiency differential exists, it is more likely that the more proficient speaker takes up more responsibility in managing discourse by taking more preventive measures and initiating more repair work than the less proficient speaker. The success of this type of interaction is to a large extent determined by the measures taken by the more proficient speaker. In the classroom context, the institutional role of the teacher as 'instructor' suggests a managerial role for him/her in leading the discourse toward set goals. This factor might have also contributed to the above ratio. This role adds a pedagogic significance to the teacher's effort to ensure the success of communication since success creates a motivating learning environment.

Second is the teachers' reliance on circumlocution in using lexical-compensatory strategies. One reason for this result may have been the teachers' levels of proficiency, which enabled them to rely on L2-based instead of L1-based compensatory strategies. Previous research on the relationship between proficiency and the use of compensatory

strategies (see Bialystok and Frolich 1980; Jourdin 2000) suggests that advanced non-native speakers, much like native speakers, opt for circumlocution in lexical compensation. This tendency is enhanced in language classrooms, where, due to pedagogic purposes, the L1-based strategies, which are less effective in meaning communication, are considered inappropriate not only for communicative reasons due to their inefficiency in establishing mutual agreement on meaning but also for the pedagogic reason of depriving students from L2 comprehensible input. The informal observation that code switching was only used to compensate for lexical items which had no L2 equivalents for cultural reasons, and not as a last resort, provides some evidence for this explanation.

Third is the rather similar behaviour of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers. This result can be accounted for by the well-established empirical finding that there is no substantial difference between the strategic choices of native speakers and non-native speakers with regard to the use of compensatory strategies (e.g. Paribakht 1985; Rost and Ross 1991; Jourdin 2000). The argument is that strategic competence, which has already been developed in L1, is available to L2 speakers at all levels (see Paribakht 1985). The main difference between native speakers and non-native speakers lies not in their strategic competence but in their access to sources of linguistic knowledge which are drawn upon through strategic competence. Therefore, if L2 speakers do have comparable access to linguistic knowledge as native speakers do, no differences are expected to exist between the strategic decisions of the two groups. Although this argument is put forward in relation to compensatory strategies, it can well apply to meaning negotiation strategies since these strategies, as discourse measures employed in managing communication problems, are also assumed to be controlled by strategic competence.

Fourth is the different behaviour of one of the native speaker groups (group 3) as it is compared with the other two groups (groups 1 and 2). We can explain the difference by the effect of 'task' on the use of CSs, which is again a well-established empirical finding (see Poulisse and Schils 1989; Selinker and Douglass 1985). Irrespective of their language background, speakers seem to draw on the same

conversational principles in their strategic choices as they do in communication in general. The point is that these principles are responsive to contextual factors, among which task is one of the most prominent. In language classrooms, the major sources of tasks are the teaching materials. In the context of the present study, the teaching materials used by teachers were commercial textbooks in relation to group 2 and commercial textbooks plus materials compiled by the institution in cooperation with teachers in respect to group 1, both sets of materials based on the tenets of the communicative approach. In contrast, the teaching materials used by group 3 were prepared and supplied by the institution based on the basic principles of the audio-lingual approach. The teachers and students in this group were involved in types of activities (e.g. drills and exercises) which generated very few opportunities for genuine interaction. The ritualistic type of interaction probably increased the predictability of the teacher's and students' moves and may have resulted in the fewer opportunities for students to initiate and change topics. The predictability element gave rise to an apparently trouble-free type of interaction which hardly left space for improvisation. This would explain why the overall level of strategy use by teachers in group 3 was very much lower than that of the other two groups.

There are two aspects to the analysis of the focus of talk in the phases of the lesson. The first aspect deals with the pedagogic aims of each phase and the way they are interpreted by the teachers. With regard to this aspect, the design of the task provided opportunities for different focuses of talk over the different phases and steps of the lesson. This element, which was associated with a difference in the pedagogic aims of the activities in each phase was interpreted differently by the teachers. Teacher 3 and teacher 4 were rather similar in their interpretation, which matched the design of the task. Teacher 7's interpretation was different, showing no distinction between the two phases. This result raises the issue of the variability of the focus of talk and its relationship to the pedagogic aims of the teaching-learning activities on the one hand and the different potentiality of each type of focus in constructing contexts which could be more or

less favourable to meaning negotiation as reflected by the frequency and distribution of CSs on the other.

The second aspect deals with the methodological aspects of the analysis of teacher talk. The results showed a great variability over the phases and steps of the lesson. The variability which took the form of fluctuation in the frequency and distribution of CSs suggests that the overall frequency for the whole lesson does not represent the true picture of the teachers' strategy use. A higher or a lower overall frequency might hide lower or higher frequencies of strategies elsewhere in the data. The argument here is that, in the study of CSs, the overall scores need to be complemented with more detailed analysis of the pedagogic aims of the different phases of the lessons so that any variability in strategy use can be detected and taken into account in the overall analysis of the whole lessons. This argument undermines to some extent detailed comparisons of teachers, or predictions about their behaviours, based on overall scores.

The discussion of the issues raised by the empirical findings of the present study enables us to argue for the following conceptual and pedagogical implications. As a conceptual implication, we can argue for an extended concept of CSs which moves beyond the learners' categories to deal with their own performance problems. It includes the more proficient speakers' categories to adapt his/her use of language to the interlocutor's needs. As was explained before, this extended notion of CSs was implied by its interactional definition (Tarone 1980). However, the conclusion was that its implications for the categorisation of CSs had not been formulated. The findings of this study contribute to the formulation of how these two types of categories, which have so far been dealt with under different frameworks of study, can be integrated under the same framework.

The relationship between the use of CSs and the broader orientations of teacher talk toward activity or topic was shown to be related to the different levels of classroom communication. The prevalence of each level in a specific part of a lesson depends on the pedagogic aims of the teaching-learning activities. The shift of focus is achieved through the use of language in specific ways by teachers. Their awareness of the pedagogic aims and their ability to change the

focus of talk play an important role in the way pedagogic aims are achieved. The implication is that there is an intimate relationship between pedagogy and communication in language classrooms, and that CSs play different functions in communication and in effect in the achievement of pedagogic goals.

Finally, an interesting theoretical issue is raised by the finding that NS teachers and NNS teachers can be very similar in their use of CSs. This is a significant result given the fact that it has frequently been argued (e.g. Kramsch 1995; Pennycook 1994) that CLT may be placing too much of a strain on NNS teachers. This may be the case for some teachers, but on the basis of the evidence from this study it looks as though we can't generalise simply on the basis of whether a teacher is NS or NNS. This might lead toward a consideration of the need for more research into the broader issue of NNS teachers' language proficiency.

As for practice, the findings of this study raises a number of interesting questions about current pedagogical practices, which with further research might lead to much clearer pedagogical implications. First is the issue of communication skills and strategies which speakers in general and language teachers in particular need to develop. In his discussion on knowledge and skills involved in oral communication, Bygate (1987:26-35) suggests that these are very useful skills not only for learners but also for native speakers. As this study has focused on the identification and description of the devices used by teachers to negotiate meaning for compensatory purposes and to ensure mutual understanding, the question can be raised as to whether teachers' awareness of these strategies would be helpful in achieving the pedagogic aims of classroom interaction. Although the relationship between communication and learning has not been yet established, it has frequently been argued that replicating natural acquisition experiences (e.g. Ellis 1992) might facilitate the acquisition process. In more specific terms, raising the awareness of teachers about the type of skills and strategies which contribute to meaning communication in language classrooms might, on the basis of the above argument, be helpful in achieving pedagogic aims.

With regard to lexical-compensatory strategies, as the data in this study demonstrate, in classes where the target language is solely used, teachers are pushed to use different means including circumlocution and mimetic gestures and even appealing to authority to compensate for students' lexical gaps and their own difficulties in adapting to students' needs. This inevitably plays an important role in motivating the students to do so when they are caught in situations where they do not have access to the words they need to communicate their messages. As noted by Berry-bravo (1993:375) those students who have not been trained in using circumlocution or who have not been exposed to its use, may find it extremely difficult to perform in classes which are run solely through the target language. These observations support the view that raising awareness about teachers' CSs might benefit the students in their efforts to learn the language through instruction. The use of circumlocution can be made more effective if it is constructed interactively with contributions from the students, since interactively-constructed meaning descriptions would relate more easily to the students' background knowledge and experiences. They would also guard against over- or under-description.

The issue of communication in language classrooms is related to the aims of classroom activities and the orientation of talk. When orientation is toward activity, it is more likely that the talk assumes features of pedagogic discourse with its reduced social and communicative value. Topic-orientation requires the students' attentiveness and their real involvement in interaction. Following Stevick (1976, 1980, 1981), Varonis and Gass (1985) claim that involvement facilitates acquisition in that it 'charges' the input and allows it to 'penetrate deeply'. We have already demonstrated the relationship between topic-orientation and the use of CSs. Based on the above-mentioned speculative arguments, we might be able to raise the issue of the benefits that teachers' awareness of the overall orientation of their talk and the use of CSs might have in bridging the gap between communication and pedagogy and in effect the construction of contexts which might be more conducive to leaning.

A further aspect might be the documentation of the strategic aspect of teacher talk, which can enhance teachers' awareness of CSs. The

issue which has been raised by several studies is that the general guidelines to teachers as to adopt procedures which generate teacher-student interaction have not produced the expected results. For example the studies done by Nunan (1987) and Brock (1986) show that the so-called communicative activities are reduced to drills and exercises basically because teachers use the traditional patterns of classroom interaction. One reason for the teachers' retreat to these patterns might be that interactional skills specifications, which can assist them in their facing the challenges of the communicative language pedagogy, have not been properly documented. As noted by Burns (1990: 36) the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) 'has largely operated in a vacuum of explicit linguistic description'. Raising the teachers' awareness of classroom interactional skills, including the devices used in managing communication problems, is likely to set the basis for their active experimentation and ultimately finding ways of employing these devices in more effective ways.

CONCLUSION

Taking the concept of CSs as the main theme of the present study, following Yule and Tarone (1991) we have attempted to extend this concept to include meaning negotiation with the intention to develop an analytical framework for the study of TT. In our attempts, we have applied this concept to teachers since we believe that this has the potential for throwing a fresh perspective to teacher talk- the talk of not only the NS teachers but also NNS teachers. Studying teacher talk from this new perspective in both normal and specially-designed tasks, we have been able to demonstrate that both NS and NNS teachers use CSs in their talk with students with substantial but different frequencies, which was shown to be the function of their focus of talk in different phases of their lessons. On the whole, the results of the study give insights into the teachers' interactive adaptations to students' linguistic needs over the process of instruction.

The issues raised by the study suggest that, in using CSs, teachers not only facilitate communication with the students and provide models for them to follow, but they also assist their own acquisition of

fluency in communication skills which they require both inside and outside the classroom. This is specially the case in foreign language classrooms, where both the teacher and the students are learners of the target language. There are two aspects to a situation where both sides of communication are non-native speakers of the language they speak. First, the use of communication strategies takes up more urgency, since both sides feel uncomfortable in using the target language. Second, communication strategies are not only a matter of help in facilitating communication but also a case for learning since practice in using communication strategies leads to more flexibility and as a result higher levels of fluency in using the target language both inside and outside the classroom.

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Note

Van Lier's (1998 149-152) makes a distinction between 'topic' and 'activity'. He defines the former as the content of talk or what is talked about and the latter as the framework of talk and its form of expression. The participants may orient themselves toward topic or activity depending on their perception of the kind of activity in which they are involved and its goals. According to Van Lier, orientation toward activity manifests itself with a focus on saying things in particular ways. In comparison, orientation toward topic is characterised with more choices as what to say and how to say it.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Microanalysis Categories

Types of question

Display questions

Display questions are defined as questions whose answer is known to the speaker beforehand. The addressee provides the answer to this type of question to display his/her knowledge and understanding rather than supplementing information not known to the questioner.

Referential questions

Referential questions are genuine questions asked to bridge an information gap between the speaker and the hearer. In response to referential questions the respondent is expected to provide new information; information which is supposed not to be known to the questioner in advance.

Closed questions

A closed question is a question wherein the respondent's answer is limited to those provided by the questioner (King 1972:158). They can take different forms according to the type of answer required by the question. In a 'selection question' the alternatives are provided for the respondent to choose from. While in a 'yes/no question' the alternative answers are not included in the question itself; however, the response is bound to be 'yes' or 'no' or an equivalent affirmative or negative. Sometimes closed questions can realise as 'fact-finding' questions requiring information to be recalled or identified. For example, 'What did you eat for breakfast?' and 'what time is it?' seek for facts to be recalled and identified respectively.

Open questions

Open questions are questions whose answer is left to the respondent. They are framed broadly; therefore, they can be answered in a number of different ways. Basically, an adequate response to an open question requires more than a word or a phrase.

Form-based questions

As a sub-category of display questions, form-based questions require the respondent to display their knowledge and understanding of the formal aspects of the target language. They are not asked because the teacher does not know the answer, but because he/she wants to check the students' knowledge or to evaluate their attempts at an answer.

Content-based questions

Content-based questions require the respondent to provide informational content which might be known to the questioner (display question) or offered as new information (referential question).

Students' level of participation

The estimation of students' level of participation in the present study was based on a modified set of procedures introduced by Van Lier (1988). The following procedures were followed in coding the transcripts www.SID.ir

1. All exchange initiations and responses produced voluntarily were coded for being produced retrospectively, that is, through self-selection.
2. The coded turns were examined to check whether they predicted the next turn or not. If yes, they were given a second coding.
3. The coded turns were examined for the second time to check whether: (1) they made any changes in the topic; (2) they shifted the topic by challenging or denying the previous turns' propositions; (3) they introduced sub-topics. If answer to any of these questions was positive, the turn was given a third coding.
4. The coded turns were examined again to check whether any of them marked the beginning or end of a sequence. If yes, the turn was given a fourth coding.

The following procedure was followed in the quantification process.

1. The coded turns were counted and added up for the teacher and students.
2. The percentage of teacher's and students' coded turns was calculated.
3. The total number of codings was calculated and added up for the teacher and the students.
4. The total number of codings was divided by the total number of coded turns to calculate the average teacher's and students' codings.
5. The average was squared and multiplied by the percentage of turns. The resultant figure was the index showing the level of the teacher's or students' participation.

Topic and activity orientation devices

The devices used by teachers to control topic and activity were divided into two sets based on their contribution to the activity rules, that is, the way things are done and expressed through language in contrast to their contribution to the topic, that is, the content of talk as opposed to the way it is expressed. The following table depicts the two sets of devices.

Devices reflecting the participants' orientation toward activity or topic

Orientation toward activity	Orientation toward topic
1. invocation of rules	1. student-addressed responses
2. procedural statements and meta-talk	2. building the topic at hand together with the students
3. routines	3. message-oriented or natural feedback
4. turn allocation by the teacher	4. treating students' responses as contributions to the topic
5. unique response rule	5. conversational repair
6. evaluative feedback	6. including clarification of the students' intentions and negotiation of meaning

A. Activity orientation

1. *Invocation of rules*: Making implicit or explicit references to the procedural or formal rules as to support the formal aspects of what is said or as to notify the students of the way something needs to be expressed.
2. *Procedural statements or meta-talk*: Stating the procedures or rules that the students are supposed to follow in doing an activity or stating the forms that they should express things in the speaking and writing.
3. *Turn allocation by the teacher*: Tight control of turn-taking through pre- or local allocation of turns
4. *Routines*: Doing or saying things according to rules or procedures which are so established that the participants feel no need to mention them explicitly. In other words, routines are marked series of turns in which the focus of the turns are not explicitly specified or elicited by the teacher.
5. *Unique response rule*: Providing a response in pre-specified forms or according to the norms of the activity in hand
6. *Evaluative feedback*: Evaluating the students' responses based on pre-specified rules or norms. In their negative forms, they are basically intra-turn corrections of linguistic errors which obstruct the turn in progress or threat its development.

B. Topic orientation

1. *Student-addressed responses* : responses which are directed to other students not the teacher
2. *Building the topic at hand together with the students*: Interactive development of topics with topical contribution from the students
3. *Message-oriented or natural feedback*: conversational feedback valuing the informational content of the student's response not its form
4. *Treating students' responses as contributions to the topic*: Acknowledging the students' responses as contributions to the topic while they may not be exactly relevant. By doing this the teacher takes the students' perception of the topic into account by treating his/her response as a valid contribution to the topic in hand
5. *Conversational repair*: treating errors as pragmatic or interactional adjustments which need to be repaired interactionally. Using conversational repairs, teachers cover up their pedagogic agenda using conversational moves which are suggestive of factual or perceptual problems. Conversational repair, used in this sense, differs from the way it is defined by Van Lier (1988:188-192). He uses 'conversational

repair' to refer to the speaker's move used to address problems of talk in comparison with 'didactic repair' which is motivated pedagogically to deal with formal/structural problems.

6. *Including clarification of the students' intentions and negotiation of meaning*: trying to elicit clarifications from the students instead of reading their minds or cutting them short and redirecting the question to other students

Appendix B: Samples of Communication Strategies

Confirmation Check

S:

14 I should have take, when we err reduce the water for body what is(.) what is?

T:

15 reduce the water of the body,

16 sweating?

17

18

Clarification Request

S:

19 some computer sheets

T:

20 some computer *sheets*?

21 what do you mean by computer sheets?

S:

22 chips

Comprehension Check

S:

23 DJ

T:

24 DJ,

25 you know that the disc jockey?

S:

26

[what is disc jockey?

27

Self-reformulation

T:

28 no- no, the question was, have you ever travelled?

29 have you travelled to any country?

S:

30 Japan, Italy, German

31

Other-reformulation

S:

216 perhaps fruit err fruit have the- err pest or other err other chemist-
chemist err poison poison materials

T:

217 oh toxins!

S:

218 toxins

32

Other-repetition

S:

655 you should take an electric dictionary.

T:

656 electric dictionary!

S:

657 electronic

Turn Completion

S:

33 as we said sexual:

T:

34 [sexually explicit magazines, yes

35 Cueing

S:

820 you must take a: tourist visa

821 must take a visa actually

T:

822 and the reason or explanation!

S:

823 yeah because you must show it to the immigration personnel

Description

S:

551 sometimes you can get disease

T:

552 sometimes yes sometimes no yeah!

553 diseases are sometimes contagious which means that other people can catch your disease

Contextualised Description

S3:

597 we have to take them to the pets

598 the name of the place I don't know huh they control and they get the certificate

T:

599 yeah [writes on the board] do you know what this is!

600 Quarantine is you have to put your animal into what they call quarantine

601 quarantine is you take it to a place ok!

602 You have a dog they take it to a place and they check the dog and may check the dog for disease

Approximation

S:

544 disable is not disease

T:

545 a disabled is different isn't it?

546 err disease for example measles or chicken pox slow pox err disease for dogs is rabies ok!

547 which is why you need to put animals in quarantine

Mime

T:

1082 right ok!: what I want you to do is in your groups

1083 if you look at exercise two ok?

1084 All I want you to do is to work with your partner or partners

1085 and I'd like you to look at the bullet points

1086 you know what bullet points are?

1087 Yeah [miming the sound of rifle] ok?

1088 And I want you to decide which of the bullet points are necessary

1089 important words err if you want to get a drivers' license ok?

Code Switching

T:

- 36 both(.) may be not, but you can if you want to(.)
- 37 am I right?
- 38 you can take some computer software, but then I think you have to take it to the Ershsad (Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance) before they- they- they inspect and label it for you

39 Appeal to Authority

S:

40 please spell alibi

T:

- 41 I think it is with one here,
- 42 let me check (checks with the digital dictionary)
- 43 yeah, I said they might come by with all kinds of alibi to refuse accepting it,
- 44 yes I'm right,
- 45 alibi means an excuse, all right?
- 46 a strong excuse,
- 47 a very good excuse, alibi