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Option: Linguistics

**The Impact of Compensation Strategies on Learners' Speaking Skill.**

**The Case of Master One Students at Guelma University**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Master's Degree in Anglophone Languages, Literatures and Civilizations**

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## **DEDICATION**

It gives me an immense pleasure to dedicate my dissertation at the feet of my adorable and affectionate parents. I am deeply grateful to them for their love, encouragement, and continued support and faith in me.

I have the honor to dedicate my work:

To my beloved sister and her husband, to my brothers Adel, Hichem and Rafik for their continuous love, encouragement and support.

Also to my lovely nephews: Dhiae Eddin and Yakin.

To my dearest friend: Iman

Finally, to all those who believed in me.

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“No one walks alone and when you are walking on a journey of life... you have to start to thank those that joined you, walked beside you and helped you along the way”. Shalu

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## ABSTARCT

The majority of foreign language learners encounter various speaking difficulties. To some extent, what these learners need is to develop some communicative strategies that can help them to solve their problems in actual classroom oral performance. This study attempted to identify the commonly used compensation strategies among Master one learners in the department of English at Guelma University to enhance their oral production. Hence, the present research hypothesized that compensation strategies would help learners to enhance their speaking skill. To carry out this research and to test the anticipated hypothesis, this paper followed a quantitative descriptive method in which a structured questionnaire and observation have been organized to collect the necessary data. Both the two procedures are based on Oxford's (1990) typology of compensation strategies. The findings from the analysis of data gathered provided evidences that confirm to a certain extent the positive impact of compensation strategies use on learners' oral performance. The main conclusion is that master one learners tend to utilize some types of these strategies to communicate their ideas. Besides, based on the findings, this study recommends some suggestions for students that may aid them to enhance their speaking skill.

**Key Words:** Speaking skill, Oral performance, Speaking difficulties, Compensation strategies.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**Cs:** Communication Strategies

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language

**IL:** Interlanguage

**L1:** First language / Native Language

**L2:** Second language / Target Language

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## **FRENCH ABSTRACT**

## **ARABIC ABSTRAC**

**GENERAL**

**INTRODUCTION**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

In many educational settings, particularly in foreign language learning context, a considerable number of studies investigated learning strategies learners employ to enhance their targeted learning skills. As far as communication is concerned, earlier studies highlighted the commonly used strategies learners utilized to conserve communication and to deal with vocabulary shortage. Learners take charge of enhancing their speaking skill through selecting the strategies that fit their needs. Compensation strategies as a subcategory under communication strategies regarded as one of the main type that many scholars as Oxford (1990) emphasized their usefulness for foreign language use.

Studying English as foreign language requires interaction and communication in classroom context and sometimes outside it. Foreign language learners may find themselves in situations where they are requested to perform but they are unable and sometimes unwilling to speak. The latter is due to learners' linguistic problems mainly lexical ones when they communicate using the target language. This gap of communication may lead to serious breakdowns in learners' interaction. To tackle these difficulties, learners use some strategies to cover the lack they suffer from. As a matter of fact, this study is oriented to investigate the use of compensation strategies to overcome lexis problems in their speaking.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Improving the speaking skill is a crucial challenge that foreign language learners have the desire to accomplish. As it has been noticed, the majority of foreign language learners at Guelma University are faced with different performance problems. Some of them may not be able to remember lexical terms related to the topic in hand. Others may face some difficulties in grammar rules. In addition, some of them may face some pronunciation

problems. In fact, there are several factors leading to these obstacles. Consequently, learners may fail to transmit their ideas. Developing learners' oral skill requires mainly overcoming these obstacles. Hence, the current study is prompted by the desire to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are learners' speaking problems?
- 2) What are the main causes behind these problems?
- 3) What are the most used compensation strategies to overcome these problems.

## **2. Aims of the Study**

The aim of this study is in two folds: firstly, it attempts to investigate how compensation strategies are used to facilitate learners' speaking performance and to overcome linguistic problems. Secondly, it is meant to check learners' awareness of this type of strategies. Hence, in order to achieve the overall aims, this study tries to shed lights on problems learners face in oral performance, the causes behind these problems and the commonly used compensation strategies among master one learners.

## **3. Research Hypothesis**

Compensation strategies seem to be as effective techniques to facilitate learners' speaking Skill. Learners would not communicate effectively if they do not rely on those strategies to compensate their lack of knowledge. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that:

**(H1)** If learners use compensation strategies, their speaking skill would improve.

The null hypothesis implies that no relation exist between two variables.

**(H0)** If learners use compensation strategy, their speaking skill would not improve.

## **4. Research Methodology and Design**

### **4.1 Population of the Study**

This study selects master one students of the English department at Guelma University as population because they have experienced several situations in which they were required to communicate in English. Moreover, they have assignments in which they present almost a whole lecture orally. Therefore, this can facilitate the gathering of the data needed to test the research hypothesis. Master one learners are about 65 students, in this research; the sample was selected through random sampling so that it would be representative. Since the learning strategies use is related to proficiency, the population of this study has been selected purposefully. The aim behind this selection is that learners at this level are aware about the obstacles facing them in oral performance. Hence, we assume that master one learners get used to refer to some alternative plans to overcome these obstacles. The latter can help to investigate learners' use of compensation strategies as useful devices to maintain their intended communicative task.

### **4.2 Choice of the Method**

This study tends to investigate Master one learners' use of compensation strategies to overcome their linguistic shortage. A quantitative descriptive method has been adopted to gather data that would test the hypothesis. The students' questionnaire would provide a comprehensive picture of subject matter. Precisely, quantitative data about students' different views of compensation strategies use and problems they encounter. Besides, in order to deepen the understanding of the result gained from the questionnaire, the research used observation as supportive data collection tool that elicit a reliable description of



compensation strategies use. To facilitate the recording of the observed strategies in class oral presentation, the second category of Oxford (1990) is prepared in a form of checklist.

## **5. Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation comprises two different parts. The first part is devoted to the two theoretical chapters that tackle some perspectives on the two variables of the present research. They are concerned with the reviewing of the relevant literature of both speaking skill and compensation strategies. The second part is the field investigation.

The first chapter discusses scholars' points of view and ideas related to the dependent variable: speaking skill. It starts with some basic definitions of the speaking skill. Then it provides elements related to speaking, it discusses its functions, and explains the process of speaking. Since speaking is considered as the performance of the target language, this chapter explains the communicative competence with its components that work as the basis for oral performance. In addition, factors and difficulties inhibiting learners from speaking effectively. Moreover, the chapter reviews some interrelated issues such as the listening ability and classroom communicative activities that can promote the learners speaking skill.

The second chapter reviews the relevant literature on the independent variable: compensation strategies. Since the latter are perceived as the solutions for learners poor oral production, a set literature would provide more understanding of its usefulness. This chapter starts by discussing the language learning strategies as broad patterns that can enhance the learning process. Then, it discusses the communicative strategies as type of the learning strategies use. Later, this chapter provides varied definitions of compensation strategy as subcategory under communication strategies. Additionally, it discusses the taxonomies of

these strategies historically through providing different scholars typologies. Finally, it presents some factors affecting the choice of compensation strategies.

The third chapter is devoted to the practical part of this study: field investigation. For the purpose of confirming or infirming the research hypothesis, the data gathered from both the questionnaire and observation are analyzed to check the validity of research hypothesis. This chapter begins with description of students' questionnaire, its administration and the analysis of the findings. Then, it describes the observation, provides its data analysis and its results. Lastly, it presents a conclusion that holds the summary of findings of all data analysis gathered from the two data collection procedures.

Finally, this study provides a general conclusion that consist of three parts: concluding remarks, the implications and research perspective and limitation.

# CHAPTER ONE

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## **Chapter One**

### **Theoretical Perspective of Speaking Skill**

#### **Introduction**

Speaking is a communicative tool that enables learners to express their ideas inside or outside the classroom context. Because of English language position in the world, knowing how to speak and communicate with it became an important issue that learners have to develop during language learning process. This chapter comprises varied scholars' definitions of speaking, its elements, its process, its functions, its characteristics, and its importance. Since speaking skill cannot be developed or mastered alone, this chapter tends to explain how speaking is related to listening and classroom communicative activities that promote the effectiveness of oral performance. Besides, this chapter highlights the main components of communicative competence that any speaker should have. Foreign language learners may study English more than 11 years, but still they are not proficient and fluent when it comes to communication tasks. The latter is due to many obstacles that prevent learners from practicing their speaking abilities effectively. On this regard, this chapter also tackles the main factors that influence learners' oral performance along with some common difficulties, precisely, linguistic problems learners are confronted with.

#### **1.1 Definition of Speaking**

Speaking is a crucial productive skill that needs to be developed along with the other learning skills to achieve proficiency in any target language. Harmer (1998) defines speaking as the process through which students use any language forms to perform some oral tasks. Therefore, speaking is a complex skill, because it is concerned with components of

pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency (Harmer, 2001). According to Spratt, Pulverness, & William (2001), "speaking includes many aspects not only grammar and vocabulary accurately in speech. We need to take in consideration the listener and the desire to communicate successfully our intended meaning to them" (p. 49).

Speaking is also a *multi-sensory activity* because of the paralinguistic features that a speaker uses such as eye contact, facial expressions, body language, pauses, voice quality changes, and pitch variation (Thornbury, 2005). According to Bygate (1987), "speaking skill is the ability in using oral language to explore ideas, intentions, thoughts and feelings to other people as a way to make the message clearly delivered and well understood by the listener" (p. 1). A general definition of speaking is the learners' ability to express themselves orally in coherent, fluent and appropriate way in a specific context.

Bygate (1987) reviews researchers' (Mackey, Wilkins and Brown and yule) related definitions of speaking. Based on their views Bygate approaches speaking into two basic ways: *the motor- perceptive skill* and the *interactional skill*. For the first approach, speaking is achieved through a systematic way. The speaker chooses the exact form, put these forms in the right order then produces the right meaning. That is, the speaker forms specific meaningful utterances through the combination of the smallest unites to transmit verbal signs to the listener. Concerning the interactional skill, Bygate assumes that this skill is dependent on the motor-perceptive skill. That is, the systematic steps speaker tends to follow to alter the utterances are the basics for achieving communication. It means that, the speaker have to decide about what, how, and when to say.

Bygate (1987) states that “interactional skill involves the ability to use the language to satisfy particular demands” (p. 7). That is, learners use the produced units to communicate their ideas. He mentions two types of demands that are related to the interactional skill: *the internal conditions of the speech* and the *dimension of interpersonal interaction*. The former refers to factors affecting the choice of word and style such as time pressure. The latter refers to “the basic communicative skill of producing speech” (Bygate 1990, p. 8). The two demands have a direct effect on the speech production. That is, they direct the interaction.

## **1.2 Elements of Speaking**

In speaking, learners need to acquire some necessary elements to guaranty success in the spoken discourse. Harmer (2001) assumes that “the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only a knowledge of language features but also the ability to process information” (p. 269). He approaches speaking elements to both language features and to mental/social processing.

### **1.2.1 Language Features**

To guaranty a well-spoken production of English language learners need to know some basic features. Harmer (2001) suggests four basic features learners should master:

- *Connected Speech*: producing a language is not enough task to become an effective speaker. Foreign language learners need to use fluent connected speech. That is, learners should know how and when to add, omit and modify in connected speech.
- *Expressive Devices*: the ability of conveying meaning is not an easy task for foreign language speakers. There are devices that contribute to the success of transmitting a given meaning. Speakers need to employ at least one of those devices to express themselves effectively. According to Harmer (2001), “The pitch and stress of

particular part of utterances, vary volume and speed and non-verbal (paralinguistic) devices can contribute the ability to convey meaning” (p. 269).

- *Lexis and Grammar*: language use vary according to its functions. Speakers need to use the exact phrases into its suitable context such as agreeing, disagreeing, expressing shock, or surprise.
- *Negotiation Language*: in case there is an interaction between two or more speakers, one should know the exact expression to be used when there is a misunderstanding of ideas. Negotiation can also be used to seek clarification and it is used in presentation cases. Harmer (2001) points that “speakers use negotiation language to show the structure of their thoughts, or reformulating what they are saying in order to be clear, especially when they can see that they are not being understood” (p. 270).

### **1.2.2 Mental /Social Processing**

According to Harmer (2001), one of the main skills that foreign language learners need to develop is the rapid processing skill. This skill holds the following necessary elements:

- *Language processing*: to perform language in coherent way, learners need to process it first, then articulate it. That is, learners use brainstorming strategy to retrieve the ideas from the memory then they put it into appropriate sequences.
- *Interacting with others*: interaction can be grounded under the speaking process. To speak is to address a certain interlocutor. The speaker task in here is to develop his ability to interact with others. That is, to exchange the role with the listener. Means being aware of turn take strategy (Harmer, 2001).
- *(On –the spot) Information Processing*: to succeed in communication, speakers need to process the other participants talk before they perform. That is, speakers should



study well the speech of their interlocutors to respond with correct ideas that fits the communication task (Harmer, 2001).

### **1.3 Systematic Process of Speaking**

Thornbury (2005) assumes that speaking is a complex skill and to achieve fluency in speaking, learners should accomplish some other basic skills. He approaches speaking skill in terms of speech production, conceptualization and formulation and articulation.

#### **1.3.1 Speech Production**

According to Thornbury (2005), an individual can produce a finite number of words. Speech production is a challenged ability for foreign language speakers that requires lot of effort to achieve it. He emphasizes three features for speech production that are *linear, contingent and spontaneity*. For linear, the speaker makes the equivalence between the amount of words and utterances in his speech production and his interlocutor' speech. For contingent, Thornbury (2005) says that "speech is produced utterance by utterance, in response to the word by word and utterance by utterance production of the person we are talking to" (p. 2). Each produced utterance is dependent on the interlocutor-produced utterance. Thornbury presents this dependency as spontaneity, another feature of speech production. He assumes that "The planning of one utterance may overlap with the production of the previous one" (p. 2). Those three characteristics can help the speaker to cope with conversation limitation of time.

#### **1.3.2 Conceptualization and Formulation**

Conceptualization is the starting point of speech production. According to Thornbury (2005), the speaker conceptualizes the speech according to the discourse type. That is, the speaker produces a given speech according to their communicative task and purpose.

Thornbury claims that before conceptualizing a given speech, a speaker sets a given map or plan to follow during conceptualization phase. He mentioned that, "It involves making strategic choice at the level of discourse, syntax and vocabulary" (p. 3). That is, speakers should structure the speech in their minds before its articulation.

### **1.3.3 Articulation**

After the first two stages, comes the stage of articulating what has been formulated. According to Thornbury (2005), speakers tend to use a set of organs to articulate given phonemes. He explains the process through which phonemes are produced: A stream of air produced in the lungs, transferred through the vocal cords, and shaped among other organs, such as movements of the tongue, lips and teeth.

### **1.3.4 Self-monitoring and Repair**

According to Thornbury (2005), self-monitoring is integrated within conceptualization, formulation, and articulation stages when speakers convey the message. Repair occurs when the speakers repair sequences, because any speaker can make mistakes in oral performance and they try to depend on self-correction strategy. Along with the same line, Levelt (1993) states that "speakers can detect troubles in their own internal speech before they are fully articulated the troublesome element" (p. 13). It means the speaker has the ability to interpret his own speech.

## **1.4 Functions of Speaking**

All language learning skills are set for a certain purpose. Each one has different functions that fits particular circumstances. According to Richard & Renandya (2002), "speaking is used for many different purposes, and each purpose involves different skills" (p. 201).

Brown & Yule (1983) point out two types of function for speaking as productive skill. They distinguish between interactional and transactional function.

#### **1.4.1 Interactional Function**

Brown & Yule (1983) claim that “interactional function is to maintain social relation” (p. 14). Richard (2006) highlights the main features of interactional function as follow:

- Has a primary social function.
- Reflects role relation.
- Reflects speaker identity.
- Maybe formal or casual.
- Uses conversational conventions.
- Reflects degree of politeness.
- Employs many generics words.
- Uses conversational register (p. 2).

#### **1.4.2 Transactional Function**

Thornbury (2005) claims that, “Transactional functions primary purpose is to convey information and facilitate the exchange of goods and services” (p. 13). According to Brown & Yule (1983), the produced message aim is to deliver a specific set of information. The speaker focuses only on conveying his/her message. Information should successfully transmitted and understood by the interlocutor. That is, speakers take into consideration the listeners' background knowledge to guaranty that his/her message is understood. Richard (2006), put a similar understanding forward, he assumed that, “a transaction is an interaction that focuses on getting something done, rather than maintaining social interaction” (p. 4). Richard (2006) outlines some features of the transactional function, which are:

- It has primary information focus.
- The focus is the message not the participant.
- Participants employ communication strategies to make themselves understood.
- Linguistic accuracy is not always important.
- There may be frequent question, repetitions and comprehension checks.
- There may be negotiation and digression. (p. 22)

### **1.4.3 Talk as Performance**

Richard adds this function as a different type from Brown & Yule's functions. According to Richard (2006), talk as performance can be in form of monolog rather than dialogs. It aims at communicating a given message in public talks. It also based on checking the effectiveness of the message on the listener. Richard (2006) presents some features that differentiates talk as performance from transactional and interactional function. The features are:

- There is a focus on both the message and the audience.
- Form and accuracy is important.
- It reflects organization and sequencing.
- Language is more like written language.
- It is often monologic (p. 24).

## **1.5 Characteristics of Speaking**

Two significant aspects are related to speaking which are accuracy and fluency. Foreign language learners seek to be fluent and accurate. A lot of attention has been paid to design activities that focus more on tasks that are balanced between the need to achieve accuracy and fluency.

### **1.5.1 Accuracy:**

According to Baker & Westrup (2003), during the process of learning a language, learners should consider the fact of being accurate. "Speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interaction" (Shumin, 2002 p. 204). Learners often need to be fluent in the foreign language and forget to be accurate. Learners should pay attention to the correctness and the completeness of language form when speaking. That is, they should focus on the grammatical structure, vocabulary and pronunciation.

- Grammar: learners use well-structured clauses through using the grammatical structure in accurate and appropriate way to form correct oral discourse. Thornbury (2005).
- Vocabulary: accuracy is achieved through the selection of appropriate lexis in the appropriate context. Some learners use same word to refer to different thing. Thus, they need to select the appropriate vocabulary item to communicate a specific meaning in order to achieve accuracy.
- Pronunciation: Thornbury (2005) states that, "the lowest level of knowledge speaker draw on is the pronunciation" (24), learners need to be aware about the way sounds are articulated. Therefore, to speak language effectively, they should consider the use of pronunciation component such as the use of the stress, intonation and pitch.

### **1.5.2. Fluency**

Fluency is the main characteristic of the speakers' performance. According to Baker & Westrup (2003), fluency is the productive phase of speaking. Learners after learning the norms of the second language they tend to use them fluently without thinking of mistakes

they may commit. Baker & Westrup (2003) state that, "During fluency activities, students concentrate on using all the English they know in order to communicate their message" (p. 90). They propose three major areas that facilitate fluent speaking:

- Good preparation and support.
- Students interest in the topic.
- Students' attitudes towards fluency activity.

Richard (2006) defines fluency as "the natural use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence" (p. 14). As it has been mentioned, Baker & Westrup (2003) assume that students' attitudes towards fluency activities is one of the main areas contributing to the achievement of fluency. Richard (2006) outlines some of fluency activities that speakers may rely on which are:

- Reflect natural use of language.
- Focus on achieving communication.
- Require meaningful use of language.
- Require the use of communication strategies.
- Seek to link language use to context. (p. 14)

Baker & Westrup (2003) distinguish between accurate and fluent speaker. They claim, "Accurate speakers do not make mistakes in grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation. Fluent speakers can express themselves appropriately and do not usually worry unduly about making mistakes" (p. 7).

## **1.6 The Importance of Speaking**

Due to the strengthening position of English as a language for international communication, mastering this language is a necessity. According to Egan (1999), “speaking is at the heart of second language learning. It is arguably the most important skill for business and government personnel working in the field” (p. 277). Tokoz-Goktepe (2014) reports that in language learning, speaking skill is the most inconsiderable skill. In communication, speaking is surely one of the main elements that foreign language learners need to develop to communicate effectively. Nazara (2011) assumes that speaking has always been considered as the most important skill to be enhanced for varied reasons. Many language learners consider speaking ability as measure of knowing a language .

## **1.7 Communicative Ability**

According to Nunan (1989), the speaker needs communicative competence that includes not only linguistic competence but also a series of other sociolinguistic and conversational skills. To ensue speaking proficiency learners need to develop their communicative ability along with their linguistic competence. Richard & Renandya (2002) stress Nunan idea; they assert that, “the ability to speak a second or foreign language well is a very complex task if we try to understand the nature of what appears to be involved” (p.201). According to Bachman & Palmer (1996), communicative ability comprises two areas: language competence and strategic competence.

### **1.7.1 Language Competence**

Language competence consists of organizational competence and pragmatic competence. According to Batchman & Palmer (1996), “organizational competence involved in

controlling the formal structure of knowledge for producing grammatically acceptable utterances or sentences” (p. 67). This type of knowledge encompasses two areas:

- *Grammatical knowledge*: it is the knowledge of vocabulary and syntax. That is, knowledge about rules in which units are combined to produce accurate utterances
- *Textual knowledge*: it refers to the knowledge of cohesion, how utterances are related to each other to produce a well-structured discourse in conversation.

Concerning pragmatic knowledge, Bachman & Palmer (1996) state that, “it enables to create or interpret discourse by relating utterances and sentences to their meaning” (p. 69).

According to them pragmatic knowledge has two areas:

- *Functional knowledge*: it enables the learner to make decision over the use of certain utterances that reflect the language user's intention. It means that, it facilitates for the speaker to choose the appropriate utterances that can reveal their intention toward a specific communicative goal (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).
- *Sociolinguistic knowledge*: this knowledge enables the learner to interpret if the language used is appropriate for the context that is used in or not. It facilitates for the speaker the selections of dialect, registers that should be inherited in certain setting in a given discourse (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

### **1.7.2 Strategic Competence**

Bachman & Palmer (1996) conceive strategic competence as a series of metacognitive components that provided a cognitive management of language use. There are three areas where metacognitive strategies operates:

1. *Goal setting*: Bachman & Palmer (1996) mention that goal setting includes:



- Identify the language use task.
- Choosing one or more task from a set of possible task.
- Deciding whether to complete or not to complete the task (p. 71).

2. *Assessment*: the individual relates the topical knowledge of language with the setting in which it is going to be used. To decide about what elements of language need to be used in a specific context, the learner checks the existence of knowledge before dealing with a specific task. In addition, he decides about which ones should be utilized. Bachman & Palmer (1996) defines assessment as “assessing the correctness and effectiveness of utterances” (p. 73).

3. *Planning*: this area is dependent on assessment. The learner at this stage decides about how to use the previously decided knowledge. Bachman & Palmer (1996) highlight three aspects of the planning stage:

- Selecting a set of specific elements from topical knowledge that will be used
- Formulating one or more plan
- Selecting one plan for implementation as a response to the task (p .73)

According to Hemerka (2009), “the term competence is used to describe the learner’s capacity to produce a language. That is, a complex of all language the learner is familiar with, and therefore should potentially be able to use” (p. 14). Types of competence stated above work as the basis for speaking performance. Learners not only should be competent in the language, they need to develop their ability of making meaningful and accurate utterances to deliver successfully their message. That is, a well use of vocabulary and structure to avoid the misunderstanding of the delivered information. Hemerka (2009) reports that:

Words once spoken cannot be taken back, so it would not be wise for them always to rely on the possibility to correct themselves. Thereby the more successful strategies a speaker has developed to deal in various situations, the more chances are that they will be able to address the others the way they intend (and do so at the first attempt). These strategies cannot come into existence by chance; they develop from the range and quality of the speaker's communicative competence (p. 16).

### **1.8 The Relation between Speaking and Listening**

Oral communication is the exchange of ideas among two or more participant, a listener and speaker. The relation between speaking and listening is inevitable and it has double sense. According to Byrne (1986), "oral communication is a two way process between the speaker and the listener and involves the productive skills of speaking and the receptive skills of understanding" (As cited in Alam, 2013 p. 19). Many researchers agreed upon the idea that a good a speaker is a good listener. In the process of developing oral proficiency, speaking comes later. Shumin (2002) states that, "speaking feeds on listening, which precedes it" (p. 205). A productive skill comes after receptive skill (listening). According to Nunan (1989), "we do not simply take language in like a tape recorder, but interpret what we hear according to our purpose in listening and our background knowledge" (p.23). Oral Communication promotes incorporation of both speaking, and listening, to reflect the basic logical language use.

## **1.9 The Relation between Classroom Speaking Activities and Oral Performance**

In classroom context, foreign language learners perform different activities through which they make use of the knowledge of the English language they have learned. Learners are involved in class interaction based on varied oral activities that teachers have organized. Shumin (2002) claims that foreign language learners are exposed to different knowledge of the language they are learning but the only context available for them to practice it is the classroom. She states that, “a key factor in L2 of foreign language development is the opportunity given to learners to speak in the language promoting interaction” (p. 208).

Language experts have organized oral skills into four distinctive types according to the learner level of proficiency. According to Holmes (2004), “the tasks gradually become more difficult, from lower intermediate to intermediate and then to the upper intermediate and, finally to advanced levels that will really help to improve student pronunciation skill” (p. 9). Nazara (2010) emphasizes that “speaking classes must be guided by the elements of conversation and the means to generate genuine conversation. In other words, to succeed speaking classes, the uses of correct approach, interesting activities, are necessary” (p.32). Thornbury (2005) suggests that communicative tasks have the following features:

- The tasks should be from real-life situations.
- Achieving some outcome by using language in funny way.
- Make the students practice and interact.
- The students use their language without limitations. (p.79)

## **1.10 Factors Affecting Speaking Performance**

Many researchers investigate factors that influence learners' use of language. Shumin (2002) points that affective factor (self-esteem, anxiety, attitude and motivation) and aural medium influence students' speaking. Batchman & Palmer (1996) present topical knowledge as a factor influencing oral performance.

### **1.10.1 Affective Factors**

According to Oxford (1990), "the affective side of the learner is probably one of the most important influences on language learning success or failure" (p.140). Based on data gathered from previous researchers' studies who examined the relation between affective factors and language performance, anxiety, attitude and motivation are the common factors that influence learners' oral performance. Brown (2000) assumes that, "The affective domain is difficult to describe scientifically. A large number of variables are implied in considering the emotional side of human behavior in the second language learning" (p. 143). Shumin (2002) stresses Brown's idea. She mentioned that at advanced levels of foreign language learning, learners consider others' judgment of their performance. That is, learners' sensitivity concerning the making of mistakes would be raised. The latter would make learners hesitate to perform so that they would not speak effectively. Shumin (2002) concludes that:

Sometimes, extreme anxiety occurs when EFL learners become tongue-tied or lost for words in an unexpected situation, which often leads to discouragement (loss of motivation) and a general sense of failure (emotion). Adults, unlike children, are concerned with how they are judged by others. They are very cautious about making errors in what they say, for making errors would be a public display of ignorance,

which would be an obvious occasion of "losing face" (loss of self-esteem/confidence) that lead to take a negative attitude toward speaking in this language (p. 204).

### **1.10.2 Aural Medium (Listening ability)**

According to Shumin (2002), "the central role of listening comprehension in the L2 or foreign language acquisition process is now largely accepted. And there is little doubt that listening plays an extremely important role in the development of speaking abilities" (p. 205). If a foreign speaker cannot understand what another speaker are saying, he would not respond properly. In fact, each speaker has double role, he can be both a listener and a speaker depending on the conversation task (turn-taking strategy). Anderson & Lynch (1988) explain this significant relationship of speaking and listening skills: "A carefully prepared L2 utterance is only a useful aid to communicate if the speaker can deal effectively with replies he receives. For the L2 learner in conversation, he needs to be skilled as both speaker and listener" (p. 15).

### **1.10.3 Topical knowledge**

Bachman & Palmer (1996) believe that topical knowledge could influence learners' speaking performance. Based on the communicative task learners exposed to, the topical knowledge provides learners with information that enables them to use language. Bachman & Palmer (1996) state that certain test tasks may be easier for those who possessed the relevant topical knowledge and more difficult for those who did not.

### **1.11 Learners' Difficulties in Oral Performance**

Brown & Yule (1983) conceive oral language production as the most difficult part in language learning. A large number of foreign language learners encounter many difficulties in expressing themselves. Based on the previously mentioned factors, the level and type of difficulty vary from one learner to another. According to Hemerka (2009), “the poor speaking performance is a big handicap, as it makes their ability to use the language for its most important purpose, the exchange of information is limited” (p. 9). She outlines a considerable number of problems that can work as the main obstacles for learners' speaking performance, which are:

- Not able to express their thoughts and opinions satisfactorily.
- Learners' use of simplified language that does not match their overall acquired level
- Often make mistakes and slips
- Speak slowly and less fluently, making frequent pauses and thinking of suitable or correct words.
- Respond briefly, often using only one word answers (Yes or No).
- Sometimes have nothing to say at all (Hemerka, 2009 p. 9).

Since this research aims at investigating only the linguistic problems learners encounter regardless of other numerous problems such as psychological ones (anxiety and fear of making mistakes). This chapter discusses only problems related to the shortage of knowledge in both vocabulary and grammar.

## **Linguistic Problems**

A growing body of literature examines difficulties foreign language learners faced with, especially, learners' oral performance ones. It reveals that linguistic problems are the common difficulties learners encounter. Learners during oral performance task may find themselves unable to complete their ideas due to the lack of knowledge in the foreign target language. According to Baker & Westrup (2003), it is not easy for learners to provide opinions about a certain topic that their teachers asked them to explain, because they have little knowledge about what to say, which vocabulary to apply, or how to use grammar accurately. That is, the lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge may prevent learners from communicating their ideas.

### **1. Lack of Vocabulary**

According to Thornbury (2005), "spoken language also has a relatively high proportion of words and expression" (p. 22). Learning English as foreign languages requires a great knowledge of its vocabulary. Foreign language learners during class performance encounter some obstacles in expressing their ideas because they had limited number of lexical items in their memory. Therefore, this shortage of vocabulary affects learners' oral performance.

### **2. Grammar Mistakes**

Some foreign language learners chose to avoid talking rather than produce incorrect grammatical utterances. According to Davies & Pearse (2000), "many people do not like speaking in front of large groups of people. This is especially true in a foreign language, because we may worry about producing utterances with many errors or oddities in them" (p. 82). Thus, fear of making grammar mistakes is a common problem in language learning especially during oral tasks.

### **3. Mother Tongue Use**

One of the common difficulties that learners face is the lack of the ability to transmit the whole ideas in English. Because they lack the knowledge of the English language, they shift to use the mother tongue to express the rest of ideas. (Tuan & Mai, 2015). According to Baker & Westrup (2003), “barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language.” (p. 12).

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, Speaking is an important productive skill that enables individuals to express themselves. The majority of foreign language learners encounter difficulties in oral performance. These difficulties are the consequences of varied factors. This chapter reviewed some definitions of speaking, the process of oral production, and its importance in language learning. Characteristics and elements that make speaking a crucial skill that should be developed along with the other skills. Then, it explained communicative ability components, the relation between speaking and listening, speaking and classroom communicative activities. After that, the chapter tackled the main factors affecting learner's oral performance and the lexical difficulties they encounter.



## CHAPTER TWO

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Theoretical Perspective on Compensation Strategies**

#### **Introduction**

Since the 1970's, language learning strategies have been a subject matter in language studies for a long period. On this regard, numerous studies focus on the different strategies learners employ to facilitate their learning process of foreign language. This chapter aims at discussing one of these strategies, which is compensation strategies. This chapter reviews briefly the literature of language learning strategies. It provides a background of the language learning strategies, its relation with proficiency and explains strategic competence. Moreover, it tackles communication strategies that are considered as the broader type under which compensation strategies came to be known. It highlights different definitions of communication strategies along with its classification. Later, it discusses compensation strategies, its definitions, historical background and the varied typologies provided by varied researchers. In addition, this chapter reviews factors affecting learners' choice of compensatory strategies.

#### **2.1 Language Learning Strategies**

In the field of language learning strategies, a noticeable shift of interest has been highlighted. The learning process turn to be a learner centered rather than teacher centered approach. On this basis, learners' role increases (Erarslan & Höl, 2014). Alongside to this shift of interest, many studies reveal that learners vary in terms of learning strategies that aid them to rich a high level of competence in learning the target language. This set of strategies refer to the selected processes that a learner tend to depend on to learn. According to Hsiao

& Oxford (2002), "Learning strategies for L2s help build learner autonomy, which requires the learner to take conscious control of his or her own learning processes" (p.369).

In the mid-seventies, researchers' awareness about the applied learning strategies learners' refer to enhance their learning of foreign or second language process raised. (Nambiar, 2009). This consciousness led them to provide varied definitions and classification of these strategies. Varied scholar attempt to define language-learning strategies such as, Rubin (1975), O'Malley et al. (1985) and Rigney (1978). All the previously mentioned researchers define language-learning strategies as procedures and techniques learners use to facilitate both the acquisition and the performance of the target language (As cited in Griffiths & Oxford, 2014). Rubin (1981) suggests her classification; she grouped learning strategies into two broad categories: those that contributed directly to language learning (direct strategies) and strategies that are involved indirectly in language learning (indirect strategies). The two groups are further subdivide into other subgroups including communication strategies (As cited in O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Oxford (1990) provides another concrete definition, she defines language learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). She classifies learning strategies into six groups: Memory strategies, Cognitive strategies, Compensation strategies, Metacognitive strategies, Affective strategies, and Social strategies. These six categories are further grouped into direct strategies (directly involve the target language) and indirect strategies (those which provide indirect support for language learning such as planning, co-operating and seeking opportunities).

## **2.2 Learning Strategies and Proficiency**

Foreign language learners vary in terms of proficiency. Many researchers as Nambiar (1996), Dreyer & Oxford (1996), Park (1997) and others investigate the main factors contributing to this difference in different contexts and varied levels. As Cook (2001) claims, “language learners vary in terms of factors such as: aptitudes, demographic variables, affective variables, learning styles and learning strategies when they start learning the second language” (As cited in Erarslan & Höl, 2014 p. 1). Language analysts attempt to draw a conclusion about the relation between language learning strategies and proficiency level of foreign learners. Precisely, successful and unsuccessful language learner is the main concern for language researchers since the beginning of seventies.

Rubin (1975) conducts a research on good language learners. According to Rubin (1975), “The differential success of second/foreign language learners suggests a need to examine in detail what strategies successful language learners employ” (p. 41). Through her research, she highlights the difference in language proficiency among both successful language learners and poor language learners. The difference is that successful ones tend to employ a certain tricks and techniques that facilitate for them the process of language learning. From Rubin’s findings, it is clear that there is a link between language strategies use and success.

O’Malley & Chamot (1990) put a similar understanding forward. They report that successful language learners have a specific way of processing information. The latter has nothing to do with the innate ability to learn a second or foreign language. Thus, language-learning strategies cannot preserve only to competent individuals but also it can be applicable

by other learners who did not know it yet, for the sake of achieving a high level of proficiency in the target language.

### **2.3 Strategic Competence**

Strategic competence is the individual ability to keep communication ongoing in case there is gaps or breakdowns in communication. (Smoclic, n.d.). That is, the learner capability to transmit the message across using different ways and techniques. Dornyei (1995) claims that, there are individuals who can successfully communicate their message in a second language with only few words. The way of doing it is through using their hands, they imitate the sound or movement of things, they mix languages, they create new words, and they provide description or circumlocution for something they do not know. In short, they use communication strategies.

Canale & Swain (1980) stress the idea, they claim that strategic competence is the ability to use “verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence” (As cited in Dornyei, 1995 p. 56). According to Henri, Little & Richterich (1996), “It is equated with the capacity to access and deploy communication strategies to compensate for the deficiencies in linguistic or pragmatic knowledge” (p. 14).

### **2.4 Communication Strategies**

Since early 1970's investigation on second language speakers' strategies has flourished. They state that during this period, communication strategies became a new area of research, through which researchers attempted to shed light on the commonly used communication strategies through developing their taxonomies (Dornyei & Scott 1997). Many researchers,

want to establish the nature of communication strategies through formulating a varied taxonomies and investigating its variation in use. The interest on communication strategies is highly considered during the 1970's and the second half of the 1980's.

#### **2.4.1 Definition of Communication Strategies**

Second language communication has been a questionable process and a debatable issue. This issue encourages researchers to investigate the series of techniques that second language learners may resort to in order to cope with performance problems communication. Ellis (1985) defines communication strategies as “psycholinguistic plans that exist as a part of the language user's communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and serves as substitutes for production plans which the learner is enable to implement” (p. 182). The target focus on the use of communication strategies is on getting a message across despite the gap in knowledge. According to Færch & Kasper (1984) “Communication strategies are related to individual language users' experience of communication problems and the solution they pursue” (p. 45).

Corder (1981) is among the first to classify communication strategies. He claims that a learner who wants to achieve his target goal of communication usually does not have enough knowledge of target language to do so. In this case, he highlightes two options: the learner can adjust his message to the resources available to him or he can attempt to increase his resources in different ways to get his message across. (As cited in Dornyei & Thurrell, 1991 p. 18). The former refers to message adjustment strategies or risk avoidance strategies, and the latter refers to resource expansion strategies. Dornyei & Thurrell (1991) states that, “with resource expansion or achievement strategies, the learners risk failure and attempt to remain

in the conversation, conveying their messages by compensating somehow for their deficiencies” (p.18).

Bialystok (1990) approaches communication strategies in terms of *Problematicity*, *Consciousness*, and *intentionality*. In term of problematicity, learners rely on the strategies when they face difficulties in communication. That is, problems learners faced with are the main reason behind the use of communication strategies. For consciousness, learners are aware about the benefits of using a certain strategy and the exact purpose of why to use it. Concerning intentionality, learners choose one strategy over another. That is, they are able to select what strategy he/she is in need to use (As cited in Oweis, 2013).

Dornyei & Scott (1997) review the literature of communication strategies in which they report that, along the history of communication strategies, earlier researchers like Tarone (1977), Faerch & Kasper (1983), Canal (1983) and others extend their views concerning the conceptualization of communication strategies. Most of the definitions and the classifications up until 1990s adhere the linguistic approach. That is, they focus only on the apparent discourse and neglect the psychological process that leads to this verbalization. During the 1990's other researchers like Bialystok (1990) and the Nijmegen group (1991) contradict the earlier views. Although, their definitions are equivalent to previous researchers, their views entirely based on psychological views. They pay more attention to the cognitive processes that are the basis of language strategy use.

#### **2.4.2 Aim of Communication Strategies**

The aim behind the use of communication strategies is to communicate the language rather than learning it. Dornyei (1995) claims that communication strategies provide learners

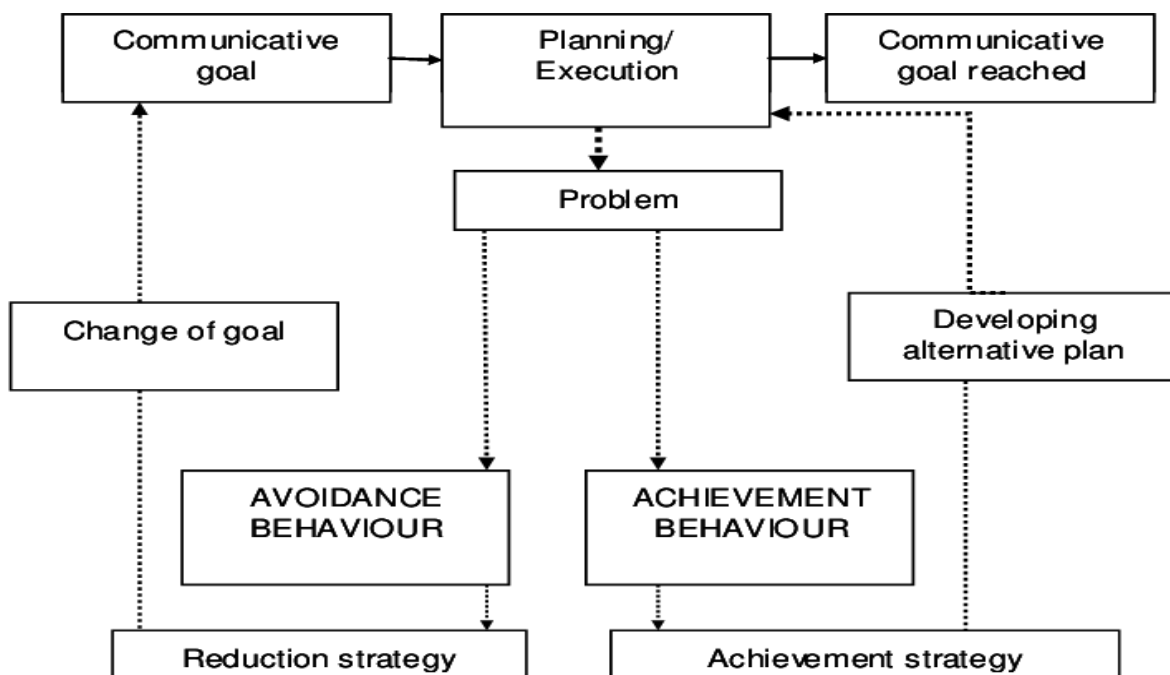
with a sense of security in the target language by which it allows them to carry on their use of language rather than giving up their message, in order to achieve their communicative goal. In fact, it is so difficult to analyze the devices second language learners employ in time of communication difficulty.

## **2.5 Taxonomy History of the Strategies**

Along the history of studies on communication strategies, many researchers try to classify communication strategies by means of taxonomies (Pouliss, 1987). The latter differ from one researcher to another. However, they adopt almost the same definition of these types. Tarone's (1977) taxonomies of communication strategies are regarded as the prominent and early one. Her developed taxonomies based on an inquiry that she got from the analysis of produced speech of adult of second language learners. She outlines six basic categories: (a) avoidance (b) paraphrase (c) conscious transfer (d) appeal for assistance and (e) mime. (As cited in Pouliss, Bourgates & Kellerman, 1984).

Faerch & kasper (1980) and Bialyslok & Frohrich (1980) provide their typologies. Later, Pouliss, Bongaerts & Kellerman (1984) (the Nijmegen group) present their typologies. Most of the typologies are divided into two main broad categories that are avoidance or reduction strategies and achievement strategies. The difference between the two categories is that, the first type is for learners who exclude the unknown part of knowledge in their message. Whereas the second type is the strategies that speakers employ to reach their desired goal, i.e., (compensatory strategies). Faerch & Kasper (1980) present a comprehensive plan through which they explained their classification and how it fits in achieving the communicative goal (p.84).



**Figure1:** Effects of Reduction and Achievement Strategies

The classification of the strategies of other researchers help the learner to enhance their proficiency in the target language (Oxford, 1990). She provides varied types of strategies including compensation strategies. In the later, she makes a well-organized classification where she unites all the compensation strategies that were separated in previous researchers' classification. She sketches it into two subgroups named *Guessing Intelligently* and *Overcoming Limitations in Speaking and Writing*.

To sum it up, during the seventies researchers start to provide different definitions from different points of views and they highlight some features of communication strategies. Later, language analysts during the period of 1980s, start to classify the strategies following different perspectives and approaches (mainly linguistic and psychological approaches). Starting from 1990 up to 2000s, researchers begin to work on this subject matter through providing very comprehensive and narrowed strategies.

## **2.6 Definition of Compensation Strategies**

Compensation strategies refer to the strategies that specifically aim at achieving language user original intended communication goal in the target language. Different researchers attempted to define it. Faerch & Kasper (1980) are the first to use the term compensatory strategies they claim that “they reserved for achievement strategies aimed at solving problems during the planning phase due to insufficient resources” (p.92). According to Oxford (1990), compensation strategies facilitate for the learner to make up for the missing knowledge in either “*comprehensive or productive*” language use. For the productive one, it aim at covering both lexical limitation and grammatical one. For the comprehensive one, Oxford (1990) states that, “it may lead learners to gain new information about what is appropriate and permissible in the target language” (p. 49).

Compensation strategies are procedures that language learners utilize for accomplishing their expected meaning on becoming conscious of obstacles issuing during the outlining stage of pronouncement because of their own linguistic deficiency. Pouliss, Bongaerts & Kellerman (1984) state that, “compensatory strategies are strategies which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to his own linguistic shortcoming ” (p.74).

## **2.7 Classification of Compensation Strategies**

Pouliss (1987) states that many researchers try to conduct studies about strategies learners employ to compensate linguistic gaps they face during the communication process. The findings gathered from these studies are classified by means of taxonomies. Although, many researchers have tackled this issue, the ones set forth are the most cited ones.

### **2.7.1 Faerch and Kasper's Typology**

Faerch and Kasper's (1980) typology is a detailed one. They differentiate between reduction strategies and achievement strategies. They provide that, in a situation of formal reduction, the speaker depend on means of reduced system in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis to communicate. In addition, they report that, "the learner preserves the topic but refers to this by means of more general expression. The result of which is a certain amount of vagueness" (p.91). For achievement strategies, Faerch & kasper (1980) state that they are subdivided in accordance with what basics the learner carry on trying to solve his planning problem. According to them, "The learner depends on different codes to fulfill their gaps in communication. The code's types are explained as follows:

#### *Type 1: Code Switching*

Faerch & Kasper (1980) state that, "In communication in which foreign languages are involved, there always exists the possibility of switching from L2 to either L1 or another foreign language" (p.93). They prefer the use of the word borrowing to refer to code switching and language switching in case the switching strategy affects only one word.

#### *Type 2: Inter-lingual Transfer*

"In the code switching strategy learners ignore the IL code, strategies of inter-lingual transfer result in a combination of linguistic features from the IL and the L1 (or other languages different from the L2 in question" (p.93). In addition, the learner relates the linguistic items from both inter-language (target language and source language or any different language. If this transfer occurs at the level of phonology or morphology that is referred to as foreignization. Furthermore, if this transfer includes the lexical level of interlanguage system, than it should be literal translation. (Faerch & kasper, 1980).

*Type 3: Strategies of inter/intra-lingual Transfer*

This strategy is used when second language is formally the same as the native language of the learner.

*Type 4: Interlingual Based Strategies*

Faerch & kasper divide this type into three strategies:

- *Generalization*: “learners fill the gaps in their plans with interlanguage items which they would no normally in such context...the generalized items can convey the appropriate meaning in the given situation” (p. 94) .
- *Paraphrases*: can have the form of descriptions or circumlocution “the learner focusing on characteristic properties or functions of the intended referent” (p. 96). It can also be exemplifications, i.e., “the learner using a hyponymic expression instead of the missing superordinate term” (p. 96).
- *Word coinage*: the learner is involved in a situation where he creates other words to refer to his intended meaning. Faerch & kasper (1980) state that:

It is used whenever the learner realizes that she cannot complete a local plan which she has already begun realizing} and develops an alternative local plan which enables her to communicate her intended message without reduction which can be considered the reduction parallel to restructuring (p. 97).

*Type 5: Cooperative Strategy*

Faerch & kasper (1980) claim that, “it is up to the learner to decide whether to attempt a solution herself, by using a linguistic-based achievement strategy, or to signal her problem to the interlocutor and attempt to get the problem solved on a cooperative basis” ( p.96). If the learner decides to signal to his/ her interlocutor that he/she is experiencing a

communicative problem and that she needs assistance, she makes use of the cooperative communication strategy of *appealing*. That is, the learner in this case has two options either to address the interlocutor directly by asking for help, or try to solve to breakdown in communicating by himself.

*Type 6: Non-linguistic Strategies*

With Non-linguistic strategies, the learner attempts to change an item through using non-verbal signs that successfully enhance his interaction with the interlocutor. Faerch & kasper (1980) assert that they are sometimes “the learner's attempt at solving a communicative lam they are often used to *support* other - verbal - strategies. An important function of non-linguistic strategies is to signal an appeal to the interlocutor” (p.98).

**2.7.2 Bialystok and Froehlich's Typology**

Bialystok & Froehlich (1980) design a task to examine the conditions for the selection of certain communication strategies in terms of ability of the learner, proficiency level and the characteristic features of the communicative situation. From the designed task, they have drawn a typology for communication strategies. The latter is divided into two main categories that are L1- based strategies and L2- based strategies. Each of the two main strategies are subdivided into three types.

*Type 1: L1-based Strategies*

Bialystok and Froehlich's L1based- strategies contain: (a) language switch. (b) Foreign-zing. (c) Transliteration. The three strategies are explained as follow:

- *Language switch*. It is the “insertion of a word or phrase in a language other than the target language, usually the learner's native language; for example: *Il y a deux candles*

sur *la cheminée*” (p. 10). Pouliss, Bongaerts & Kellerman (1984) state, “Language switch is not restricted to the learner’s native language. He may also use any foreign language he knows” (p. 77).

- *Foreignization*: Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) claim that, “Native language (L1) items are the creation of non-existent or contextually inappropriate target language (L2) words by applying L2 morphology and/or phonology to LI lexical item” (p. 10). Example: *Il y a une cloche sur la cheminée.*, ‘cloche’ used instead of the word clock. The used word exists in French that means “*churchbell*”. However, the word use is contextually inappropriate; the speaker used it to transmit his idea.
- *Transliteration*: is “the use of L2 lexicon and structure to create a (usually non-existent) literal translation of an LI item or phrase, such as *place de feu* for English ‘fireplace’ or *pièce de temps* for *timepiece*” (p. 11).

#### *Type 2: L2 based- Strategies*

It consists of Semantic Contiguity, Description and Word Coinage.

- *Semantic contiguity*: is “the use of one concept that indicates specific semantic features with the desired concept. In their task, learners’ changes some word through using other words that are approximates in meaning” (p.11). For example ‘*tabouret*’ (stool), frequently replaced by ‘*chaise*’ (chair) or ‘*table*’ (table) (Bialystok and Frohlich 1980).
- *Description*: it contains three sub-classifications that are general physical properties, specific features, and interactional/functional characteristics. Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) state that:

The general physical properties refer to universal features of objects, that is, color, size, material and spatial dimension, the latter including the concept of shape, such as "it is round", as well as location within space, e.g. "it is something that hangs on the wall". Specific distinguishing features are usually marked by the surface structure "has", example "it has four legs". The interactional descriptions indicate the functions of an object and the actions that can be performed with it (p.11).

- *Word coinage*: the learner tries to create a specific lexical item in the foreign or second language through which he includes a specific conceptual feature in the morphological system of the second language. For example, 'clock' was referred to as 'heurot', the noun suffix **-ot** was attached to 'heure' meaning 'time'. According to Bialystok and Froehlich (1980), "This strategy usually produces items which do not exist in the target language or, if they do, have a contextually inappropriate meaning" (p. 12).

The L2 based strategies are not only for compensating the lack of foreign language gaps; it can be applied in the native language of speakers too. Pouliss, Bongaerts & Kellerman (1984) claim that "L2-based strategies are not restricted to foreign language speech, speakers occasionally have to make with a related word or some new invention when they cannot retrieve the exact word they need" (p. 78).

### *Type3: Paralinguistic Strategies*

This strategy refers to the use of non-verbal items such as gestures or sounds to indicate a verbal item. Bialystok and Froehlich insert that "Gestures or sounds occasionally

accompanied an utterance, or were used to substitute a verbal reference to a target item” (p. 12).

### **2.7.3 Pouliss, Bongaerts and Kellerman's Typology**

The three researchers have made a study to investigate the identification of compensatory strategies provided by the prior researcher such as Rubin (1977). They make experimental works on learners to present their identification of compensatory strategies. This study set to guaranty their typologies are not built on bias interpretation of data. The three researchers study is untitled the *Nijmegen Project*. After their task, they identified the compensatory strategies and classified it to form their typology. Pouliss, Bongaerts & Kellerman outline their typology into inter-lingual strategies and intra-lingual strategies.

#### *Type 1: Interlingual Strategies*

Inter-lingual strategies are broad type that hold L1 based strategies. The latter encompasses:

- *Borrowing*: refers to the use of mother tongue items with their pronunciation.
- *literal translation*: Pouliss, Bongaerts and Kellerman (1984) define it as “a word for word translation into L2 from the native language, either of idioms, idiomatic phrases or compound words” (p.89)
- *Foreignization*: it is the use of mother tongue exact lexical item but with second language pronunciation.

The inter-lingual strategies includes also strategies which are based on other languages than first language which refer to “Borrowing, literal translation or foreignization of word or phrase from a foreign language that is not the speaker's present target language” (p.90).



*Type 2: Intra-lingual Strategies.*

Intra-lingual Strategies are divided into six subtypes:

- *Approximation*: is “the use of a target language word or phrase which shares a number of critical semantic features with the target item. It includes the use of high or low coverage words, superordinate terms and exemplification”. (p. 90).
- *Word coinage*: is the make-up of new items in the target language to transmit the intended concept.
- *Description*: the learner provides a description of the intended item using its structure into the target language. The description of a certain item includes “general physical properties, specific features interactional/functional characteristics, locational properties, other features (features which are indirectly associated with the target item, often context- or culture- bound)” (p.90).
- *Restructuring*: A new type has not been mentioned in the previous typologies. It refers to providing a new speech plan when the intended plan is not successful.
- *Appeal for assistance*: the learner asks for help when he misses a certain word. It has two forms: direct and indirect request. In the first, the listener asks directly to provide the missed item. The other form is that the speaker needs to show the target item missed through making some gestures. (Pouliss, Bongaerts and Kellerman, 1984).
- *Mime*: is “the use of mimic gestures to replace or illustrate speech”. (p.90).

#### **2.7.4 Oxford's Typology of Compensation Strategies**

According to Oxford (1990) “compensation strategies allows learners to produce spoken or written expression in the new language without complete knowledge[...] certain compensation strategies are used in speaking; however other compensation strategies can be

used in informal writing as well as in speaking” (p. 50). Oxford indicates that compensation strategies used for production skills assist learners to carry on using the language. She outlines her typology into two broad categories. The two categories are *Guessing Intelligently in Listening and Reading* for receptive skills and *Overcoming Limitation in Speaking and Writing* for productive skills.

#### **2.7.4.1 Guessing Intelligently in Listening and Reading**

This strategy includes both linguistic and non-linguistic clues. In using linguistic clues Oxford (1990) reports that “seeking and using language clues in order to guess the meaning of what is heard or read in the target language; in the absence of complete knowledge in vocabulary, grammar and other target language element” (p. 50). That is, the learner tries to relate the given concept to the previous knowledge of his mother tongue in order to understand the intended message. For the second type of using nonlinguistic clues, Oxford states that the learner depends on other sources regardless of the language to guess the meaning of a certain concept in the target language such as the context, text structure or the situation where the lexical item is used.

#### **2.7.4.2 Overcoming Limitation in Speaking and Writing**

Oxford (1990) suggests eight strategies under this type used for both speaking writing. Switching to the mother tongue, getting help and using mime or gestures are used only in speaking. While, selecting the topic, coining words, adjusting or approximating the message and using a circumlocution or synonym can be both used in speaking and writing.

- *Switching to the mother tongue*: learners use some missed expression in their mother tongue without providing its translation.

- *Getting help*: the speaker can use some gestures to indicate that the target expression is missing or rather he can ask for help directly.
- *Using Mime and gestures*: refers to the use of body movements to indicate the meaning of a certain expression.
- *Selecting the topic*: In this case, the learner chooses the topic of his interest of which he has sufficient knowledge.
- *Adjusting or approximating the message*: Making ideas simpler and easier to transmit can be a successful strategy that Oxford presented.
- *Coining words*: the learners can invent or relate two words in the target language to indicate the desired concept.
- *Using a circumlocution or synonym*: When the learner forgot the exact term, he can provide a description of the given expression or state another word that is equivalent to the forgotten one.
- *Avoiding communication partially or totally*: learners can either adapt this strategy to avoid communicating the whole topic, or only avoid explaining some expression or ideas related to the topic in hand.

## **2.8 Factors Influencing the Choice of Compensatory Strategies**

From the above overview of literature, it is clear that numerous researchers attempt to classify and conceptualize communication strategies. Other crucial issue that was not highly considered by researchers is the factors, only few investigate factors influences the learners' choice of the strategy. Mollay (2011) identifies the main ones that are task, first language influence, learners' attitude and proficiency.

**1. Task**

Mollay (2011) claims that the task devoted to the learner reveal the nature of the selected compensation strategy. As Mollay reviews, there are many researchers as the Nijmegen group used a series of tasks to investigate the strategies learners tend to employ in each different task. Pouliss (1989) states that, “task is the dominant factor in determining the choice of compensatory strategies” (As cited in Mollay, 2011 p. 56). In fact, Mollay (2011) do not consider tasks as important factor but rather she emphasized the role of communication goal. Mollay (2011) assumes that “people do not attempt to solve tasks but rather set themselves goal which they would like to reach” (p. 57).

**2. First language Influence**

The influence of the native language is another factor contributing to the selection of compensation strategies. According to Mollay (2011), there is insufficient work on the relationship between native language and choice of the strategy. She reviewed that only Tarone's (1977) investigation on learner's background backed this idea of influence. Mollay (2011) concludes that the context where the learner is using the language could influence the choice of compensation strategy. In her study, she mentions that, “Language production in German EFL lessons were observed, one would find different communication strategies than in EFL lesson in an English- Speaking environment” (p. 59).

**3. The Influence of Learners' Attitudes**

Learners differ in terms of personality. The difference lay in their degree of attitudes and motivation towards the learning goals precisely their communicative goals. Corder (1983) assumes that “learner's personality may influence whether he adopts achievement or reduction behavior” (As cited in Mollay, 2011 p. 59). That is, learners' attitudes can be an

important factor that could influence the choice of compensatory strategy. If they have positive attitudes towards their goals they would choose to compensate their lacks, using the above reviewed compensation strategies. However, if they have negative attitudes they will resort to reduction or avoidance strategies.

#### **4. Foreign Language Proficiency**

The literature of communication strategies reveals that a part of language analysis's interest is devoted to discuss the relation between proficiency and the type of communication strategies selected. Mollay (2011) reviews that "learners at different proficiency levels do not employ CS less or more often but merely favor different CS types, or that, advanced learners use their strategies more efficiently than beginning learners" (p. 60). That summarizes that the choice of the compensatory strategies depend on learners' level of proficiency. Parikibaht (1984) mentions that the frequency of the strategies use vary (As cited in Mollay, 2001). It means that, beginners tend to employ more strategies than advanced learners do. Chen (1990) claims that the strategy of circumlocution and approximation is the most employed among proficient and advanced learners. (As cited in Mollay, 2001). Results of different researches have shown that there is a link between the frequency of Compensatory Strategies use and proficiency level. The number of compensation strategies used minimized when the proficiency level raised (Oweis, 2013).

#### **Conclusion**

In short, the process of learning a second or foreign language is hard task to achieve. On this regard, researchers investigated language strategies use. They attempted to highlight and provide various strategies that can help learners to achieve a high level of proficiency.

Learning a language means to be able to communicate with it. Learners have to be aware about the existing strategies that may aid them to achieve their communication goal. Many scholars tried to classify the communication strategies so that it would be easier for learners to select the exact strategy that cope with his/her lack of knowledge in the target language if they face some gaps. It is clear that these strategies are not easily defined or classified. Most researchers have classified communication strategies based on varied perspectives. The discussed information in the present study tackles the issue of classification of compensation strategies and the main factors influencing the choice of selecting them. Researchers' taxonomies are somehow different but they share the same goal, which is facilitating the process of communication in language learning context.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Field Investigation**

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## **Chapter Three**

### **Field Investigation**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the practical part of the research. This study aimed to elicit from both the students' questionnaires and the observation a set of data that would test the impact of compensation strategies on learners' speaking skill. Since the research only consider the quantitative descriptive data, administrating a questionnaire and making an observation during class oral presentation seem to be the most appropriate tools that facilitate the investigation of the stated hypothesis. The aim behind the selection of observation is to deepen the understanding of the hypothesized issue. This chapter is composed of two sections. Section one relates to students' questionnaire. It is devoted to the description, analysis of students' questionnaire along with the discussion of results illustrated from the sample's responses. Section two provides the description and analysis of observation along with the discussion of results and findings.

#### **3.1 Students' Questionnaire**

##### **3.1.1 Sample Choice**

The population used for this study is composed of 65 students divided into three groups of Master one foreign language learners in English department at Guelma University. A sample of 45 students from the target population participated in this research. This sample was selected randomly because participants shared the same heterogeneous mix of characteristics, such as age, and educational background. Therefore, this sample would allow the generalization of result to the whole population. Moreover, at this level, students have



experienced many tasks where they were required to speak. We can assume that, master one students are aware about the problems that hamper them to master their speaking so that they will be able to solve it. The second reason behind our choice of this sample is that, students opportunities of presentation in different modules at this level are maximized unlike in the other levels where teacher talk is emphasized.

### **3.1.2 Description of the Questionnaire**

In order to identify the elements that this study is based on. The questionnaire was designed to examine learners' views concerning the impact of compensation strategies on their speaking skill. The students' questionnaire encompasses three sections. Section one was structured to obtain general information about students (level, age). To ensure that all students share the same characteristics. Section two emphasized student' perception of speaking skill including factors influencing their oral performance and difficulties they encounter. The last section was structured to check the strategies learners may employ in time of varied communication difficulty. The type of strategies that learners were asked about represents Oxford's (1990) typology of compensation strategies. Precisely, the category that fits speaking skill, which includes eight types. It is worth mentioning that the Topic Selection strategy was not used in this questionnaire because, the topic selection is in the hand of the teacher not the students. In the last two questions, students where asked about their opinions concerning the importance of compensation strategies as effective devices that could help them to enhance their speaking. All in all the questionnaire consists of 22 questions divided among the three sections (See appendix A).

### **3.1.3 Administration of Students' Questionnaire**

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The questionnaire was distributed to each of the three groups. In each group, about 10 to 15 students were selected randomly to answer the questions. There was a misunderstanding to some questions and few participants asked for explanation. Hence, a simpler explanation for the ambiguous questions. The 45 administrated questionnaires were handed back at the same hour they was distributed at.

### **3.1.4 The Analysis of Results and Findings**

#### **Section One: General Information**

##### **1. Age distribution**

**Table 3.1**

*Students' Age*

Age	Number	Percentage
22	31	68.89%
From23 to 24	14	31.11%
Total	45	100%

The reason behind the choice of this question is to describe the sample of the study. The age of learners may reflect their proficiency level. As the data indicates, over half of the respondents (68.89%) are almost in the same age (22) which reflects the basic age of master one students. Only (31.11. %) of students are more than 22 years old.

**2. How long have you been studying English?**

**Table 3.2**

*Students' Years of Studying English*

	Number	Percentage
11 years	37	82.22%
More than 11 years	08	17.78%
Total	45	100%

Another factor that can contribute to foreign language learners' level of proficiency is the period of studying the English language. As it has been reviewed, proficiency is one of the main factors contributing to the selection of compensation strategies. It is supposed that learners, who have more experience in studying English, will have better level than others. The data indicated that the majority of students (82.22%) have studied English for 11 years. This implies that they have the same level and experience. Only (17.78%) of students have studied English for 12 years.

**3. How do you rate your overall proficiency level in English?**

Regarding the student proficiency level in the English language, none of them (0%) claimed that it is excellent. This implies that despite their level they are still working to achieve proficiency. The majority of students (77.78%) claimed that their level of proficiency is good. Only (22.22%) of the total said that it is fair. No one (0%) said that his or her level of proficiency is poor. This implies that students are working to improve their proficiency level.

**Table 3.3**

*Students' Appreciation of Their Proficiency Level in English*

	Number	Percentage
Excellent	/	0%
Good	35	77.78%
Fair	10	22.22%
Poor	/	0%
Total	45	100%

**4. What is the learning skill you have developed the most?**

**Table 3.4**

*Learners Most Developed Learning Skill*

Learning Skill	Number	Percentage
Listening	/	0%
Speaking	19	42.22%
Reading	05	11.11%
Writing	21	46.67%
Total	45	100%

According to the results demonstrated above, about the half of student (46.67%) claimed that they developed the writing skill more than the other skills. While (42.22%) of them have developed their speaking skill. Only (11.11%) of the total indicated that they developed the reading skill. None of the students (0 %) developed the listening skill. This demonstrates

that students consider the productive skills more important than the receptive ones. The latter implies that student during their learning process think that to ensure proficiency they need to master both speaking and writing only.

**5. How important is it for you to become proficient in English?**

**Table3.5**

*Learners Attitude towards Proficiency in English*

	Number	Percentage
Very important	34	75.56%
Important	11	24.44%
Not important	/	0%
Total	45	100%

As learners' attitude plays a major role in achieving language proficiency, learners were asked about their views concerning the importance of achieving proficiency in English. As the results demonstrate that almost (75.56%) of the respondents indicate that it is very important to achieve a high level of proficiency in the English language. Only (24.44%) of students consider it important. However, none of them (0%) considered it as not important. This implies that students are aware to reach a high level of proficiency in the English language.

**Section Two: Students' Perception of Speaking Skill**

**6. How do you find speaking in English?**

This question aimed at determining learners' views concerning the speaking skill. Few number of participants (13.33%) stated that speaking is very easy. Some of them (37.78%)

said that speaking is easy. This implies that they do not face difficulties in speaking. About (48.89%) of students regarded speaking a difficult skill to be mastered. This indicates that despite their level, most of master one learners still face some difficulties in speaking the English language. None of them (0%) have selected very difficult. This implies that speaking can be difficult but also there is a possibility to be mastered through making efforts.

**Table 3.6***Student Opinions Concerning the Degree of Difficulty of Speaking Skill*

	Number	Percentage
Very easy	06	13.33%
Easy	17	37.78%
Difficult	22	48.89%
Very difficult	/	0%
Total	45	100%

**7. Which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?****Table3.7***Learners' Description of their Oral Performance Level*

	Number	Percentage
High	03	6.67%
Above average	16	35.56%
Average	26	57.77%
Low	/	0%
Total	45	100%

The aim behind this question is to investigate learners' oral performance level. Only (6.67%) of students said that they have a high level of performance. Under the half of them (35.56%) indicated that their level of oral performance is above average. Moreover, over the half of respondents (57.77%) stated that they have an average level in oral performance. This implies that the most of master one student did not fully mastered their speaking skill.

**8. Do you feel afraid to talk?**

**Table3.8**

*Learners Fear from Speaking*

	Number	Percentage
Yes	28	62.22%
No	17	37.78%
Total	45	100%

This question tends to reveal if learners at this level are still inhibited to speak effectively or not. From the table above, the majority of the students (62.22%) responded with yes to the question. Only (37.78%) of students stated that they do not feel afraid to talk. This indicates that only few of them take control over their speaking whereas, most of students are still afraid to perform orally. This signifies that there are some factors inhibiting them from speaking effectively.

**9. What are the factors that inhibit you from speaking effectively? (Select only one type of factors).**

Because some students are afraid to talk. This question's aim is to highlight the most factors affecting learners' oral performance. Only (35.56%) of students think that

psychological factors are the reason behind their poor performance. The majority of students (64.44%) selected linguistic factors as the main reason. This indicates that learners' competence of the English language is the important element that affects their oral performance. None selected personality factors. This indicates that learners are not aware of the effects of listening ability on their speaking skill.

**Table 3.9***Factors Affecting Learners' Speaking Performance*

Factors affecting speaking performance	Number	Percentage
Psychological factors (affective factors)	16	35.56%
Linguistic factors( lack of knowledge)	29	64.44%
Personality factors( interaction)	/	0%
Total	45	100%

**10. What do you think is the most difficult task when you speak?**

As indicated in the table below, (48.89%) of students have difficulties in recalling lexical terms. This indicates that learners have limited set of vocabulary. Few of them (20 %) indicated that using correct grammar is the main difficulty they encounter. This implies that learners' lack of grammatical knowledge prevents them from using coherent utterances. Some participants (31.11%) associated their performance difficulty with their inability to transmit their ideas effectively in the English language. None of the participants provided further suggestions of the difficulties they really encounter

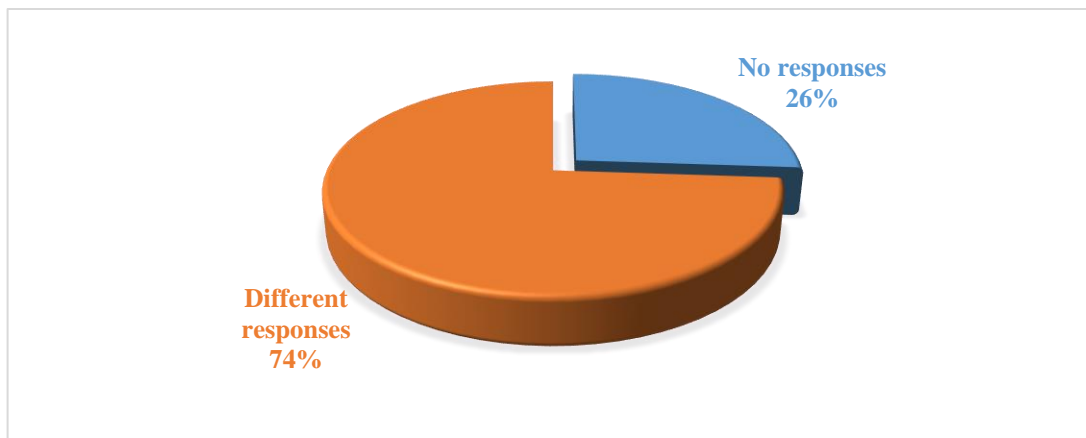


**Table3.10**

*Learners Difficulties in Performing a Speaking Task*

	Number	Percentage
Recalling lexical terms	22	48.89%
Using correct grammar	09	20%
Transmitting your ideas	14	31.11%
Others	/	0%
Total	45	100%

**11. How do you think linguistic problems could be overcome or minimized?**



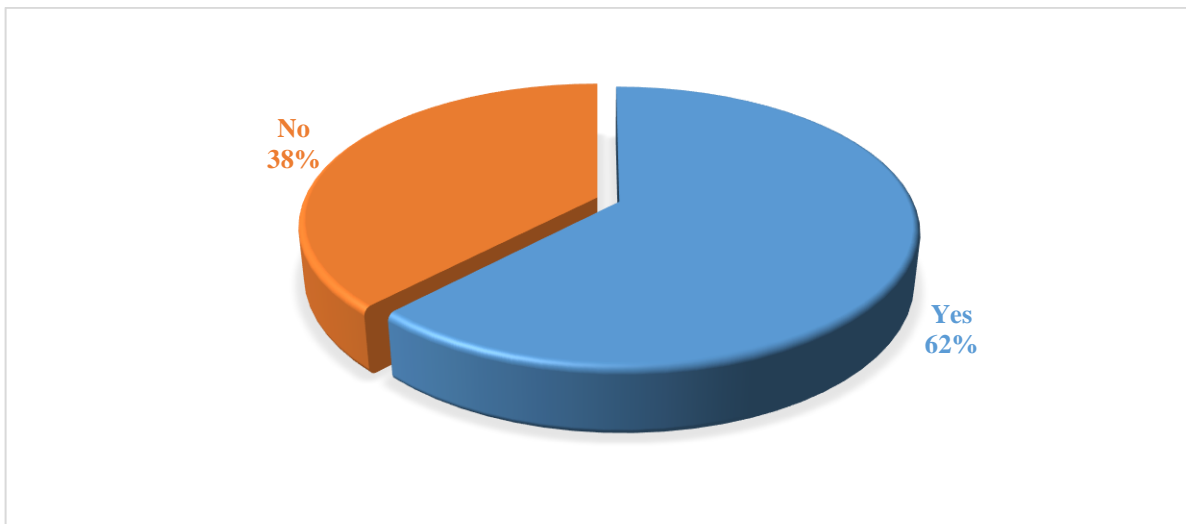
**Graph 3.1: Learners' Suggestions about the Strategies that Can Be Used to Overcome Linguistic Problems.**

In this question, learners were asked about their views concerning the solution that can enhance their oral performance. Few of the participants (26%) did not answer. However, the majority of them (74%) provided varied answers. Their answers can be summed up as follow:

- Enlarge my linguistic knowledge about the topic before I perform, because I think vocabulary plays a major role in speaking
- Changing the topic
- Through the extensive listening to natives and the regular practice.
- Using Dictionaries in time of preparation for the topic.
- Make pauses to recall and reorganize the ideas and start over.
- Reformulating ideas and make it simple.

**Section Three: Learners Use of Compensation Strategies.**

**12. Do you depend on some communication strategies to enhance your oral performance?**

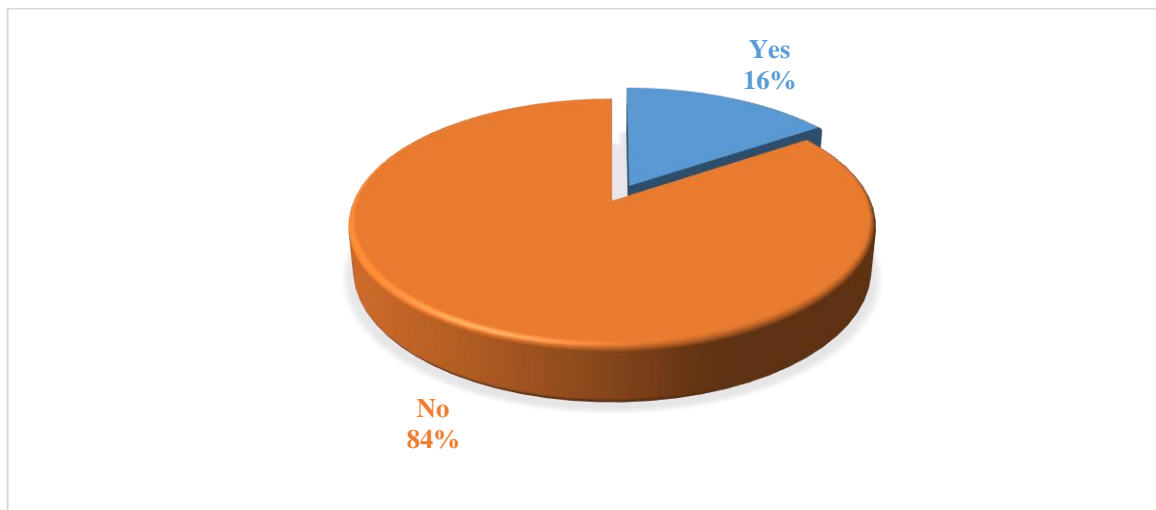


**Graph 3.2: The Use of Communication Strategies.**

The aim behind this question is see if learners are used to employ some communication strategies to overcome their oral problems or not. The obtained data show that approximately two-thirds of the participants (62%) use communication strategies. This indicates that

learners are familiar with these strategies to a considerable extent. Only (38%) of them do not employ these strategies.

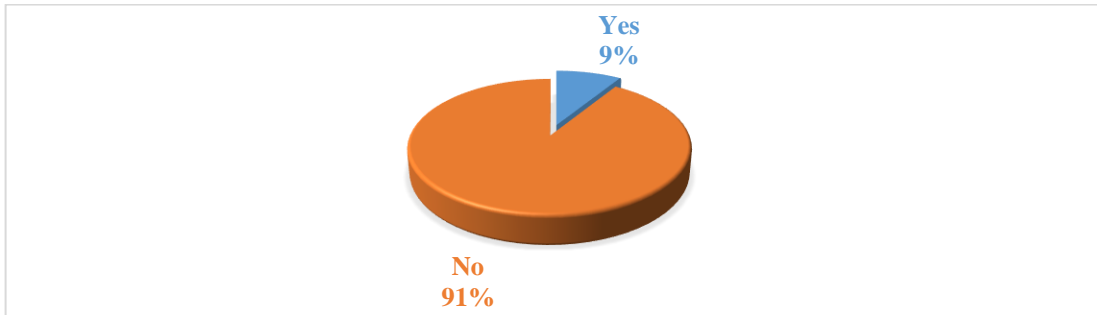
**13. Have you ever heard about Compensation strategies?**



**Graph 3.3: Learners' Awareness of Compensation Strategies.**

In this question, learners were asked if they know the compensation strategies or not. (16%) of learners claimed that they know compensation strategies. While most of participants (84%) indicated that, they do not know it. This implies that, despite the fact that they are advanced learners still they did not know the usefulness of compensation strategies in the field of foreign language learning. Therefore, learners did not come across this type of strategies. This indicates that the majority of learners have never attempt to cover their oral performance problem using compensation strategies.

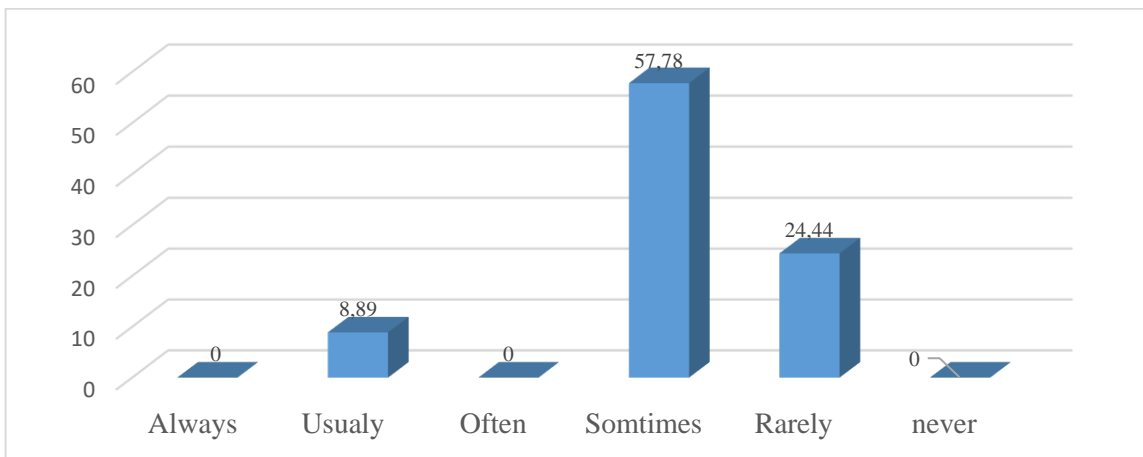
**14. When you cannot say a given term or expression in English, do you usually switch to your mother tongue.**



**Graph 3.4: Learners' Use of Switching to the Mother Tongue Strategy.**

As indicated in the graph above, very few participants (9%) used switching to the mother tongue strategy to transmit the missed words, while the majority of them (91%) claimed that they do not refer the language switch strategy. This implies that most of master one students are able to cover their limited knowledge using the English language only. Therefore, the data indicated in the graph reflects participants' proficiency level in the English language.

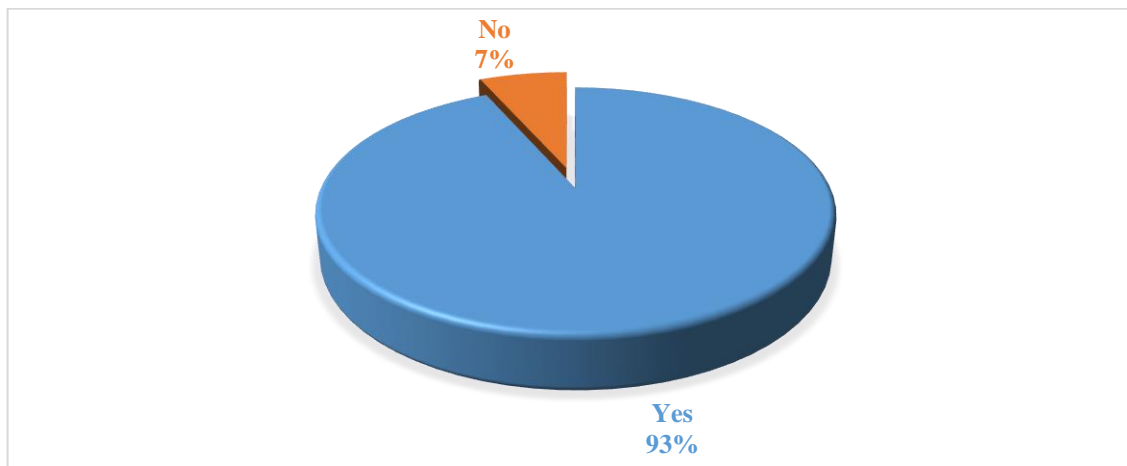
**15. When you are not able to indicate a certain meaning of a word, how often do you use physical motion instead of expression?**



**Graph 3.5: The Use of Mime and Gestures Strategy**

As the result indicates, none of the participants claimed that they always use mime and gestures strategy. Few respondents (8.89%) stated that they usually use physical motion in case where they do not know how to communicate a given expression. Over half of them (57.78%) claimed that they sometimes use it. Moreover, only (24.44%) out of the whole participants said that they used it rarely. None of the participants opted for the option often and never. This implies that students depend on other compensation strategies to cover the missing knowledge.

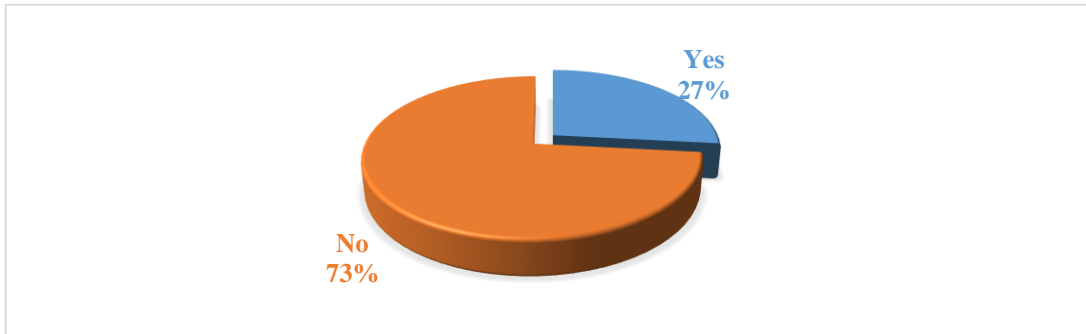
**16. If once you forget the exact term to be used when are performing, do you provide its synonym or the circumlocution of the word?**



**Graph3.6: Learners use of Circumlocution and Synonym Strategy**

As the previous question, this question also seeks to present how many students use circumlocution and synonym strategy. The data in the graph indicated that most of the participants (93%) frequently depend on circumlocution and synonym strategy to carry on their oral task. While (7%) of the sample said that they do not use it. This implies that the majority of the learners believe that use circumlocution and synonyms is good strategy to cover their missed knowledge.

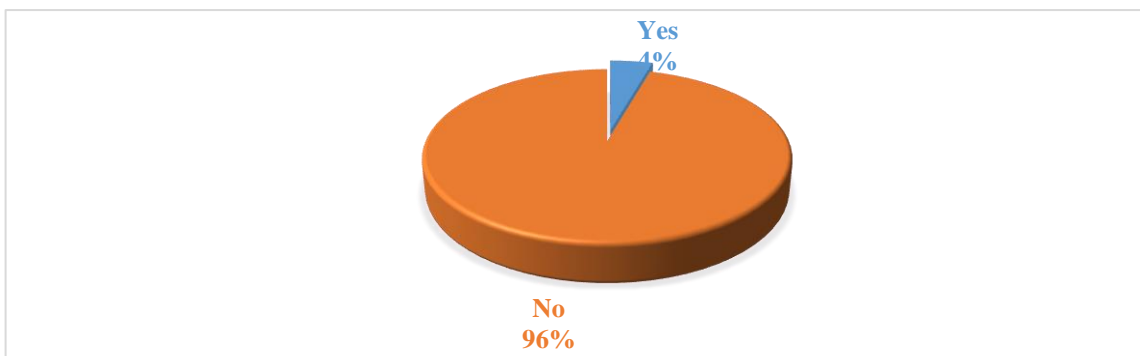
**17. Do you refer to adjusting and approximating your message when you are presenting?**



**Graph3.7: The Use of Adjusting and Approximation Strategy.**

As indicated in the graph only (27%) of students approximate their intended message in case they are faced with linguistic difficulties during oral performance task. The majority (73 %) of respondents did not use this strategy. This implies that most of the students preferred to transmit the intended message using other strategies rather than approximating it.

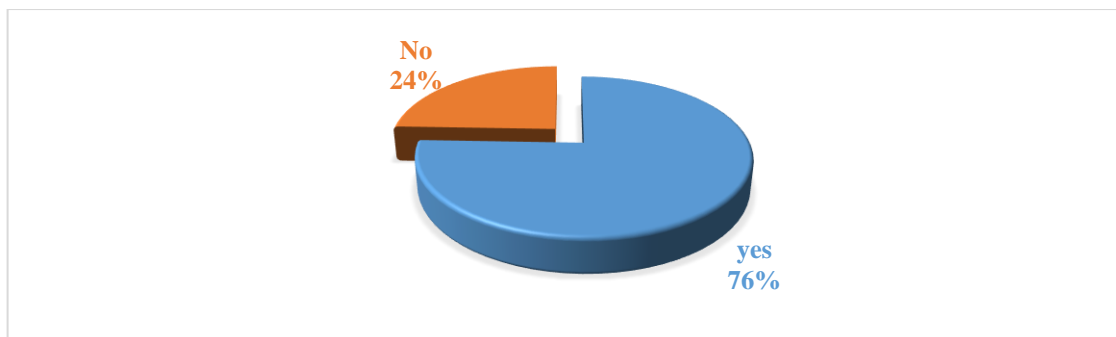
**18. When you do not have the exact vocabulary item, do you depend on the strategy of making new words to communicate the intended concept?**



**Graph3.8: The Use of Coining words Strategy**

This question's aim is to investigate whether students at this level create new words to deliver their intended meaning or not. As the graph presented, hardly any of the respondents (4 %) used this strategy. While the majority of them (96%) did not use it. Since immediate and intermediate learners frequently use this strategy as researchers has indicated in the literature review, consequently, master one learners would not depend on this strategy at this advanced level.

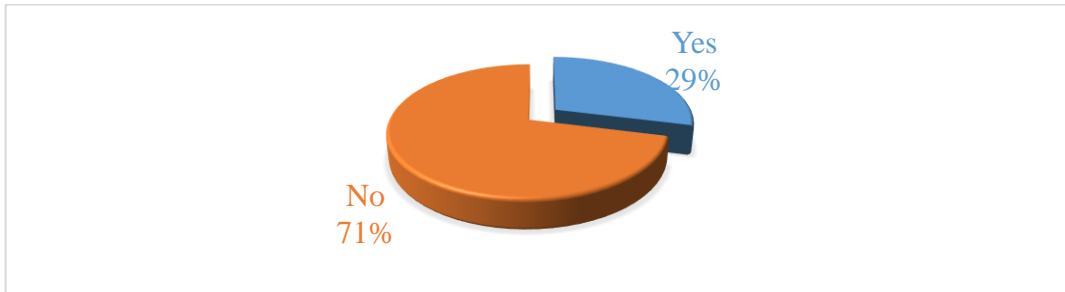
**19. When you are stuck in your oral performance, do you ask for help from your classmates or your teacher?**



**Graph3.9: Getting Help Strategy**

In this question, learners were asked if they refer to the appeal for assistance strategy or not. As it is shown in the graph, (24 %) of the participants do not ask for help either directly or indirectly. This implies the majority of students are self-dependent learners and they may refer to other strategies to overcome their gap of knowledge. Most of respondents (76%) claimed that they use the getting help strategy. This implies that learners believe that their classmates or teachers help is a good technique to carry on the delivering of the message rather than abandon it.

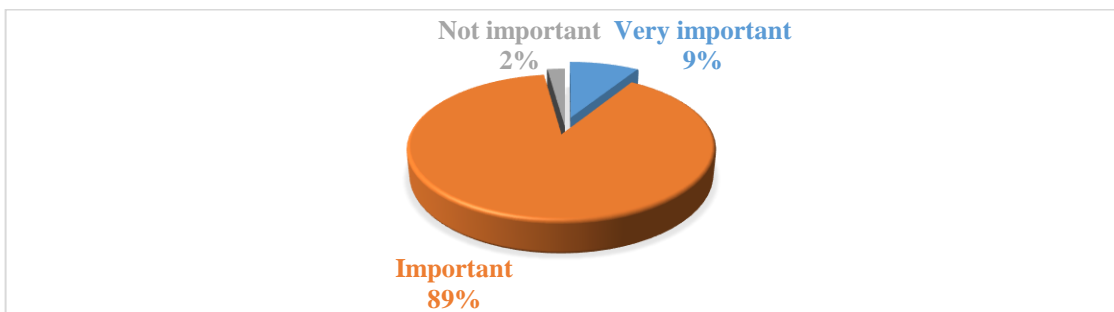
**20. In case you have limited knowledge about given idea, do you avoid its explanation in your oral performance?**



**Graph 3.10: Learners Use of the Avoidance Strategy.**

As the graph above indicated, the majority of participants (71.11%) did not avoid the idea despite the limited knowledge. This implies that those learners prefer to complete delivering the ideas of the target topic to preserve the flow of ideas. While (28.89%) of them drop it because of the lack of knowledge. This indicates that learners who avoided the explanation of idea believe that this strategy is useful to ensure the success of the oral performance task, so that to avoid the misunderstandings of the message and to avoid deviation from the right path of the intended message.

**22. How important do you consider compensation strategies as important techniques to maintain your communicative goal?**

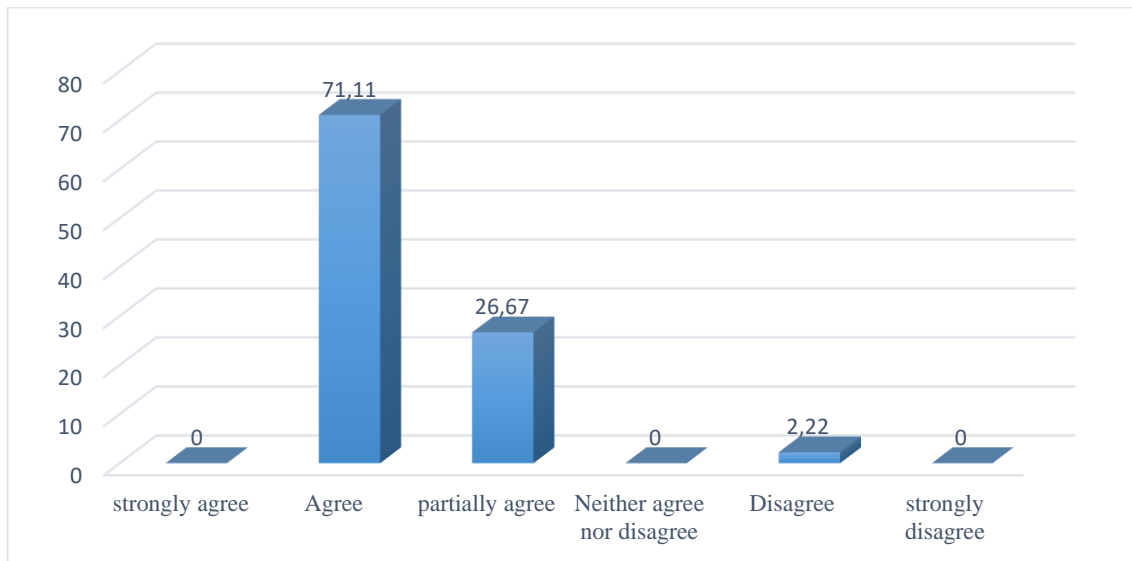


**Graph3.11: The Importance of Compensation Strategies.**



This question is asked in order to check learners' opinions regarding the importance of compensation strategies in speaking. Small number of the participants (9%) claimed that they are very important techniques. Nearly all the respondents (89%) regarded compensation strategies as important techniques that help them to maintain their communicative goal This implies that the majority of learners are aware about the effectiveness of these strategies use. Few respondent (2. %) stated that it is not important. Surprisingly the result of this question contradicts the previous one that is related to learners' awareness.

**22. Do you agree that compensation strategies enhance your speaking skill?**



**Graph3.12: The role of Compensation Strategies in Enhancing Speaking Performance.**

This question tended to investigate learners' evaluation of the value of compensation strategies in enhancing their speaking skill. None of the participants strongly agreed that compensation strategies improve their speaking. Most of the sample (71.11%) agreed upon the usefulness of compensation strategies. A portion of (26%) partially agreed about its effectiveness. This implies that the majority of participants' acknowledge that compensation

strategies can be the solution to their oral performance difficulties. While only (2.22%) of the total disagree,

### **3.1.5 Summary of Results and Findings from Students Questionnaire**

Based on the descriptive and statistical analyses of the data presented, the following results have been found.

This questionnaire revealed that, despite the 11 years spent in studying English, master one learners' speaking skill was not really mastered. This is due to some difficulties that learners still encounter at this level. A remarkable result emerge from the analyzed data is that the significant problem learners are facing is the limited vocabulary of the English language. This difficulty is the common obstacle that master one learners claimed that they encounter. The lack of the ability to transmit their ideas effectively. As the interpreted data revealed the linguistic knowledge is the major factor leading to this difficulty.

The participants highly consider the importance of speaking skill to achieve proficiency in the English language. The data gathered also revealed that the majority of Master one learners claimed that they do not know compensation strategies. However when they are asked about their use of these strategies in separate ways we found that they use various kinds of compensation strategies in communicating their intended meanings. As they claimed, they widely depended on Circumlocution and Getting help strategy. We can conclude that learners are using these strategies without knowing its nature. That is, they use them unconsciously.

## **3.2 The Observation**

### **3.2.1 Sample Choice**

The entire population of master one students could not be observed. Due to the constraints of time, we opted for a sample of 23 students. This sample size would serve the purpose of the observation, rather than attempting to observe the wider number of 65 master one students. The second reason to this number selection is that almost all students were using papers during oral presentation. That is, we assumed that the observed results would be the same for all students. The sample was presenting in a group of two to four students. Each one presents a given part of the topic provided by the teacher for about 15 to 20 minutes.

### **3.2.2 Description of the Observation**

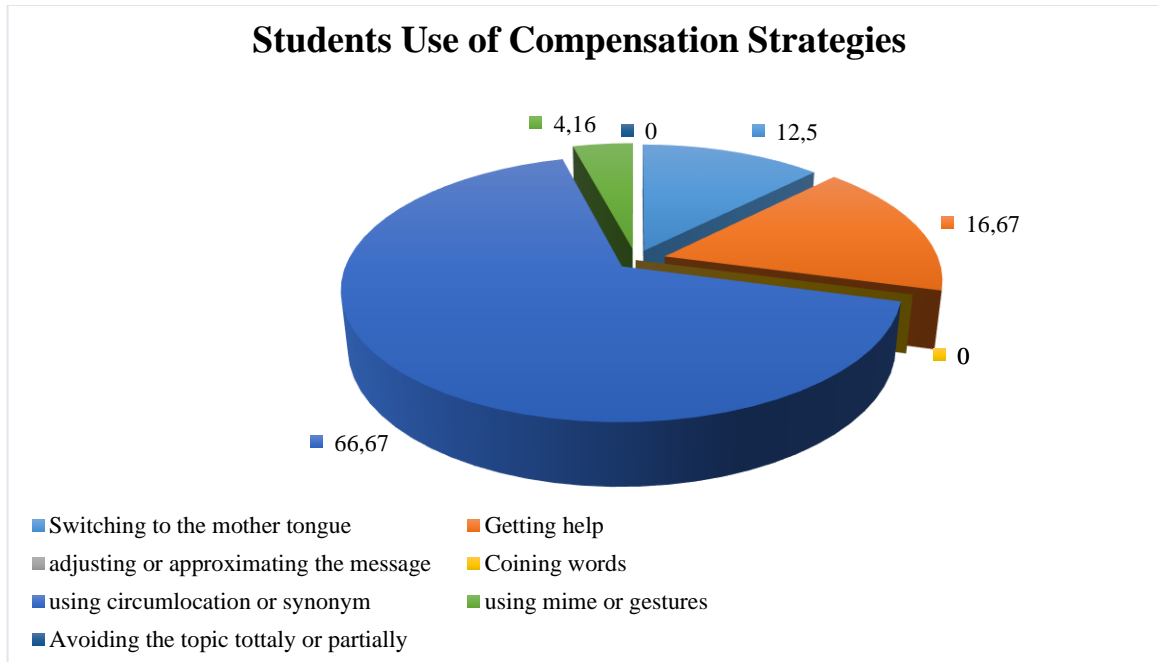
This research also conducted a study based on the observation as a supportive tool. Since the study is of descriptive nature, this tool has been used. The data obtained through observation serves as a check to participants' answers in the questionnaires about the topic of investigation. This research used class observation during oral presentation tasks to see how students have performed, and what linguistic problems they really encounter. In addition, to highlight the most used compensation strategies from the neglected ones.

Class observation took place one week after the administration of the questionnaire. Students of the three classes of master one level were observed during class oral presentation. After asking for permission from the teachers who were in charge of these three classes, each class was observed in three periods of 90 minutes. Since the study tackled the compensation strategy across the speaking skill, Oxford's (1990) typology of compensation strategy, precisely the category entitled Overcoming Limitation in speaking and Writing was prepared in the form of checklist to facilitate the gathering of data see. (See Appendix B). Students'

oral presentations served as a help to highlight the type of compensation strategies used along with its impact on master one oral performance.

### **3.2.3 Analysis of the Results and Findings**

What have been observed during class performance is that the majority of students read what they had written on a piece of paper. Therefore, they are not using their linguistic competences to perform the task. In addition, students had a lot to say in time of 20 minutes. Each one of the participants did not consider the grammatical mistakes they committed because they only wanted to finish their parts. This implies that master students consider fluency more than accuracy in speaking. Some students did not give much attention to what their classmates have asked. Therefore, they respond with brief answers that sometimes did not correspond at all to the question asked by either the teacher or their classmates. Few of them hesitate to express themselves. The latter is clear from their body movements and facial expressions. Without papers, learners cannot express themselves effectively. When the teacher asked them to explain a given idea they could not do so, or at least they could not state the idea as it was written on the paper in front of them. That is they did not use the exact lexical items and the appropriate structure. The latter is what allowed us to highlight the compensation strategies used. The strategies master one learners used can be illustrated in the following graph:



**Graph3.13 The Observed Compensation Strategies Used by Learners**

From the figure above, most of the observed students (66.67%) used circumlocution and synonym strategy. For example, when their teacher or classmates asked them to restate the idea in their own words and make it simple. They provided definitions and description of some terms because they could not deliver the exact lexical term. Only (12.5%) of students used switching to the mother tongue strategy. In fact, students were not allowed to use mother tongue only some of them used it when they provided idioms and proverbs during communication session. (16.67%) of participants used the strategy of getting help. This strategy was used indirectly. Learners did not ask for help directly, they used the expression “how to say it? Then they make pauses because they waited for their classmates to complete the sentence or provide the intended word or expression. None of the presenters used coining words, avoidance and the approximation of the message strategies.

### **3.2.4 Summary of Results from the Observation**

As expected, the analysis of the observation prove that the shortage in linguistic knowledge is the highly noticed problem learners really encounter. Closer inspection revealed that despite the fact that they are advanced learners, they did not use varied strategies to overcome the linguistic problem they faced and they only stick to talking around strategy (circumlocution) most of the time. That is, not all compensation strategies under Oxford's (1990) typology were fully utilized. The latter is a result of their unawareness of the appropriate usage of the exact compensation strategies as illustrated in the questionnaire analysis.

The observation results confirm to a certain extent previous findings in the literature; it was stated that proficient learners merely preferred some compensation strategies to others. However, the latter did not mean that advanced learners have to use fewer strategies. In fact, the case of the study sample is slightly different. It is true that they are advanced learners but still they are not proficient in speaking and they are not aware about compensation strategies role as well. Therefore, not their proficiency is the reason behind their use of one or two preferred strategies but rather their ignorance about the exact role of compensation strategies. Apart from this slight discordance, learners did achieve their communication task and did not abandon it using some types of compensation strategies. It is fundamental to note that in addition to compensatory strategies, learners depend on the affective strategies during oral presentation (making pause and deep breath).

### **Conclusion**

The results driven from this study, did confirm to some extent the positive impact of compensation strategies on learners' speaking skill. From the analysis of the questionnaire,

learners claimed that they use compensation strategies to compensate for their shortage in vocabulary rather than avoiding the topic. Moreover, the data gathered from the observation confirms learners' views to a certain extent. The analyzed data indicates that master one learners are still facing difficulties in oral performance tasks and they try to solve it with the use of some compensation strategies to achieve communicative goal. However, learners do not fully master the exact usage of these strategies. The latter because of their lack of awareness about compensation strategies' usefulness regarding the speaking skill.

# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**



## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

This study has investigated the impact of compensation strategies on learners' speaking skill. It was assumed that if master one learners use compensation strategies during oral performance task to overcome their gap of knowledge, then their speaking skill would enhance. The literature reviewed on compensation strategies and speaking skill revealed that these types of strategies are solutions for learners' different shortage in knowledge regarding the English language. Moreover, strategic learners are able to enhance their speaking skill. To achieve a more reliable and comprehensive picture of the subject matter, data has been collected through observation and a questionnaire administrated to students. The questionnaire has been designed to check learners' awareness of the compensation strategies, to identify the used strategies and to set out problems that inhibit them from speaking effectively. Since this problem can be observed, the observation can support learners' views and opinions.

The findings of this study confirmed to a certain degree the previous researchers' views: Faerch & Kasper (1980), Pouliss, Bongaerts & Kellerman (1984) & Oxford (1990). That is, these findings increased the evidence that compensation strategies can enhance learners' speaking skill. Moreover, the results drawn indicated that learners have employed specific types of these strategies to maintain their target communicative goal. In fact, not all typology of Oxford 1990 was utilized; it means that they have resorted only to two types of compensation strategies that are getting help and circumlocution strategy to overcome their gap of knowledge.

### **1. Pedagogical Implications**

The issues discussed so far in this study provided some insights that should assist learners in the foreign language context. The current study results can bring some enlightenment to foreign language learners. Based on the findings the following implications can be offered. Learners need to extend their linguistic knowledge so that they will be able to perform effectively. As the study has demonstrated, almost all master one students are paper-dependent during oral presentation. On this regard, learners need to develop their communicative competence along with their linguistic competence so that they will perform well.

From the questionnaire analysis, it is clear that all learners neglected the listening skill and did not develop it. In fact, one of the main factors that contributes to speaking is the listening ability. To perform well, learners need to depend on the extensive listening to native speakers. The latter will help them to enrich their vocabulary in one hand and, they will learn from them some techniques and mechanisms to overcome different obstacles they face during communication or in any performing tasks in another hand.

Practicing the language also can be a helpful tip to improve learners speaking skill. To master language, foreign language learners have to use the language not only in classroom context. They need to create different personal contexts where they will be able to use the language and feel comfortable. This also can help them to overcome the psychological factors that are one of the crucial issues affecting their oral performance.

Concerning the use of the speaking strategies, many researchers reported in the theoretical part that communicative strategies are conscious and controlled. This study revealed that learners used compensation strategies unconsciously. That is, they are not

aware of the type of strategies they are using. Only what they are aware of is that it helps them to overcome their linguistic gap without knowing its nature. Therefore, learners have to extend their knowledge about the use of these strategies that would enable them to cover the difficulties they really encounter as foreign language learners.

Since this study investigated the linguistic problems, the observation results indicates that learners committed different grammatical mistakes. The participants did not even attempt to correct these mistakes. That is, they consider fluency more than accuracy. Both accuracy and fluency are the main characteristics of speaking skill. To master speaking means to consider both of them. On this basis, this study recommends from foreign language learners to emphasize both accuracy and fluency to ensure an effective oral performance and the clarity of ideas. This also can be achieved through a variety of activities that teachers have to organize.

As the study indicated, the majority of students did not know what is the function of compensation strategies. They were not even aware about the existence of the strategies in the field of foreign language learning. As learning a foreign language is a hard task that cannot be fulfilled from learners' side. A teacher as guider and facilitator have to integrate the compensation strategies in oral sessions in order to raise learners' awareness about the usefulness of these strategies. Since they are not native speakers, for sure they would commit mistakes. Training learners how to use these strategies at earlier stages of learning the foreign language would lead to positive outcomes. That is learners at certain advanced level will get used to these strategies use and they would not face bigger difficulties in communication.

To help learners in constructing strategic competence, teachers or instructors have to emphasize communication. To find out learners' difficulties teachers need to assess their

learners during oral performance. This assessment can facilitate for the teacher to highlight also their learners' interests in the type of topic they want to present. The latter would allow them to distribute the topics of discussion based on their learners' abilities. This step would reduce learners' possibility to face performance difficulties on one hand, and increase learners' motivation toward proficiency in speaking on the other hand.

## **2. Research Perspective and Limitation**

This research investigated the impact of compensation strategies on the speaking skill only. In fact, compensation strategies can be applicable in all the four skill. Thus, further experimental investigations are needed to study the application of compensation strategies in the remaining skills such as writing; listening and reading. Because this study aimed to investigate compensation strategies among advanced learners it was restricted only to master one students in the English department of Guelma University. We propose further research to be undertaken into other levels. That is, other researchers can investigate its use by freshman learners or its implementation in oral tasks.

Finally, a number of potential limitations need to be considered. First, observing learners during oral presentation sessions was not that helpful to investigate compensation strategies used. The latter is due to learners' use of papers from which they present their ideas, which make it difficult to identify the strategies. The investigation of these strategies use need other tools such as designing speaking tests and following experimental methods that may give the research other dimensions. Secondly, because of time constrains, the whole population of master one students could not be observed. As a result, the conclusion settled from the observation results does not provide the full picture of the compensation strategies use

among master one learners. Consequently, the findings might not be generalized to the whole population

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## Appendix A

### Students' Questionnaire

**The Impact of Compensation Strategies on Learners' Speaking Skill. The Case of Master One Students at Guelma University.**

**Dear Master One Students,**

We are preparing a research on the significance of using compensation strategies to enhance learners' speaking skill. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire. Your answers are very important to the validity of the result.

Please, tick (✓) the appropriate box to indicate your choice, and specify your answer when needed.

#### **Section one: General Information**

1. Age ...years.

2. How long have you been studying English?

.....years

3. How do you rate your overall proficiency level in English?

Excellent	
Good	
Fair	
Poor	

4. What is the skill you think you have developed the most?

Listening	
Speaking	
Reading	
Writing	

5. How important is it for you to become proficient in English?

Very important	
Important	
Not important	

### **Section Two: Student's Perception of Speaking Skill**

6. How do you find speaking in English?

Very easy	
Easy	
Difficult	
Very difficult	

7. Which of the following describes your level of oral performance in English?

High	
Above average	
Average	
Low	

8. Do you feel afraid to talk?

a. Yes

b. No

9. What are factors that inhibit you from speaking effectively? (Select only one type of factors).

Psychological factors ( affective factors)	
Linguistic factors ( linguistic knowledge)	
Personality factors ( interaction)	

10. What do you think is the most difficult task when you speak?

Recalling lexical terms	
Using correct grammar	
Transmitting your ideas	

-If others, please specify

.....

.....

.....

11. If you face any linguistic difficulties in oral speaking, how do you think the problems could be overcome or minimized?

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.....  
.....

**Section Three: Compensation Strategies.**

12. Do you depend on some communication strategies to enhance your oral performance?

a. Yes

b. No

13. Have you ever heard about compensation strategies (it is a method of using different strategies to facilitates and enhance your speaking)?

a. Yes

b. No

14. When you cannot say a given term in the English language, do you usually switch to your mother tongue?

a. Yes

b. No

15. When you are not able to indicate a certain meaning, how often do you use physical motion in place of expression?

Always	
Usually	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

16. If once you forget the exact term to be used when you are performing, do you provide its synonym or the circumlocution of the word?

a. Yes

b. No

17. Do you refer to adjusting and approximating your message when you are presenting?

a. Yes

b. No

18. When you do not have the exact vocabulary item, do you depend on the strategy of making new words to communicate the intended concept?

a. Yes

b. No

19. When you are stuck in your oral performance, do you ask for help from your classmates or your teacher?

a. Yes

b. No

20. In case you have a limited knowledge to explain a given idea, do you avoid its explanation in your oral performance?

a. Yes

b. No

21. How important do you consider compensation strategies as important techniques to maintain your communicative goal?

Very important	
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Important	
Not important	

22. Do you agree that compensation strategies enhance your speaking skill?

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Partially agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

**Thank you for your cooperation**



## Appendix B

### The Checklist used in the Observation

**Session Number:**

Type of Compensation Strategies	Observed		Number of students			Examples / comments
	Yes	No	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	
Switching to the mother tongue						
Avoiding communication partially or totally						
Using mime or gestures						
Getting help						
Adjusting and approximating the message						
Coining words						
Using Circumlocution and synonym						

Further Notes :

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## Résumé

La majorité des étudiants en langues étrangères rencontrent diverses difficultés en expression orale. Dans certaines mesures, ce dont les apprenants ont besoin, c'est développer des stratégies de communication qui peuvent les aider à résoudre leurs problèmes dans la performance orale en class réelle. Cette étude tente d'identifier les stratégies de compensation couramment utilisées parmi les étudiants de Master un en département d'anglais à l'université de Guelma. Ainsi, l'hypothèse d'étude présume que les stratégies de compensation aideraient les apprenants à améliorer leur compétence oratoire. Pour bien mener cette recherche et pour confirmer l'hypothèse anticipée, cet article propose une méthode descriptive quantitative dans laquelle un questionnaire et une observation ont été organisés pour recueillir les données nécessaires. Les deux procédures étaient basées sur la typologie d'Oxford 1990 des stratégies de compensation. Les résultats des données recueillies ont fourni des preuves qui confirment dans certaines mesures l'impact positif des stratégies de compensation sur la performance orale des apprenants. La conclusion principale déduite que les étudiants de Master un ont tendance à utiliser certains types de ces stratégies pour communiquer leurs idées. De surcroit des résultats, cette étude a recommandé des suggestions pour les étudiants qui peuvent les aider à perfectionner leur compétence oratoire.

**Mots clés :** Compétence oratoire, Performance orale, Difficultés d'expression orale, Stratégies de compensation.

## ملخص

يواجه معظم متعلمي اللغة الأجنبية صعوبات مختلفة في التحدث. إلى حد ما، ما يحتاجه هؤلاء المتعلمون هو تطوير بعض الاستراتيجيات التواصلية التي يمكن أن تساعدهم على حل مشاكلهم في أداء الفصول الدراسية الفعلية. وقد حاولت هذه الدراسة التعرف على استراتيجيات التعويض الشائعة الاستخدام بين المتعلمين في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة قلمة لتعزيز إنتاجهم الشفوي. وهكذا، افترض البحث الحالي أن استراتيجيات التعويض تساعد المتعلمين على تحسين مهاراتهم في التحدث. ولتنفيذ هذا البحث ولاختبار الفرضية المتوقعة، اتبعت هذا البحث طريقة وصفية كمية تم فيها تنظيم استبيان ومراقبة منظمين لجمع البيانات اللازمة. واستند كلا الإجراءان إلى تصنيف أكسفورد 1990 لاستراتيجيات التعويض. وقدمت نتائج تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها أدلة تثبت إلى حد ما الأثر الإيجابي لاستراتيجيات التعويضات على الأداء الشفوي للمتدربين. الاستنتاج الرئيسي الذي تم استخلاصه هو أن طلاب سنة أولى ماستر يميلون إلى استخدام بعض أنواع هذه الاستراتيجيات لتوصيل أفكارهم. إلى جانب ذلك، استنادا إلى النتائج، أوصت هذه الدراسة بعض الاقتراحات للطلاب التي قد تساعدهم على تعزيز مهاراتهم في التحدث.

**الكلمات الدالة:** مهارة التحدث، الأداء الشفوي، صعوبات النطق، استراتيجيات التعويض.