



**Strategic communication in Spanish as L2:
Exploring the effects of proficiency, task and
interlocutor**

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Maritza Rosas Maldonado

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the way English L2 learners of Spanish communicate face-to-face with other learners (NNS), and native speakers (NS) by means of communication strategies (CSs). The final aim is to examine the learners' strategic use of the target language as influenced by three variables: the proficiency level, the type of task and the type of dyad.

Learners with different proficiency levels interacted face-to-face when carrying out two types of tasks. 36 interactions with different combinations of dyad and task were elicited by means of video and audio recording, observation of participants' interactions and stimulated recall methodology. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to investigate possible associations between CSs and tasks, dyads and proficiency levels in each setting.

The major findings in this study indicate a higher use of CSs in beginner levels, which was reflected in the lower level learners' concern for solving lexis-related problems, and their tendency to focus on less complex grammatical features of the language. The higher level learners, however, seemed to focus more on grammar-related problems, as well as on more complex aspects of the target language. A similar lexis-grammar distinction was observed for the task variable. The open task, a free-conversation activity, involved higher cognitive demands due to the lack of visual support and the linguistic freedom provided by the topics given. This pushed the learners to invest more in the conversation, by attempting to produce more L2 and more conceptually complex ideas, thus making it a more grammar-oriented activity. Conversely, the closed task, a jigsaw activity, resulted in a more linguistically demanding task due to its linguistic restrictions, through the visual context provided, posing more lexis-related problems. Finally, the NNS-NS's non-shared status was the major influence on the learners' CSs. The NS – through their linguistic expertise – did not only assist and guide the learners, when this help was elicited through the learners' CSs, but also triggered comprehension problems because of their more complex speech. The NNSs' similar status, on the other hand, although also triggered the learners' appeal for help – albeit to a lesser extent – the interlocutor was less likely to provide the assistance required, and just acknowledged their peer's message to avoid a communication breakdown and maintain the conversation. It seemed that the learners do not expect this assistance as much as when interacting with a NS, as they are aware of their mutual lack of L2 resources, and because their shared characteristics also promote a mutual, implicit understanding between them.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Communication strategies

The interest in communication strategies (CSs hereafter) as mechanisms which aid L2 learners and users in trying to get their message across by making use of the linguistic resources available has been growing across different fields of enquiry (see, for example Kasper & Kellerman, 1997). From its origins in the 1970's (Selinker, 1972) as part of Interlanguage studies to its subsequent development in second/foreign (L2 henceforth) learning (Tarone, 1977; Færch & Kasper, 1983) and L2 language teaching (Canale & Swain, 1980) these strategies have been considered vital for L2 language use and learning.

The present study has been based on my own experience as L2 learner and EFL teacher, a foreign language context where the difficulties faced by learners in trying to communicate in an L2 are increased by the fewer opportunities to practise the target language, and thus develop their L2 oral communication skills. In addition, the need for teachers to cover all main receptive and productive skills within the L2 language class makes it even more difficult to focus on developing the learners' communication skills necessary for coping with the different demands imposed within and outside the L2 classroom. In this respect, comprehensive projects, such as the ones assigned for the development of the 'Common European Framework of reference for language learning and teaching', have attempted to clarify and specify what L2 learners and users are expected to achieve at the different learning stages. One of the main objectives of this Framework aimed at 'specifying the full range of language knowledge, skill and use' (quoted in Holec *et al*, 1996), which included 'the competences required by the language user or learner in communication and learning context' (Holec, *et al*, 1996:6). This implied that strategic competence constituted an important aspect to be researched and developed within this framework. It is noteworthy that a relevant and comprehensive project such as this one implemented strategic competence as part of the learning objectives to be considered in all educational systems in Europe. The inclusion of this aspect demonstrates the importance given to the various mechanisms or CSs necessary for the learners to overcome the problems arising in L2 communication, which at the same time emphasises the importance of investigating this issue further. The fundamental motivation for this study, therefore, was to gain insight in the way that L2 learners manage to communicate by means of CSs by considering certain factors which may affect their strategic use of the language. This further exploration may help to throw some light on the many difficulties that learners encounter when trying to communicate, and the different ways in which they use their own linguistic repertoire as well as their interlocutors' resources to convey meaning. All this further insight may be a valuable contribution to L2 communication as well as the learning and teaching of second languages.

The difficulties faced by L2 learners in communicating have been widely investigated within the area of CSs. It has been demonstrated that learners of an L2 need more time than native speakers to process and express information, difficulties which are intensified by the learners' lack of L2 resources, the type of meaning to be conveyed, and the situational or learning context, amongst other factors. However, they still manage or attempt to communicate, by stretching those resources and/or reducing, or simply abandoning, their message. They also make use of stalling mechanisms to gain time to think or remember the words they need to express meaning, in addition to resorting to paralinguistic devices to either communicate or complement their message.

Because of the complexities involved in L2 communication, various definitions and classifications of CSs have been proposed so far, most of which have addressed the issues of problematicity and consciousness in the strategic use of the language. That is, when learners find difficulties to convey their message it implies that they are aware of the problematic situations, and thus of their attempts to solve them. In addition, two theoretical frameworks have guided research in this field: the psycholinguistic and the interactional perspectives. The former one views CSs as a cognitive process and thus considers the learners' internal processes for the identification of these mechanisms. The latter one, on the other hand, is concerned with the learners' performance and their cooperation in solving problems in communication. Although both perspectives focus on the analysis of the CSs in different ways, more recent studies have been able to incorporate both theories through the broadening of analytical frameworks, which include those mechanisms involving problems in the learner's own performance in addition to those related to problems in the interlocutor's output. This merging in the way of viewing and classifying CSs has also been evidenced in more recent methods used for their identification, which implemented the use of retrospection in order to account for those processes which are not observable through the learners' output. This therefore allows the examination of the two kinds of processes which the different theoretical perspectives individually proposed to examine. This study draws from both these perspectives by utilising a wider analytical framework, which covers mechanisms used for the solution of problems produced in the learners' own output and those triggered by the interlocutor's performance. Additionally, the elicitation of the learners' retrospective comments immediately after their interactions in the L2 allowed me to explore the processes underlying the learners' linguistic behaviour.

1.2 The aims of the study

In the following, I will explain the focus of this study and present the gaps this research seeks to fill.

As already mentioned, extensive research has been done on CSs since the 1970's, where it originated from Selinker's work on 'Interlanguage', in which he referred to these devices as 'one of the five central processes involved in L2 learning' (1972:215). Since then there has been a great deal of research in this area, with English being one of the most studied second languages, and the lexical CSs have constituted the main focus of analysis (Bongaerts & Poullisse, 1989; Kellerman et al, 1990; Si Qing, 1990; Bou-Franch, 1994; Littlemore, 2001; Fernández Dobao, 2002, 2004; Lee, 2004; Rababah, 2007). In addition, factors related to the use of these strategies have also been analysed, such as learners' proficiency levels (Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1980; Haastrup & Phillipson, 1983; Paribakht, 1984; Safont Jorda, 2001; Rababah & Seedhouse, 2004), the tasks used for elicitation methods (Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1980; Poullisse & Schils, 1989; Fernández Dobao, 2001; Rababah & Seedhouse, 2004; Rababah & Bulut, 2007), and the situational context (Williams, Inscoc & Tasker, 1997). A few other studies have also focused on analysing these CSs in interactional contexts (Paribakht, 1984; Labarca & Khanji, 1986, Fernández Dobao & Palacios Martínez, 2007). Finally, fewer studies in this area have examined Spanish as L2, which is my particular interest, and the little research done so far has been limited to examining these CSs in relation to the learning context (Lafford, 2004; Rubio, 2007).

What most research has found so far indicates that lower level learners because of their lack of L2 linguistic resources encounter more problems to communicate, and thus need to use more CSs in order to compensate for those gaps. In contrast, higher level learners need to make use of fewer CSs as their more advanced knowledge of the L2 provide them the necessary resources to communicate meaning. It has also been observed that depending on the learners' level of proficiency they tend to favour the use of certain CSs over others. The fewer studies which have focused on analysing the task factor have primarily argued for its relationship with the type and quantity of CSs employed by the learners, which seems to be mainly affected by the task demands, the time given for its realisation, and the learners' familiarity with the type of activity. Finally, the evidence so far gathered for the interlocutor – primarily from studies in L2 learning – have concentrated on the benefits of either type of interactant (NS/NNS) as affecting the learners' learning process.

All this evidence therefore suggests the need to further investigate some issues in CS research, which are addressed in this study. Firstly, a wider range of strategies will be

examined, as a way of expanding the analysis so far carried out by most studies on only the lexical problems experienced by learners. Secondly, the use of CSs by two groups of learners with different proficiency levels will be explored in order to see how far the proficiency level affects the patterns of CS use. The task factor will be observed in more detail, as two very distinct activities – and their influence on the learners’ CS usage – will be examined. The analysis of the effects of a different type of interlocutor (NS and NNS) on the learners’ use of CSs in face-to-face interactions is intended to contribute to the little research carried out so far in this field. Finally, the focus of this study on English L2 learners of Spanish will not only help to extend the knowledge on CSs – by considering a different, less studied target language – but also to throw some more light on the intricacies of this second language.

In summary, this research sets out to investigate the way English L2 learners of Spanish manage to communicate via CSs in face-to-face interactions with other non-native speakers (NNS) and native speakers (NS). For this, learners of different proficiency levels will be observed when interacting face-to-face in different dyads (NNS-NNS and NNS-NS) and when carrying out two types of tasks (closed and open). Thus, the final objective is to examine the learners’ strategic use of the target language as influenced by three variables: the proficiency level, the type of interlocutor (NNS/NS) and the type of task (closed/open). In order to achieve this goal, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are the CSs used by English learners of Spanish when interacting face-to-face with other learners and native speakers?
2. How do different variables affect the learners’ use of CSs?
 - 2.a To what extent does the proficiency level affect the CS usage?
 - 2.b Do the CSs used vary in accordance to the type of task performed?
 - 2.c Does the type of interlocutor (NS-NNS) influence the CS use?
 - 2.d Is the CS usage affected by the interaction of these variables?

1.3 The organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised into eight chapters. The first two chapters provide the theoretical and empirical context which served as basis for the present work. This is followed by the six chapters which describe the study: the methodology and analytical framework used, the presentation and discussion of results, and finally the conclusion.

Chapter 2 describes in more detail the theoretical background and research carried out in the field by defining main concepts and explaining the theoretical perspectives underlying CSs. Some methodological issues for the identification of CSs are also introduced, followed by a

brief analysis of empirical evidence regarding the main variables to be examined in this study. This chapter concludes with the aim of this study and the research questions addressed.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology utilised in order to collect the spoken data, identify the CSs and analyse their use in the different settings: lower-higher levels, closed-open tasks, NNS-NS/NNS-NNS dyads. Information regarding the participants and the preliminary pilot study are also presented. The chapter goes on to describe the steps followed in the collection and elicitation of data as well as the instruments used. Finally, the data analysis is explained, covering the software tools employed for the transcription, analysis and coding of the data, and the statistical tests and inter-rater analysis used for the validation of results.

Chapter 4 presents the adapted analytical framework used for the identification of the CSs. This modified version was based on the taxonomy proposed by Dörnyei & Kormos (1998) and the interactional and paralinguistic CSs presented in a previous review of CSs by Dörnyei & Scott (1995). This chapter serves as an introduction for the subsequent analysis and discussion of results, as it defines and illustrates each of the mechanisms to be examined later. The conventions used in the transcription of the data are also presented.

Chapter 5 turns to the analysis and discussion of results by first presenting an overview of the results in order to address the first general research objective: the number and type of CSs. It then focuses on the examination of the first variable, the proficiency level, aiming to determine the effects of this variable on the learners' use of CSs. The results obtained are examined from most general to most detailed levels of analysis, considering each main CS category and subcategories within the analytical framework of the study.

Chapter 6 moves on to the examination of the second variable, the type of task, in an attempt to determine its effects on the learners' strategic use of the language. Previous to this analysis, the possible demands imposed by each task are introduced to be later used as a baseline for the subsequent quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results.

The third and last variable examined constitutes the focus of chapter 7, which addresses the possible influence of the type of interlocutor on the learners' CS usage. For this analysis, the main interactional elements characteristics of NNS-NS and NNS-NNS interactions are firstly presented together with the possible effects of each type of dyad. This information introduces the main features which are later targeted in the qualitative analysis.

The thesis concludes with chapter 8, which presents the research aims and summarises the findings in this study. In addition, and as a result of the findings obtained in chapter 7, it

concentrates on examining the interaction of the three variables previously analysed as affecting the learners' use of CSs. Lastly, some suggestions for future research are proposed.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review

The present chapter provides an introduction to what constitutes the main issue of this study, that is, communication strategies (CSs). It addresses the different factors which form part of the main research objective: the CSs employed by English L2 learners of Spanish when carrying out two tasks with a different type of interlocutor. The following account will present an overview of CSs, in terms of the origins of the concept, definitions, underlying theoretical frameworks and typologies. In addition, some evidence on the identification methods as well as the main variables under examination will be provided.

2.1. Communication strategies: origins

The term communication strategies originated from the study of interlanguage (IL). One of the first works which discussed second language learning from a psycholinguistic perspective was that of Selinker (1972) entitled 'Interlanguage'. In his work, he defined IL as '...a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a target language norm' (p.214). Within the assumption that second language learning should be concerned with the analysis of 'surface structures of IL sentences... [so as to be able] to study the psycholinguistic processes...underly[ing] this IL behaviour' (p.214), he suggests the existence of five central processes in second language learning; one of them being 'strategies of second language communication'.

The concept of CS has been widely studied since then within the area of 'process-oriented IL research' (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). The first studies which focused only on IL speech production, and which were gathered in the work of Faerch & Kasper in 1983, aimed at proposing the first definitions and typologies of CSs. From the 1970's on, IL studies were concerned with examining different types of speakers' speech in relation to the different learning stages, and the processes involved in that learning, one of them being the communication process (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). Research carried out in the foreign language (FL) classroom also helped to complement studies on CSs, an aspect which was enhanced by the turn to more communicative teaching methodologies in the 1980's. This interest in CSs was reflected in the incorporation of these mechanisms in the theoretical framework for 'communicative competence' presented by Canale & Swain (1980), for which they proposed 'strategic competence', as an additional category to the existing ones (grammatical and sociolinguistic competence).

At the end of 1990's, Kasper & Kellerman (1997) published a second edited volume on these strategies covering the latest studies. In this work, they did not only present the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic views on these strategies, but widened the scope by

incorporating studies from other areas, such as bilingualism and language pathology. Since then, there has been a continuous interest in the study of these mechanisms. Factors related to their use have also been examined, for example, the influence of different background languages as well the learners' L2, the tasks to be applied for elicitation purposes, the learning context, and the type of dyads, amongst others. Some of these factors will be further developed in section 2.7. In order to have a broader view of how the concept of CSs originated, the component of strategic competence will be now analysed with the purpose of determining how CSs fit within this broader construct of L2 language use.

2.2 Strategic competence

One of the first attempts to include communication strategies within a broader framework was made by Canale & Swain (1980), who proposed an outline of a theory of communicative competence, complemented first by some criteria for a communicative approach to second language teaching, in which they incorporated a new component, 'strategic competence'. Their interest lay in the fact that different features of L2 learners' oral production, such as 'how to deal with false starts, hesitation [...] how to avoid grammatical forms that have been not mastered fully...' (p.25) had not been considered until then within the competencies a learner was expected to have. Bearing this in mind, these authors proposed a third component, to the already existing types of competencies (grammatical and sociolinguistic), which as they themselves put it: 'is made up of verbal and non verbal communication that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence' (p.30). The breakdowns referred to here were related to grammatical and sociolinguistic competencies. These scholars also suggested that this strategic competence might be more useful at early stages of L2 learning, and that the use of these CSs might be dependent on learners' age and their L2 proficiency, factors which would be also examined in later CS research. However, as Canale & Swain did not develop this new element further, restricting its definition to this compensatory role – and there was no empirical evidence supporting its rationale – their construct was criticised by other researchers, who instead challenged it and made their own proposals.

One of the researchers who attempted to develop the previous proposal further, through her own empirical evidence, was Paribakht (1985), who as Yule and Tarone (1990) would do later, sought to extend the relation between this new competence and the linguistic competencies. Her other main objective was to see whether the learners' L2 proficiency affected their use of CSs – a relationship which would successfully be confirmed through her findings. She also found that all subjects seem to possess this strategic ability, but that this

competence and their L2 proficiency level appear to be independent. That is to say, the L2 knowledge that these learners have would help them in their selection of a specific CS, for example more related to their L1 or L2, depending on their interlanguage stage, but they would all share this strategic competence: ‘strategic competence and linguistic competence are two different dimensions of language competence’ (p.142). She concluded that strategic competence ‘has a different status from the other competencies’, in that ‘it can be transferred to L2 learning and communicative situations without causing interference’, and that it depends on other ‘competencies and knowledge areas’ (p.142). She also suggested the inclusion of all language-related strategies (learning and communication strategies), and proposed her own definition of strategic competence as ‘the learners’ ability to try out different means for solving any language-related problems whether in learning or in communication’; ‘learning strategies used to *expand* the speaker’s competence, and CSs used to *exploit* it’ (p.142). This view, therefore, places CSs in a wider perspective of problem-solving capacity, whilst still maintaining a particular role for CSs as opposed to learning strategies. What is particularly relevant to the present study is that Paribakht showed that all speakers possess this strategic ability, which seems to increase as our language experience increases, and as such can be transferred to other languages in the case of L2 learners. The way in which learners utilise this competence, in terms of the kinds of strategies they apply when communicating, can thus be different depending on their proficiency level, and therefore: ‘learner behaviour in terms of strategy use seems to be transitional and dynamic’, as Paribakht herself concluded (1985:141).

A different but complementary view of this construct was given by Yule & Tarone (1990), who also used Canale & Swain’s first attempt to define this type of competence, by challenging it through their own study on CSs. They attempted to verify a proposal by Swain (1984) that of ‘mastery of communication strategies [...] to enhance the effectiveness of communication...’ (quoted in Yule & Tarone, 1990: 179) which implied that competent native speakers were expected to be experts in the use of CSs. For this purpose, they designed a methodology that would account for this competence in both NNSs and NSs so as to obtain a corpus with which to compare the NNSs’ performance. They argued that strategic competence should refer to ‘an ability to select an effective means of performing a communicative act that enables the listener/reader to identify the intended referents’ (p.181). In stating this, they further explained that this competence ‘relates to the acquisition of the ability to use L2 linguistic forms to perform communicative acts such as successfully identifying intended referents’ (p.181). This meant, as Dörnyei & Thurrell (1991) would also mention later, that those L2 learners who seem to be very proficient in terms of grammatical knowledge, for example, might not be successful in carrying out a conversation, while others

might, although their grammatical resources are quite limited. This small-scale study allowed Yule & Tarone to effectively test their research design, in that they were able to identify those instances where NNSs speech was similar or different to that produced by NSs. Consequently, they were able to confirm that, irrespective of the learners' proficiency level in other language areas, this strategic ability could give them additional help to successfully communicate their intended message. Despite these positive findings, it is worth noting that this study limited its scope to lexical referents only, which led these authors to restrict their proposed definition of strategic competence to the successful identification of these types of referents.

Other researchers who also accepted that this type of competence referred to both mother tongue and target languages was Dörnyei & Thurrell (1991), who noted that: 'communicative breakdowns occur and must be overcome in both languages but it is of more importance for foreign language learners' (p.17). They recognised the importance of considering such competence, especially, in activities related to teaching and testing, such as oral language exams, where some very proficient students, regarding aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, 'get stuck and are unable to carry out their communicative intent', and others 'can communicate successfully with only one hundred words, relying almost entirely on their strategic competence' (p.17). Their study, which focused only on the benefits of teaching CSs, advocates the development of strategic competence within the foreign language classroom, on the grounds that it is not dependent on other factors of the learners' proficiency, but that it can be trained separately, since as they mention it is a competence that 'can be activated' when learners need to communicate something that goes beyond their linguistic knowledge. This work; therefore, supports the idea presented by the researchers mentioned above, regarding the usefulness of these CSs, in that they help learners to communicate their intended message regardless of their proficiency level in other language areas. Dörnyei & Thurrell's perspective, on the importance of instructing foreign language learners on the use of these CSs to enhance their communicative performance, shows how valuable these strategies can be. However, as this view will not be of particular interest in the present study, it will not be further developed.

Another attempt to elaborate on the concept of strategic competence was made by Bachman & Palmer (1996), who redefined a previous proposal (Bachman, 1990) by stating that,

we conceive strategic competence as a set of metacognitive components, or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities (p.70).

By metacognitive strategies, they referred to ‘those processes that enable language users to engage in goal setting, assessment and planning’ (p.79), adding that the ability to use the language involves strategic competence and language knowledge (organisational and pragmatic). Although these authors developed this concept more deeply within the area of language testing, the construct proposed does cover the fact that language users in general utilise this type of competence, and that it refers in a broader sense not only to all underlying processes we are engaged in when performing any cognitive activity, but more specifically to being able to think about our own performance in any language-related event. The essential concepts of this proposal are therefore in line with Paribakht’s suggestions mentioned above.

A more developed view of this type of competence was proposed by Skehan (1998). He provides a detailed analysis of this component – as proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and then further developed by Bachman (1990) and Bachman & Palmer (1996) – criticising their positions. He strongly pinpoints the weakness in Canale and Swain’s proposal, by saying that their framework is not ‘comprehensive’ and ‘rather limited, only emphasising the compensatory role of strategies’ (p.159) – a critique also made by Cohen (1998) and Yule & Tarone (1990). Regarding Bachman’s approach, Skehan highlights the fact that it presents significant advances, more detailed changes in relation to the broader notion of communicative competence as well as its components. Additionally, he underlines the change made relating to the role of strategic competence, which has now become ‘central to all communication’ (p.161), which means that it connects the learner’s (and the mother tongue user’s) intended message and the other existing competencies, as well as their previous knowledge and the situational context. The most important aspect, as Skehan mentions, is that ‘Bachman is redefining the relationship between competence and performance’ (p.161). However, his criticism of this second view has to do with the lack of empirical evidence to account for the ‘mechanisms and processes which can enable such a model to move beyond “checklist” status’ (p.164). Thus, based on such a detailed exploration and analysis of these two approaches, Skehan reflects on the different processes which are fundamental to strategic competence, analysing all the factors which influence each stage within language use, such as planning and execution. He examines this by relating these processes to task-based research and testing, which results in a deep analysis of the

current aspects considered in testing, and how to re-evaluate the performance testing methods. Within this frame of analysis, Skehan suggests a wider construct for this competence, that of 'ability for use', which as he explains 'is seen to mediate between underlying competences and actual performance'. He proposes that,

dual-coding models of abilities, attention-linked tensions between performance goals such as fluency, accuracy, and complexity, and even an understanding of a redefined competence-performance relationship would be best handled within this construct (p.168).

Although this construct seems to address all the different processes involved in communication, and as such Skehan's analysis appears to be useful in order to have a broader view of this competence, it is specifically proposed within a model of performance testing, an issue that goes beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, Cohen (1998) is also interested in analysing this concept, by exploring the different factors involved in learning and using an L2. Like other researchers mentioned above, he points out that, while Canale and Swain (1980) restricted this component to a compensatory role, Bachman & Palmer (1996) broadened it to consider metacognitive processes in the realisation of cognitive activities, such as communicating in a second language. Cohen adds that this component will therefore include not only metacognitive strategies 'for determining the language needed to perform the task', but also cognitive 'for selecting appropriate language structures', strategies for planning 'how to accomplish the task' and 'post-task assessment strategies' (p.14).

On the basis of the above discussion, it is possible to distinguish some of the main processes underlying this kind of competence, and which will be considered for the present study. The views which will be given more relevance include aspects proposed by Bachman and Palmer (1996), in that this component should involve those metacognitive abilities which enable L2 learners to carry out cognitive tasks, such as the elicitation activities used in this study. Another feature of strategic competence which will also be taken into account concerns what was proposed by Paribakht (1985), Yule & Tarone (1990) and Dörnyei (1991). This aspect points to this competence as being possessed by all learners, irrespective of their proficiency level, and which they are able to use in language-related areas in order to cope with language-related problems in communication. The learners' subsequent CS use therefore will tend to vary according to that level; a feature which can be observed particularly in chapter 5. As the wider concept which comprises these mechanisms, as well as the main processes

underlying their usage, has been explained, what follows addresses some of the main definitions and perspectives which have been specifically proposed for CSs.

2.3 Communication strategies defined

Various definitions of CSs are found in the literature. Most of them have focused on the concepts of ‘problem-orientedness’ and ‘consciousness’, and have followed a linguistic or a psychological approach.

One of the first pioneer studies which attempted to provide a definition for these strategies was that of Váradi (1973). He defined CSs as ‘a conscious attempt to communicate the learner’s thought when the interlanguage structures are inadequate to convey that thought’ (quoted in Tarone 1977:195). Following that, in 1977, Tarone concluded, from Váradi’s conceptualization of CSs, that ‘conscious communication strategies are used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual’s thought’ (p.195). The aspect of ‘consciousness’ is thus complemented by that of ‘problematicity’ being proposed in the second definition; both factors would be central in later definitions.

In 1976, Tarone, Cohen & Dumas proposed their own definition and analytical framework for these strategies. They based their work on studies of error analysis and used a former definition applied to the term ‘production strategy’ (Tarone, Fraunfelder & Selinker, 1976) to the concept of CS, defining the term as ‘a systematic attempt by the learner to express (or decode) meaning in the target language in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed’ (Tarone, et al 1976:78). By not only using the same definition, but also by adding the term ‘decode’, as they explain, they wanted to broaden the terminology to involve the dimension of ‘comprehension of language’. This ‘receptive aspect’ was also acknowledged by Corder in 1978, who stated that since communication is a ‘cooperative enterprise, one must suppose that we may adopt both productive and receptive strategies of communication’ (quoted in Corder, 1983:15). However, as until then the receptive type of strategies had not been studied, he opted for proposing a working definition for the term: ‘a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty’ (p.16). He further developed the concept of CSs, by claiming that ‘they have essentially to do with the relationship between ends and means’ (1983:17), that is to say, to try to achieve communicative goals by applying whatever linguistic means are available to the learner. When this happens, the learner has only two options: ‘tailor his message to the resources available’, which Corder calls adjustment or risk-avoidance strategies, or ‘he can attempt to increase his resources by one means or another in order to

realize his communicative intentions', which he calls resource expansion strategies (1983:17). These two main categories would be later applied in other classifications.

In the 1980's, Færch & Kasper proposed their own definition and framework for the analysis of CSs, adding a psycholinguistic perspective to the study of these strategies. They based their work on a model of speech production, hence the functions of CSs are 'characterised through their relationship to processes and plans' (quoted in Færch & Kasper, 1983:22). They defined CSs as 'potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal' (p.36). Through this definition, they postulated their criteria for the identification of CSs, as being essentially 'problem-orientedness' and 'consciousness'. These two features are clarified through the following statement 'if the individual experiences a problem in reaching a goal, this implies that he is conscious about there being a difficulty' (p.34). As they consider 'consciousness' as a 'matter of degree', they suggest caution in its use since this factor might depend mainly on the individual's cognitive and interlanguage development. This explains their preference for keeping their definition as 'potentially conscious plans', and to refer to 'individuals' in order to cover both L1 users and L2 learners.

Later, Tarone (1981) refers back to her former definition, concluding that from that definition 'it is not clear what is meant by a "systematic attempt", and it is impossible to distinguish a "production strategy" from a CS' (p.63). She also reformulates Váradi's definition (1980), arguing that it is almost impossible to talk about 'conscious or unconscious level', and so she prefers 'to avoid specifying a degree of consciousness in any definition' (1981:287). From here, she adds an interactional function to CSs. arguing that 'language is a part of communication – a living organism – created by both speaker and interlocutor' (p.288). She thus proposes her final definition, by stating that 'the term [CS] relates to a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared' (1981:288). She complements this, by proposing her own criteria for characterising a CS, as presented below, in addition to her proposal of a CS typology.

1. a speaker desires to communicate a meaning X to a listener;
2. the speaker believes the linguistic or sociolinguistic structure desired to communicate meaning X is unavailable, or is not shared with the listener;
3. the speaker chooses to: a) avoid – not attempt to communicate meaning X; or b) attempt alternate means to communicate meaning X. The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning (p.288)

With this conceptual reformulation, she emphasises the ‘decoding side’ she had proposed in her first definition. Thus, by considering both interlocutors, she addresses the features of production and comprehension on the part of both speakers, as in any natural or quasi natural conversation. From her definition, it can also be implied that ‘mutual attempt’ points to the collaboration between both speakers, and thus mutual help by both speakers in order to cope with the communication problems arising in interaction. Nonetheless, this factor is not apparently present in her defining criteria, as this cooperation on the part of the interlocutor has not been made explicit.

In contrast to Tarone’s interactional view of CSs, in 1990 Bialystok, from a psycholinguistic perspective, analyses and reviews previous studies on CSs proposing her own definition. She considers CSs ‘as governed by the cognitive mechanisms of language processing...which would entail an analysis of the psycholinguistic processes that regulate language acquisition and use’ (p.116). This view is further explained by Yule & Tarone (1997), when pointing out that this perspective is more concerned with the description of the psychological processes used by L2 learners, that is to say, it focuses on the cognitive ‘deep structure’ (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:180) of strategic language behaviour. This kind of analysis, which concerns with the learners’ cognitive behaviour, differs from the linguistic view – which is interested in what it can be observed – in that it involves the study of processing components. As Bialystok (1990) herself explains, her approach has to do with

a framework for explaining language processing in a first and second language...whose central aim is that language proficiency...emerges from the mastery of the two underlying processing components [linguistic knowledge and control of linguistic processing] (p.117-118).

Later in 1995, Dörnyei & Scott, following a linguistic or what they call a ‘traditional’ approach to CSs, extended the scope of what had been proposed until then, by defining CSs as ‘every potentially intentional attempt to cope with any language-related problem of which the speaker is aware during the course of communication’ (quoted in Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:179). The feature of consciousness is also present in this definition, but they specify that ‘one cannot altogether avoid taking certain aspects of consciousness into account in defining CSs because problem-orientedness in itself is an insufficient criterion of strategic language use’ (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:187). This is why they emphasise that a problem-solving device is a strategy only if it is conscious in three aspects: 1) as awareness of the problem, 2) as intentionality and 3) as awareness of strategy language use (p.187). By limiting this feature of ‘consciousness’, these scholars managed to set a more defined criteria

for what they consider to be CSs. Additionally, by referring to ‘any language-related problem’, they are not only broadening the scope on the types of difficulties learners might find, but also specifying those kinds of problems; a factor which was not delimited in some of the previous definitions. By emphasising this last aspect, they also address the analysis of surface structures or observable behaviour, which contrasts with Bialystok’s approach. Nevertheless, the interactional aspect has not been incorporated to this definition, thus it seems that they are only concerned with the individual’s performance when overcoming communication difficulties, as most above-mentioned definitions are.

Finally, amongst the more up-to-date definitions of CSs, Lafford (2004) suggested a working definition for her study of the effects of the learning context on the CS usage. She based it on the definition presented by Dörnyei & Scott (1995), and on their CS classification, in which the interactional perspective, as suggested by Tarone (1981), was included. Hence, Lafford is able to merge both views in the following proposal:

strategies used by L2 learners in a conscious attempt to bridge a perceived communication gap either caused by the learners’ lack of L2 knowledge (resource deficit), problems with his or her own performance or problems resulting from interaction with an interlocutor (Lafford, 2004:204).

To sum up, it seems that the key concepts most definitions refer to have not been well defined and therefore delimited, which makes it difficult to have a clear view of what CSs are. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) were able to define their criteria of consciousness, problematicity, as well as the way of analysing these strategies (language-related), contributing to a more detailed idea of how to define these strategies. Nevertheless, they did not consider both speaker and interlocutor in the solution of communication problems. On the other hand, the interactional perspective implemented by Tarone (1981) cannot always be generalised, since although most learners will be willing to cooperate in the solution of problems arising in their interaction, there will also be those who will avoid such collaboration. In addition to depending on the learners’ willingness, it will also depend on the type of conversation or task both interlocutors are involved in. Therefore, it seems necessary to set more defining criteria for this last aspect as well. Concerning the view proposed by Bialystok (1990), although it appears to be a more thorough way of analysing and describing these strategies, more information, especially empirical evidence, supporting this approach is needed to have a clearer opinion of how strategic behaviour would be defined and classified within a language processing model.

Hence, in view of both theoretical perspectives most CS definitions have been based on, together with the analytical framework used for the present study (in chapter 3), Lafford's defining criteria will be given primary consideration. This definition represents most accurately the mechanisms observed in the current data, since as it entails the two main defining perspectives, it covers not only those CSs triggered by problems because of the learners' lack of L2 resources, as well as their own performance, but also those problems generated in the interlocutor's output, therefore involving a wider conceptual spectrum.

2.4 Theoretical approaches for the identification and description of CSs

So far it is clear that the study of CSs has been framed within two main theoretical approaches: the psycholinguistic followed by researchers such as, Færch & Kasper (1983), Bialystok (1990), Poulisse (1987, 1993), Dörnyei & Kormos (1998), and the interactional, followed by Tarone (1977, 1981), Yule & Tarone (1997), Paribakht (1984), Wagner & Firth (1997), amongst others.

As was mentioned in a previous point, the focus of the interactional view is on the learners' cooperation to solve the communication problems that arise in conversation. On the other hand, the interest for the psycholinguistic view is in the cognitive processes the individual engages in to overcome these problems. The former perspective has to do with a more linguistic analysis of CSs, with language use and the learners' performance: that is, what can be observed. The latter approach emphasises the internal processes of learners when producing the language. Yule & Tarone (1997) clarify these differences by stating that,

the interactional view attempts to work from performance data to consider underlying competence, while the psycholinguistic view seeks to characterise underlying competence in order to account for performance data (p.19).

Bialystok (1990) also refers to this dichotomy, by pointing out that both perspectives approach the explanation of CSs from a processing view, that is, 'within the operations in language processing'. The interactional approach has to do with the 'analysis of the dynamics of communication, perhaps on the basis of language use and a sociolinguistic analysis of language used in contexts'. The psycholinguistic approach 'entails an analysis of the psycholinguistic processes that regulate language acquisition and use' (p.116).

In terms of data analysis, Yule & Tarone (1991) suggest that 'analysts should make use of an analytic framework which encourages the analyst to look at both sides of the conversational exchange' (quoted in Wagner & Firth, 1997:324). Therefore, as Wagner & Firth (1997)

conclude, whilst the psycholinguists see CSs as ‘elements of the speaker’s cognitive processes’, they ‘are elements of the interaction’ (p.325).

These differences between both perspectives are minimised to some extent by Færch & Kasper (1984), when pointing out that the typology of CSs they proposed does not need to be considered purely psycholinguistic, as

language users may decide to employ non-linguistic strategies such as gesture and mime, more adequately categorised as behavioural strategies; or they may resort to cooperative strategies involving the interlocutor in the problem-solving activity (p.46)

By stating this, these scholars acknowledged that interaction on certain occasions will be a helpful means for learners to solve a problem in communication. In fact, Færch & Kasper (1984) argue that both approaches could be linked, considering that ‘CSs defined in interactional terms form a subset of what we consider strategies on the basis of the psycholinguistic definition’ (p.59).

The interactional view has also incorporated other theories for the description of these phenomena, such as the sociolinguistic perspective. This view ‘examines CSs as part of socially situated interaction’ (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997: 275). Rampton (1997) utilised this theory as a way of extending the scope entailed in the analysis of CSs, concluding that,

it provides an opportunity to connect with analysis of the ways in which social reality is constructed through interaction and by placing L2 learning and use within wider social scientific debate and macro levels of social and cultural organisation (p.301).

Finally, another theoretical approach which has been used in the identification and description of these phenomena is the ‘collaborative theory’. According to Wilkes-Gibbs (1997), this theory ‘treats speaking and listening as fundamentally collaborative processes, and conversing in any language as a strategic collective activity’ (p.238). Its basis lies in the term grounding process, which means that ‘in trying to communicate by using language people are trying to add to their common ground – their shared knowledge, beliefs and assumptions – in a mutually intelligible way’ (p.239). Wilkes-Gibbs applies this theory to the analysis of some previous studies, and concludes that it proves to be very useful in explaining the problematic situations experienced in specific discourse contexts, since one of

the common features of this approach is that ‘the solution [to these problems] is jointly achieved through strategic collective activities’ (p.274).

This brief review of some of the theoretical views underlying the analysis of CSs has served as a basis for the selection of the approach to be followed in the present study. Features from both of the two main theories described above have been used for the identification and description of the spoken data collected. On the one hand, the CSs elicited have been considered as elements of the ongoing conversation between both interlocutors. Thus, as Yule & Tarone (1997) explain, the linguistic forms of the utterances produced by both speakers have been examined, so as to be able to identify which CSs are most used in relation to the the task being performed, the kind of interactant involved, and the learners’ proficiency level. On the other hand, the psycholinguistic approach has also proven useful to account for the learners’ internal processes when producing the target language, as their retrospective comments – which help to evidence these cognitive processes – provide, on most occasions, the necessary empirical support to confirm the learners’ strategic use of the language.

2.5 Communication strategies classified

The way these strategies have been classified into typologies is as varied as their definitions. Most of those first attempts to conceptualise them also aimed at classifying them. The relevance of these classifications, as Fernández Dobao (2004) points out, lies not only in the fact that they ‘serve to organise and classify the data obtained but also because of their main role in describing the phenomenon’ (p.31).

The different taxonomies which have been proposed have also followed the researchers’ own theoretical perspectives: interactional (Tarone et al, 1976, Tarone 1977; Corder 1983; Paribakht, 1985) and psycholinguistic (Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Poulisse et al., 1990; Bialystok, 1990; Poulisse, 1987, 1993; Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998). This divergence can be noticed, as Yule & Tarone (1997) indicate, in the researchers’ interest in investigating ‘linguistic performance’, in the case of the former view, and examining and classifying ‘internal behaviour’, in the case of the latter. In addition, these two views have also differed in the number and types of CSs each one considers as necessary within their classifications. The interactionists favour more extensive taxonomies, containing reduction and achievement strategies, and psycholinguists are in favour of more reduced typologies, and have focused more on compensatory strategies. These main differences will be presented in the following taxonomies, which will be described in terms of the main CS categories in which they have been classified.

Following some of the first studies carried out by Váradi (1973) and Tarone et al (1976), Tarone (1977) proposed a reorganised taxonomy, which tried to explain the linguistic behaviour of her subjects in the particular communication situation that was set in her study. She classified five basic conscious CSs: avoidance, which is subdivided into topic avoidance and message abandonment; paraphrase, subdivided into approximation, word coinage and circumlocution; conscious transfer divided into literal translation and language switch; and appeal for assistance and mime.

In 1978, Corder's attempt to categorise these strategies (cited in Corder, 1983) contributed to the field, in that he classified most of the CSs already proposed, dividing them into two macro strategies and incorporating two new CSs. These main categories were called 'message-adjustment or risk-avoidance strategies', and 'resource-expansion or risk-running strategies' (see definitions on p.12). The first category is subdivided into topic avoidance, message abandonment and message reduction, this last strategy being one of the added CSs. The category 'resource-expansion' is divided into switching, paraphrase or circumlocution, paralinguistic devices, appeal for help and borrowing, this last CS being a new one. Corder focused on the learner's interaction, and the difficulties that the learner may find 'to convey messages which his linguistic resources do not permit him to express successfully' (1983:17).

Following this, Færch & Kasper (1983) also divided CSs into two main categories, similar to the ones proposed by Corder (1978). One of these types is called reduction strategies, where 'the learner can try to do away with the problem normally by changing the communicative goal', or by relying on achievement strategies, where 'the learner attempts to tackle the problem directly by developing an alternative plan' (1983:36). The main difference of this proposal with the previous ones is that they locate CSs within a model of speech production, and are concerned with 'the cognitive structures underlying verbal reception and production' (Færch & Kasper, 1984:46)

In 1987, a different type of taxonomy was presented by the Nijmegen group, a group of researchers at Nijmegen University in the Netherlands who carried out a large-scale study. These researchers developed a 'process-based' taxonomy based on three main criteria: parsimony, by proposing a two-way typology; generalizability, represented across a number of factors such as interlocutor, task, amongst others; and psychological plausibility (cited in Kellerman & Bialystok, 1997). This last idea refers to the 'two cognitive processes of analysis and control (concept and code strategies) that are constantly being applied to mental

representations and which are therefore shaped and influenced by them' (p.35). Conceptual strategies 'manipulate the individual's knowledge of properties of the concept' and code strategies 'manipulate the user's knowledge of word form by ad hoc labels for referents...' (p.34). Thus, in the first category, the speaker tries to explain a concept by applying his available linguistic resources, and in the second, the speaker applies his linguistic knowledge by using referents relating to the intended concept.

In 1990, Bialystok proposed a similar criterion to that of the Nijmegen Group for classifying these strategies. This criterion involved a 'psychological difference in choice which is through dependence on different forms of processing'. She argues that the linguistic behaviour obtained in most classifications 'do not constitute strategies in that they do not capture the cognitive choices available to speakers during communication' (p.131). Consequently, CSs do not need to be classified under several different categories since different strategies would be processed under the same component. Thus, she proposed two main categories or 'processing components'. The first strategy called 'analysis-based' 'is an attempt to convey the structure of the intended concept by making explicit the relational defining features' (p.133). That is to say, the speaker analyses the concept which s/he intends to utter by applying distinctive features of that concept as in paraphrasing. The second category is called 'control-based', which is 'the manipulation of form of expression through attention to different sources of information' (p.133). This means that the speaker keeps his original concept, but manipulates the means of reference as when applying language switch or mime.

Another classification was the one proposed by Poullisse (1993). Her work, like the two previous taxonomies, presents the researcher's own focus on 'psychological plausibility', an aspect that can be seen in a new typology organisation. Instead of a two-way classification, she proposed a three-way taxonomy: reconceptualization, substitution, substitution-plus (cited in Kellerman & Bialystok, 1997:38). Poullisse's main critique of the previously proposed classifications – that of Bialystok and The Nijmegen Group – as summarised by Dörnyei & Kormos (1997), is that they 'did not sufficiently take into account the processes involved in speech production, as outlined by the L2 adaptation of Levelt's (1989) well-known model of L1 processing' (quoted in Dörnyei & Kormos, 1997:201).

Finally, one of the latest most up-to-date and comprehensive accounts of CSs was proposed by Dörnyei & Kormos (1998). This work was based on some previous empirical study of data collected from 44 Hungarian learners of English, as well as on the theoretical data so far being proposed. These scholars pulled together previous taxonomies and added their own

work to it, by following a psycholinguistic approach; they suggest their own framework of problem-solving mechanisms in L2 use, which is based on Levelt's speech production model. Their aim, as they explain, was 'to bring together several lines of research and provide a comprehensive overview of problem management in L2 communication' (Dörnyei & Kormos; 1998:350). This typology offers a new organisation of CSs by presenting four main categories, which address the four main problem sources in L2 communication:

1) L2 resource deficit 2) processing-time pressure 3) perceived deficiencies in one's own language output and 4) perceived deficiencies in the interlocutor's performance. These problem-solving devices can thus be connected to the various pre and post-articulatory phases of speech processing (p.350).

The main difference of this work with previous taxonomies, regardless of the approach, has to do with the fact that this one provided a more extensive number of CSs, which are divided into categories in accordance with the types of problems learners would encounter when communicating. Thus, for example, within the L2 resource deficit category, lexical, grammatical and phonological problem-solving mechanisms can be found, which gives the researcher a broader category to fit in the problems arising from the lack of L2 knowledge. In addition, although this typology follows a psycholinguistic approach, it does cover some of those CSs relating to problems experienced by the interlocutor – CSs which had been previously classified by Dörnyei & Scott (1995, 1997) as interactional CSs. Hence, it provides a more comprehensive account of the different solving-mechanisms applied when interacting, and not only those referring to the individual.

This last taxonomy constitutes the analytical framework for the present study. The rationale behind this selection was that this classification is the most comprehensive, and up-to-date work so far proposed, and although it follows a psycholinguistic approach, it does address some of the problems experienced by the interlocutor. Nonetheless, in order to cover a wider spectrum of CS usage, some CSs taken from the category of interactional CSs proposed by Dörnyei & Scott in a previous taxonomy (1995) were implemented. It is worth adding that this classification proved to be beneficial for the CS identification process during the data analysis, since it facilitated the examination of the learners' apparent communication problems. This analysis was thus carried out by first pinpointing these difficulties, by assigning them to the main types of problem sources which learners may find when interacting, and then identifying whether those CSs referred to a more specific communication problem, such as lexical, grammatical, phonological, etc., (for a detailed description of this modified taxonomy please refer to chapter 3).

Having discussed the analysis and classification of CSs, the next section addresses the methods most used in the identification of these mechanisms.

2.6. Communication strategies identified

The literature in this field has given some suggestions for the identification of these problem-solving devices. Færch & Kasper (1983), always following a psycholinguistic approach, suggested focusing on ‘specific features of performance which unambiguously indicate that the planning/execution process leading to this performance has been strategic’. The features suggested are: temporal variables such as rate of articulation, pauses, drawls and repeats; self-repairs, such as false starts and new starts; and speech slips, such as lapses and speech errors (p.213). As opposed to these scholars’ psycholinguistic perspective, Haastrup & Phillipson (1983), following an interactional view, also explain their identification methods for those occasions when communication is disrupted. They point out that ‘these disruptions are often explicitly signalled by one of the speakers and followed by repair, clarification or similar shared efforts to negotiation towards mutual comprehension’ (p.143). Therefore, there will be an explicit indication of a linguistic problem, and production problems will be shown by hesitation or nonverbal signals anticipating the use of CSs.

These disruptions are also mentioned in Wagner & Firth’s study (1997), who following an interactional approach, called these features disruption markers. These markers are used by the speaker or interlocutor to show that s/he is having a problem when communicating. These researchers refer to these actions as ‘flagging an upcoming problem in discourse encoding, thereby signalling that a CS is imminent’ (p.325).

The use of these features or markers was then complemented by a new methodological tool, introspection, proposed in another early study carried out by Rapauch (1983). This scholar recognised the difficulties faced by analysts in CS identification, and stated that ‘a satisfactory interpretation of those indicators often requires some introspective comments made by the learner on his own performance’ (p.199). Previous attempts had been made by Tarone (1977) and Kellerman (1974), but in preliminary small scale studies. This aspect was also acknowledged by Kasper & Kellerman (1997) in their second volume on CSs who, taking information from the papers presented, suggest that researchers have to rely on two sources of evidence to identify CSs: markers in the discourse and retrospective comments.

This latter term, retrospection, is part of introspection methods. These methods have been largely used in the fields of philosophy and psychology, and thanks to the shift from

behaviourist perspectives to more cognitive views, became a central linguistic methodology (Gass & Mackey, 2000). Introspection 'assumes that a person can observe what takes place in consciousness in much the same way as one can observe events in the external world' (p.3). This method includes one subtype of introspection: 'verbal report' which can be online or retrospective. This latter is referred to by Gass & Mackey (2000) as stimulated recall, a method which was utilised in the present study, and which will be now explained in more detail.

Stimulated recall is a retrospective method, which is used 'to explore learners' thought, processes and strategies by asking learners to reflect on their thoughts after they have carried out a predetermined activity' (Gass & Mackey, 2000:37). Within this type of introspective methodology, there are three subtypes: consecutive recall (immediately after the activity); delayed recall and non recent recall. From these three, the one most often recommended is consecutive recall. Ericsson & Simon (1984) in their survey of the literature in the field, claim that retrospective data can be considered a reliable source of information, only under the following conditions:

- 1) data should be collected immediately after the task has been performed,
- 2) subjects should be provided with contextual information to activate their memories,
- 3) all the information asked for must be directly retrievable (so that subjects are not induced to generate responses),
- 4) the information asked for should relate to specific problems,
- 5) no leading questions should be asked, to minimise 'researcher bias',
- 6) subjects should not be informed that they will be asked for retrospective comments until after task performance so as not to affect performance on the task (quoted in Færch & Kasper, 1987:217).

The rationale behind this type of introspective method is that it helps to discover internal mental actions which are not perceivable by simple observation. Although this methodology presents some disadvantages, mainly in terms of reliability (Ericsson & Simon, 1984), it can 'help identify the type of knowledge a learner uses when trying to solve particular communicative problems and it can also help determine the organization of this knowledge' (Gass & Mackey, 2000:21). This method has proven to be effective in several studies related to CSs, such as Dörnyei & Kormos (1998), Dörnyei & Scott (1995), Poulisse (1990), Fernández Dobao (2004), Ceo-DiFrancesco (2003), amongst others. Dörnyei & Scott (1995) emphasise its importance by pointing out that it helped them to identify ambiguous 'coping

devices', and allowed elimination of those devices which were incorrectly identified as well as confirming many of the categories. They reinforce the point made by Ericsson & Simon (1984), concerning the requirement of immediacy in collecting these comments from participants, although this is a difficult task since as they mention:

...at this point the interviewer has not been able to analyse the transcripts yet and, as we have found, it is only after a thorough examination of the text that those subtle problem areas can be identified and the best questions can be formulated (p.159).

Hence, and as suggested by empirical and theoretical evidence, this research relied on the identification of markers or signals, of the type above mentioned, plus consecutive stimulated recall methodology in order to confirm and identify the learners' CS usage (please refer to chapter 3 for further details).

Now that the definition, classification and identification of CSs have been described, in the following section I turn to the main variables which will be examined in this study as affecting CS usage.

2.7 Empirical research on CSs: main factors related to their use

From early on, in the research in this field, some studies have focused on examining the factors that might be related to the choice of CSs. Amongst these variables the literature mentions: learners' proficiency level, the influence of learners' first language (L1) in relation to the target language, the learning context, the tasks used for elicitation purposes, the type of interlocutor, and personality and motivational aspects. Three of these aspects will be discussed here as they constitute the main interest for the present study.

One of the first and most studied factors has been learners' **proficiency** level. Its relationship with the number and type of CS to be applied by learners has proven to be certain (Bialystok & Frölich, 1980; Paribakht, 1984; Labarca & Khang, 1986; Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Poulisse, 1990; Safont Jorda, 2001; Rababah & Seedhouse, 2004; Fernández Dobao, 2002). Learners at an early stage of their learning process, and due to their more limited knowledge of the L2, will tend to use a higher number of CSs, and to choose those which are more related to their L1, such as 'literal translation', 'foreignizing' or 'paralinguistic' strategies. They have been also found to rely more on stalling mechanisms, as for example, 'repetition' or 'pauses' in order to gain time to think of the appropriate language item. On the other hand, more proficient learners have been shown to use a fewer number of CSs, and as they possess

more linguistic resources in the L2, they are more likely to employ more cognitively demanding strategies, such as self-repairs, own-accuracy check or approximation, among others.

The next variable which was considered in this study is that of **task**; a factor which has been found to play an important role in the learners' selection and quantity of CSs (Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Poulisse, 1987; Safont Jorda, 2001; Rababah & Seedhouse, 2004; Fernández Dobao, 2002, 2004; Rababah & Bulut, 2007). It has been shown that the demands imposed by the tasks affect the use of CSs. Depending on the task requirements, learners would be asked to give more or less detailed information, that is to say, depending on the cognitive complexity of the task, they would focus, for instance, on describing, narrating, or on producing more difficult vocabulary, all of which would result in a higher or lower number of strategies, in general, and the use of certain CSs over others, in particular. The time allotted for the completion of tasks, and the familiarity with the type of activity, amongst other factors, would also affect the learners' use of CSs (Poulisse & Schils, 1989). From the studies carried out by the above-mentioned researchers, the tasks which have been most used for elicitation purposes are interview, conversation and story-retelling. Results from these studies, in relation to CSs, indicate that the interview and conversation activities have produced a higher number of compensatory (Rababah & Bulut, 2007) and lexical strategies (Fernández Dobao, 2004). It has to be considered that results will also vary in relation to the research goals, and to the types of CSs the researchers are trying to elicit, as well as the analytical framework used for the CS identification. Nonetheless, one fact on which most scholars have agreed, with regard to the task, is the degree of control over the elicitation instrument, and which is necessary for the control of the oral content produced by the subjects, thus making the analysis process easier to handle (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Fernández Dobao, 2004). In order to have a more precise picture of the characteristics of different tasks – and due to the little empirical evidence found in relation to CSs – research on second language learning was considered to guide my own selection of tasks for the research methodology of this study. Thus, a concise summary of what was found in this field as being more relevant for the present research purposes will be now provided.

First of all, it should be noted that the term, 'task', has been given different definitions and divided into different categories. Some scholars have classified them in 'pedagogic and real world tasks' (Nunan, 1989) or 'one-way and two-way tasks' (Long, 1990). These latter category refers to the way information flows, which means that only one or both interlocutors possess the information to be exchanged. Others have called them 'required information exchange' (Doughty & Pica, 1986), 'convergent and divergent' (Duff, 1986), or

'reciprocal and nonreciprocal tasks', as well as 'open and closed' tasks (Ellis, 2003). Open tasks refer to those activities which do not aim at a specific goal, whereas closed ones demand from participants to reach a determined objective. In this respect, Pica *et al* (2009) presents some theoretical and empirical bases for the use of 'communicative tasks' for pedagogic and research purposes, proposing a typology of tasks so as to identify them according to their contribution to language learning. The rationale behind the use of these tasks is that 'language is best learned and taught through interaction' (p.172), thus following input and interactional theories of L2. These theories propose that through the interaction and negotiation of meaning that learners and their interlocutors generate, they aim toward their own learning (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1981; Hatch 1978). From her typology, it is suggested that for a communicative task to provide learners with more opportunities 'to experience comprehensible input, feedback on production and IL modification', it should meet the following criteria:

1. each interactant holds a different portion of information which must be exchanged and manipulated in order to reach the task outcome,
2. both interactants are required to request and supply this information to each other,
3. interactants have the same or convergent goals
4. only one acceptable outcome is possible from their attempts to meet this goal (Pica, 2009, p.178).

The only task which fits these requirements is the jigsaw, followed by the information-gap task, which might meet the criteria only if it is repeated so as to allow learners to swap their roles of 'requesters' and 'suppliers' of information, which are the characteristic features of this type of task. The other activities mentioned in this taxonomy are 'problem-solving', 'decision-making' and 'opinion-exchange'. These tasks do not fulfil the requisites, because although both interactants are given information to be exchanged (two-way flow of information), interaction is not compulsory as one participant could carry out the task (Pica *et al*, 2009). In contrast to the jigsaw task, Pica refers to opinion-exchange as the activity which promotes the fewest opportunities for comprehension, feedback and modified production, since 'there is no requirement for interaction and, therefore, a single interactant might dominate and any number of outcome options or no outcome at all is expected' (p.183). Long (1990) also argues that closed tasks – which in Pica's typology would apply to the jigsaw – generate more negotiation of meaning than open tasks, since 'participants know that task completion depends on their finding the answer, not settling on any answer they choose when the going gets rough and moving on to something else' (p.45). He also contrasts this type of task with free-conversation (opinion-exchange in Pica) activities in

which, as he points out, there is not an imposed need to communicate or to treat topics deeply. Duff (1986) also found that the convergent task ('closed' in Ellis terms) she used generated more negotiation of meaning, demonstrated in more and shorter turns, yet she also observed that the divergent task used, 'debates' ('conversation' in Ellis and 'opinion-exchange' in Pica), 'produced longer turns, more syntactically complex discourse and more extended discourse' (Duff, 1986:172). Ellis (2003) supports this, stating that 'whereas closed tasks encourage meaning negotiation, open tasks particularly if they are convergent, promote accuracy and complexity' (p.123). Thus, although closed tasks seem to be more beneficial for meaning negotiation, and thus for communicative purposes, open tasks also appear to be favourable in the production of L2 language, by means of the generation of more varied and complex structures. This point is reinforced by Skehan (1998), who argues that 'conversation is the ideal supportive mechanism to: a) identify areas where IL is limited and needs extension; b) provide scaffolding and feedback at precisely the point when it will be most useful for the learner' (p.20).

All the evidence presented above aided in the selection of the two main tasks used as elicitation instruments for this research (for details please refer to Chapter 3). For this, the typology proposed by Pica *et al* (2009) proved to be most beneficial in that the interactional characteristics more attributed to the jigsaw task made it a better option. This task was the only activity which was suggested as prompting a fairly equal type of interaction by both speakers, which it was hoped would also generate a more balanced CS usage, thus avoiding the leading of the conversation. The selection of the free-conversation task, followed some of the other scholars' recommendations, as being an activity which produces a different kind of output, and as such, it was seen as advantageous for the elicitation of a different type of data, which would enrich the identification and analysis of CSs.

The last factor which is relevant to the present study is the type of **dyad**. Whilst there have not been many studies of the influence of different dyads on the use of CSs (Fernández Dobao & Palacios Martínez, 2007), different pairings of learners (NNSs-NNSs), and of learners and native speakers (NNSs-NSs) have been widely used in studies related to interaction and L2 learning. Therefore, the information gathered here is drawn from studies on these areas.

The interest in analysing interactions between both types of dyads lies in the importance that these kinds of encounter represent to learners, in terms of the input received, output produced and the modifications of their input and output when incomprehensibility occurs. All these concepts derive from the input (Krashen, 1985) and interaction hypothesis (Long,

1981) and from what has been referred as ‘negotiation of meaning’ (Pica, 1994). It is therefore within this context that these two types of dyads have been analysed. Studies have shown that NNSs-NSs interactions seem to enhance L2 learning through the NS signals of incomprehension, which are negotiated with the NNSs, and thus modify the NNSs’ interlanguage toward comprehensibility (Pica, 1988; Alcón & Guzmán, 1994). Additionally, NSs have been shown to help learners to produce more modifications of the interactional structure as well as provide more L2 input to the NNSs (Long, 1983; Pica *et al.*, 1996). Other studies, on the other hand, have supported the value of interactions between NNSs-NNSs, arguing that they produce more negotiation than NNSs-NSs, since the former ones need to work more in order to make input comprehensible, and thus they modify their utterances toward comprehensible output (Shehadeh, 1999; Varonis & Gass, 1983). A third and interesting view, although contrary to what had been suggested before, is the one presented by García Mayo & Pica (2000), who found out that interactions between advanced EFL NNSs ‘provide as much modified input, feedback and output as when interactions between NNSs-NSs take place’ (p.277). Therefore, taking into consideration these findings, both types of dyads were examined in the present study in order to determine whether any of these pairings affected more the learners’ strategic use of the language.

2.8 Aims of study and research questions

From this brief account of the major issues regarding CSs and their use, as related to the objectives of this research, the purpose of this study becomes clearer. As the theoretical perspectives on this issue have been widely researched, what this work aims to do is to broaden the empirical existing evidence in relation to these mechanisms as being affected by three different variables. In this respect, this study attempts to investigate a wider range of CSs, as opposed to most research so far which has focused on examining only lexical CSs. The examination of the CSs used by learners with a different proficiency level also aims to expand the existing knowledge with regard to its effects on the learners’ CS usage. Additionally, there is little research which has considered analysing the strategies used by both interlocutors – in face-to-face interactions – as well as with a different type of interlocutor, which is one of the variables here considered. The task effects on CS usage is another factor which has not been fully examined, hence, the interest in this study for analysing two very distinct tasks. Finally, Spanish as L2 has been given little attention, and the studies carried out so far relating to these CSs have been limited to examining the learning context. Taking these aspects into consideration, the research questions guiding the present study, as set out in Chapter 1(repeated here for convenience), are as follows:

1. What are the CSs used by English learners of Spanish when interacting face-to-face with other learners and native speakers?
2. How do different variables affect the learners' use of CSs?
 - 2.a To what extent does the proficiency level affect the CS usage?
 - 2.b Do the CSs used vary in accordance to the type of task performed?
 - 2.c Does the type of interlocutor (NS-NNS) influence the CS use?
 - 2.d Is the CS usage affected by the interaction of these variables?

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

3.1 Design of the study

As already stated, this study attempts to extend knowledge of the way English learners of Spanish try to overcome problems in face-to-face interactions with other learners and NSs of Spanish by means of CSs. Thus, the possible effects that the proficiency level, the type of task, and the type of interlocutor have on the learners' use of these mechanisms will be examined. In addition, the possible influence of the interaction of these three variables on the learners' CS usage will also be analysed. A descriptive, qualitative-quantitative, cross-sectional study was designed to see the effects of these variables on the learners' strategic communication. Hence, following the research methods utilised in the extensive number of studies in this area, this chapter presents in detail the steps followed in order to collect the data. Information regarding the participants who volunteered in this project, the instruments used for data elicitation, and the subsequent procedures carried out for the collection and analysis of data will form the core of this chapter.

3.2 Recruitment of participants

For the recruitment of volunteers, undergraduate students of the Hispanic and Latin American Studies were contacted through the Head of the School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies (SOCLAS) at the University of Liverpool. I attended several classes of these two courses and explained the purpose of my study. To those students who seemed interested in participating in my project, I asked them to fill in a two-page questionnaire (see appendix A) so as to obtain some personal (name, age, e-mail address) as well as language-related information (L1, number of years studying Spanish, stays in a Spanish speaking country, perceived oral proficiency level). I then matched the proficiency level, participants stated they felt they had, against the level their final marks showed they would have so as to be able, for the data collection, to put together students with a similar level of oral production as far as possible. Next, all the students willing to participate were contacted via e-mail, which resulted in a first number of ten students who I managed to successfully pair for the first sessions of the data collection. After some time, fourteen other students were recruited, amounting therefore to a final number of 24 English L2 learners of Spanish who formed part of the whole study. As this project involved the analysis of two different types of dyads (NNS-NNS/NNS-NS), it was also necessary to recruit native speakers of Spanish. For this, some Erasmus students¹ who were studying at the time at the University of Liverpool were contacted, in addition to two other non-student Spanish speaking people. Each of these NS participants interacted with two different pairs of learners. Thus, a total of 24 learners, and 7 native speakers of Spanish participated in this project.

¹ European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, European Union Student Exchange Programme.

3.2.1 Participants

From the 24 English students learners of Spanish who were finally recruited, twelve of them were enrolled in a second year ‘ex-beginners’ class², whereas the other twelve were enrolled in a second year (advanced) class³, with the exception of one participant who was in first year (advanced)⁴. 12 students were assessed as belonging to elementary oral proficiency levels, and the other 12 students as being of either pre-intermediate or intermediate levels (this information was later corroborated by an assessment of their oral production, as will be explained in the procedures section). The information regarding their oral production level was used to pair participants. It should be noted; however, that each learner’s particular learning experience might have affected their L2 performance, thus influencing their oral competence. Aspects such as their different degrees of motivation and attitudes toward the L2 as well as their personality characteristics – extrovert or introvert traits – could also have an influence on their L2 proficiency. The ages of these students ranged from 18 to 26. In relation to the Spanish speaking participants, as mentioned above, five of them were Erasmus undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Liverpool as exchange students, and their ages ranged between 20 and 25 years. The other two native speakers were working in Liverpool and their ages ranged between 25 and 35 years.

3.3 Materials

3.3.1. Background Questionnaire

As already mentioned, a two-page questionnaire was designed and applied to prospective participants in order to obtain some personal and language-related information. The main purpose of this questionnaire was to know about participants’ oral level of Spanish from their own perspective, so as to have some basis to compare with the records of their marks in the oral classes, and be able to pair them as equally as possible regarding these levels. In addition, participants were asked about their stays abroad specifically in a Spanish-speaking country and about their L1, extra information which also helped me to obtain an equal sample, and thus to do the pairing of dyads according to a similar oral production level. This pairing according to a similar level would be useful in order to analyse the data collected.

3.3.2. Data elicitation tasks

The instruments used for the data elicitation were two communicative tasks, which were selected from those used in the pilot study carried out prior to the main research; this piloting

² This classification meant that these students had no language requirements to take this course.

³ This meant that these students were required to have A-level qualification to take this course.

⁴ Students were also required to have A-level qualification.

will be described in detail under procedures. The use of a task-based methodology was supported by the extensive empirical studies in this area which, although have focused mainly on English as L2 and on the elicitation of lexical CSs, have established the most effective ways of eliciting this type of spoken data. The rationale behind the use of these two tasks was that the data which needed to be elicited had to demonstrate strategic use of the language, and hence they had to demand from participants the use of CSs to cope with the communication problems arising in their interactions. Moreover, as the main purpose was to analyse dyads of NNS-NNS and NNS-NS in face-to-face interactions, the type of tasks to be used had to be communicative tasks, which according to Pica (2009) should fulfil certain requisites in order to provide learners with opportunities for comprehension, feedback and modified production, key aspects of interaction. This interactional aspect was relevant for task selection, since it was expected that the task requirements would make both interlocutors communicate as equally as possible, avoiding the leading of the conversation by any speaker, and thus demanding from them a fairly equal strategic use of the language. The two tasks which were selected as the ones that met the purposes of this research correspond, as Ellis (2003) classifies them, to a closed type of task⁵, a ‘jigsaw’ activity, and an open task⁶, a ‘free-conversation’ activity.

3.3.2.1 Closed task

Two jigsaw activities were utilised as closed types of task for the data elicitation (see appendices B1 and B2): one activity proposed by Klippel (1984:150) and a second one supplied by a teacher, but whose original source is unknown. This type of task consisted of one story divided in two parts; each half of the story was given to each participant. The activity asked learners to find out the real story sequence, and so they had to describe their pictures to each other, which demanded from them not only to try to describe items in each picture, but also to try to interpret what the main character might be doing first, second and so on. This also required from them to ask questions to each other to confirm their guesses or to find out more information. All these demands forced subjects to try to get their message across, which it was hoped would oblige them to use different CSs as well as more language and to interact with one another. As mentioned above, two tasks of this type were used so as to avoid the NS having to do the same activity with both NNS subjects; this aspect will be explained in detail under procedures. This task was the one that fulfilled all the requirements expected in the pilot study, since it generated a high amount of CSs – and a more varied use of CSs – as well as more language production. In addition, this type of task is considered by Pica (2009) as the only one that meets all the requirements of a real communicative task, in

⁵ Closed tasks are those activities that require to reach a determined goal (Ellis, 2003)

⁶ Open tasks are those activities which do not aim at a specific objective (Ellis, 2003)

that it provides learners with all the features needed for interaction to take place. Interaction, as mentioned above, was one of the aims which this task needed to fulfil in order to demand from both speakers to communicate as equally as possible, avoiding the leading of the conversation by one of them, and thus demanding the use of CSs from both speakers. The other reason for this task to be selected had to do with one of the main recommendations in the literature concerning the control of the task content. This means that what speakers might utter can be controlled to some extent, and problems arising in the conversation might be anticipated, making it advantageous for the identification of these devices.

3.3.2.2 Open task

The open type of task that was applied for data collection was a ‘free-conversation’ activity. Two activities of this type were also used, each one consisting of a free topic given in the form of a statement. The first topic asked learners to ‘talk about someone who has influenced them’ and the second activity instructed them to ‘talk about their best holidays ever’. There was a third topic prepared (‘stressful situations and what to do to cope with them’) in case the participants were not able to elaborate on the first topic given. As part of their instructions, they were told to speak freely about the topic provided, and to try to interact as much as possible, asking questions when necessary. This activity was selected from the pilot study, because it produced more, and more elaborate language in addition to producing a good number of CSs within the open activities employed. Moreover, it was one of the tasks which most participants favoured saying that they felt more challenged, as they could elaborate a bit more and felt freer to direct the conversation. Although this task has not been suggested by empirical studies regarding CSs – and it has not been favoured as a communicative activity (Pica, 2009) – it has been shown to be beneficial in interactional studies regarding L2 oral production, in that it provides speakers with more opportunities to produce more complex structures, and thus develop other communication skills (Skehan, 1998). Finally, for the selection of this task, it was also considered the fact that it would give learners the chance to perform a more natural type of task, and therefore be faced with different types of communication problems – similar to the ones found in a real life situation – and it would also provide me with a different type of spoken data which would enrich the analysis.

3.4 Procedures

Now that the main instruments of the data collection have been presented and described individually, the steps taken for the elicitation of the data will be explained in detail. This description will start with the pilot study, conducted sometime prior to the main project, and which aimed at narrowing down the variables that would be analysed in the main research,

and thus be able to design the most effective methodology for the data collection. The procedures followed for the main study as well as for the data analysis will be subsequently described.

3.4.1. Pilot study

This small scale study, conducted from April to June of 2009, aimed at testing the methods recommended by most studies in the area, and at finding out the tasks that would pose more linguistic problems to the learners, thus demanding a higher use of CSs. Furthermore, the effects of the type of interlocutor and the participants' proficiency level were also examined so as to narrow down the variables that would be analysed in the main research. Having this in mind, NNS-NS/NNS-NNS dyads with different proficiency levels were observed when performing six different communicative tasks.

Before all this was carried out, formal approval was sought and gained from the Committee on Research Ethics at the University of Liverpool. In order to address ethical issues, participants were previously informed about the aims of this study (see appendix C) – although in general terms so as not to influence their performance – and were asked to sign a consent form (see appendix D). The subjects recruited to participate in this pilot study needed to have English as L1 and Spanish as L2. There was no specification of a proficiency level at this stage, since the original aim was to test the way of eliciting the data through the use of specific instruments. Therefore, it was not until the first sessions were conducted that I realised the potential problem of the subjects' proficiency level. From then on participants were required to work in pairs according to a similar level. This factor was not formally controlled mainly because of the difficulty that this implied, considering that the subjects were volunteering to participate; however, this aspect was improved in the main study, as will be explained under procedures. Ten NNSs, coming from different backgrounds, volunteered to take part in this project, in addition to four NSs who were required in order to interact with the NNSs. The equipment used in each session involved a video camera connected to a laptop, in which the video was immediately being transferred, and which would be later used for the post-interview, plus a digital audio recorder so as to have an audio record of each conversation in addition to the video. The assistant set up the video camera and left the room during each session; he would return to set up the camera for the following task. The session was organised as follows:

- NNS1 does open task 1 with NS (NNS2 is on a 10-minute break)
- NNS2 does open task 2 with NS (NNS1 is on a 10-minute break)
- NNS1 does closed task 1 with NNS2 (NS leaves)

- Both NNSs are interviewed
- Each NNS is interviewed individually

By following this format in the first sessions, it was possible to test the six tasks immediately, and have a preliminary idea of how these activities would work with the two types of dyads, and with the proficiency levels of these first participants. As was mentioned above, at this stage the proficiency level was not a factor to consider among the requirements for people to participate, but after these first sessions, this fact was taken into account due to the results obtained. Once dyads were formed and the organisation of the session was explained, the participants sat facing each other and holding the pictures (closed tasks) or instructions (open tasks) they needed to work on. I sat near them so as to take notes of the problem indicators, or markers, which could be noticed during each conversation, and which might anticipate or evidence communication problems. Each task usually took ten minutes, and after each one the subjects were asked to swap with the other NNS or NS in order to do the following activity. For the tasks used at this stage, six communicative tasks were selected after reviewing a number of different activities (Ur, 1981; Klippel, 1984; Pattison, 1987; Wright *et al.*, 2006; Hadfield, 2001). These activities were divided into three closed tasks and three more open tasks. The closed ones consisted of one jigsaw and two spot-the-difference tasks; this last type of task is categorised as ‘problem-solving’ according to Pica (2009). The open ones consisted of two ranking activities, classified as ‘decision-making’ tasks, and one free-conversation activity, which has been labelled as ‘opinion-exchange’ (Pica, 2009). In the jigsaw task, participants were asked to order the different set of pictures each one was given so as to work out the sequence of the whole story. To do this, they needed to describe their own pictures as well as ask each other questions and agree on a sequence. In the two spot-the-difference activities, they had to either find the differences (‘what are the differences’) in one, or find the similar picture out of six in the other (‘Twins’) by describing and asking each other questions. In one of the ranking activities, participants had to agree on ‘the places they would show foreigners visiting the area they were living in’ according to importance (‘The Guide’). In the other, they had to agree on ‘the things they would need if stranded on a desert island’ also according to their importance (‘The Desert Island’). In the last open task, the free-conversation, subjects were presented with three broad topics to choose from, and they were asked to freely exchange their opinions about the selected topic. After participants had carried out the tasks, the NNSs were asked to stay for a post-interview. This interview was conducted by showing participants the video of them performing the tasks; each interaction was shown at a time. They were also given the pictures they used in some of these activities in order for them to better remember their performance. Interviews were done in the interlocutors’ L1 and were audio recorded; they

lasted about 20 to 30 minutes each. This interview aimed at eliciting retrospective comments from the participants in order to identify and verify the CSs used. For this, the subjects were asked to recall what they were thinking when communicating, by watching their performance and by looking at the pictures they used for their realisation, and to try to give reasons for their linguistic behaviour concerning the problems encountered. In order to do that, each time they thought they had had a difficulty in communicating or in understanding their partner, they would ask me to stop the video and they would try to explain what they did in order to overcome those problems. In most cases – especially where the participants were young undergraduate students – it was difficult to elicit their comments, since they could not explain what the problem was or how they managed to solve it. In these cases, I had to help them in some way by prompting them with some contextual information of what they had said. Additionally, I used my notes to ask some more specific questions about some difficulties at the end of the interview, if they had not mentioned those problematic situations.

For the data analysis at this preliminary stage, the tasks performed in each of the five sessions were orthographically transcribed. The retrospective comments were added to these transcriptions in order to identify and confirm the CSs. The identification and classification of these CSs was done by following the analytical framework proposed by Dörnyei & Kormos (1998) and the interactional and paralinguistic strategies presented in a previous review of these strategies by Dörnyei & Scott (1995). After the identification and classification of the CSs, these devices were manually counted in order to see the type of dyad, the approximate proficiency level and the type of task which produced a higher quantity and more varied types of CSs as well as language use. This last aspect was observed in a preliminary way, by counting the number of words uttered by the subjects, which made it possible to determine how much language each task generated and whether this language production was equal on the part of both interlocutors in each dyad. This was expected would help me to avoid the leading of the interactions by any of the speakers in the main research, thus obtaining a fairly equal use of CSs. The analysis of the learners' CS usage was quite demanding since in each speaker's utterance a varied number and type of strategies can be found. In addition, as this is spoken data, conversations tend to be fairly fluent from one speaker to the other, which makes it more difficult to identify the different mechanisms used to cope with problems in communication. The complexity of the analysis was also due to the problems found when trying to identify problem indicators during the conversations. As this process was done through the elicitation of retrospective comments – carried out immediately after the performance of the tasks – it was almost impossible to pinpoint at every possible problem participants might be experiencing while interacting. Consequently,

during the data analysis there were many CSs that could only be identified by observing the videos, but not confirmed by subjects, whilst others could not be classified or were still ambiguous. In order to try to make this analysis less complex, a categorisation of the way of identifying the different CSs was applied in the main research. This classification will be explained in detail in the following subsection.

All in all, this piloting allowed me to examine different communicative tasks being performed by two different types of dyads and whose proficiency levels ranged from elementary to advanced. The observation of these subjects' interactions gave me enough information to efficiently plan the main research which will now be described.

3.4.2. Main study

As mentioned above, based on the information and results obtained in the pilot experience, it was possible to carry out the data collection of the main research, which allowed me to solve the little problems presented in the piloting, and thus to improve some of the steps followed. With the exception of a few differences, as will be explained here, the main study was quite similar to the pilot project.

The first phase of the main research took place some weeks in March and May of 2010 at the University of Liverpool. As the ethical issues had been resolved, the search for volunteers was done quicker than before. The first step was to contact prospective volunteers during the months of January and February 2010. For this, undergraduate students from the Hispanic and Latin American Studies from SOCLAS at the University of Liverpool were contacted, through the teachers in charge of the oral language lessons from both departments. I was invited to several of these lessons and was allowed to briefly explain my project, and apply questionnaires to those interested in participating. This gave me some preliminary information about their L1, language background and e-mail address so as to contact them again for the data collection session. After attending different classes and having applied questionnaires, I was able to see which of those volunteers would fit into the requisites I was looking for. With this information and the students' oral proficiency levels, which was confirmed by teaching staff on the basis of their final oral assessment marks obtained in the previous academic term, I was able to ensure that students were paired in an equal way, so that I would be able to analyse them according to levels.

Before each data collection session, the subjects were informed again about the ethical issues involved, giving them more time to decide whether to participate or not; they then signed the consent form. The setting of the room was essentially the same as in the pilot study, and the

procedure was very similar. In order to try to mitigate the possible effects that the presence of a video camera might have produced on these learners' L2 performance, I tried to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere previous to the collection of the data. I had a brief informal talk with the participants where I also introduced the NS so that they could get acquainted with each other. Some refreshment and snacks were also provided as these sessions were usually carried out in the evenings after class time; all of this aimed at making participants feel at ease in an attempt to make them forget the presence of the video camera. In addition, as will be seen in the data analysis procedures, the first few minutes of recording were not considered for the data analysis. As an example, the organisation of two sessions will be now presented:

Session 1

- NNS1 does the jigsaw task 1 with NS (see task in appendix B1)
- NNS2 does the jigsaw task 2 with NS (see task in appendix B2)
- NNS1 does the free conversation task 1 with NNS2
- Both NNSs are interviewed on the task they did together (see stimulated recall protocol in appendix E)
- NNSs are interviewed individually on the tasks each did with the NS

Session 2

- NNS1 does the free conversation task 1 with NS
- NNS2 does the free conversation task 2 with NS
- NNS1 does the jigsaw task 1 with NNS2
- Both NNSs are interviewed on the task they did together (stimulated recall protocol)
- NNSs are interviewed individually on the tasks each did with the NS
- NSs are interviewed after this second session (see stimulated recall protocol in appendix E)

This organisation differs from the one in the pilot study in that this time there were only two tasks to be used for data elicitation. In addition, two activities of the same type of task (open and closed) were used in each session so that the NS – who would interact in two sessions with different learners – would not be required to perform the same activity twice. By following the format described above, it was possible to test the two types of tasks used in each session, and balance the data collected from both tasks, since in one session each NNS-NS pairing did the same type of task twice and in the following session, as shown above in session 2, the other pairing did the other type of task twice as well. This made possible to

gather information from 24 NNS-NS dyads and 12 NNS-NNS pairings for each type of task, having in mind that the latter pairings produced a similar amount of data to the former as both interlocutors were learners.

The procedures followed in each session were very similar to the pilot study. The main difference, at this stage, was based on the fact that in the piloting I noticed that some learners did not understand very well how to do the task, thus a practise task was implemented this time to be used when the learners found it necessary (see task in appendix B3). Therefore, once the instructions of the task were given, learners were asked whether they fully understood how to do the task, and if they did not, they practiced for a few minutes, before the elicitation activity, with another similar one. This helped NNSs in several cases to make them feel more comfortable in this new situation. Due to time constraints and analysis purposes, the tasks did not take longer than 10 minutes: once this time was reached I had to stop the activity.

A factor which was improved at this stage was the annotation of the NNSs' signals while interacting. In the pilot study, I realised it was difficult to pinpoint every problem learners might be having while communicating, mainly due to the fact that the post-interview had to be conducted immediately after the tasks were performed; hence, I aimed this time to be more accurate in doing so. I tried to write down as many possible instances of problematic language-related episodes as possible, so as to be able to identify or confirm the maximum possible number of CSs. In the post-interview, I used these notes to remind me of at least some of those instances in which learners did not provide comments.

Regarding this last procedure, the post-interview was conducted following 'stimulated recall methodology', and specifically 'consecutive recall methodology', that is to say, immediately after the data elicitation instruments, in this case the tasks, had been performed. This retrospective method is used to 'explore learners' thoughts, processes and strategies by asking learners to reflect on their thoughts after they have carried out a predetermined activity' (Gass & Mackey, 2000:37). This methodology has proven to be useful in this type of study, since it is the only way to discover internal mental actions which are impossible to perceive by simple observation. This is reinforced by the fact that, as its name suggests, it stimulates participants by showing them, in this particular case, the video of their performances and the pictures (closed task) of the activity they have just performed, helping them to remember even more. Although this method does present some disadvantages in terms of reliability (Ericsson & Simon, 1984), it has proven to be very beneficial in several studies regarding CSs (Faerch & Kasper, 1987; Poulisse, 1990; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995;

Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998; Fernández Dobao, 2004) in that it allows the researcher, on one hand, to identify the various observable actions performed by the speakers and, on the other, to be able to clarify any ambiguous cases. As already mentioned, this post-interview was conducted after both types of tasks were performed. Therefore, once the last type of dyad (NNS-NNS) did the last type of task, this pair was interviewed first regarding that last interaction, and afterwards each NNS was interviewed separately about each of their interactions with the NS. In order to carry out this post-activity, students were told beforehand that they would be interviewed in their L1 on what they had done once both tasks had been performed. The fact of doing this activity in their L1 was designed to help participants to feel more comfortable to not only reflect on what they had done, but also to try to explain their linguistic behaviour. This interview was partly based on the notes I took while learners were interacting, notes related to ‘signals’ that might represent the difficulties they were having in communicating, i.e., hesitation, drawls, repetitions, etc. (Faerch & Karper, 1983; Wagner & Firth, 1997), plus a few questions I prepared beforehand (stimulated recall protocol). Once the tasks had been performed, the real aims of this study were explained to participants together with the purpose of this post-interview (see procedures for more details). This latter aspect aimed at making it clear to them that these tasks had been selected in order to present them with linguistic problems, and that they did not have to feel in some way threatened by the fact that the questions would focus on their problems and errors in their L2 – which might otherwise have caused them some reluctance when commenting on them. Consequently, as part of the instructions, it was explained what the procedures of this post interview would be, and that the videos of each interaction would be observed: first the video of the NNS-NNS pairing, and then the videos of the NNS-NS pairings with each of the NNSs being interviewed separately. They were asked to reflect on the problems they thought they had had in communicating while doing the tasks, and to ask me to pause the video each time they felt they had had some difficulties, to comment on the type of problem and, if possible, to explain what they did to try to solve that problem. This post-interview was conducted as in the pilot study, but this time it took longer to analyse each interaction with both NNSs and then individually. As I had more practice in doing this, I was able to pick on more aspects of the conversation, which meant that the interview required more time, in addition to the fact that some NNSs were more reflective on their own performances, and thus comment more extensively on each problematic situation. Another fact which I had to consider was that these students were not familiarised with retrospective methods, and so I had to explain carefully what I was attempting to do, and tried to obtain their comments in a spontaneous way in an effort to reduce some bias on my part.

The other difference, at this stage, was that this post-interview was also applied to the native speakers who interacted with the learners, but as they interacted with two different dyads – and because of the time taken in each post-interview with the learners – the NSs were interviewed on the following day after the second session they had participated in. The aims of the study and the purpose of the activity were also explained, but in contrast to the previous one, this interview was more concise (see protocol in appendix E), since it involved questions concerning whether they had had problems understanding their NNS partners, and whether they felt they had helped them to some extent in getting their message across. Thus, this interview pointed to a more overall view of the interactions in order to find out the NSs' reactions to the learners' problems when communicating, information which was expected would help to complement the qualitative analysis.

A factor which proved to be beneficial in the main study was the fact that the interactions were filmed, and these videos were used to stimulate learners' comments on their own performances. It was noticeable that as they could see their expressions and gestures, they could remember better what difficulties, if any, they were having at the moment of communicating, and thus were able to comment more spontaneously on those problems. Nevertheless, this was not always the case, since there were some occasions in which learners did not provide much information, and so the notes taken previously were used to prompt their comments on specific instances. This prompting was done by simply asking them whether they felt there was any problem when communicating something in particular, if so what they intended to communicate and how they managed to communicate that. On the other hand, there was another factor that did not prove to be as beneficial, a fact also observed in the pilot study: the disadvantages of having this post-interview conducted immediately after the interactions. As happened in the piloting, this made it difficult for me to identify several of the problem-related instances as there was not time to examine the interactions beforehand. However, as mentioned above, the support of the videos partly compensated for this difficulty.

A final step taken at this stage, before the analysis of the data, was to corroborate the oral proficiency levels demonstrated by the learners' marks with their performance of the tasks. I assessed their oral production by watching the videos of their performances, and applying the oral evaluation criteria stipulated in the Common European Framework of reference for language learning and teaching, especially designed for Spanish as a Foreign Language. After my own assessment, a Spanish teacher from the Hispanics Department was asked to do the same so as to confirm this evaluation. There was total agreement in most cases regarding these learners' oral proficiency levels, which allowed me to group them into two of the main

levels proposed in this framework: level A, basic learner ('usuario básico'), level B, independent learner ('usuario independiente). These levels have been specifically assigned to the oral use of the language and have been subdivided into 1, 2, 2+ each, according to the degree of development of learners' oral skills in each stage. This post-task assessment indicated that the pairing of the dyads, initially based on the information obtained from the questionnaires and the students' marks in their oral classes, was in most cases done quite accurately.

3.4.3. Data analysis procedures

This stage of the research was much improved in comparison to the pilot stage, mainly because the piloting focused primarily on finding the most suitable data collection method and not on the analysis of this preliminary data. Hence, all the steps followed after the data gathering will be now described and explained.

3.4.3.1. Data transcription

For the transcription of the tasks performed, some of the conventions suggested in the literature related to conversational analysis (Have, 1937), teaching and second language acquisition research (Swan, 2001; Mackey & Gass, 2005) were followed. Only those conventions which were really pertinent to the purposes of this research were utilised, such as the signalling of overlapping speech, pauses, rising intonation, and gestures (please refer to chapter 4 for further details). For the transcription of the interactions, I used a software programme called 'transana', a free software developed by Chris Fassnacht at the Wisconsin Center for Education, University of Wisconsin (version 2.1, 2005-2009) and especially designed for transcribing purposes. This programme allows the transcribers to see the video of the interaction while transcribing, to time stamp the whole interaction and to rewind and forward the video on the same screen, helping the researcher to save time and making this process less time consuming. The fact of having the video while transcribing made it easier for me to add any paralinguistic feature or my own comments to the transcript. However, at times, because of factors such as overlaps in speaking, it was necessary to double check these transcripts with the audio recordings of the sessions. These audio recordings provided back up information which turned out to be very useful at this phase of the study. Another aspect which was taken into account was the presence of a video camera, which may have placed some pressure on the learners especially at the beginning of each interaction. For this, the first few minutes of each interaction were not considered in the analysis of the data. Finally, in addition to transcribing the interactions, the post-interviews were also transcribed, although the focus in this case was simply on the content of what was said, and thus all the

unnecessary information and expressions were left aside, so as to register only the evidence that would help to identify and confirm the strategic use of the language.

3.4.3.2 Data analysis

At a preliminary stage, the analysis involved identifying the CSs used by the learners through the application of the theoretical framework proposed by Dörnyei & Kormos in 1998, and the interactional and paralinguistic CSs presented in a previous review on these strategies by Dörnyei & Scott in 1995. The rationale for the use of the former framework was that it is the most up-to-date and comprehensive account of these devices found so far in the literature. Moreover, it has the advantage that it does not only present those CSs which follow a psycholinguistic approach, but also some of those mechanisms related to language problems involving the interlocutor. Nonetheless, as some of the latter strategies were missing in this account, the interactional CSs from the second above mentioned framework were added to this taxonomy, in order to have a broader number of interactional strategies learners might apply when interacting with other learners and NSs. This preliminary analysis helped me to start setting the analysis criteria which would be later applied when coding the data, therefore, it was at this stage that I decided on my own defining criteria for the CSs, refined some of the definitions of CSs presented in the main framework, and added some new ones which were identified in the data (see adapted taxonomy in following chapter). In carrying out the formal analysis, I used a programme called UAM Corpus Tool, developed by Mick O'Donnell (version 2.0; 2008), and which is used for the linguistic annotation of texts and images. I uploaded the transcripts, which I had prepared using 'transana', together with all the paralinguistic information and my own comments as the data for analysis. The programme allowed me to select within each text (each interaction) as many segments containing CSs as needed, and to classify them according to a coding scheme (the analytical categories) I myself fed into the programme. This scheme can be modified at any time, adding any new strategy that might be found while analysing the data. It also allows the researcher to classify one segment as containing more than one CS, function which proved to be very useful in this analysis in particular, since in most cases learners apply more than one strategy in a single utterance.

It is important to note that, as happened in the pilot study, this analysis turned out to be quite complex. For this, it required the application of a categorisation of the different ways of identifying the CSs, which meant that some strategies could be identified through examining the transcripts only, that is to say, could be easily observed, but that others needed confirmation from the comments elicited in the post-interview. This categorisation was therefore divided into three main categories: supported (by evidence), partially supported

and unsupported. This classification was based on the two sources of evidence obtained: the transcripts – and thus the videos of the interactions – and the comments elicited in the post-interview. The following table presents this classification in more detail.

Table 3.1 Categorisation for the identification of CSs

Main categories	Sources of evidence	
	Transcript	Post-interview
I. Supported	1.1 observed	not required
	1.2 inferable	1.2.a confirmed
		1.2.b indicative
1.3 Unclear	Confirmatory	
II. Partially supported	2.1 Inferable	No evidence
	2.2 Unclear	Indicative
III. Unsupported	3.1 Unclear	No evidence

As can be seen in table 3.1, each main category had to be divided into subcategories in order to organise all the data collected. Thus, regarding those strategies that could be *supported* (by the evidence obtained), fourth different subtypes were found: those which as above mentioned were observable in the transcripts (and videos) and thus did not require evidence from the post-interview (1.1); those instances which were inferable on the transcript and for which there was enough evidence in the post-interview to identify the phenomenon (1.2.a). In addition to those which could be inferred in the transcript, and there was some indication in the post-interview for me to be able to identify the strategies (1.2.b). The last subtype within this category refers to those instances which although were unclear to me in the transcript, there was still enough evidence in the learners' comments to identify the strategies applied (1.3). In relation to the second main category classified as *partially supported*, two subtypes were found: those which could be inferred through the transcript, but for which there was no evidence in the post-interview in order to identify the phenomenon with certainty (2.1). The second subtype refers to those instances in which the phenomenon was unclear to me in the transcript, and the evidence given by the learners provided just some indication for a possible, yet still uncertain identification (2.2). The last main category concerns those instances in which the strategies could not be identified because the phenomenon was unclear to me in the transcript, and there was no evidence given in the post-interview so as to identify the CS (3.1).

The complexity of this analysis demanded another procedure to be followed in this stage, and which consisted of a one-to-one inter-rater reliability test so as to assess and validate results and reduce the researcher's bias. For this purpose, a Spanish teacher from SOCLAS was asked to examine a sample of the data, hence, prior to this analysis, I explained the framework used as well as the way I had carried out the analysis. After a practice session – where the inter-rater attempted to do a preliminary analysis with my guidance – we gathered and worked together comparing our analyses. We agreed on most of the CS identification, and when there were discrepancies in the coding of the CSs, each case was discussed and together we arrived at a consensus regarding the proper classification of each communication instance.

Following this analysis, some descriptive as well as inferential statistics procedures were applied. Descriptive statistics was used to present and describe findings in general terms, and inferential statistics to see whether the effects of the variables were significant. For the latter procedures, a non-parametric test⁷, the Chi-square test was applied to determine whether there was a significant relationship between each of the variables, that is to say, the proficiency level, the task and the type of dyad and the patterns of CSs. Additionally, a loglinear analysis⁸, was applied to examine these three independent variables (proficiency, task, interlocutor) and look for their possible interactions with one another as affecting the learners' use of CSs. This kind of analysis is used in order to 'test the relationship between more than two categorical variables (Field, 2009:721). Finally, this quantitative analysis was complemented with a qualitative examination of the spoken data elicited as well as the retrospective comments obtained from the learners. This analysis made it possible to thoroughly examine the learners' strategic behaviour – a phenomenon not directly observable – so as to confirm the quantitative results obtained and, on most occasions, to identify the variable effects which were primarily perceivable through qualitative means.

⁷ Type of test which is applied to ordinal and nominal data

⁸ 'Loglinear analysis is hierarchical: the initial model contains all main effects and interactions. Starting with the highest-order interaction [three-way interaction], terms are removed to see whether their removal significantly affects the fit of the model. If it does then this term is not removed and all lower-order effects are ignored' (Field, 2009: 721).

CHAPTER 4
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Analytical Framework used for the identification of the CSs

The purpose of this chapter is to present and explain the scheme used for the data analysis, that is, for the coding and identification of the CSs, in order to proceed with the analysis and discussion of results in the following chapter in a more comprehensible way. This introductory chapter therefore will present this analytical framework considering first its broader main categories of CSs, and then continuing with a more detailed view of each of these main classifications and their corresponding subcategories; examples taken from the current data will be provided for a better understanding of each strategy. The conventions used in the transcription of the data will be first presented.

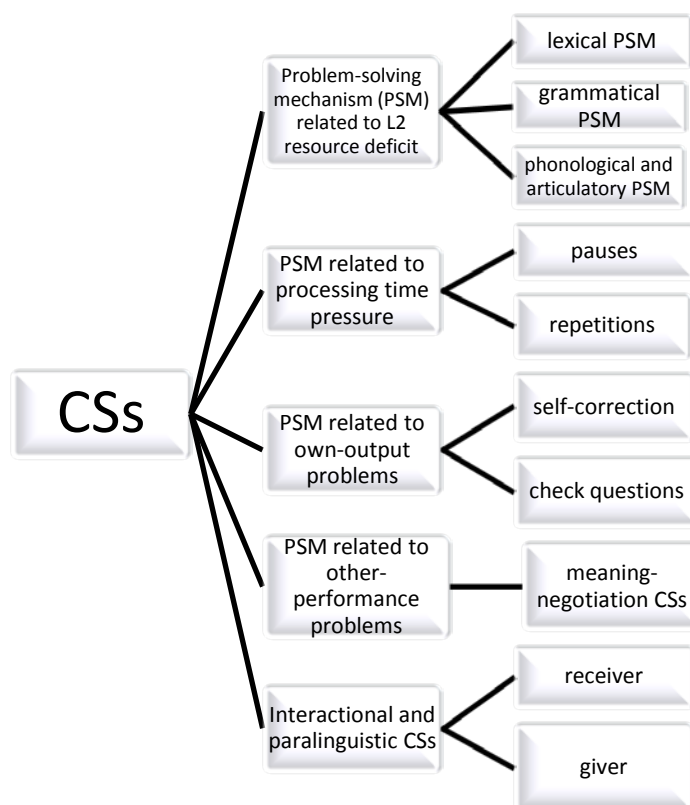
[]	square brackets indicate overlapping speech
(word)	word in parenthesis indicates that the word was not clearly heard
{ }	curly brackets show the researcher's comments based on the videos
(())	double parentheses indicate inaudible speech
↑	upwards arrow indicates rising intonation
wa-ter	hyphens in between syllables mean that the word was slowly uttered
(0.2)	pauses are shown in seconds and placed in between parentheses
<i>italics</i>	words in italics show the English translation of each utterance
bold	words in bold are my notation of relevant non-linguistic features, such as 'risa' /'laugh', and gestures.

4.2 Analytical framework: adapted version of a CS taxonomy

The framework used for the data analysis was based on the taxonomy proposed by Dörnyei and Kormos (1998) and the interactional and paralinguistic CSs presented in a previous review of these strategies by Dörnyei and Scott (1995). This taxonomy was adapted according to the data analysed in the present study, which allowed me to categorise and account for all the phenomena encountered. The main categories that comprise this scheme will be now presented.

Figure 4.1 below presents the five main categories included in the analytical framework used in this research.

Figure 4.1 Main categories of CSs



The first four categories were taken from the framework proposed by Dörnyei & Kormos (1998) and the last one was added from the review of these strategies presented by Dörnyei & Scott (1995). According to Dörnyei & Kormos (1998) their classification, which was based on the previous work mentioned above (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995) follows a psycholinguistic approach based on Levelt's L2 model of speech production. By doing so they focus on the management of the four primary problem areas (figure 3.1) and how they relate to 'the various phases of speech processing' (p.356). Regarding the first problem area, 'problem-solving mechanisms (PSM) related to L2 resource deficit (RD)', they are said to be 'employed when resource deficits hinder the planning and encoding of the preverbal plan' (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:358), that is learners need to resort to these types of strategies because of their limited command or lack of linguistic resources in the L2. This main category is divided into three main subareas as shown in figure 4.1, which account for the main sources of problems encountered by L2 learners: lexical, grammatical and phonological-articulatory types of PSM.

The second category, that of 'PSM related to processing time pressure (TP)', refers to the various stalling mechanisms L2 learners employ in order to gain time and thus be able to think of the necessary item/s for them to communicate. This category is subdivided into two main types of mechanisms or CSs used for this purpose, 'pauses' and 'repetitions'.

The third main category has to do with those ‘PSM related to own-output problems (O.O)’ and which refer to the L2 deficiencies identified by the speaker in his/her own output; problems that can be overcome by means of two subtypes of CSs: ‘self-corrections’ and ‘check questions’.

The fourth type of CS proposed in Dörnyei & Kormos’ taxonomy (1998) refer to those ‘meaning-negotiation mechanisms triggered by perceived problems in the interlocutor’s rather than in one’s own speech’ (p.374). These scholars added these types of mechanisms to their proposal in order to integrate ‘speech perception’ processes, and thus cover a wider range of problematic areas in L2 communication.

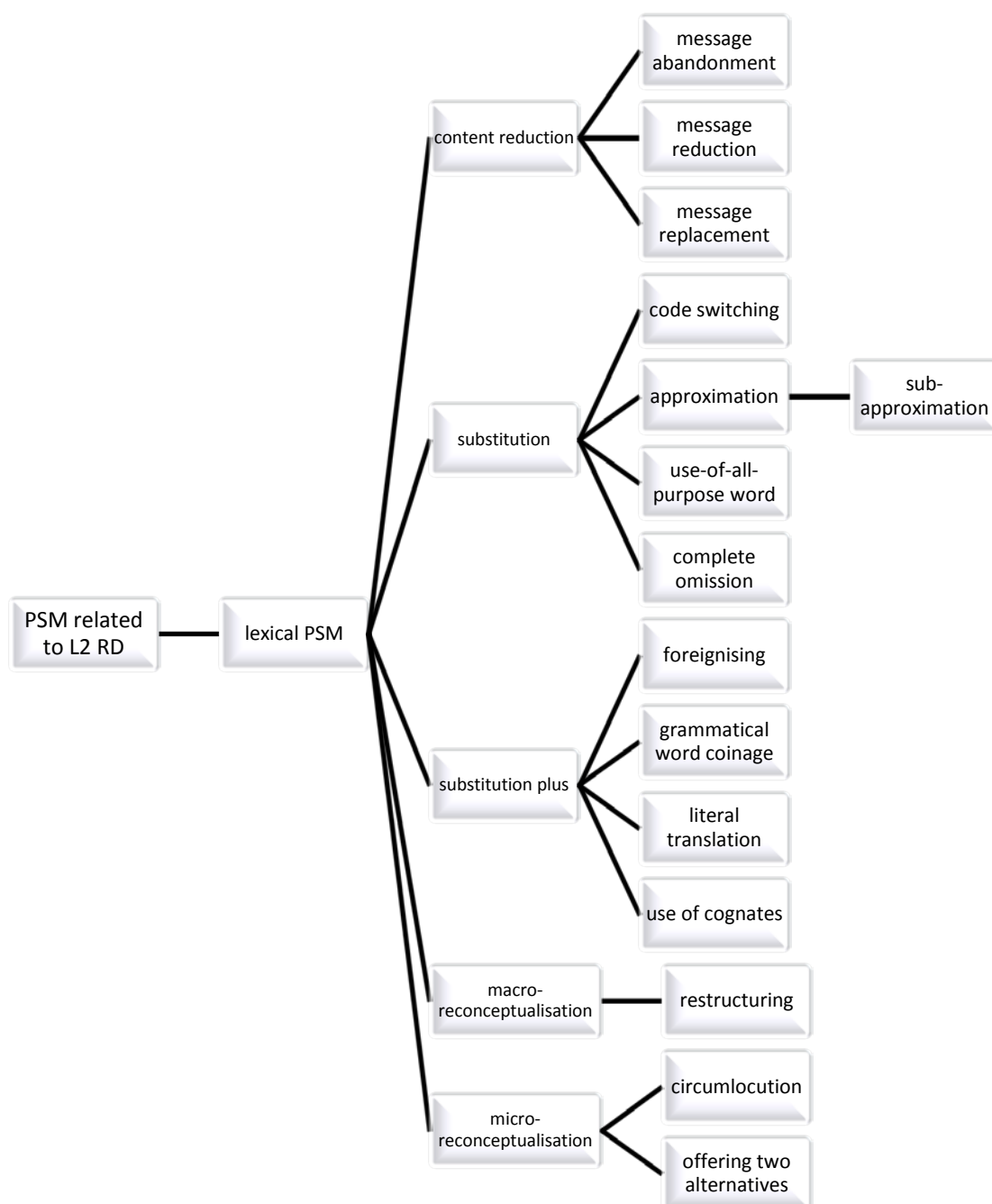
Finally, the fifth and last category, implemented in this study, aims at describing those mechanisms used in order to overcome problems that arise in communicating with another interlocutor and which therefore are solved through interaction. Dörnyei & Scott (1997) define this type of CS as those instances ‘whereby the participants carry out trouble-shooting exchanges cooperatively, and therefore mutual understanding is a function of the successful execution of both pair parts of the exchange’ (p.199). In this study and for analytical purposes, this category was subdivided into those CSs employed by the speaker who is having problems in communicating her/his message, ‘receiver’, and those mechanisms used by the interlocutor who gives assistance, ‘giver’.

In what follows, the subcategories within each main classification will be presented and described, together with their corresponding subtypes and CSs within each subtype; examples from the data obtained will be added, and the CS instances in each example will be underlined.

4.2.1 Lexical PSM-L2 resource deficit

Figure 4.2 below shows the first sub classification, lexical PSM, within the first main category ‘PSM related to L2 resource deficit’.

Figure 4.2 PSM related to L2 resource deficit



As can be seen in Figure 4.2, this subcategory is divided into five other subtypes which each include various CSs, thus constituting the subcategory with the most strategies; a fact that has made it the more studied problem area. This might indicate as Dörnyei & Kormos (1998) point out: ‘that a great proportion of the problems speakers encounter during speech production is lexis-related’ (p.358). The first subtype within this lexical PSM is called ‘content reduction’, which refers to those mechanisms utilised in order to ‘help the speaker to get over the problem situation and thus avoid a complete communication breakdown’ (p.362). The first CS within this subtype, *message abandonment*, is a type of avoidance strategy where the speaker gives up attempting to express his/her meaning and thus leaves

the message unfinished. This can be seen in the following example, where the speaker, after some hesitation and pausing, just stops the message and laughs. Her behaviour is later confirmed in her comments, where she indicates that she did not know how to continue.

Example 4.1 message abandonment

NNS6: para mi es el mismo pero eh no eh no hizo mi trabajo uhm después el el día antes de
-**risa**-de debo eh darlo y eh (0.4) **sí-**risa****
*for me it's the same but eh I doesn't eh doesn't do my work uhm after the the day
before mu-**laugh**-mu I must eh give it and eh (0.4) yes-**laugh***

Retrospective comments NNS6: I was trying to say I always leave my work till the last minute but I didn't know how to say 'the last minute' so I was trying to say the day before I have to hand it in (NNS5: yeah I got that) I was trying to think of a different way of saying it but still put across the same message. And then I didn't know what else to say and I didn't think I made any sense-**laugh**.

The following CS within the lexical PSM is *message reduction*, which is defined by the above mentioned scholars as 'reducing the message by avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic language wise or by leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources' (p.359). In the example below it is clear from what the learner says that she is using fewer words, by leaving out some items, thus reducing her message so as to be able to get her meaning across. The underlined sentence should have been uttered as in 'crees que es el mismo chico...'

Example 4.2 message reduction

NS: [con copa de champan?]
[with glass of champagne?]

NNS22: [champan **sí-**risa****-piensas el mismo chico pero ah
*[champagne yes-**laugh**-do you think the same boy but ah*

NS: [va con un traje
negro?]
*[is he dressed with
a black suit?]*

Retrospective comments NNS22: ...I think I just got scared to say too many words because the more you say the more that's gonna be wrong-**laugh**-so I just said a few words at a time.

The last CS subtype within 'content reduction' refers to *message replacement*, which has to do with a partial replacement of the message substituting it with a new alternative one. On a few occasions, this strategy in particular was difficult to differentiate from the CS called

restructure, which is also a lexical type of CS, but which according to my data refers more to leaving an utterance unfinished and changing it by finding a different way of expressing the message. The partial replacement referred to in *message replacement* can be observed in the following excerpt, where NNS5, as she expresses in her comments, could not say what she originally intended to, but managed to continue and thus tried to communicate the same idea with an alternative message.

Example 4.3 message replacement

NNS5: eh (0.3) cuando eh está en una no sé cómo se llama-**risa**-como cuando eh cuando mis amigos eh no tienen el mismo eh opiniones en una cosa y es difícil porque ...

*eh (0.3) when eh is in a I don't know what's called-**laugh**-like when eh when my friends eh don't have the same eh opinions in a thing and it's difficult because...*

Retrospective comments NNS5: there I wanted to say: 'when there is a disagreement with your friends or an argument between your friends' (so then you said 'cuando está and then...') yeah- **laugh**- I just missed out I just didn't know how to say argument or disagreement -**laugh**.

The following CS subtype within the 'lexical resource deficit PSM' points to those mechanisms whose main function is the 'substitution' of the message or part of it, through the changing or omission of the original plan for an alternative one. Learners can substitute L2 lexical items for their L1 equivalents, *code switching*, use an approximate or related term, *approximation*, or resort to a related term, but within a restricted lexical set, *sub-approximation*. Regarding the former one, *code switching*, the example below shows how NNS12 has to use an L1 word in order to communicate the intended meaning, in this case she meant to say 'traje' ('costume'), as referring to the man in the pictures the learners were describing.

Example 4.4 code switching

NNS11: [se viste en en el
[he is dressed in in the]

NNS12: [si en un costume-**risa**-negro
*[yes in a costume-**laugh**-black]*

The second CS that of *approximation* is used by NNS6, in the following example, when trying to communicate the word 'coat', as she commented later. She did not know the exact L2 word for 'coat' so she decided to use a related term, in this case 'jacket', and thus be able to express her meaning.

Example 4.5 approximation

NNS6: hay una fo fota ah con el señor y eh se vesti eh una cha chaque chaqueta eh y eh (0.3)
(I don't know how to say it)

There is a photo ah with the gentleman and eh he is dress eh a ja jack jacket eh and eh (0.3) (I don't know how to say it)

Retrospective comments NNS6: I was trying to say 'he's wearing a coat' but I didn't know the word for 'coat' but I knew the word 'chaqueta' so it's similar.

The following CS called *sub-approximation* is a phenomenon that was observed in the analysis of the present data, and therefore it constitutes a new strategy within this adapted analytical framework. As mentioned above, it refers to the use of a related term within a restricted lexical set. This can be seen in the example below, where NNS14 meant to say 'something' ('algo'), as she comments later, but uttered 'someone' ('alguien') instead, hence selecting the wrong pronoun within this set of indefinite pronouns.

Example 4.6 sub-approximation

NNS14: [señalando-**risa**- eh ah al alguien pero no sé qué

*[pointing-**laugh**-eh ah some someone but I don't know what*

NS: (vale)

(ok)

Retrospective comments NNS14: (alguien?) I meant 'something' 'alguien' is someone isn't it? Yeah I was trying to say 'he's pointing at something but I don't know what'. But I said 'someone' so that probably confused her-**laugh**.

The next CS within the substitution subtype is *use-of-all-purpose word*; where learners substitute the words they need with an 'empty' lexical item, such as thing, stuff, etc. In the present data, learners mainly used the words 'cosas' ('things') and 'algo así' ('something like that'). Additionally, if not knowing a word learners may leave a gap in their message and carry on communicating as if the missing item had been uttered; this mechanism is called *complete omission*. The former CS is shown below, where NNS24 used the word 'things' when referring to 'decorations', as she herself mentions in her comments.

Example 4.7 use-of-all-purpose word

NNS24: pero el está portando otra otra ropa y esta colgando las-**gestos**-eh poniendo las cosas-gestos-en...

*but he is carrying another another clothes and is hanging the-**gestures**-eh putting the things-gestures-in...*

Retrospective comments NNS24: I think I wanted to say 'decorations' I don't know why I just tried 'decoraciones', I think when you look at something you think it will be more complicated than it is 'cause it's just 'decoraciones', but you think it could be quite complex you sort of start simplifying a bit more, I guess it was better for me to say that because it was quicker and...

The latter CS mentioned above, *complete omission*, can be observed in the example below, where although NNS17 does not comment on it, it is clear that she meant to say 'tengo el dibujo siguiente...' (I have the following picture...), but opted for omitting the word 'dibujo' (picture) because of not knowing or remembering how to say it.

Example 4.8 complete omission

NNS17: oh sí sí y tengo el después cuando ha usado el saca corchos y...

oh yes yes I have the after when he has used the corkscrew and...

The subsequent CS subtype, 'substitution plus' strategies, refers to those instances where 'the speaker may also apply L1 or L2 morphological and phonological encoding processes' (p.362) as in *foreignising*, where the learner 'employs an L1 word and adjusts it to the L2 phonology or morphology' (p.360). In the following example, the speaker herself indicates that she is adapting an L2 word ('hipnoterapia') by making it sound Spanish, and thus adjusting it to the L2 equivalent.

Example 4.9 foreignising

NNS13: pues hago el yoga todos los días y hipnotera hipno-te-rapia también

well I do the yoga everyday and hypnothera hypno-the-rapy too

Retrospective comments NNS13: I didn't know what hypnotherapy was, I just guessed it (what did you do?) I knew 'therapy' and 'cause I've heard 'therapy' added to the first bit, and the first bit sounds like it comes from Latin or something and I always do that I guess and make it sound like it should be.

In this CS subtype ('substitution plus'), learners can also 'create a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word' (p.360), thus employing *grammatical word coinage*. In the example below, it can be seen that NNS8 is uncertain of the word 'vecinidad', since she also applied the CS *own accuracy check* to see whether the word is correct or if the NS understands her. When commenting on the use of this word, she clarifies that she meant something more similar to 'neighbourhood', 'vecindario' in Spanish, which is the word given by the NS.

Example 4.10 Grammatical word coinage

NNS8: ...colegio eh tuve eh mis amigos muy diferentes de aquí eh porque mis amigos
...school eh I had eh my friends very different from here eh because my friends
eh de mi vecinidad↑ De mi
eh of my *vicinity↑ of my

NS: [vecindario
[neighbourhood

Retrospective comments NNS8: I wanted to say of my area so I said ‘vicinity’, well I thought it was ‘vecinidad’ is that right?

Learners can also employ *literal translation* by resorting to their L1 or L3 to translate literally their message partially or completely, as can be seen in the excerpt below, where NNS5 realises that she used the wrong word when uttering ‘preguntar por dinero’ (‘ask about money’) instead of ‘pedir dinero’ (‘ask for money’). As she could not probably remember the correct word, she opted for translating it literally from the English ‘ask for money’.

Example 4.11 literal translation

NNS5: cuando no tengo mucho y y tengo que eh hablar con mi mamá-**risa**-y eh pregunta la a
por dinero-**risa**-porque no tengo-**risa**-
when I don't have much and and I have to eh speak to mi mom-**laugh**-and eh ask her
ah for money-**laugh**-because I don't have-**laugh**-

Retrospective comments NNS5: then I meant ‘ask for money’ (preguntar?) oh yeah is that for question right? **Laugh**- oh I just used the wrong word-**laugh**.

The last mechanism within the ‘substitution plus’ CSs addresses a new phenomenon observed in the data, and thus added to this adapted framework: *use of cognates*. This new CS refers to the use of an existing L2 word that looks the same as the L1 equivalent, but which has a different L2 meaning.

Example 4.12 use of cognates

NNS13: entonces mi mamá me meee di dijo que es una buena manera para paaraaaa copiarr
no copiar para (0.2) estar con esa
then my mom tol told me mee that it is a good way to too copy no copy to (0.2) to be
with that

Retrospective comments NNS13: I wanted to say ‘to deal with it’ but I had no idea how to say that (cope?) yeah but that’s wrong isn’t it, it’s like ‘copy’... sometimes you can translate verbs like so easily, but I knew that it wasn’t ‘copiar’ so I just said it (to yourself?) yeah and then I said ‘no’ ‘cause I didn’t want everyone to know that that was the right thing, so probably to everyone as well like ‘no no I didn’t mean that’-**laugh**.

The following subtype of CS within the ‘lexical subcategory of PSM’ refers to what has been labelled by Dörnyei & Kormos (1998) as ‘macro reconceptualisation’ which comprises the CS *restructure*. This mechanism is defined as ‘abandoning the execution of a verbal plan because of language difficulties, leaving the utterance unfinished and communicating the intended message according to an alternative plan’ (p.360). In several cases, this CS could be easily observed, even when comments had not been provided, in instances where for example the speaker starts producing his/her message, and then there is a sudden immediate change of that message leaving the former one unfinished, as shown in the following example.

Example 4.13 restructure

NNS23: ...tres meses o algo así para practicar un poco el portugués es que ahora hoy estoy muy tengo muchas ganas hoy pero es que antes todo sería...
...three months or something like that to practise Portuguese a little it’s because now today I am very I feel much eager but it’s because before everything would be...

Retrospective comments NNS23: I was gonna say ‘yo soy like nervioso’ or, but I couldn’t think of the right word so I changed what I was saying.

The last CS subtype presented in the ‘lexical PSM’ refers to what is called ‘micro conceptualisation’ and which comprises two strategies: *circumlocution* and *semantic word coinage*. The former one has to do with exemplifying, describing or illustrating features of the L2 item or action to compensate for the exact word/s. In the excerpt below, for example, NNS5 does not know how to say ‘he is locking the car’, thus she tries to explain that the car (thing) is safe by saying ‘cuando cosa es seguro’ (‘when thing is safe’).

Example 4.14 circumlocution

NNS5: eh no abre-**gestos**-pero cuando cosa es seguro es-**risa**
*eh does not open-**gestures**-but when thing is safe is-**laugh***

Retrospective comments NNS5: I wanted to say ‘he’s locking’ but I didn’t know how to say ‘lock’.

The last CS within this subcategory has to do with a new mechanism which was observed in the data, and therefore added to this adapted framework: *offering two alternatives*. It refers to those problem related instances where the learner utters two related L2 words at the same time, because of feeling uncertain which one is correct, and in the belief that by producing both the interlocutor will understand either item and thus will comprehend the message. This can be observed in the following example, where NNS12 expresses in her comments that she was not sure whether it was ‘saber’ or ‘conocer’, both verbs meaning ‘to know’, and although she does not expand on her explanation, it is clear that she tried both verbs in order for the NS to understand her message.

Example 4.15 Offering two alternatives

NS: ah y tú estudias español y francés y alemán no?
ah and do you study Spanish and French and German, right?

NNS12: noo no no no sé o no conozco
*noo I don't don't don't know or don't know**
['know', target word: conocer, conozco]

NS: ya
ok

Retrospective comments NNS12: I was like ‘no I don’t know them’ like ‘I don’t speak them’ like I was thinking ‘I don’t speak them’ and then I was like ‘is it saber or conocer’ like ‘to know’ ...

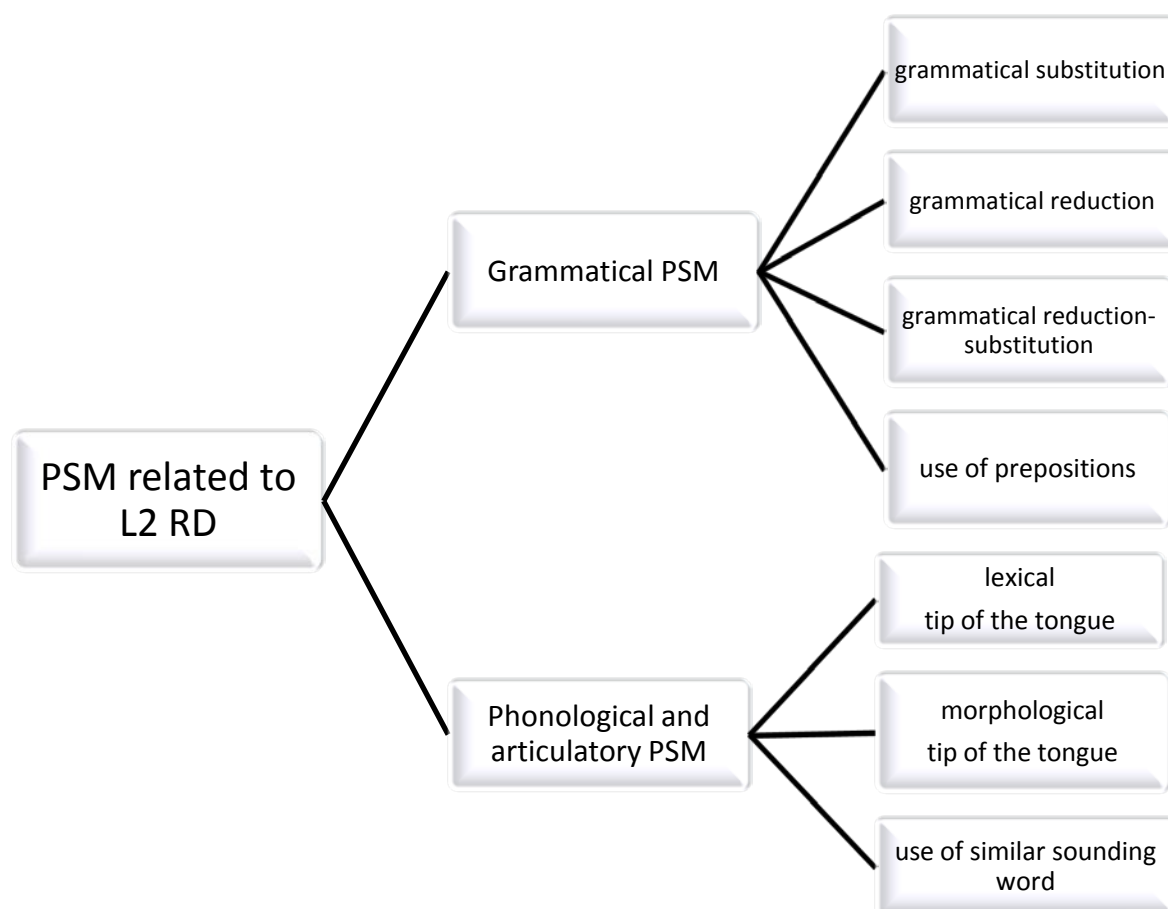
The latter CS above mentioned *semantic word coinage* was not observed in the present study hence it has been excluded from this framework.

The other two main subcategories of ‘PSM related to RD’ will be now presented together with their corresponding CSs.

4.2.2 Grammatical and phonological-articulatory PSM – L2 resource deficit

Figure 4.3 below shows the remaining section of the first main CS category, ‘PSM related to RD’, that is the subcategories above presented: ‘grammatical PSM’ and ‘phonological-articulatory PSM’.

Figure 4.3 PSM related to L2 RD: grammatical and phonological-articulatory CSs



The grammatical problem-solving mechanisms shown above consist of four CSs, the first of which is called *grammatical substitution*, and which refers to ‘changing certain grammatical specifications of the lemma through transfer or overgeneralisation’ (p.361). This CS in particular was observed and identified quite often in the present data. In most cases, learners tended to overgeneralise aspects related to the verb tense as well as gender, as shown in the following example. Here NNS7 indicates that she realised her error when using the present subjunctive ‘tengas’, instead of the present indicative ‘tienes’, and thus corrected herself. Although she does not comment specifically on what process she applies when producing ‘tu tengas’ in that construction, it is clear that she overgeneralised the verb form by transferring the basic structure from the first person ‘I have’ (‘yo tengo’) to the second person.

Example 4.16 Grammatical substitution

NNS7: piensas que tengas el primera *cuadra entonces y el final

*Do you think that *you have the first *block then and the end*

NNS8: ah vale risas

Ah OK laugh

['cuadra', target word: cuadro, 'picture']

Retrospective comments NNS7: Awful use of that conjugation there! I thought 'piensas que' and I was like 'subjunctive' does it need to be used here? And then it didn't need to be used here so...

The second CS in this subcategory is *grammatical reduction*, which was also observed and identified in this data quite frequently. In most instances, learners employed a simplified grammar, through the use of infinitives and/or present tense, instead of the correct conjugated form, and by leaving out grammatical words, such as prepositions, articles, auxiliares. Additionally, they tended to simplify the Spanish copula 'está' (to be) for the one English copula 'es', as shown below, where NNS22 produced 'es posible que el corcho es entre...' instead of 'es posible que el corcho esté entre...' (it is possible that the cork is among...) as underlined. In most of these cases, the learners did not comment on this in particular, yet this phenomenon was clearly observed and thus identified.

Example 4.17 Grammatical reduction

NNS22: risa-es posible que el cor corcho corcho↑-risa

laugh-it's possible that the cor cork cork↑-laugh

NS:

[el corcho si

[the cork yes]

NNS22: es eh entre las eh los cosas en el el techo↑-gestos-

is eh among the eh the things in the the ceiling↑-gestures-

The subsequent CS relates to the third mechanism shown in figure 4.3 within the 'grammatical PSM', *grammatical reduction-substitution*. This CS was added to this modified taxonomy for analytical purposes, due to the number of strategic instances where the phenomenon was not clear enough to identify it as either of the above mentioned CSs (*grammatical reduction or substitution*). Most of these instances have to do with an incorrect use of gender, as shown in the examples below, where it is not clear whether the learners are overgeneralising or transferring gender as in *grammatical substitution* by, for example, overgeneralising masculine gender 'el botello' ('the bottle') to the correct feminine construction 'la botella'. On other occasions, it is not clear whether they are using a simplified construction as in *grammatical reduction*, by employing simplified structures, as

in ‘un mesa’ instead of ‘una mesa’, in which case the learner might be reducing the article. Therefore this third CS was implemented in order to account for the most instances of strategic use related to ‘grammatical PSM’. In the examples below, taken from different interactions, this incorrect use of gender can be observed when NNS20 uses a masculine article and adjective when referring to ‘ropa’ (‘clothes’), which is a feminine noun, this latter noun therefore needs to be in agreement with the preceding items. In the second example, NNS10 applies the correct gender when uttering ‘nuevo trabajo’ (‘new job’), but not when producing the article which should be masculine singular ‘un nuevo trabajo (‘a new job’).

Example 4.18 Grammatical reduction-substitution

NNS20: sí los los otros él no está llevando la el mismo ropa es...

yes the the others he is not wearing the the same clothes is...

NNS10: no me gusta cuando tu eh empezar una nuevo trabajo

I don't like it when you eh start a new job

The last phenomenon within the ‘grammatical PSM’, which was also observed in the data and thus added to this framework, regards a problem source here referred to as *use of prepositions*. This phenomenon was included in order to be able to distinguish this type of problem to some extent, since it was difficult to identify what CS was being used in each of these problem-related instances. The excerpts below, taken from different interactions, exemplify this phenomenon, by showing how both learners choose the wrong prepositions. In the case of NNS1, she is using ‘de tren’ instead of ‘en tren’ (‘by train’), and NNS23 says ‘para hacer’ instead of ‘que hacer’ (‘not much to do’).

Example 4.19 Incorrect use of prepositions

NNS1:...entonces siempre eh (0.2) fuiamos de (0.2) de eh (0.2) tren...

...then always eh (0.2) we went by (0.2) by eh (0.2) train...

NNS23:...no tiene mucho para hacer entonces...

...doesn't have much to do so...

The next CS subtype within the ‘PSM related to resource deficit’ refers to ‘phonological and articulatory PSM’ which comprises three CSs: *lexical & morphological tip of the tongue*, *use of similar sounding words* and *mumbling*. The former one is defined as ‘an attempt to retrieve and articulate an item, saying a series of incomplete or wrong forms or structures before reaching the optimal form’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:361), this optimal form referring to the form that the learner thinks is the correct one, regardless of whether it is or not. This attempt to retrieve and articulate an item can be used lexically or morphologically. The lexical type, as shown in 4.20, refers specifically to lexical items as in this case the word

‘escaleras’ (‘stairs’) which NNS6 tries to retrieve and then succeeds by finding the correct form.

Example 4.20 Lexical tip of the tongue

NNS6: y eh hay eh las es escale escaleras↑ (can't remember the word) esca escaleras

and eh there are eh the st stai stairs↑ (can't remember the word) stai stairs

NS: mhm

Morphological tip of the tongue was added to the framework due to the type of data elicited, which showed that English L2 learners of Spanish experience difficulty when trying to conjugate verb forms, and thus attempt to retrieve and articulate a verb form following the same principle found in the original (*lexical*) *tip of the tongue*. The excerpt below shows how NNS11 tries to conjugate correctly the past tense of the verb ‘dormir’ (‘sleep’), by repeating parts of the verb form in present until he reaches the structure he thinks it is the best in order to be understood, but which in fact is still not grammatically correct.

Example 4.21 Morphological tip of the tongue

NNS11: ...anteayer eh no dor dor du duermo no duermo-**risa**

*...the day before eh I don't slee slee sl sleep I don't sleep-**laugh***

NS:

[no dormí]

[I didn't sleep]

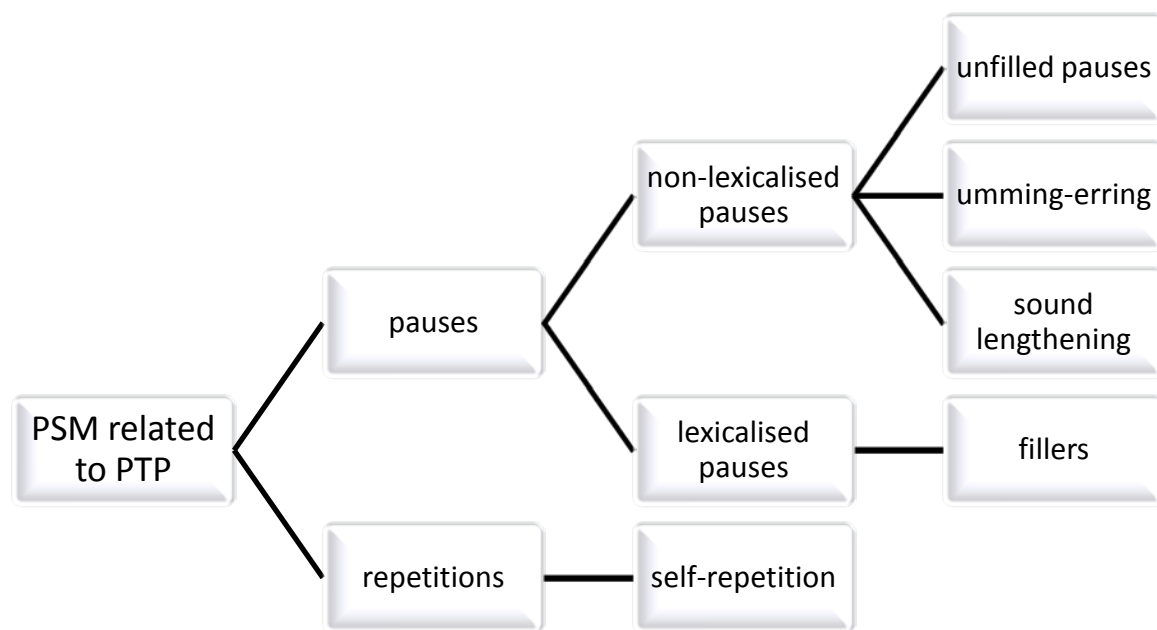
Retrospective comments NNS11: ... ‘durmiendo, duermo’ I didn't know which way, I wanted to say ‘I didn't get much sleep last night’...

The following CS, *mumbling*, which was presented in the original framework, was not observed in the present data and thus it was not included in the current taxonomy.

4.2.3 PSM related to processing time pressure

Figure 4.4 outlines the subtypes of CSs comprised within the second main category of this analytical framework, ‘PSM related to processing time pressure (PTP)’.

Figure 4.4 PSM related to processing time pressure (PTP)



This category is composed of those mechanisms used by L2 learners when processing the L2 language, hence mechanisms needed in order to gain time to process and communicate, and thus keep the communication flowing. The time-gaining mechanisms within this category are ‘pauses’ and ‘repetitions’. ‘Pauses’ are subdivided into ‘non-lexicalised’ and ‘lexicalised pauses’; the ‘non-lexicalised’ types of CSs, specifically *unfilled pauses* and *umming-erring* ‘require no additional processing but are inadequate in maintaining the appearance of fluency as they result in hesitant and disjointed speech’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:370). *Unfilled pauses*, as its name suggests, refer to the silent pauses employed by the learners when not knowing or remembering the words needed to communicate, and which are usually preceded or followed by *umming-erring*. This latter CS therefore differentiates from the above mentioned one, in that here learners try to gain time by filling the pause with sounds, such as *er, eh, mhm*, as shown in the example below. In 4.22, it can be observed that NNS16 hesitates about the verb tense, by first *umming-erring* and then by using an *unfilled pause* – which has been annotated in between brackets according to the number of seconds. Due to the frequent use of these two CSs, their identification and coding was limited to those instances where the learners employed both of them together as shown below.

Example 4.22 Unfilled pauses and umming-erring

NNS16: eh cuando era eh doce años↑ eh (0.3) fue

eh when I were eh twelve years old↑ eh (0.3) he went

NS: [fui]

[I went]

NNS16: [fui-**risa**-eh a Bar Barcelona]

*[I went-**laugh**-eh Barcelona]*

The third CS within the ‘non-lexicalised pauses’ is *sound-lengthening*, which is said to be ‘a more elaborate variation’ of these types of pauses, since ‘it is more effective in holding the floor’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:370). This stalling mechanism can be observed in the example below, where NNS24 draws and repeats the preposition ‘en’ (‘in’) so as to gain time to think of the correct word, which in this case is ‘armario/ropero’ (‘wardrobe’).

Example 4.23 Sound lengthening

NNS24: eh col colgando! esa es la palabra colgando enn enn el rincón

eh han hanging! That is the word hanging inn inn the corner

Retrospective comments NNS24: I couldn't remember the word for 'wardrobe', I wanted to say ideally 'hanging in the wardrobe door' but I just couldn't think of that or 'cupboard'.

The subsequent ‘lexicalised pauses’ consist of the CS called *fillers*, which ‘involve the use of various filling words or more complex prefabricated chunks’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:370). This CS was not frequently observed in the current data mainly because its coding needed the learners’ retrospective comments. From the instances in which it was identified, it can be seen that the learners used different filling words, such as ‘no sé’ (‘I don’t know’), ‘pero’ (‘but’), ‘también’ (‘also’), amongst others. In the example below, NNS15 employs another filling word ‘cuando’ (‘when’) to gain time and continue communicating her message.

Example 4.24 Fillers

NNS15: ...eh mm (0.3) entonces eh quizás mío es uno luego dos cuando eh (0.3) eh eh uno y mío es dos también porque...

...eh mm (0.3) then eh perhaps mine is one then two when eh (0.3) eh eh one and mine is two also because...

Retrospective comments NNS15: ...I think I said ‘cuando’ because it’s a word I know and that I keep on using, but maybe just to fill in space because I don’t know what else to say...

The next subtype ‘repetitions’ originally consisted of two CSs: *self-repetition* and *other-repetition*. The former one, *self-repetition* has a similar function to the use of *fillers*, in that by repeating a string of words the speaker is able to gain time and thus be able to keep the conversation flowing. This CS was frequently used, and since its identification did not need confirmation from the speakers, it was coded through observation especially in relation to its use together with the ‘non-lexicalised’ types of CSs, as can be seen below.

Example 4.25 Self-repetition

NNS1: en eh el último eh está ah en el aparcamiento hay un coche y el mismo hombre
 eh (0.4) está ah (0.2)-**risa**-eh está-gestos-(0.2) abrir con con-gestos
in eh the last one eh is ah in the parking there is a car and the same man eh (0.4) is
ah (0.2)-laugh-eh is-gestures-(0.2) to open with with-gestures

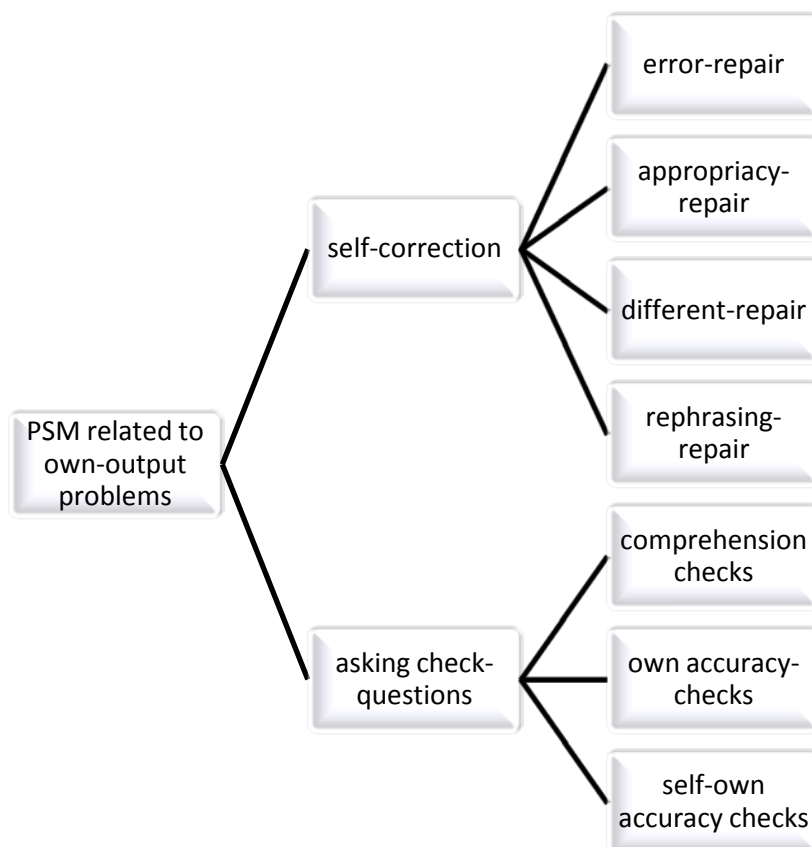
NS: sí

Retrospective comments NNS1: I was trying to think of the word ‘open’ and then the word ‘keys’...

The following CS within this subtype, *other-repetition*, was not observed in the present data, and therefore it has been removed from this modified framework.

4.2.4 PSM related own-output problems

Figure 4.5 PSM related to own-output (O-O) problems



This third main category called ‘PSM related to own-output problems’ refers to the deficiencies experienced by the speaker in his/her own L2 language production. This category consists of two subtypes: ‘self-correction’, which is formed by various repairing mechanisms, and ‘asking check questions’ which are directed to the interlocutor. The first CS within ‘self-correction’ is called *error-repair*, and refers to those ‘self-initiated corrections of accidental lapses in one’s own speech’ (p.372) and it can be used when correcting any type of problem related instance, such as grammatical, lexical or phonological. This type of self-initiated correction can be seen in the example below where NNS24 immediately corrects, in this case successfully, the verb form.

Example 4.26 Error-repair

NNS24: ...la gente son muy elegante es muy elegante y...

...the people is very elegant are very elegant and...

Retrospective comments NNS24: I think I said 'la gente son muy elegante', but it's a mistake, it should be 'es' but that's a recurrent thing because it's 'the people are', and it's hard to think in Spanish as 'people' and turn into a singular, you always feel it should be plural. So I corrected it like immediately to myself more than to her.

The following CS within these repairing mechanisms is *appropriacy repair*, which has to do with correcting specifically inappropriate information in one’s speech. In the excerpt below although NNS11 is not able to successfully correct the information given when uttering ‘la tercera’ (‘the third’), he does indicate that the word is incorrect, by saying ‘no’ and then by trying to correct it. In his comments, NNS11 explains that the word he was trying to utter was ‘la última’ (‘the last one’) referring to ‘the last picture’.

Example 4.27 Appropriacy repair

NNS11: y eh tercera no tercera eh (terminaba) (the last one)

and eh third no third eh (finished) (la última)

Retrospective comments NNS11: I was trying to say ‘the last one’ and I said ‘terminar’ like ‘the end’, ah ‘última’ that’s the word! I meant ‘la última’, the last one.

The third mechanism within ‘self-correction’ which formed part of the original taxonomy was *different repair*. However, as this CS was not observed in the present data, it has been excluded from this modified framework.

The last CS within this subtype is *rephrasing repair*, and it is defined as ‘repeating the slightly modified version of a word or phrase because of uncertainty about its correctness’

(p.372). In the example below, NNS7 rephrases what she previously asked NNS8, because she realises that she did not conjugate the verb form correctly the first time.

Example 4.28 Rephrasing repair

NNS7: piensas que tengas el primera *cuadra entonces y el final

do you think that you has the first picture then and the end*

['cuadra', target word: cuadro 'picture']

NNS8: ah vale- **risas**

ah ok-laugh

NNS7: tienes piensas que tú tienes el

Do you have do you think that you have the...

Retrospective comments NNS7: I thought 'piensas que' and I was like 'subjunctive does it need to be used here?' And then it didn't need to be used here. I realised I got it wrong, so I corrected it.

The second subtype of CS, within 'PSM related to own-output problems', addresses those mechanisms considered to be 'pre-repair mechanisms', that is 'check questions', since they are used in order to first 'elicit feedback from the interlocutor regarding the problem area' (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:373). In relation to the first CS, *comprehension checks*, its main function has to do with asking your interlocutor questions so as to check whether s/he can follow you. This strategy in particular was employed only once by a NNS, and on a few occasions by the NSs. In 4.29, below it can be observed that NNS23 is having problems in communicating her message, first through hesitation (laughing, *miming*, *pausing*) and then by showing her uncertainty about the interlocutor's comprehension of her message by resorting to this CS.

Example 4.29 Comprehension checks

NNS23: porque-**risa**-la cosa de la botella se va-**gestos**-eh (0.2) y se vuelva, entiendes? Como

because-laugh-the thing of the bottle goes-gestures-eh (0.2) and comes back, do you understand? like

NNS24: oh vale

oh ok

The subsequent and last CS within 'check questions' is *own-accuracy checks*, which was applied quite frequently by the learners in this study. Through this CS, the learners can 'check that what they said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question intonation' (p.373). From the data observed, it was possible to distinguish *lexical* as well as *grammatical own-accuracy checks*, although the process carried out by the learners was the same as illustrated below. Here NNS22 confirms the use of this CS when

saying that she expects confirmation from the interlocutor to check whether the word uttered is correct or not.

Example 4.30 Own-accuracy checks

NNS22: todas las personas las personas en la vida ah pueden influ influir↑ si? pero ah pienso...

all the people the people in the life ah can influ influence↑ yes? But ah I think...

Retrospective comments NNS22: I always do that if I think I might be wrong I just say 'si', I am just expecting someone to say 'yes' or 'no'-**laugh**- if I said it wrong then it's kind of 'do you understand me?', and then if she didn't say 'yes' I assume I said something really wrong and she didn't get it so, I think I was just doubting that I'd got that sentence right.

A variation of this strategy, a phenomenon entitled *self-own accuracy checks*, was added to this framework, due to the fact that a few learners resorted to this mechanism by repeating a word, with or without rising intonation, but to themselves, as shown in the excerpt below. It was generally observed from the NNSs' gestures, and sometimes confirmed through their retrospective comments, that they used this CS in order to check that the word they had produced was correct.

Example 4.31 Self-own accuracy checks

NNS20: ...y eh eh el-gestos-eh corcho {it looks as if he is saying it to himself} (saca) corcho está eh cayendo...

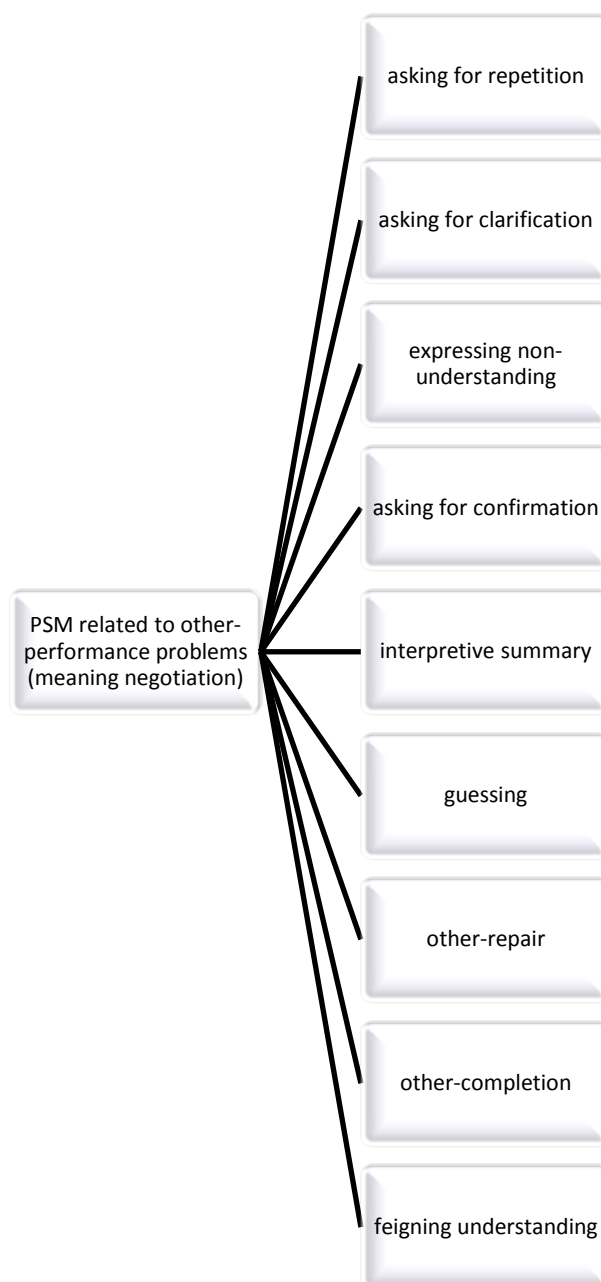
...and eh eh the-gestures-eh cork {it looks as if he is saying it to himself} cork (screw) is eh falling...

Retrospective comments NNS20: I was working out the word for 'cork', 'cause I knew it was a compound noun 'saca corcho'-**laugh**- I sort of found that's how I meant it in my head. I said it and then I had to just clarify that I had said the right word.

4.2.5 PSM related to other-performance problems

The following table (4.6) presents the fourth and last main category presented in the original framework proposed by Dörnyei & Kormos (1998). These CSs refer to meaning negotiation mechanisms which are triggered by problems in the interlocutor's speech.

Figure 4.6 PSM related to other-performance (O-P) problems



This category, as explained by these scholars, had not been originally considered in their framework, since it also includes speech perception mechanisms which had not been their focus from the psycholinguistic perspective followed. However, their inclusion was necessary in order to cover all the processes involved in L2 problem management. The first type of process, *asking for repetition*, has to do with not hearing or understanding something that the interlocutor has said as shown in the excerpt below. In this example, it is clear that as NNS20 was still finishing his previous message when saying ['el tiempo'] shown as an overlap, he could not hear properly what the NS was asking him, and thus had to resort to this strategy. In this study this CS was employed only in three instances.

Example 4.32 Asking for repetition

NS: mhm pero buscabas trabajo en España o

mhm but were you looking for a job in Spain or

NNS20: [el tiempo]

[the time]

NS: [o aquí en Inglaterra o

[or here in England or]

NNS20: cómo?

what?

NS: buscabas trabajo allí para trabajar en España o

were you looking for a job there to work in Spain or

NNS20: no eh...

The following CS within this category, *asking for clarification*, 'is used in order to request explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure' (p. 375). This strategy was not only employed by the learners, but also by two NSs who indicated that there were a few instances where they had to *ask for clarification* in order to understand what the learners were trying to communicate. In the excerpt below, NNS4 does not understand the NS's question and so she asks him to repeat, yet it is clear that she is attempting to elicit some explanation from the NS when trying to translate the NS's utterance into English.

Example 4.33 Asking for clarification

NS: de qué lo conoces el festival...

how do you know the festival...

NNS4: qué eh

what eh

NS: de qué lo conoces?

how do you know it?

NNS4: how do I (()) {puzzled look}

NS: **risa**-bueno y tus mejores vacaciones?

laugh-well and your best holidays?

Retrospective comments NNS4: I don't think I understood that, you can see that I asked him to repeat that...

The next strategy refers to *expressing non-understanding*, which was observed on most occasions because of the learners' gestures and puzzled looks. This can be observed in the example below, where NNS16 shows her non-understanding of the NS's question in the two underlined instances.

Example 4.34 Expressing non-understanding

NS: [¿y desde cuándo vives fuera de casa?]
[how long have you lived on your own?]

NNS16: **{puzzled look}**

NS: ¿desde cuándo vives fuera de casa?
How long have you lived on your own?

NNS16: cuando **{puzzled look}**
when

NS: ¿desde cuándo vives fuera de casa? ¿Solamente vives este año fuera de casa con tus amigos?
how long have you lived on your own? Have you lived on your own with your friends only this year?

A similar mechanism is the one referred to as *asking for confirmation*, where the NNS or, as was observed in this study, the NS ‘requests information that s/he heard or understood something correctly by repeating the trigger in a question repeat or asking a full question such as: you said?, you mean?’ (p.375). This CS together with *interpretative summary* and *guessing*, as opposed to the previous ones, are used when there is partial understanding, as shown below, where NNS5 requests confirmation regarding one word in particular ‘sueño’ from ‘tengo sueño’ (‘I am sleepy’).

Example 4.35 Asking for confirmation

NNS6: ...tengo sue sue sueño↑ sue sueño↑
...I am sle sle sleepy↑ sle sleepy↑

NNS5: Sueño?
Sleepy?

NNS6: sí, tengo sueño *todas las días y no no quiero hacer algo
*yes, I am sleepy *every day and I don't don't want to do something*
[‘every day’, target word: todos los días: every day]

The other two CSs which also require partial understanding of the interlocutor’s speech, as mentioned above, are *interpretive summary* and *guessing*. The former one was observed only on one occasion, where the NS due to the NNS’s ambiguous speech had to paraphrase the learner’s message to see whether she had understood correctly.

Example 4.36 interpretive summary

NNS15: eh cuan cuando era niña fui aaa fui Francia con mi con mi familia y eh no nosotros
eh camp camping↑ Camping en Francia y conducir conducir todos de la-gestos-
(0.3) conducir a In Inglaterra↑ en Francia-gestos-
eh whe when I was a child I went too I went to France with my with my family and
eh we we eh cam camping↑ camping in France and to drive drive everybody of the-
gestures-(0.3) to drive to En England↑ in France-gestures-

NS: ¿fuieste hasta Francia en coche?
did you go to France by car?

NNS15: Sí-**risa**

NS: oh

The next CS, *guessing*, as its name indicates, implies guessing part of the interlocutor's message when s/he is showing difficulties to communicate something in particular. In this study, due to the examination of both types of dyads, this CS was observed in both NNS and NS's speech. Excerpt 4.37 below shows how NNS8 is indirectly requesting help from her peer, who then helps her by *guessing* the action she is trying to describe. This kind of assistance provided can be confirmed in NNS7's comments.

Example 4.37 Guessing

NNS8: eh pienso que es un hombre delante de una tienda en la que está eh delante-gestos-de
la ventana de la tienda y eh (0.3)
eh I think that is a man in front of a shop where he is eh in front-gestures-of the
window and eh (0.3)

NNS7: ¿está mirando por adentro?
Is he looking inside?

NNS8: si eh...
Yes eh...

Retrospective comments NNS7: I was trying to explain what she was seeing and you kind of think what she was seeing and suggest it.

The subsequent CS, *other-repair* – which was also employed by both types of interlocutors – has to do with correcting something in the interlocutor's speech. In the example below, it can be observed how NNS12 utters the wrong word 'vino' ('wine'), a related word to what she wanted to say 'champagne', as can be seen from the sounds and gestures she makes. These actions thus help her peer to provide the correct word.

Example 4.38 Other-repair

NNS12: eh tengo un otro yy y él tiene la botella y hay una explosión-**sonidos-gestos-** el vino
eh I have an other aand and he has the bottle and there is an explosion-sounds-gestures- the wine

NNS11: [risa-ah sí champaña
[laugh-ah yes champagne

The following mechanism within this category refers to a new phenomenon called *other-completion*, which was observed in the present data and therefore added to the framework. This CS has to do with completing the interlocutor's message when noticing s/he is looking for a specific word. As happened with the previous mechanisms, this strategy was used by both NNSs and NSs in instances where their interlocutor needed some help to continue communicating. In 4.39 below, NNS24 is trying to communicate something different to the word 'agua' ('water'), and so NNS23 helps her by completing her utterance with the item needed 'vino' ('wine').

Example 4.39 Other-completion

NNS24: [risa-poniendo el el el agua o el
[laugh-putting the the the water or the

NNS23: [en el vino, en el vaso
[in the wine, in the glass

NNS24: [el vino si en el vaso si eh
entonces...
[the wine yes in the glass yes eh
so...

Retrospective comments NNS24: I was gonna say 'water', I think I said 'agua' and then I thought no no, and then I thought 'beer' but it looked like a champagne bottle, and then she said 'vino' and I was like yeah.

The last CS in this category refers to *feigning understanding*, which is defined as 'making an attempt to carry on the conversation in spite of not understanding something by pretending to understand' (p.376). Because of this latter fact, that of 'the learner pretending to understand', it was necessary to confirm the identification of this CS through the learners' retrospective comments. In the example below, NNS13 is having problems with two specific words, as she later confirmed, but tries to continue with the conversation without expressing verbally her non-understanding.

Example 4.40 Feigning understanding

NS: vale ah yo tengo una que está el señor, hay una mesa, encima una silla y encima el señor arreglando algo en los adornos que hay

ok ah I have one where there is the gentleman, there is a table, a chair over it and over the chair the gentleman fixing something in the decorations

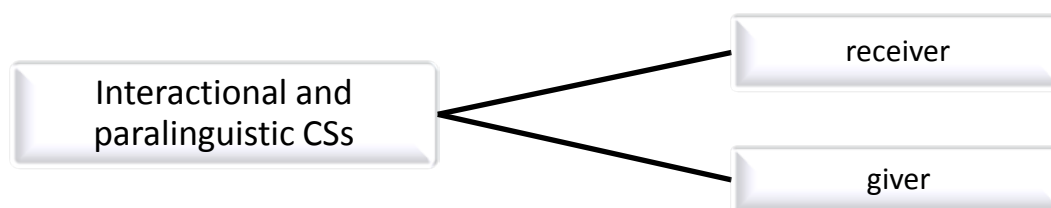
NNS: aha

NS: [en el techo]
[in the ceiling]

Retrospective comments NNS13: ... I was having troubles with 'arreglar' and 'adornos'... I think I was trying to convey without saying: oh what is that?

4.2.6 Interactional and paralinguistic CSs

Figure 4.7 Interactional & Paralinguistic CSs

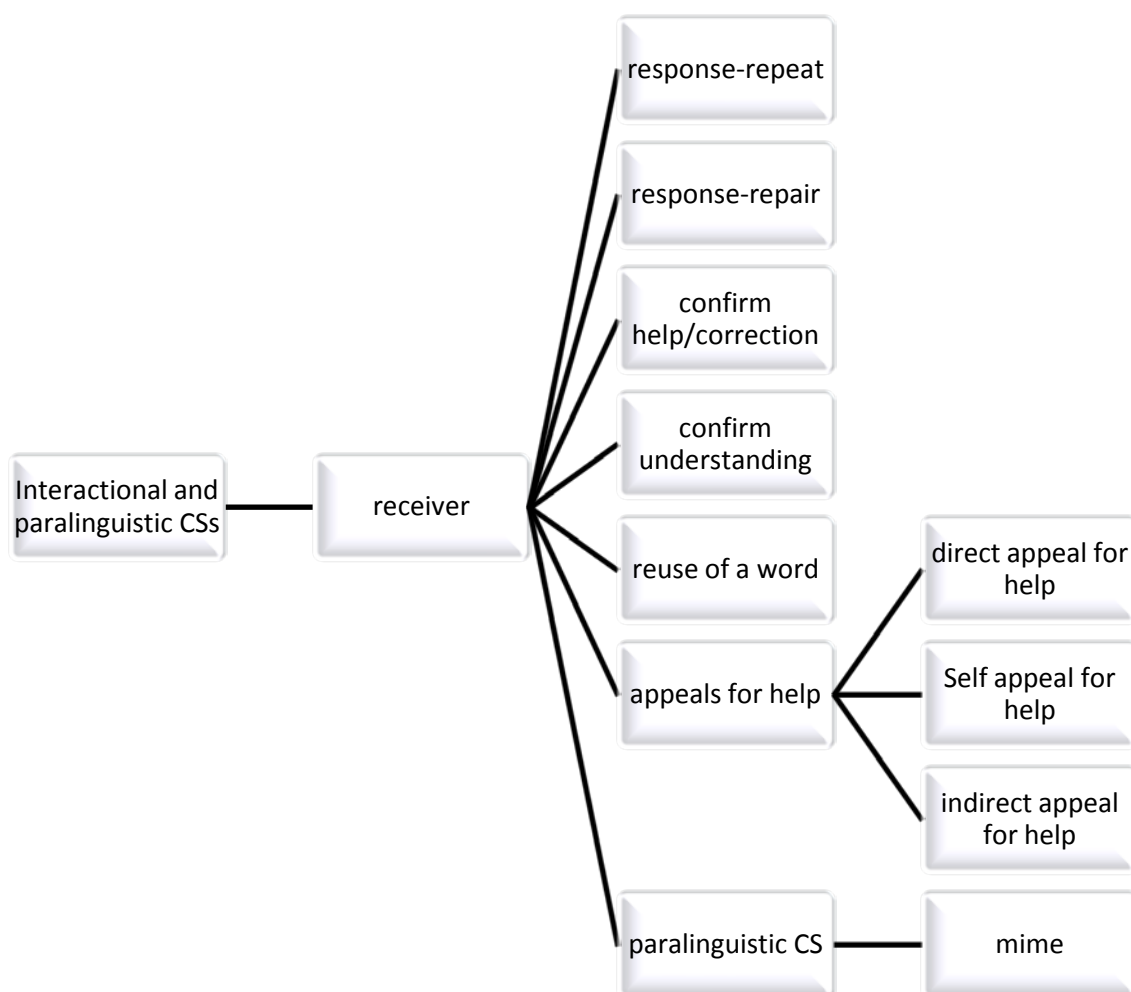


As mentioned before, this category was taken from Dörnyei & Scott's taxonomy (1995) and added to the present classification in order to cover a wider spectrum of CS usage. This category refers mainly to those interactional strategies 'whereby the participants carry out trouble-shooting exchanges cooperatively and therefore mutual understanding is a function of the successful execution of both pair parts of the exchange' (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995:160). The only paralinguistic strategy included in this category, *mime*, has been defined as 'describing whole concepts non-verbally, or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration' (p.162). This mechanism was originally classified by the same scholars under 'direct' CSs (1995), since it has to do with the use of alternative mechanisms in order to compensate for the lack of L2 resources; types of strategies which were later called 'PSM related to L2 resource deficit' (Dörnyei & Scott, 1998). However, as this paralinguistic mechanism also involves the participation of both interlocutors, it has been included in this study within the interactional type of CSs. The main distinction that has to be made regarding this last category (interactional & paralinguistic), when compared to the original one by Dörnyei and Scott (1995), refers to the modifications carried out in this adapted

framework and shown above in figure 4.7. As already mentioned, this category was taken from a previous review on these CSs, but because of the data observed in this study – which was based on NNS-NNS and NNS-NS dyads – it was necessary to make a subdivision into those CSs employed by the speaker who is having problems in communicating his/her message, ‘receiver’, and the interlocutor who gives assistance, ‘giver’; in both cases these CSs can be employed by either a NNS or a NS. Hence, this first subdivision will be now presented and its corresponding mechanisms will be described in detail.

4.2.6.1 Interactional & paralinguistic CSs: receiver

Figure 4.8 Interactional and paralinguistic CSs: ‘receiver’



The first CS presented within this category, *response-repeat*, is defined as ‘repeating the original trigger or the suggested corrected form, after an *other-repair* or *other-completion* CS’ (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995:165). This CS was used by NNSs mainly after the two CSs above mentioned had been employed by NSs, that is, mostly after their NS interlocutors had corrected or completed their message, as shown below, where the NS corrects the learner’s utterance.

Example 4.41 Response-repeat

NNS17: ...ha abierto eh un botella de cham(pagne) no sé-**risa**

...has opened eh an bottle of cham(pagne) I don't know-laugh

NS: champán

champagne

NNS: champán y eh...

champagne and eh...

The next CS in this category regards *response-repair*, which is considered a type of self-repair mechanism but triggered by the interlocutor as can be observed in 4.42. Here NNS16 realises that she did not use the correct verb when referring to 'play an instrument', and because of the NS signal of non-understanding, she manages to correct herself in the following utterance.

Example 4.42 Response-repair

NNS16: [eh con mi escuela↑ escuela eh para jugar en en una banda]

*[eh with my school↑ school eh *to play in in a band]*

NS: para qué?

for what?

NNS16: eh para que eh tocar

eh for what eh play

['to play', target word: 'tocar', 'play']

Retrospective comments NNS16: I say 'to play in a band' but 'jugar' is not the right verb is it? 'play' in like play a musical instrument I think is 'tocar', I think I corrected myself after, because I realised that that's to play a sport (how did you realise?) because she didn't understand.

Confirm help/correction is a new CS within the 'receiver' subtype which was added in order to account for those instances where the 'receiver' confirms that the help or correction provided by the 'giver' corresponds with the word s/he is trying to communicate. In the excerpt below, NNS12 confirms that the verb form provided by the 'giver', in this case a NNS, is what she wanted to say as she later expressed in her comments.

Example 4.43 Confirm help/correction

NNS12: ...y por eso ellos son ellos han (influir) mucho

...and for that they are they have (to influence) much

NS: [influido]

[influenced]

NNS12: oh influido yeah influido mucho sí

oh influenced yeah influenced much yes

Retrospective comments NNS12: I wanted to say ‘they’ve influenced me a lot’.

Confirm understanding is another new CS that was observed in the data and therefore added to this framework. It has to do with the ‘receiver’ expressing that he/she understands what the interlocutor has uttered as shown in the example below. Here, it can be observed that due to some previous non-understanding on the part of NNS15, the NS rephrases her original message which is then understood by the learner; her comments also corroborate this.

Example 4.44 Confirm understanding

NS: a mí también en mi casa cuando somos muchos y hay mucho jaleo y mucho alboroto
me too in my house when we are too many and there is some big racket and lots of fuss

NNS15: no-**{puzzled look}**

NS: [cuando hay mucho ruido y mucha

[when there is a lot of noise and lots of

NNS15: [oh sí]

Retrospective comments NNS15: I didn’t understand ‘boroto’ but I understood ‘ruidoso’

The following strategy, *reuse of a word*, also refers to a new mechanism observed in the data. This CS has to do with the learner trying to reuse a word uttered by the interlocutor (NNS or NS), at any time during the conversation, so as to compensate for the word that the learner needs in that instance as shown below. NNS21 explains in her comments that she was trying to use the word that the NS had previously uttered which was ‘atracador’ (‘mugger’), and although she does not produce the same word but ‘atacador’ – which sounds similar to the one given by the NS – she still managed to get her message across and continue communicating.

Example 4.45 Reuse of a word

NNS21: (0.3) eh (0.2) puede puede ser el

(0.3) eh (0.2) it can can be the

NS: [el atracador]

[the mugger]

NNS21: sí

yes

NS: sí no?

yes right?

NNS21: eh (0.3)

NS: y las de abajo? las fotos de abajo?

and ¿the ones below? ¿the photos below?

NNS21: eh (0.2) el un el otro eh ataca atacador↑ tiene un cuchí cuchillo

eh (0.2) the a the other eh atta attacker↑ has a kni knife

Retrospective comments NNS21: I didn't know what she had asked there so I was like and 'the other attacker' cause I didn't know if that was the word she had used before so I just thought oh I'll try to say that and she went oh yeah so I thought that must be right.

The following subcategory 'appeals for help' was originally classified under 'PSM related to RD-lexical' in Dörnyei & Kormos' taxonomy, but due to their interactional nature they were here categorised within the interactional type of strategies. As their name suggests, these types of CSs refer to requesting assistance from the interlocutor regarding a problem related situation. This subcategory consists of three types of *appeals for help*, according to the way the requests are carried out: *direct appeals for help* mean that the 'receiver' asks for assistance from her/his interlocutor explicitly in regard to a problem-related item/s. In the example below, NNS5 asks directly about the word 'dibujo' ('drawing') by trying to describe the word and pointing to the pictures.

Example 4.46 Direct appeal for help

NNS5: tengo una di-bujo↑ ¿Cómo se llama eso? son cuatro {**points to her pictures**}

*I have a dra-wing↑ what is it called? They are four {**points to her pictures**}*

NS: dibujo

drawing

Retrospective comment NNS5: I was trying to say 'the drawing'.

The second type of 'appeals for help' consists of a similar mechanism to the one above mentioned, but this time the request is addressed to oneself 'self appeal for help'. In this case

the ‘receiver’ is only partially uncertain of the word needed, and thus tries to retrieve the item by herself, as shown in below, and also confirmed through the learner’s retrospective comments. It is noteworthy that this excerpt was the only instance where a NNS commented on this process. On the other four occasions where this CS was identified, as there are no comments provided by the learners, this phenomenon might seem to be related to a type of stalling mechanism, such as *fillers*.

Example 4.47 Self appeal for help

NNS1: eh mi primera (0.3) pienso que es en una comisaría eh (0.3) y hay un hombre que que está eh como se llama eh (0.4) eh (0.2)-**risa**-ah...

eh my first (0.3) I think that is in a police station eh (0.3) and there is a man that that is eh what’s called eh (0.4) eh (0.2)-risa-ah...

Retrospective comments NNS1: (when saying ‘como se llama’, were you expecting the NS to help you?) no I was talking to myself-**laugh**.

The third CS, *indirect appeal for help*, is defined as ‘trying to elicit help from the interlocutor indirectly by expressing lack of a needed L2 item either verbally or non-verbally’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998: 361). In the example below, NNS21 is trying to indirectly request help by pointing to her scarf, which as she explains later was something similar to the word she needed to use in this instance.

Example 4.48 Indirect appeal for help

NNS21: pero tiene una {muestra su bufanda}

but he has a {shows her scarf}

NS: [bufanda]

[scarf]

NNS21: bufanda sí

scarf yes

Retrospective comments NNS21: I didn't know how to say 'scarf' or anything around my neck-**laugh**.

The last subtype of CSs within this category refers to the paralinguistic mechanism *mime*, which as above mentioned has to do with describing items non-verbally or by complementing a verbal CS with a visual illustration. Both characteristics were observed in the data analysed. The following example shows how NNS1 tries to remember the word ‘gafas’ (‘sunglasses’) but as she probably cannot retrieve the word she indirectly asks for help through *miming* the missing item on two occasions.

Example 4.49 Mime

NNS1: una chaqueta, unos eh-gestos-eh (0.4) una como se llama ah-risa-ah (0.3)

a jacket, some eh-gestures-eh (0.4) a what's called ah-laugh-ah (0.3)

NS: [una]

[a]

NNS1: una-gestos-risa

a-gestures-laugh

NS: ¿gafas?

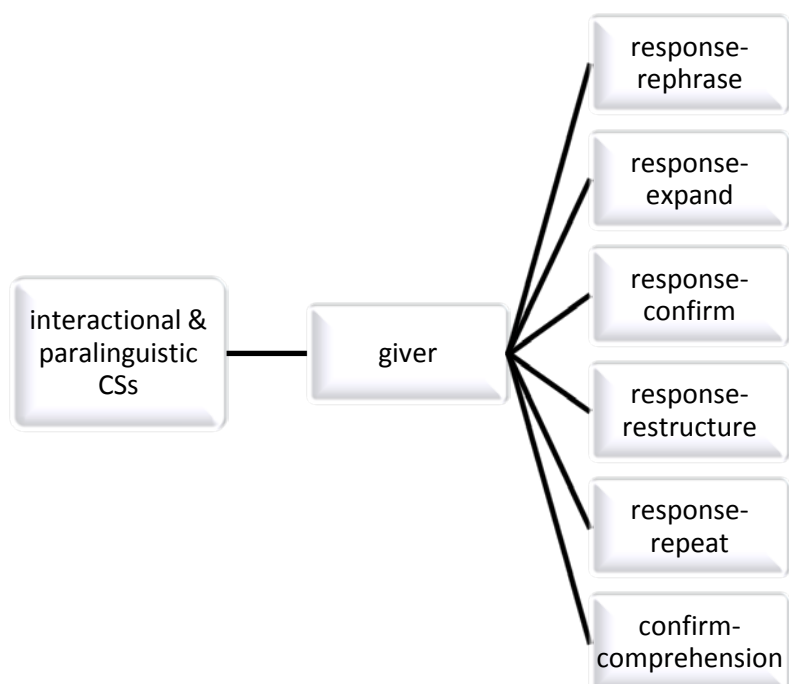
sunglasses?

NNS1: gafas! Eso

sunglasses! That's it

4.2.6.2 Interactional & paralinguistic CSs: giver

Figure 4.9 Interactional and paralinguistic CSs: Giver



As can be seen in figure 4.9, this subtype presents mostly CSs related to different types of response which, in this case, are used by the speaker who helps the other interlocutor to get her/his message across. It should be noted that due to the NS's linguistic expertise, this type of interlocutor was in a better position to assist the learners, and in fact some of the CSs in this subtype were only employed by the NS in response to the CSs used as problem indicators by the learners. Thus, although the CSs used by the NS is not the focus of this study, they were added here only in order to illustrate the mechanisms observed, which as will be seen, were triggered by other CSs employed by the NNSs.

The first CS, *response-rephrase*, refers to those instances where the ‘giver’ rephrases the trigger or the original utterance because the ‘receiver’ did not understand or hear clearly. In the excerpt below, it can be seen how NNS13 rephrases a previous utterance due to her peer’s non-understanding.

Example 4.50 Response-rephrase

NNS14: y a veces eh canto **risas**

And sometimes eh I sing laugh

NNS13: oh

NNS14: [porque relajar porque me disfruta y

[because relax because I enjoy and

NNS13: mm

NNS14: eh tómate eh (0.2) de la vida normal, si?

Eh take me eh (0.2) from the normal life, yes?

NNS13: de su casa en X , tu casa en X

From your house in X, your house in X

NNS14: si? No entiendo

Yes? I don’t understand

NNS13: no mm estoy tratando de decer decir la vida normal para ti es en X

No mm I am trying to say say that the normal life for you is in X

Response-expand is similar to the previous CS but, in this case the ‘giver’ (NS or NNS) ‘puts the problem word/issue into a larger context’ (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:192), and as was observed in this study, learners sometimes exemplify or complement this CS with *miming*. In example 4.51, due to the learner’s misunderstanding, NNS1 repeats her utterance but this time she modifies and clarifies the message by providing more information.

Example 4.51 Response-expand

NNS1: nunca he ido de vacaciones como esto eh solamente viajar (0.3)-**risas**

I have never gone on holidays like this eh only to travel (0.3)-laugh

NNS2: {**puzzled look**}

NNS1: eh a visitar las ciudades pero no no de unas vacaciones eh no sé ¿completa? En (0.3)

Eh to visit the cities but no no of a holidays eh I don’t know complete? In (0.3)

NNS2:

[(la

ciudad)]

[(the city)]

NNS1: sí, es pagado por por avión, por eh la habitación y eh la comida también, nunca nunca he ido de (vacación) como eso-**risa**-tal vez debo ir-**risa**-(0.5)

yes, is paid for for plane, por eh the bedroom and eh the food too, I have never never gone on (holidays) lije this-laugh-perhaps I must go-laugh-(0.5)

Retrospective comments NNS1: I was trying to say ‘a package holiday’, I was trying to explain it in a different way. I was saying like that ‘everything is paid for as in a package holiday’, ‘es pagado por la habitacion’ like for everything, because I didn’t know whether she had understood when I said ‘completa’.

The subsequent CS *response-confirm* was taken from Dörnyei & Scott’s framework (1995), but it was here adapted and extended to the CSs *confirm help/correction* and *confirm understanding* in the previous subtype (‘receiver’). Accordingly, in this study *response-confirm* belongs to the ‘giver’ subcategory, and indicates those instances where the interlocutor (NS or NNS) confirms what the ‘receiver’ has just said. The data revealed that this CS was usually employed after the ‘receiver’ resorted to *own-accuracy check*, as shown below, where NNS24 cannot remember the word for ‘ceiling’ and thus opts for using a related term, which she knows is not correct. This is why she resorts to *own-accuracy check* in order for her peer to *confirm* the word used.

Example 4.52 Response-confirm

NNS24: yo tengo uno cuando está eh como se llama-**gestos**-eh eh pe poniendo las cosas en
eh-**gestos-risa**

I have one when he is eh what is it called-gestures- eh eh pu putting the things in eh-gestures-laugh

NNS23: sí-**risa**

NNS24: sí sí en el cielo↑ **gestos**

Yes yes in the sky↑ gestures

NNS23: sí en el cielo-**risa**

Yes in the sky-laugh

Retrospective comments NNS24: I couldn't remember 'ceiling' I kept thinking 'cielo'? but that's like 'sky'.

The following CS, *response-restructure*, was also added in this study due to one problem related instance where the NS, in this case the ‘giver’, had to resort to this type of mechanism. This CS according to the data observed (example 4.53) refers to the changing of the message when the original meaning has not been understood, which forces the ‘giver’ to change the subject. As shown below, the NS (giver) tries to talk about something in particular (‘a festival’), but after some unsuccessful attempts on the part of the ‘receiver’ to understand the meaning, the NS decides to restructure and change the subject in order to continue with the conversation.

Example 4.53 Response-restructure

NS: mis vacaciones preferidas no fueron unas vacaciones sino un verano que fui a dos festivales de música y me la pasé muy bien. Fui al (()), el festival internacional de (())

my favourite holidays were not real holidays but a summer I went to two music festivals and I had a great time. I went to (()), the international Festival of(())

NNS4: si

NS: te suena?

does it ring a bell?

NNS4: pardon?

NS: te te suena?

does it does it ring a bell?

NNS4: si eh conoces?

if eh you know?

NS: [lo lo, sí]

[yes]

NNS4: sí

NS: de qué lo conoces el festival...

how do you know it...

NNS4: qué eh

how eh

NS: de qué lo conoces?

How do you know it?

NNS4: how do I (()) {**puzzled look**}

NS: risa-bueno y tus mejores vacaciones?

laugh-well and your best holidays?

Retrospective comments NNS4: I wasn't sure and I think I did understand it but I wasn't sure so I had to check it again and I went into English which is not very good.

Response-repeat is a CS also included in both subtypes of CSs ('receiver' and 'giver') within the interactional-paralinguistic strategies. In this subtype, it refers to the 'giver' repeating his/her original message mostly, as observed in this study, because the 'receiver' did not understand or hear correctly the message or part of it. In the example below, it could be observed in the video – and also confirmed through the comments – that this NNS did not understand what the NS asked her, which is why she has to repeat the question. This type of mechanism was only observed on a few occasions as being used by the NS.

Example 4.54 Response-repeat

NS: ...y ¿desde cuándo vives fuera de casa?
...and how long have you lived on your own?

NNS16: {puzzled look}

NS: ¿desde cuándo vives fuera de casa?
How long have you lived on your own?

Retrospective comments NNS16: I didn't understand that.

The last CS within this main category is *confirm-comprehension*, which is the same as *confirm-understanding* but this time is used by the 'giver' (NS or NNS) in order to tell the 'receiver' that her/his message has been understood and thus continue with the conversation. In example 4.55, NNS14 is having some problems to communicate, but as NNS13 understands her partner's message she is able to confirm it by saying 'I know what you are trying to say' as she later explained in her comments.

Example 4.55 Confirm-comprehension

NNS14: ...pero eh ella es un profesora y muy estricta y a veces eh ella no eh tiene eh (0.3)
(si simpática)
...but eh she is an teacher and very strict and sometimes eh she does not eh have eh
(0.3) (ni nice)

NNS13: ok

NNS14: no sé la palabra
I don't know the word

NNS13: sí sí eh pero lo sé qué está tratando de decir
yes yes eh but I know it what are trying to to say

Retrospective comments NNS13: and I knew what she meant, I was trying to say 'I understand' and so I was trying to say 'I know what you are trying to say'.

As the analytical framework used for the data analysis of the current study has been thoroughly explained, the analysis and discussion of results will be presented in the following chapters. This next section of the research, therefore, aims at examining the results obtained for each of the variables being investigated so as to address the research objectives.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS FOR THE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

5.1 Overview of results

As stated at the end of the previous chapter, the results obtained in the present study will be now analysed and discussed in an attempt to answer each of the research questions proposed. Hence, this chapter will focus first on the general aim of this study, which addressed the number and type of CSs used by English L2 learners of Spanish in face-to-face interactions with NNSs and NSs when carrying out two types of tasks. The general results obtained will therefore be briefly analysed, in order to examine the distribution of the different CS categories for all the data, and identify the overall patterns of CSs used by the learners. This will provide the basis for a more detailed examination of each of the variables specified in the remaining research questions: the use of these CSs at two different levels of proficiency, and in two settings: NNSs interacting with a different type of interlocutor (NNS-NNS/NNS-NS) and NNSs carrying out a different type of task (open/closed tasks).

Table 5.1 General results obtained for all the categories of CSs

CS Categories					
L2 resource deficit	Processing time pressure	Own output problems	Other performance problems	Interactional-Paralinguistic	Total
1522 (42.3%)	1121 (31%)	445 (12.4%)	115 (3.2%)	399 (11.1%)	3602 (100%)

Table 5.1 shows the total quantities of CSs, together with the corresponding percentage (shown in parentheses) obtained for each of the main categories present in the analytical framework. It can be seen that the category most employed by all the learners was ‘PSM related to L2 resource deficit’ together with ‘PSM related to processing time pressure’. The category least used is ‘PSM related to other performance’. These general results suggest that the learners in this study encountered more difficulties due to deficiencies in their L2 resources which, concurrently, demanded a higher use of stalling mechanisms (‘processing time pressure’) in order to compensate for gaps in their communication. The ‘PSM related to L2 resource deficit’ have been defined as ‘problem-solving mechanisms employed when resource deficits hinder the planning and encoding of the preverbal plan’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:358). This category involves mainly processes related to L2 lexical knowledge, which have been the types of CSs most studied so far (Bialystok & Frölich, 1980; Palmberg, 1982; Hyde, 1982; Raupach, 1983; Færch, & Kasper, 1983; Poullisse, 1987, 1990; Poullisse & Schils, 1989; Bou-Franch, 1994; Fernández Dobao, 2002, 2004; Rababah & Bulut, 2007). The interest in this type of problem indicates that most L2 learners may have to overcome this type of difficulty more often. Additionally, the higher use of this category in particular might be due to the fact that it also comprises grammatical and phonological mechanisms, necessary to compensate for deficiencies in these areas. These latter mechanisms have not been as thoroughly examined as the lexical ones and thus a further

analysis of the results, in the following section of this chapter, will aim at clarifying this aspect. The higher use of ‘PSM related to processing time pressure’ may be related, as mentioned above, to the also high production of ‘resource deficit PSM’, which may have required the learners to gain more time in order to convey meaning. These mechanisms are said to be used ‘in order to gain time and devote attention to [L2] processing’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:357), which implies that the processing of an L2 requires more attentional resources and time than is required when using an L1, as a few studies have also helped to confirm (Stewart, 1995; Wannaruk, 2003; Prebianca, 2009). Regarding the least used CS category that of ‘PSM related to other performance problems’, these CSs are defined as ‘meaning-negotiation mechanisms triggered by perceived problems in the interlocutor’s speech’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:374). They involve problems experienced by the interlocutor, which is why they are said ‘to be related not only to speech production processes but also to speech perception processes’ (p.374). Contrary to what was expected, the results show that learners did not need to resort to this type of CS very frequently. This may be due to other factors such as the type of task and/or the interlocutor, variables which will be analysed in chapters 6 and 7.

5.2 Analysis and Discussion of Results: Proficiency level

This section examines and discusses the results obtained for the first variable being investigated, proficiency level, which addresses the first specific objective proposed in this study: the extent to which this factor influences the learners’ use of CSs. Findings will be firstly analysed and discussed considering the totals obtained for this variable, including some statistical information, and then continuing with a more detailed examination of these results. This factor therefore will be quantitatively and qualitatively analysed and discussed. It is worth adding that for the qualitative analysis only the results that show a strategic frequency of 3 times per 1000 words and over, by at least one of the two proficiency groups, will be examined.

Previous to the presentation of these results, the total normalised frequency of CSs will be briefly examined so as to have a preliminary overview of these learners’ performance according to frequency of strategy use. The following table presents the language produced by the learners according to their level, in terms of number of words, the total number of CSs used by each level, and the normalised frequency per 1000 words of CSs in each group. Normalised frequencies are included in order to allow comparisons between the proficiency levels to be made.

Table 5.2 Results for the proficiency level according to frequency of CSs

Level	Language production	CSs	CSs per 1000 words
Level A	6552	1762	268.9
Level B	10142	1840	181.4

Table 5.2 shows the amount of language produced by the learners of each level, with level B learners (the more proficient group) showing the greater language production. Regarding the total number of CSs employed by both levels, it can be seen that the difference between the groups is quite low. However, the normalised frequency of CSs for each level shows a proportionally higher frequency of CS use by level A learners. This higher frequency on the part of the lower level learners finds support in most studies regarding the influence of the proficiency level in the use of CSs, in that the less proficient learners tend to use a higher number of CSs than more proficient subjects (Tarone, 1977; Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1980; Hyde, 1982; Labarca & Khanji, 1986; Poulisse, 1987, 1990; Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Safont Jorda, 2001; Fernández Dobao, 2002). The rationale offered for this difference is that lower level learners encounter more problems in communicating due to their more limited command of the L2 and thus require a higher use of strategies. However, it seems likely that another aspect, also mentioned in the literature – the learners’ choice of CSs in relation to their level of proficiency – might have affected these learners’ use of strategies more (Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1980; Hyde, 1982; Paribakht, 1984; Si-Qing, 1990; Fernández Dobao, 2002). Hence, in order to have a clearer view of how the proficiency factor might have influenced the learners’ selection of CSs, the following tables show the distribution of the various categories of CSs in increasing degrees of delicacy.

Table 5.3 presents the number of strategies used in each of the main categories of CSs according to level together with the normalised frequencies of CSs (in parentheses).

Table 5.3 Main CS categories by proficiency level (frequency per 1000 words)

Proficiency levels	CS categories					Totals
	L2 resource deficit	Processing time pressure	Own output problems	Other performance	Interactional-Paralinguistic	
Level A	740 (112.9)	557 (85.0)	185 (28.2)	65 (9.9)	215 (32.8)	1762
Level B	782 (77.1)	564 (64.5)	260 (25.6)	50 (4.9)	184 (18.1)	1840
Totals	1522	1121	445	115	399	3602

Table 5.3 shows that, in terms of the raw distribution of the different categories, the main difference resides in the use of the category ‘PSM related to own output problems’, which

was proportionally more used by Level B learners. It is worth noting also that the profiles of the two groups (reading across the table) are fairly similar with 'PSM related to L2 resource deficit' showing the highest CS frequency, then 'SPM related to processing time pressure', and 'PSM related to other performance' showing the lowest frequency. The only difference is that for Level A, the third most frequently used category regards 'PSM related to interactional-paralinguistic CSs', whereas for Level B is 'PSM related to own output'. Overall, the differences in the patterns of distribution are statistically significant ($df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 16.527$, $p = .003$), indicating differential use of the various CS resources by the two groups. Focusing on the normalised frequencies in Table 5.3, it is clear that Level A learners use all the CS categories noticeably more often than Level B learners, with the exception of 'PSM related to own output problems', where there is a much smaller difference. A tentative explanation for the relatively high use of this category by the more proficient learners might be that, as these learners possess more L2 knowledge, they may be more aware of their own performance, and thus be able to monitor their output more often by means of this type of mechanism. The higher frequency of CS use by the level A learners, in most of the categories, might indicate that as they have a more limited command of the L2, and thus fewer resources, they encounter more problems in communicating and therefore need to rely on CSs more often than the more proficient learners. In order to clarify these preliminary conclusions, each of these categories will be now examined with the view of elucidating the possible effects that this variable might have on the selection of CSs by English learners of Spanish as L2.

5.2.1 Analysis of results for each CS category

The next table presents the results obtained for the first main category, 'PSM related to L2 resource deficit', specifically the amount of CSs employed in each subcategory. Subsequently, each subcategory will be analysed in order to find out which strategies in particular were most applied by both levels. It should be noted that, on some occasions in the qualitative analysis, only a few instances of strategic behaviour will be examined due to the low frequencies of CSs produced.

Table 5.4 Results for PSM related to L2 resource deficit

CSs Categories and subcategories	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
PSM related to resource deficit				
R.D. lexical	307	47	336	33
R.D. grammatical	347	53	342	34
R.D. phonological-articulatory	86	13	104	10
Totals for category	740	113	782	77

The results presented in table 5.4 do not show noteworthy differences regarding the subcategories of ‘L2 resource deficit’: as expected, the normalised frequencies show more frequent use of all the CSs by Level A learners. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this category relates to the ‘L2 speakers’ deficient L2 competencies’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:357) and thus it relates to the three problem-related areas shown in table 5.4. In terms of raw frequencies, the ‘grammatical’ subcategory was the type of CS most employed by both levels. In fact, for both groups the profile (reading down the table) from highest to lowest CS frequency is the same: grammatical, lexical and phonological. However, the number of lexical and grammatical CSs for Level B is almost similar. This might be due to the fact that these more proficient learners may attempt to express more and more complex ideas, which poses more linguistic demands and thus pushes them into situations where they do not only need more lexis, but also more grammatical resources. On the other hand, the higher frequency of the ‘grammatical’ type of CSs, on the part of lower level learners, might suggest that due to their more restricted L2 knowledge and resources, this linguistic area presents more communication problems to them than to the more advanced levels. In order to find out whether there is any more concrete evidence for either of these hypotheses, each of these subcategories will be now analysed so as to observe which strategies in particular were most used by both levels, and thus be able to determine any possible tendencies.

5.2.2 Analysis of ‘lexical PSM-L2 resource deficit’.

The next table presents the results obtained for the first subcategory ‘lexical PSM’. Results which seem of particular interest are highlighted.

Table 5.5 Results for lexical PSM-L2 RD

LEXICAL PSM	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
<i>Content Reduction</i>	36	5.5	35	3.4
message abandonment	21	3.2	14	1.4
message reduction	8	1.2	10	1.0
message replacement	7	1.1	11	1.1
<i>Substitution</i>	116	17.7	100	9.9
code-switching	47	7.2	24	2.4
approximation	31	4.7	45	4.4
sub-approximation	24	3.7	15	1.5
use-of-all-purpose word	4	0.6	8	0.8
complete omission	10	1.5	8	0.8
<i>substitution plus</i>	110	16.8	121	11.9
Foreignising	13	2.0	11	1.1
grammatical-word coinage	9	1.4	5	0.5
Literal translation	88	13.4	103	10.2
use-of-cognates	0	0.0	2	0.2
<i>macro-conceptualisation</i>	26	4	62	6.1
Restructure	26	4	62	6.1
<i>micro-conceptualisation</i>	19	2.9	18	1.8
Circumlocution	13	2.0	14	1.4
offer two-alternatives	6	0.9	4	0.4
total for lexical PSM	307	46.9	336	33.1

As can be seen from table 5.5 above, the profiles of the two groups (reading down the table) are fairly similar with respect to the subcategories ‘substitution’ and ‘substitution plus’, which show the highest CS frequencies for both levels. However, their profiles differ in that the order of CS use for each level is different from highest to lowest frequencies: Level A resorted to the subcategories ‘substitution’, ‘substitution plus’, ‘content reduction’, ‘macro and micro conceptualisation’. Level B, on the other hand, resorted to ‘substitution plus’, ‘substitution’, ‘macro conceptualisation’, ‘content reduction’ and ‘micro conceptualisation’. As can be observed, the subcategory ‘substitution plus’ was most frequently applied by both groups, and ‘macro conceptualisation’ was the least frequently employed by both levels. A possible rationale for this strategic behaviour might be that ‘substitution plus’, mostly applied through ‘literal translation’, is a mechanism used by the learners to substitute an L2

item with an L1 equivalent, and by doing this, they also retrieve those L1 elements one by one ‘thereby creating a new (often incorrect) L2 lexical entry’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:364). Such processes, as will be seen in the analysis below, seem to be of easier access for learners at both levels. ‘Macro conceptualisation’ types of CSs, on the contrary, involve more complex processes as ‘they entail the analysis and decomposition of the preverbal chunk in order to be able to express it through a combination of lexical items’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:365). This type of CSs might therefore pose more linguistic and cognitive demands on the learners, and thus be less used than any other type of strategy.

In relation to the first CS subtype, ‘content reduction’, results in general do not show a high use of these types of strategies, although the normalised frequencies indicate that *message abandonment* was more frequently employed by the lower level learners. Hence, a brief account of what was observed in the data from this level will be now presented.

Message abandonment is said to be applied when the learner lacks the L2 resources, and is not able to stretch their limited L2 knowledge so as to get over the communication problem. The data analysis revealed that most Level A learners signalled their lack of L2 resources by means of stalling mechanisms, such as *umming*, *pausing*, *miming* as well as laughing, and on some occasions, by expressing this lack of resources by uttering ‘I don’t know’ before breaking off the conversation. This confirms that the lower level learners, due to their fewer linguistic resources, are unable to express everything they want, which forces them to stop their message, as they are not always able to overcome a communication problem. Fernández Dobao (2002) found similar results in that lower levels used a higher number of ‘content reduction’ mechanisms – also called ‘avoidance’ strategies – when faced with lexical difficulties, which were the type of data elicited in her study. Thus, it seems that the less proficient learners may be more prone to this type of avoidance behaviour, which according to Palmberg (1983) is “‘an easy way out’ for the foreign language learner who is unable to communicate a desired meaning due to vocabulary difficulty’ (p.153). This factor mentioned by Palmberg seemed to be the cause in most of the instances of *message abandonment* observed here. Corder (1983), on the other hand, refers to this type of mechanism as a less extreme avoidance type of CS, in that although the learner gives up the message, s/he at least attempts to get it across; a feature which was also observed in most problematic instances. Hence, the fact that the less proficient learners resorted to this CS, relatively more often, than the more proficient subjects confirms what was already mentioned that, due to their more limited linguistic knowledge and resources, these learners will be slightly more likely to leave their message unfinished when facing communication

difficulties. On the other hand, the more proficient learners will less likely abandon their message, but will instead attempt to either *reduce* or *replace* meaning.

The next CS subtype most frequently used within ‘lexical PSM-L2 resource deficit’ concerns ‘substitution’ mechanisms used for substituting the message or part of it, through the changing or omission of the original plan for an alternative one. In the ‘substitution’ subtype, the results show that *code-switching* was more often applied by Level A learners, and it is the CS that shows a more substantial difference in number and frequency to the results obtained for Level B. This strategy consists of ‘including L1 or L3 words with L1 or L3 pronunciation in L2 speech’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:359). This higher use of an L1/L3 on the part of the less proficient learners appears to be compatible with most studies (Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1980; Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Wannaruk, 2003; Fernández Dobao, 2004; García Nuñez, 2006) in that lower level learners tend to make more use of these L1 based strategies, or ‘transfer CSs’ (Tarone, 1977; Corder 1983) because of their restricted L2 knowledge. The data reveals that the Level A learners resorted to this mechanism, on most occasions, when lacking the L2 word/s – mostly nouns as in 5.1.1 below – as well as when formally expressing such lack by saying: ‘I don’t know the word’, ‘I don’t know how to say it’, etc., through which they were also *indirectly appealing for help*. Additionally, it was used as complement of other CSs as in 5.1.2, where NNS6A instead of *translating literally* the verb ‘goes up’ or simply applying *code switching*, uses both CSs together and adds *miming* so as to be able to get her message across. A last use of this CS pointed to the use of discourse markers, such as ‘so’, ‘then’, ‘I mean’, in order for the learner to try to connect ideas or, on some other occasions, of random exclamations such as ‘wait!’. In such cases, as well as on some occasions where they produced discourse markers, it was clear that their switch to English was unconscious, as reflected in their gestures – which could be observed from the videos of their interactions – and also because the learners did not comment on these particular instances.

Example 5.1.1 Code switching

NNS12A: sí en un costume-**risa**-negro

*Yes in a costume-**laugh**-black*

Example 5.1.2

NNS6A: si y va up-**gestos**-las escaleras

*yes and (he) goes up-**gestures**-the stairs*

Example 5.1.3

NNS21B: [eh ah (hay una (0.2) gap)-**risa**-eh no sé eh eh sí eh porque cuando cuando era en colegio...

*[eh ah (there is a (0.2) gap)-**laugh**-eh I don't know yes eh because when when I was at school...*

Retrospective comments NNS21: I was gonna say 'there is a big gap' between us, because I meant to say she's 28, but I didn't know how to say 'gap' so I think I just said it in English because I didn't know how to finish it-**laugh**.

Hence, it was found that this CS proved to be quite useful, especially for the lower level learners, in that they were able to continue communicating their message by using this strategy in different ways, thus avoiding a communication breakdown. It is interesting to note that one of these strategic uses has to do with an unconscious and random application of this CS, which was not so common in the more proficient learners, who employed *code switching* mostly in a more conscious way to compensate for the lack of a specific L2 term, mostly nouns, as shown in example 5.1.3. This last aspect was also found by Wannaruk (2003), who observed that lower level Chinese students employed this CS much more frequently than more proficient learners, and that the two levels used it in different ways. Poulisse & Schils (1989) also found that lower level learners, because of their limited command of the L2, have to resort to their L1 more often. The results here, therefore, seem to indicate that these learners' proficiency level affects the way they communicate, since it makes them more prone to switching to their L1, in problem-related instances, than the more proficient learners. This unconscious switch to their L1 also suggests that their mother tongue is perhaps 'nearer the surface' as they attempt to use the L2. Moreover, the fact that the lower level learners resorted to this CS much more frequently than the more proficient subjects in order to compensate for, especially, nouns seems to suggest that lexis may be more salient for these learners. This aspect appears to be in line with Pienemann's Processability theory (1998, 2005) of second language acquisition (SLA), which proposes that in the early stages of language generation, learners are primarily concerned with distinct lexical items, a process that precedes the 'phrasal procedure', in which the learners are able to integrate those lexical items correctly in longer utterances. He argues that in the first stages of SLA '...the beginning learner is unable to produce any structures which rely on the exchange of specific L2 grammatical information using syntactic procedures' (2005:11). This supports the findings observed for this CS, in that the less proficient learners encountered more problems related to lexis, which they tried to compensate by *switching* to

their L1, confirming therefore the relevance of such aspect when starting to produce the target language.

Of the remaining subcategories within 'lexical substitution', the CSs which produced a fairly good number of strategies are *approximation* and *sub-approximation*. The normalised frequencies still show a higher use of these CSs on the part of level A learners; however, the difference in both levels regarding *approximation* is quite low, showing a fairly similar frequency for both groups. It is also noteworthy that this mechanism is the only one that presents the highest frequency within 'substitution' CSs in the more proficient group, which may suggest differences in strategic use. Thus the data from both levels will be considered in order to examine those differences.

Approximation, also referred to as an L2-based CS (Tarone, 1977; Bialystok and Fröhlich, 1980; Færch and Kasper, 1983), has to do with using L2 alternative lexical items that are related to the target items needed to communicate. The data reveals that the more proficient learners resorted to this CS for three main purposes, illustrated in the following examples.

Example 5.2.1 Approximation-similar level

NNS19B: ...y ennn una pintura eh en ese esa hoja hoja está eh poniendo los decoraciones...

...and inn a painting eh in that that sheet sheet (he) is eh putting the decorations...

Retrospective comments NNS19B: I meant 'picture', that was the closest I had to think of at the time on the spot but I should have said 'dibujo' maybe.

Example 5.2.2 Approximation-synonym

NNS24B: ...y se puede ver la la ropa más más elegante...

...and you can see the the more more elegant clothes...

Retrospective comments NNS24B: I think I didn't wanna say 'elegante' it was a silly word, I wanted to say 'formal', but I don't know why I didn't say 'formal' (in Spanish), I just picked 'elegant' and we kept saying it...

Example 5.2.3 Approximation-superordinate term

NNS8B: ...champaña y pienso que eh es un hombre ennn suuu casa y hay tiene-**risa**-
tiene-**risa**-tiene la *botela de champaña y hay un eh explosión-gestos-de eh del
*botela-**gestos**-y-**risa**
*...champagne and I think that eh is a man innn hisss house and there (he) has-
laugh-has-laugh-has the bottle of champagne and there is eh explosion-gestures-of
eh of the bottle-gestures-and-laugh*

[‘botela’, target word: botella ‘bottle’]

Retrospective comments NNS8B: I wanted to say ‘it popped’-**laugh**-but then started to think ‘it burst’ and then I couldn’t think what ‘burst’ was and then I thought of explosion-**laugh**.

The most common mechanism was to substitute a target lexical item with another one related at a similar level, as in 5.2.1. Here, NNS19B was not able to convey the appropriate word, which she explains was ‘dibujo’ (drawing’), and thus employs a related word, ‘pintura’ (painting), which shares semantic features with the target term. These learners also *approximated* L2 terms by applying synonyms of the intended L2 items, as in 5.2.2, where NNS24B indicates that the word she wanted to use was ‘formal’, but used ‘elegant’ instead. In this case, it was possible to identify this CS only because of the learner’s comments, since as this word was a synonym, it adequately expressed the intended meaning. A third usage of *approximation* has to do with the application of a superordinate term, such as the one used by NNS8B in 5.2.3. She wanted to indicate that ‘the cork popped or burst’, but as she could not communicate that exact meaning, she used a more general term ‘explosion’, which also shares semantic features with the intended meaning. In some of the problem-related instances the learners signalled the use of this CS by means of hesitation markers (*pauses*) and stalling mechanisms (*sound lengthening*). On a few other occasions, this CS was used in combination with *own-accuracy checks*.

The main difference between groups pointed to the fact that Level A learners employed *approximation* mostly in conjunction with a variety of other strategies, such as *tip of the tongue phenomenon*, *literal translation*, *own-accuracy checks*, *grammatical reduction* and *circumlocution*, whilst Level B learners *approximated* the intended L2 meaning with just specific lexical item/s. This varied use of other strategies, together with *approximation*, on the part of level A learners seems to suggest that the proficiency level does affect their use of this CS in particular. These learners do encounter more problems when attempting to

communicate, and therefore to find the intended meaning, which causes them to convey their message through the use of more than one CS. On the other hand, the way level B *approximated* meaning with just specific lexical words shows that both groups apply their L2 linguistic knowledge differently. Finally, the fact that this latter, more proficient, group resorted to this mechanism quite frequently appear to be concurrent with some studies, which have found that this CS is more frequently employed by more proficient learners than those from lower levels (Wannaruk, 2003; Fernández Dobao, 2004), and in particular, with those observed by Fernández Dobao (2004), who found most of the same purposes for *approximating* in intermediate and advanced learners.

Sub-approximation refers to a new CS added in this study, and which attempted to account for a phenomenon similar to the one above examined. This CS has to do with the use of alternative lexical item/s, which share semantic features with the target structure, but specifically within a restricted lexical set. This CS was more frequently employed by the level A learners as shown in table 5.5. The data revealed that in all the problem-related instances, these learners seemed to select the incorrect item within this specific set, yet they were still able to express meaning. As can be seen in 5.3, NNS5A opts for the wrong expression ‘me gusta’ (‘I like’), when referring to her parents, within the set of ‘gustar/querer/amar’; a confusing aspect for her as she mentioned in her comments.

Example 5.3 Sub-approximation

NNS5A: si si es dificil porque eh *me quiero los dos y no no quiero que decidir que eh me gusta mucho eh mucho eh más mi madre o mi padre-**risa**

yes yes it's difficult because eh I love both and I don't I don't want that decide that eh I like much eh much eh my mother or my father-laugh

['me quiero los dos', target word: 'quiero a los dos'/los quiero a ambos', 'I love them both']

Retrospective comment NNS5A: ‘You don’t want to decide who you are gonna’... then I wanted to say ‘to love’ but I couldn’t remember which one ‘like’ was the right for parents cause we have a different way to say ‘to love one more than the other’, I just couldn’t remember which way to say it.

In various cases other CSs were also used together with *sub-approximation*, as occurred with the Level A learners when employing *approximation*. Additionally, there were other few problem-related situations which had to do with other types of sets, such as the prepositional

sets 'abajo/debajo' ('below or underneath'), demonstrative adjectives 'esto/eso' ('this/that'), and adverbs of place 'aquí/ahí' ('here/there'), amongst others. The higher frequency of *sub-approximation* seems to suggest that the less proficient subjects, who are in their first stages of L2 learning, feel more insecure about their L2 knowledge, and thus make a constant and inappropriate selection of words or structures in the target language. Although this aspect may represent both levels, in that the learners from both groups still belong to this stage, the higher use of this CS, in particular on the part of beginner levels, suggests that their proficiency level plays an important role. Their more noticeable lack of L2 resources forces them to be constantly trying out different related items in the target language in an attempt to find the most appropriate terms. These findings also seem to confirm an aspect previously mentioned regarding lexis and its relevance for the lower levels. The fact that these learners, who are in their early stages of L2 acquisition, are still uncertain about which lexical items to appropriately employ in communication, demonstrates again that lexis is an area within this L2 which constitutes a main problem source for these lower levels.

The following CS subtype which also shows a frequent use, although by both groups, is 'substitution plus'. This subcategory is formed by those mechanisms that involve 'an initial substitution process and subsequent construction process leading to the creation of a new lexical entry' (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:364). Conversely, the only CS that produced the highest frequency within this subtype was *literal translation*, which surprisingly was applied quite frequently by both groups, although there is a slight difference favouring level A. *Literal translation* as its name suggests refers to the literal translation of word/s or structure/s from an L1 or L3 to the L2. This CS has also been referred to as 'transfer' or L1-based strategy, as *code switching* and *foreignising*, and as such it has been found to be preferred by lower level learners who, because of their limited L2, tend to resort to this type of CSs more often (Tarone, 1977; Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1980). The fact of transferring words and structures from an L1 seems an easier and more reliable way of facing communication problems when at such early stages of L2 learning. However, as in this study this mechanism was employed fairly frequently by both groups, the data of both levels was observed so as to find some differences which might be related to their proficiency levels.

One similarity observed concerns the ways in which this CS was used by both groups: learners applied this CS mostly in order to translate isolated words and/or phrases word for word from English into Spanish, and verbal structures. In 5.4.1, NNS5A translated each word from her L1 so as to express her intended meaning, and so producing a less comprehensible message, which is later clarified through her comments. The second CS usage can be observed in 5.4.2, where although the learners did not provide comments, it is

still clear that they take the structure from their L1 ‘he is not wearing’, and transferred it exactly into Spanish. In some problem-related instances in both levels the learners also used other CSs together with *literal translation*.

Example 5.4.1 Literal translation-word for word

NNS5A: ...entonces ahora *es en su casa y luego eh *bajo las escaleras a afuera
...so now he is in his house and then eh down the stairs o outside

[‘es en su casa’, target word: está en su casa, ‘he is in his house’]

[‘bajo’, target word: baja, ‘he goes down’]

Retrospective comments NNS5A: I was trying to say ‘he’s down the stairs outside’

Example 5.4.2 Literal translation-verbal structures

NNS20B: sí los los otros el no está llevando la * el mismo ropa es
yes the the others he is not wearing the the same clothes is

NNS19B: sí el está llevando como un traje
yes he is wearing like a suit

[‘el mismo ropa’, target word: la misma ropa, ‘the same clothes’]

The main difference in the use of this CS by both groups relates to the output of the more proficient learners, which was more comprehensible than the output of those lower level subjects. Although in both groups those translated instances are noticeable, the outcome of the lower level group is not easily comprehended due to their more rudimentary L2 language. For example in 5.4.1 above, it is difficult to understand the translated structure since at first it is not clear whether NNS5A is using the verb ‘bajar’ (‘to go down’) in its present or past form as in ‘él baja o bajó las escaleras’ (‘he is going down or he went down the stairs’), and then whether she wanted to add something such as ‘va hacia afuera’ (‘he goes out’), which would have been a more comprehensible description of the picture she was observing. Hence, thanks to her retrospective comments, it is possible to observe that she opted for translating the English structure she had in mind word for word; an outcome that is not grammatically correct, but which helps the learner to get at least the gist of her message across. The utterances of level B learners, on the other hand, are more understandable in this respect, since although those translated structures are still incorrect, these learners seem to use more appropriate words that as a whole appear to be less odd and closer to the intended target structure.

The last difference which emerged when further examining the data has to do with the types of items each level transferred from their L1, and although the frequencies are fairly small, some slight differences are still observable. The lower level learners tended to transfer lexical items more frequently (frequency: 4.3) than the Level B learners (3.1) as in ‘hombre de policía’ (‘police man’), whose appropriate equivalent is ‘policía’. Furthermore, there was a fairly frequent transfer of prepositions (2.9) compared to the more proficient group (0.8) as in ‘el hombre en la chaqueta’ (‘the man in the jacket’), which should be appropriately expressed ‘el hombre de chaqueta’/‘el hombre que viste chaqueta’. The more proficient learners, however, favoured mostly the transfer of verb conjugations (frequency: 3.2) compared to the lower level (2.6) as in ‘...estamos visitando en el próximo año’ (‘...we are visiting in the next year’), which should be appropriately expressed: ‘...visitaremos el próximo año’. This more detailed examination of the data seems to point again to this tendency for the lower level learners to favour lexis over grammar, as opposed to the more proficient learners, who as shown above, seem to focus more on grammar. In contrast, the fact that the less competent learners, on this occasion, also attempted to solve grammatical types of problems, through the *translation* of prepositions, might also suggest a possible effect of the proficiency factor, in that these learners may be in the process of developing their L2 into the use of more complex structures. Unfortunately this evidence is not enough to draw any firmer conclusions in this respect.

The last subcategory to be examined within the ‘lexical PSM’ regards ‘macro conceptualisation’, which comes from the original concept of ‘reconceptualisation’ proposed by Poulisse (1993) and present in Dörnyei & Kormos’ taxonomy (1998). This concept refers to both processes of ‘macro’ and ‘micro reconceptualisation’, which have to do with ‘the analysis and decomposition of the preverbal chunk in order to be able to express it through a combination of lexical items’ (p.3 65). This subcategory is the only one that shows a higher frequency of strategy use in Level B through the CS *restructure*, as can be seen in table 5.5. This mechanism is defined as when ‘the speaker seeks an alternative manner of expressing the intended message’ (p.365), and ‘it is employed whenever learners realise that they cannot complete a plan which is already being executed and decide to develop an alternative plan which enables them to reach their original communicative goal’ (Færch & Kasper, 1984:51). This strategy has been classified as an ‘achievement or compensatory’ CS, which refers to the solution of communication problems by expanding the L2 resources (Corder, 1983), and it has been sub-classified as an interlanguage (IL) type of CS (Færch & Kasper, 1983). In this study, the use of *restructure*, by the more proficient learners, coincides with Færch & Kasper’s description mentioned above, since the data showed that every time the learners realised that they were not able to continue communicating their message, they stopped and

used other words to express their meaning. It seems that once the learners start producing their message, they suddenly realise that they do not have the necessary lexical or grammatical structures to continue, and thus compensate for those gaps with alternative structures. Two distinct features were observed in the data regarding the way the more proficient learners *restructured* their message. Some learners signalled that they were experiencing problems in communicating their original meaning by means of *pauses* (lexicalised and non-lexicalised) or *repetitions*; which helped them to gain time and think of an alternative message. In 5.5.1, for example, it can be observed how NNS24B signals that she is experiencing problems by stopping and *umming* before *restructuring* her message (as underlined). She indicates that she did not have the words to continue talking about her past jobs, which forced her to change her message.

Example 4.5.1 Restructure-signalled

NNS24B: ...tenía tres eh eh t eh trabajos muy diferentes en al mismo tiempo entonces eh no tenía ningún tiempo para para mí y eh eh hay mucha presión eh si claro que si eh haay mucho trabajo no se puede concentrar y...

...I had three eh eh j eh jobs very different in at the same time so eh I didn't have any time for for me and eh eh there is much pressure eh yes of course eh there is lots of work and one cannot concentrate and...

Retrospective comments NNS24B: I changed what I am saying, I've said like 'I have these jobs I was doing this' and then because I couldn't think of enough words to explain how it was, I started saying 'obviously if you have a lot of work you're very stressed or whatever'.

The second characteristic observed is that some learners did not signal that they were having communication problems, and thus did not stop their original message, but continued from one structure to the other as in the example below. Here NNS23B compensates for her original message 'estoy muy' ('I am very') with an immediate alternative 'tengo muchas ganas'. She explains her linguistic behaviour when indicating that she originally wanted to say 'I am really overwhelmed by it', but as she could not find those words, she decided to change it for a structure she was probably more acquainted with, thus being able to employ her own resources to communicate her message. The CS usage in this last instance might be also explained by the nature of the expression she wanted to produce first, which presents more elaborated language and hence it might have caused this learner more difficulties to express that meaning.

Example 5.5.2 Restructure-unsigalled

NNS23B:...es que ahora hoy estoy muy tengo muchas ganas hoy pero...

...now today I am very I am very excited today but...

Retrospective comments NNS23B: I was trying to say like 'I'm really kind of overwhelmed by it' but I couldn't think of the vocabulary so I just said 'I'm excited'⁹ so I changed what I was saying.

The higher frequency of this CS on the part of the more proficient learners seems to also emphasise the relevance of the proficiency variable when *restructuring* their message. It seems that the Level B learners are more equipped with more knowledge of the target language and thus possess more resources to draw upon when communicating, hence being able to *restructure* their message more often than the less proficient learners. This evidence appears to be concurrent with Corder's definition in that, as this CS is considered an achievement mechanism, it requires the learner to expand his/her L2 resources; an aspect that seems to be more likely to be accomplished by the more proficient subjects. Similarly, the evidence here analysed conforms to results from more recent studies in that higher proficiency learners were more able to *restructure* their utterances (Fernández Dobao, 2004; Prebiana, 2009) and more frequently than lower level learners (García Nuñez, 2006).

To sum up, the use of the lexical CSs here analysed clearly demonstrate the effects of the proficiency variable. The lower level learners, because of their less L2 knowledge and fewer resources in the target language, resorted relatively more to *message abandonment* when facing communicative difficulties. The more proficient learners, on the other hand, were less likely to abandon their message but instead attempted to *restructure* their output more frequently than the less proficient subjects. The lower level learners also needed to rely on their L1 more often by means of *code-switching*, in their attempt to communicate mostly lexical items (nouns) and thus avoid a communication breakdown, which again appears to be a reflection of their lack of L2 linguistic repertoire. These learners also resorted to *sub-approximation*, which was demonstrated through their search for the appropriate item within a related lexical set. Finally, in those instances where both groups resorted to the same CSs with similar frequencies – thus not showing any proficiency related effects – as occurred with *approximation* and *literal translation*, a closer examination of the data revealed differences in the way both groups employed them. The less proficient learners needed to

⁹ Although this English expression is more usually translated as 'estoy emocionada', the Spanish expression used by NNS23 in 5.6.5 is not entirely inappropriate since it carries the same connotation as the English expression, and it is particularly more used in Latin American Spanish.

approximate terms in conjunction with other CSs – which points again to their lack of L2 resources and thus to their more frequent reliance on CSs – whereas the more competent subjects *approximated* the intended words with just specific related items. The main difference in the way the learners made use of *literal translation* was primarily reflected in a less comprehensible output, on the part of the Level A subjects, as opposed to a more understandable speech – as well as closer to the L2 equivalent – produced by the Level B learners.

5.2.3 Analysis of ‘grammatical PSM-L2 resource deficit’

The following subcategory to be analysed within ‘PSM related to L2 resource deficit’ is ‘grammatical PSM’. The table below shows the results obtained for each of the CSs that comprise this subcategory according to level, in addition to the normalised frequencies for each CS.

Table 5.6 Results for Grammatical PSM -L2 RD

Grammatical PSM	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
grammatical substitution	76	11.6	106	10.5
grammatical reduction	190	29	145	14.3
grammatical reduction-substitution	52	7.9	50	4.9
use of prepositions	29	4.4	41	4
Totals	347	53	342	33.7

As shown in table 5.6, the raw totals obtained for the ‘grammatical PSM’ subcategory do not show substantial differences between the two groups. Nonetheless, the normalised frequencies show again a higher use of these types of CSs by Level A learners. It can also be observed that the profiles of both groups are similar, with *grammatical reduction* showing the highest frequency followed by *grammatical substitution*, *grammatical reduction-substitution* and finally, *use of prepositions* showing the lowest frequency. When observing both profiles in more detail, it can also be seen that the Level A learners resorted more frequently to *grammatical reduction* and that both groups employed, in fairly similar frequencies, *grammatical substitution* and *use of prepositions*. Hence, these latter CSs will be now analysed considering their use by both levels, followed by *grammatical reduction*, which will be examined considering its higher frequency on the part of the less proficient learners.

First of all, it is worth mentioning that these types of problem-solving mechanisms have not been as thoroughly examined as the ‘lexical PSM’ (Bongaerts & Poulisse, 1989; Si-Qing, 1990; Kellerman *et al*, 1990; Poulisse, 1993; Bou-Franch, 1994; Fernández Dobao, 2002, 2004) except for *grammatical reduction*, which was mentioned in earlier studies as ‘formal reduction’ (Færch & Kasper, 1983; Váradi, 1983). However, more specific grammar related mechanisms, such as *grammatical substitution* have not been included in most taxonomies proposed so far with the exception of the one presented by Dörnyei & Kormos (1998), and which constitutes the analytical framework used in the present study. This subcategory is related to ‘the insufficient knowledge of the grammatical form and the argument structure of the lemma, as well as the word-ordering rules of the L2’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:357). In this process,

the *grammatical form* of the lemma (information about the diacritic parameters of the lemma such as person, number, tense, gender, etc.) and the *argument structure* (determining what place the lemma can occupy in the sentence and what obligatory and optional complements it can take) are accessed and encoded, and [it is] also the point when the lemmas are ordered in a phrase (p.366).

Grammatical substitution has been defined as ‘changing certain grammatical specifications of the lemma through transfer or overgeneralisation’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:361). Hence, as these scholars explain ‘in order to cope with this problem, the speaker can draw on the corresponding L1 or L3 subroutines and rules or the argument structure of a similar or synonymous L2 lemma (overgeneralization)’ (p.366). In the present data, as mentioned above, this mechanism was frequently employed by both levels and the problems encountered by most learners had to do with an incorrect use of the verb tense and/or form as well as of gender. This latter use represents the only although small difference between groups, where there was a slightly higher frequency of gender-related problems on the part of the lower level learners (level A, normalised frequency: 4 – level B: 2.8). In both types of problems, the learners tended to transfer some structures from their L1 or overgeneralise an L2 grammatical construction, as shown in the following examples. In 5.6.1, NNS7B comments on the fact that she did not know how to conjugate what she thinks should be future tense. In this instance, she incorrectly applied future tense when referring to a present action with future connotation. A more correct form would be ‘cuando llega algún examen’ (‘when an exam comes’) – though this would be more appropriately expressed in Spanish as ‘cuando hay/tengo un examen’ (‘when there is/I have an exam’). Thus, it seems as if she first tries to transfer the English expression ‘when exams come’ by using the same verb, and then overgeneralising future for a present tense with future connotation.

Example 5.6.1 Grammatical substitution - verb forms

NNS7B: si claro eh a veces pero eh cuando eh llegará a algún exámen es como tengo que hacer el exámen no más y eh no pen pensar en el estrés
yes of course eh sometimes but eh when eh will come a any exam is like I have to do the exam anyway and eh not to thin think of the stress

Retrospective comments NNS7B: I didn't know what I was saying, I was trying to think of the future and then I was like 'llegará?', I didn't know how to conjugate it.

Another example of *grammatical substitution* can be seen in 5.6.2, where NNS24B used an imperfect form instead of the correct preterite because, as she indicated, she was referring in English to actions that were in progress in the past ('because my dad was living there...'); this past continuous in English 'suggests the use of an imperfect form in Spanish' (Bradley & Mackenzie, 2004:130). On this occasion, as happened in a few other strategic instances, this learner substitutes a preterite form with an imperfect tense, which refers in Spanish to a habitual action in the past ('Antes Juan trabajaba en un hospital: 'Juan used to work in a hospital'). This is a confusing aspect for English speakers who have similar tenses, but which do not exactly match the preterite and imperfect tenses in Spanish. Hence, it is clear through this learner's comments that she incorrectly transferred a similar grammatical construction from her L1, thus relying on *grammatical substitution* to get her message across.

Example 5.6.2 Grammatical substitution - verb forms

NNS24B:...pasé unas vacaciones con mi padre hace unos años en los Estados Unidos porque mi padre eh vivía ahí durante unos meses eh mientras que es estudiaba y eh fui a Nueva York y todo eso...
...I spent some holidays with my father some years ago in the United States because my father eh was living there during some months eh while he st studied and eh I went to New York and all that...

Retrospective comments NNS24B: I think all that was pretty correct 'cause I was using this continuous past because it was 'I went on holiday there' but then I started explaining like 'because my dad was living there and it was because he was studying there, and then I kind of mixed the tenses a bit, but I thought that was ok because I just went for a brief period to see him.

In 5.6.3 the problem is also related to tense, but in this case regarding an expression of time with the verb ‘hacer’.¹⁰ In this example as NNS2A uses preterite tense in the main clause ‘fui a Menorca’ (‘I went to Menorca’), she thus needs to use present in the time expression since it refers to an action that occurred a certain amount of time ago. Hence, it can be observed that this learner is overgeneralising the incorrect past verb form in the belief that both clauses should agree in tense.

Example 5.6.3 Grammatical substitution - verb forms

NNS2A: hacía muchos años fui a Menorca con mi familia...

many years ago I went to Menorca with my family...

Another problem found in the data, albeit in fewer instances, is the overgeneralisation of ‘estar’ over ‘ser’ (‘to be’), which was more frequently observed in the output of Level B learners. In 5.6.4, NNS22B employs ‘estar’ when using an expression that requires the use of ‘ser’, since it relates to an inherent characteristic ‘we are very different’. Thus, in this case it can be seen, from this learner’s comments, that, although she realises her error, she indicates that she used ‘estar’ because she was ‘talking about characteristics’, which confirms the fact that she overgeneralised an L2 rule incorrectly.

Example 5.6.4

NNS22B: tengo ah una hermana y dos hermanastras y-**risa**- *todos estamos muy diferentes-**risa**...

*oh yes, I have ah a sister and two stepsisters and-laugh-we all *are very different-laugh...*

[‘todos estamos’, target word: todos somos, ‘we all are’]

Retrospective comments NNS22B: I used 'estar' again just like the last time ‘estamos muy similar’ (and is that ok?) NNS22: no-**laugh**- (and why do you think that happened?) NNS22: ‘cause I am talking about characteristics about them, I start with 'estar' but then I realise it's wrong, but I just keep going because I know she'll understand anyway so... I find it really difficult, I think I use 'estar' a lot when I shouldn't...

¹⁰ This verb literally means ‘to do/make’, but within this idiomatic expression is translated as ‘ago’, thus the Spanish expression ‘hace muchos años’ would be expressed in English as ‘many years ago’.

A last common problem found in the data – which in fact constitutes the only more marked difference between groups – regards an overgeneralisation of gender; CS use which was slightly more often observed in the data of the Level A. In most of the instances observed for both levels, the default form was the masculine gender. The data revealed that the learners opted for the masculine for nouns which do not have a natural gender and therefore presented more difficulties for them to use the appropriate gender as shown in the examples below. The problem arose especially with nouns that have an ending that might be related to the grammatical gender masculine ‘o’ as in ‘foto/razón/explosión’ (in level B) or which end with ‘e(s)’ as in ‘imagen/partes/navidades’; a form which does not show unambiguously that they are feminine nouns. In such cases, the learners tended to opt for overgeneralising masculine over feminine.

Example 5.6.5

NNS4A: [por los navi ah navidades pasadas]

[for the past christ ah christmas]

Another characteristic, although less frequently observed, has to do with the use of incorrect gender, but which does not seem to follow any rationale, as illustrated in the example below, where the feminine noun requires in this case feminine article and pronoun as in ‘la otra historia’.

Example 5.6.6

NNS17B: sí sí pero el otro eh (0.2) his eh historia eh...

Yes yes but the other eh (0.2) sto eh story eh...

The data shows that problems especially related to verb forms are common not only in lower levels, but also in the output of more proficient learners, who might be expected to possess more L2 knowledge and, therefore, a better command of grammar related aspects. A tentative explanation for this might be that the more proficient learners have probably just acquired some of the L2 rules, and thus might tend to overgeneralise them to contexts where they are not appropriate. This factor might explain the confusion that some learners mentioned in their comments regarding these grammar problems, in addition to the fact that Spanish is more flexible than their L1 causing them more grammatical problems in communicating (Deveau 1998; Dominguez & Arche, 2008; Johnston, 1995). Other studies have also found that early levels encounter difficulties in mastering the verb forms, and that learners in general tend to use the preterite as a default marker of past tense (Lafford, 1996; Salaberry, 2000; Ruiz Debbe, 2005). Although these claims partially support my findings, in

that most of the learners did find difficulties in the conjugation of verbs, the evidence is not enough to draw conclusions regarding a default verb form.

With regard to the use of this CS in problematic instances related to gender – which showed a slightly higher use by the lower level learners – studies regarding the acquisition of Spanish gender have found contradictory results. Some studies have observed that the preferred form used by learners is the masculine (Cain et al, 1987; Finneman, 1992), as ‘the masculine form is the unmarked or more “universal” morphological form for gender and will therefore be the first acquired’, the feminine form, or the marked form, ‘will be acquired as it is differentiated from the masculine form’ (Cain, 1987:345). Others have found a tendency for overgeneralising feminine to masculine contexts (Griebling, 2006). Tight (2006), on the other hand, observed that L1 English speakers learning Spanish tended to ‘assign grammatical gender based on a word’s perceived gender connotations’, and so they tended to ‘correctly assigned grammatical gender least often where there was a conflict between the two’ (p.156). The evidence here finds support in some of these studies, in that most learners tended to overgeneralise the masculine form. This was particularly observed, as Tight (2006) also found, in those instances where the learners related the masculine grammatical gender to words perceived as masculine because of their ending in ‘-o’ or those endings in ‘-e/-es’ which caused them confusion. The fact that this type of problem was relatively more frequent in the output of the less proficient learners might demonstrate again the influence, though less noticeable, of the proficiency factor. It seems that the less proficient learners still encounter problems, which may be categorised as less complex grammatical problems in comparison with, for example, verbal inflections, which are considered more complex structures within the study of Spanish grammar (Oliva *et al.*, 2010). Finally, with regard to the overgeneralisation of ‘estar’ over ‘ser’, some studies have found that ‘estar’ seems to appear in later stages of acquisition (VanPatten 1985; Ryan & Lafford, 1992) but mainly when referring to location. The few instances of this phenomenon observed in this study are not enough to determine any tendency, except for the fact that it was mainly applied by the more proficient learners. The most common overgeneralisations of ‘estar’ in my data involve ‘sequence in time’ and ‘inherent characteristics’, contexts where the use of ‘ser’ is required.

In sum, although the findings obtained here in relation to *grammatical substitution* do not show strong differences between the two levels, especially with regard to verb inflections, they seem to concur with studies interested in the development of Spanish as L2, on the grounds that learners from different proficiency levels transfer and overgeneralise (VanPatten, 1985; Deveau, 1998) grammar-related aspects, the main processes examined here.

The second grammatical mechanism, employed fairly frequent by both levels, involves a new problem source found in this study, and which pertains to an inappropriate *use of prepositions*. As shown in table 5.6, both levels encountered problems when producing prepositions in Spanish, although the CS frequencies are quite small. Hence, what follows is a brief account of what was observed in the examination of this phenomenon, and which aimed at determining any differences related to the proficiency variable between both groups.

The only albeit small difference between groups relates to a slightly more frequent use of the preposition ‘por’ by the lower level learners, and of ‘para’ by the more proficient subjects. In both cases it seemed that, as in *grammatical substitution*, the learners may be transferring the English preposition ‘for’ into Spanish, instead of producing the appropriate preposition ‘para’. Regarding the use of ‘para’ by the more proficient learners, there were a few instances where it appeared that they were overgeneralising the English infinitive ‘to do’ to the Spanish ‘para’, such as in: ‘para + infinitive’ when the infinitive means ‘in order to’, e.g. ‘he went to Spain (in order) to learn Spanish’. Even though the data from my study is very limited, evidence found so far in the literature indicates that ‘por’ is, in fact, more frequently produced by lower level learners, who use it as equivalent of the English preposition ‘for’. ‘Para’, on the other hand, appears later in the learners’ L2 output, being also overused as substitution for other prepositions as well as for ‘por’ (Guntermann, 1992a; Lafford & Ryan, 1995). However, because of the few instances of usage, the varied production of different prepositions, and the lack of retrospective comments, there is not enough evidence to support this finding. It is worth adding, however, that in the data from the Level A learners, ten NNSs (out of twelve) produced instances with an incorrect *use of prepositions*, whereas in Level B only four NNSs (out of twelve) encountered this type of problem, a feature of CS usage which may be well related to the learners’ proficiency levels. This last finding seems to suggest that the lower level learners do encounter this type of problem more often, and that this is an aspect which still constitutes a problematic area within grammar for those learners who are, in other respects, more proficient, as may be the case with those four Level B learners. Thus, the fairly higher frequency of this phenomenon, on the part of the lower level, appears to indicate, as shown in the use of *literal translation* – where this level transferred prepositions from their L1 more often than the Level B learners – that these learners might be progressing towards the use of more complex grammar structures in the target language. These factors, on the one hand, demonstrate the effects of the proficiency level on the learners’ strategic use of the language, and on the other, involve a type of problem common to English speakers learners of Spanish, which also suggests problematic areas in L2 oral production worth investigating further.

The last mechanism more frequently applied within the ‘grammatical PSM’ concerns *grammatical reduction*, which as mentioned before, was markedly more often employed by the lower level learners; thus the following analysis will focus on the data obtained for this group. This CS is defined as when ‘the speaker uses intentionally simplified grammar hoping that the interlocutor will be able to reconstruct the grammatical meaning from the context’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998: 366). These scholars found that this mechanism was ‘very common in languages such as Russian or German in which speakers often swallow or completely omit the diacritic markers of adjectives and verbs’ (p.367). Previous studies termed this mechanism as ‘formal reduction’ within ‘reduction’ types of strategies governed by avoidance behaviour (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Færch & Kasper explain the use of this mechanism as follows:

in order to avoid producing non-fluent or incorrect utterances by using insufficiently automatized or hypothetical rules/items, learners may decide to communicate by means of a “reduced” system, focussing on stable rules and items which have become reasonably well automatized (p.38).

The data analysis revealed that the lower level learners used simplified grammar which involved (from most to least frequent): leaving out grammatical words (prepositions, articles, auxiliaries), an overuse of ‘es’ in contexts where ‘está’ should have been used, and use of infinitives and present tense instead of the correct conjugated verb forms. The following excerpts illustrate this CS usage.

Example 5.7.1 Missing grammatical words

NNS15A: entonces *ahora es en su casa y luego eh bajo las escaleras a afuera so eh eh

entonces eh tu tu eh tu es número dos?

*so now he is in his house and then eh down the stairs out outside so eh eh so eh you
you eh you is number two?*

[‘ahora es en’, target word: ahora está, ‘now he is’]

Retrospective comments NNS15A: I was trying to say ‘he’s down the stairs outside so yours must be the second one’.

In 5.7.1, NNS15A indicates in her comments what she wanted to say, and thus it can be seen that in the last part of her utterance she *reduces* her output by producing ‘tu es número dos’(referring to ‘your picture’) instead of the appropriate one: ‘el tuyo/la tuya es (el/la

número dos'. Although in this instance the speaker does not comment on her output, it is clear that she reduced her speech by omitting certain grammatical items in an attempt to express what she intended to, which makes the speakers' speech less fluent and less comprehensible. The omission of these kinds of items was common in the output of these learners showing the highest frequency (normalised frequency: 7) and, therefore, this type of simplified grammar will be also noticeable in most of the examples below.

A second characteristic found in the Level A learners' output involves a quite frequent use of the infinitive form of the verb (normalised frequency: 5.6) instead of the correctly conjugated verb form. In the example below, it can be seen through the learner's comments that she intentionally opted for the use of the verb in its infinitive form, because she did not feel capable of conjugating the verb appropriately.

Example 5.7.2 Use of infinitives

NNS16A: [eh tengo una (cuadro↑) cuando el hombre salir↑ su casa↑ También

[eh I have a (picture↑) when the man to go out↑ his house↑ too

Retrospective comments NNS16A: I was trying to say 'he leaves the house' but I wasn't sure of how to say in that person so I just said 'salir', the verb in its infinitive.

Another frequent use of this CS, on the part of the Level A learners, had to do with using the present tense (normalised frequency: 4) instead of the correct conjugated verb form. This can be observed in 5.7.3 below, where NNS1A indicates that she wanted to express her message by means of a different verb form. It is clear that on these occasions the learners also intentionally opted for a form that was easier for them to remember.

Example 5.7.3 Use of present tense & singular

NNS1A: el verano pasado fui a Francia con mis amigos eh porque (0.2) trabajaba ah en

Lyon, me fue también eh (0.2) eh las vacaciones eh porque fue (0.3) eran muchas cosas para hacer eh es una tierra muy bonita y y (0.3) pero eh debe trabajar también-**risa**-eh...

*last summer I went to France with my friends eh because (0.2) I worked ah in Lyon, it was also eh (0.2) eh the holidays eh because it was (0.3) there were many things to do eh is a very nice land and and (0.3) but eh I must work too-**laugh**-eh...*

Retrospective comments NNS1A: it was for a job not really for a holiday and that's what I was trying to say, I just used 'fue' because it's an easy way and the same with 'vacaciones también' because it's an easy way of trying to get the message across. Then I wanted to say 'I had to work' and I knew there was an imperfect thing, but I don't know which form it was so I just said what I remembered.

Another aspect which was frequently observed in the data had to do with the reduction of the form 'está' to the simpler form 'es' of the verb 'to be' (normalised frequency: 7), and its subsequent overuse in instances where 'estar' should have been used. It is noteworthy that the opposite was observed for Level B learners, who overgeneralised 'estar' in instances where 'ser' should have been used, phenomenon which was examined within *grammatical substitution*. This simplified usage of 'to be' was characterised by a higher use of 'es' for location as in 5.7.4, where NNS15A indicates that she meant to say 'he is in his house' ('él está en su casa'), which should have been conveyed through the use of 'está'.

Example 5.7.4 Overuse of 'ser'

NNS15A: eh la primera es eh cuando el hombre es en en su casa y cua eh luego eh bajo las...

eh the first is eh when the man is in in his house and whe eh then eh go down the...

Retrospective comments NNS15A: I wanted to say 'so after he was in his room he went downstairs...', I know there's a lot of missing but I didn't know how to say it, it's not right in Spanish that's why I am not confident in saying it.

The learners also resorted to this simplified form in contexts where 'está' should have been used for the present progressive, as illustrated below. In this example, NNS15A used 'es' when trying to narrate the actions of the main character from the story she was describing.

Example 5.7.5 Overuse of 'ser'

NNS15A: [eh eh entonces hay un botella de champan y el hombre es eh es mirando en un espejo- **gestos-ah** (0.3)

*[eh eh so there is a bottle of champagne and the man is eh is looking in a mirror-**gestures-ah** (0.3)]*

Retrospective comments NNS15A: I was trying to say in my head ‘he’s looking at himself’ I wanted to say ‘trying to make himself look nice’ **laugh** I couldn’t say this whole sentence.

Example 5.7.6 - Level B

NNS23B: ...quiero investigar niños con autismo y eh el entendimiento↑ cultural de estos niños y si la gente piensa piensa algo diferente o si es igual que aquí o todavía no estoy segura es que *cuando me voy espero que todo es más fácil

... I want to investigate children with autism and eh the cultural understanding↑ of these children and if the people think think something different or if it’s the same as here or I’m not yet sure is that when I go I hope that everything is easier

[‘cuando me voy espero que todo es más fácil’, target word: cuando me vaya espero que todo sea más fácil, ‘when I go I hope everything will be easier]

All the evidence here presented supports the fact that the lower level learners encounter grammar related difficulties when trying to communicate in Spanish as L2. This forced them to avoid these problems, by mostly simplifying their output through a frequent omission of grammatical items. This main characteristic in these learners’ speech seems to suggest that they are still more concerned about lexis when trying to communicate meaning, through mainly content words, as was observed in the examples above, and particularly, when omitting verb inflections as their use of infinitive and present verb forms demonstrated. These learners’ frequent use of *grammatical reduction* resulted in a less fluent and less comprehensible speech, which in most instances was more clearly understood only because of the learners’ retrospective comments. The speech of the more proficient learners, on the other hand, was much more comprehensible, and although it also presented similar characteristics to the ones from level A, the proportions were quite low in comparison: omission of grammatical items, normalised frequency: 3.7; use of infinitives 2.8; use of present tense 2.3; overuse of ‘es’ 2.4. Some of these features can be observed in 4.7.6 above, where the learner’s speech is still understandable, although there is, in this case, also reduction of the verb form to its present form, instead of the appropriate conjugated form (subjunctive): ‘cuando me vaya espero que sea más fácil’. Hence, although both levels had to resort to this CS, and thus employed a simplified grammar, the proficiency variable can still be observed in the output produced by both groups, which differs in their strategic frequency and degree of comprehensibility. These findings seem to be in line with some studies which have also found that low proficiency learners, due to their restricted L2 competence, have to reduce their output more often than the more proficient learners in order to avoid

communication problems (García Nuñez, 2006; Yang & Gai, 2010). Færch & Kasper (1983) also acknowledged this ‘reduction’ strategy as: ‘correctness’ by avoiding errors in their L2 production, and ‘fluency’ by facilitating communication, ‘in which case the learner may perform utterances which he knows are not correct but which he considers appropriate from a communicative point of view’ (p.41), aspects which were clearly demonstrated in the data and retrospective comments above. Studies from the field of second language development also help to validate these findings since they have observed that English learners of Spanish in their early stages of learning tended to simplify their output, particularly when producing the Spanish copula ‘ser/estar’, for which they simplified its use to the copula ‘ser’ only as in English (VanPatten, 1985). By doing this, learners manage to keep the flow of the conversation, and it also helps them to progress towards more complex grammar structures (Guntermann, 1992b).

Hence, considering the evidence here gathered as well as the empirical studies in this respect, it can be concluded that the lower level learners – in their attempt to keep the conversation flowing – opted for reducing or simplifying their speech by intentionally omitting grammatical items which, due to their limited L2 resources, they may have not yet acquired, and so they had to mostly rely on their lexical knowledge. Another possible explanation might be related to Richards’ proposal (1975:116): ‘the language learner typically begins by constructing general rules which do not account for redundant and unnecessary parts of grammar’. Although it is unclear how the learners determine which aspects of grammar are redundant or unnecessary, from this closer analysis, it becomes apparent that the beginner level learners intentionally opted for omitting, particularly, grammatical words. In fact, it is within this area of second language development where this learners’ tendency finds most support. Myles (2005), for example, concluded that, as in L1 acquisition, the French L2 learners that she observed went through ‘an optional infinitive stage in which verb forms are sometimes inflected in finite contexts and sometimes not’ (p.109), and that the use of inflected verb forms progressed in time. Something similar was found by Marsden & David (2008), who analysed the data of French and Spanish L2 learners, concluding that they were able to produce more verb forms as their proficiency progressed. All this empirical evidence seems to be in line with the ‘input processing (IP) model’ proposed by VanPatten (1996), whose main claim as Dussias (2003:243) summarises is the following:

because processing is more effortful for early-stage learners, obtaining meaning from the input more efficiently involves processing lexical items and ignoring grammatical

items (number markers, noun and verb inflections) particularly when the latter are very low in communicative value.

Although this is an ‘input model’, its basis can be generalised to the processes which govern oral communication. However, its lack of specificity regarding the notion of ‘communicative value’ constitutes its main weakness, as Dussias mentions, in that it does not specify how learners are able to decide what is or is not communicatively important.

To sum up, the use of *grammatical reduction*, which constitutes the CS most frequently used within this subcategory (‘grammatical PSM’), further confirms the effects of the proficiency variable. The lower level learners intentionally opted for reducing their speech, by mainly omitting grammatical words in instances where they were not capable – because of their restricted L2 – of producing the appropriate construction as a way of avoiding errors and facilitating their communication. Their apparent neglect of verb inflections, through their high use of infinitive and present verb forms, suggests that they are still more concerned about lexical items through which they can still communicate, yet in a rudimentary form; a fact which also finds support in the area of second language development. These findings, together with what was observed for *grammatical substitution* and *use of prepositions*, help to clarify the preliminary conclusions previously proposed for the results in 5.6. Although there was a slightly higher frequency of all these CSs, on the part of the lower level learners, a closer examination of the data revealed a few differences in their strategic use, confirming again the effects of the proficiency variable.

5.2.4 Analysis of ‘phonological-articulatory PSM-L2 resource deficit’

The next subcategory to be analysed concerns the ‘phonological and articulatory PSM’ within ‘L2 resource deficit’. The table below presents the distribution of CSs obtained for each of the mechanisms that form this subcategory in addition to the normalised frequencies for each CS.

Table 5.7 Results for Phonological-articulatory PSM-L2 RD

Phonological-articulatory PSM	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
morphological tip-of-the-tongue	34	5.2	41	11.99
lexical tip-of-the-tongue	45	6.9	48	4.7
use-of-similar-sounding word	7	1.1	15	4.45
Totals	86	13.1	104	10.3

It is interesting to note that, on the one hand, the level B learners resorted more frequently to the *morphological tip-of-the-tongue* phenomenon, while the Level A learners employed more often the same CS, but its *lexical* counterpart. Hence, both CSs will be now analysed and discussed to see the possible effects that the proficiency level might have on the use of these CSs.

Tip of the tongue phenomenon refers to a retrieval mechanism which is used ‘in an attempt to retrieve and articulate an item, saying a series of incomplete or wrong forms or structures before reaching the optimal form’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:361). This phenomenon is present in Færch & Kasper’s taxonomy of CSs as ‘retrieval strategies’, a broader concept which is said to be ‘identified on the basis of performance features which indicate that the speaker is searching for a linguistic rule/item or perhaps testing out various possibilities before executing any of them’ (1983:224). The study of this ‘retrieval’ CS has been quite limited (García Nuñez, 2006; Prebianca, 2009) in comparison to the ‘lexical PSM’, and it has only been included in the taxonomies proposed by Færch & Kasper (1983) and Dörnyei & Kormos (1998). The *morphological tip of the tongue* phenomenon, more frequently employed by the Level B learners, was included in this study within the phonological and articulatory mechanisms due to the type of data found in the analysis, since it was observed that, in addition to lexical forms (*lexical tip of the tongue*), most learners had difficulties when trying to retrieve verb forms. Both types of mechanisms were used in most instances in conjunction with *own accuracy checks*, which refer to the speakers being uncertain of the correctness of the word/s they are producing. *Morphological tip of the tongue* is illustrated in the excerpt below, where it is clear that NNS7B is trying to retrieve the appropriate verb form, although unsuccessfully.

Example 5.8.1 morphological tip of the tongue

NNS7B: y creo que tengo cuatro por si cuando el lle llegas a llega llegara↑ (0.2) Llegaba a a su casa con su maleta
and I think that I have four for yes when he arri arrive to arrives will arrive↑ (0.2) arrived to to his house with his suitcase

Retrospective comments NNS7B: I was thinking how to say ‘he arrived’ ‘he was arriving’.

The higher frequency of this CS by the more proficient subjects appears to demonstrate these learners’ developing stage of interlanguage. It seems that they are still uncertain about verb forms when trying to convey verbal structures, and thus need to retrieve a series of incorrect

forms until reaching an optimal construction which may help them to get their message across. This CS usage may have also been intensified by the difficulties that the Spanish verb forms present to especially English speakers (Salaberry, 2000; Ruiz Debe, 2005), thus making them feel more doubtful about their appropriate use, hence their need to compensate for this type of problem more often.

Regarding *lexical tip of the tongue*, more frequently employed by the Level A learners, the data revealed that they also resorted to this CS, on most occasions, together with *own accuracy checks*. As shown in the excerpt below, these learners attempted to find the correct lexical item by repeating parts of the intended meaning, and also through checking whether the word uttered was correct by means of *own accuracy checks*.

Example 5.8.2 lexical tip of the tongue

NNS15A: en el en el su suro suroeste↑ En el suroeste de Francia

In the in the su south southeast↑ in the southeast of France

Retrospective comments NNS15A: I didn't know if that was right, so I repeated it but I think I said it in French I don't know (why do you think you used rising intonation there?) it was for her to nod me to say that she understands.

From the few studies which have examined this phenomenon, the low production of these types of mechanisms has not made it possible to draw any firm conclusions (Prebianca, 2009; García Nuñez, 2006). From what has been here analysed, on the other hand, it can be concluded that the more restricted L2 knowledge, which still governs the output of the lower level learners, seems to demonstrate their lack of linguistic resources in the L2. These learners still encounter more problems than the more proficient learners to remember and retrieve the lexical items necessary to communicate, thus their need to compensate for these gaps by resorting to *lexical tip of the tongue* more often than the more competent subjects. Thus, it seems that the more proficient learners have relatively richer L2 resources to draw upon in more problematic instances, which enable them to produce lexical items more easily than the less proficient subjects. Nonetheless, these resources are still not enough to overcome grammar-related problems, and especially in an L2 with more flexible grammar features. The more limited L2 repertoire of the lower level learners, on the other hand, makes them encounter more difficulties related to vocabulary, which is a feature of the L2 which beginner levels are just acquiring at this early stage of IL development. This also confirms a point already mentioned: lexis-related problems are more salient for the lower level, as opposed to grammar-related problems, which seem to be more relevant for the higher level.

The main conclusion which can be drawn concerning ‘L2 resource deficit’ is that the lower level learners seem to be more concerned with solving lexis-related problems over grammar-related problems. This was demonstrated through their frequent use of CSs such as *lexical tip of the tongue*, *code-switching* and *sub-approximation*. This behaviour was also supported by a higher frequency of *grammatical reduction*, specifically through the omission of grammatical words, which seemed to suggest that these learners rely mostly on their lexical knowledge, by trying to communicate meaning through mainly content words, as shown in the omission of auxiliaries and verb inflections. On the other hand, the higher use of *grammatical tip of the tongue* by the more proficient learners appears to indicate their concern for grammar-related problems. This seems to be further confirmed by the fact that these types of difficulties, which might be regarded as more complex — such as verb inflections – are still relatively more predominant in these learners’ speech. This behaviour, more preferred by the higher level, can be contrasted with the lower level’s focus on gender-related instances, as well as on their slightly more frequent *incorrect use of prepositions*, linguistic issues which may be considered less complex. All this seems to support the rationale previously suggested: the lower level learners are primarily more concerned about lexis, and are just in the process of focusing their attention on less complex grammar structures, whilst the more proficient subjects’ primary focus seems to be on more complex structures, such as verbal constructions, and thus mostly on grammar-related problems.

5.2.5 Analysis of ‘PSM related to processing time pressure’

What follows examines the second main category, ‘PSM related to processing time pressure’. The next table presents the results obtained for each subcategory, and CSs within this category, for each level together with the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 5.8 below shows that the total normalised frequencies favour again the Level A learners over the Level B subjects. Nonetheless, when looking at the profiles of each group (reading down the table), it can be noticed that they are similar with *self-repetition* showing similar, but also the highest normalised frequencies for both levels, followed by *unfilled pauses*, *umming/erring*, *sound lengthening* and finally *fillers* with the lowest frequency. When comparing the profiles of both groups (reading across the table), however, it can be observed that the most substantial difference is in the use of ‘non-lexicalised pauses’, in particular of *unfilled pauses* and *umming/erring*, which were more frequently used by the learners from Level A. Hence, the following analysis will focus on these two devices.

Table 5.8 Results for PSM related to Processing Time Pressure

PSM related to PTP	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
<i>Non-lexicalised pauses</i>	371	56.6	261	25.7
unfilled pauses	163	24.9	104	10.3
umming/erring	161	24.6	98	9.7
sound lengthening	47	7.2	59	5.8
<i>lexicalised pauses</i>	2		8	
Fillers	2	0.3	8	0.8
<i>Repetitions</i>	184	28.1	295	29.1
self-repetition	184	28.1	295	29.1
Totals for category	557	85	564	55.6

These ‘processing time pressure’ mechanisms, also called ‘stalling mechanisms’, are used ‘in order to keep the communication channel open and provide more time and attentional resources’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:368). Due to the high frequency of these types of mechanisms in the present data, their coding and identification was limited to those instances where the learners employed both CSs together (*unfilled pauses* and *umming/erring*). This aimed at differentiating those problem-related instances in L2 communication, where the learners need to gain time in order to find the appropriate items to communicate, from the speakers’ normal use of pauses in both their L1 and L2 speech.

The excerpt below shows one of the most common CS uses, where these stalling mechanisms are also used together with other CSs such as *mime*, *tip of the tongue*, *own accuracy check* and/or *indirect appeal for help*, CSs which help to confirm the speakers’ uncertainty regarding the word/s they are trying to convey. In 5.9, it is clear from the NNS’s utterance that she is having problems with the word ‘gafas’ (‘sunglasses’), which forces her to gain time through *pausing and umming* so as to remember the word. As she cannot still remember the item, she then *mimes* the object she is trying to convey, which at the same time helps the NS to provide the word by means of *guessing*.

Example 5.9 Unfilled pauses & umming/erring

NNS1A: una chaqueta, unos eh-gestos-eh (0.4) una como se llama ah-**risa**-ah (0.3)

A jacket, a pair of eh-gestures-eh (0.4) a what's called ah-laugh-ah (0.3)

NS: [una
[a

NNS1A: una-gestos-**risa**

a-gestures-laugh

NS: ¿gafas?

Sunglasses?

NNS1A: gafas! Eso

Sunglasses! That's it

Retrospective comments NNS1A: I was trying to find the word for 'glasses', I was trying to remember.

It is evident, therefore, that the Level A learners still exhibit a more basic command of the target language, through their more limited L2 knowledge and fewer linguistic resources. All this forces them to produce hesitant utterances, and thus to rely on these stalling mechanisms in order to have more time to remember the items needed – as was also reported by Wannaruk (2003) – and to think of alternative options, or to indirectly ask for help to their interlocutor. Additionally, it was observed that these types of CSs are an excellent means for lower level learners to maintain the flow of the conversation. Thus, the proficiency variable can be again validated as affecting these learners' strategic behaviour.

5.2.6 Analysis of 'PSM related to own-output problems'

The following main category to be analysed concerns those 'PSM related to own-output problems'. The next table provides the results obtained for each subcategory, and CSs within this main category according to level, in addition to the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 5.9 Results for PSM related to Own-output problems

PSM related to O-O problems	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
<i>self-correction</i>	98	15	142	14.0
error-repair	82	12.5	127	12.5
appropriacy repair	12	1.8	13	1.3
rephrasing-repair	4	0.6	2	0.2
<i>check questions</i>	87	13.3	118	11.6
comprehension checks	0	0.0	1	0.1
own-accuracy checks	86	13.1	108	10.6
self- own accuracy checks	1	0.2	9	0.9
Totals for category	185	28.2	260	25.6

As can be seen from table 5.9, the total frequency of CSs for both groups is fairly similar as well as the profiles of each level. These profiles only differ in relation to the CSs most frequently employed by each group: *own-accuracy checks* being the CS most often used by the lower level learners, and *error-repair* showing the highest frequency on the part of the more proficient subjects. Interestingly, *error-repair*, a CS considered as being more cognitively demanding, and as such expected to be more often used by the more proficient learners, shows equal frequencies in both levels. Therefore, *error-repair* will be first examined considering the data obtained for both levels, so as to determine any differences related to the proficiency factor. Subsequently, *own accuracy checks* will be analysed with regard to its more frequent use by the low level subjects.

‘PSM related to own-output problems’, as its name suggests, refers to those mechanisms related to deficiencies in one’s own output, and whose main function has to do with the learners’ ability to monitor their own L2 speech. *Error-repair* or *self-repair* is said to occur as a monitoring procedure where ‘an accidental lapse in speech processing is corrected’ (Dörnyei & Kormos (1998: 371). These lapses can occur at any level according to the type of repair, that is to say, lexical or grammatical repairs. The data in this study revealed that both levels resorted to *error-repair* mostly in order to correct grammatical errors (morphosyntactic). The only difference between groups has to do with a more frequent production of successful repairs, on the part of the Level B learners (normalised frequency of 10.1) over the Level A (normalised frequency of 6.9). The following excerpts illustrate the use of this mechanism by both groups, so as to observe how the proficiency level may have affected the learners’ use of this strategy.

Example 5.10.1 Error-repair

NNS10A: ... también tengo una una imagen cuando él es eh (0.3) *es salga↑ sa salga eh (0.3)
no

...I also have an an image when he is eh (0.3) is leave↑ leave lea leave eh (0.3) no

NS: [¿saliendo
de casa?

leaving the house?

NNS10A: sa sale la casa en una...

lea leaves house in a...

['es salga', target word: está saliendo, 'he is leaving']

Retrospective comments NNS10A: That was me trying to say 'he's leaving', 'sale' but I said 'salga' which I knew wasn't right so I was trying to correct myself.

Example 5.10.2

NNS2A: ...y (0.2) pienso que (0.2) comprar algo y ess una mujer eh que es el ven vendedor,
vendedora ah (0.4) y...

*...and (0.2) I think that (0.2) to buy something and iss a woman eh that is the sales
salesman saleswoman ah (0.4) and...*

Retrospective comments NNS2A: I was trying to say 'he's buying something from the lady he's at the counter' but I couldn't think how to say that...

As mentioned above, the Level A learners were not able to successfully repair their message as often as the more proficient learners. This aspect can be seen in 5.10.1 where NNS10A, as she explains, is trying to utter 'he's leaving the house' but as she knows that what she is producing is inappropriate, she then tries to correct her message in her second intervention, although unsuccessfully. The next example (in 5.10.2) shows an immediate and successful *error-repair* by NNS2A, involving the word 'vendedora' ('saleswoman'). Although she did not comment on this problem in particular, it is clear that she had problems with the gender of this word, which she is able to correct. However, she is not able to correct another more noticeable problem related to the verb form 'comprar' ('to buy'), which should have been properly conjugated in present continuous.

The excerpt below, from the data of the Level B subjects, points to this slight difference with the lower level, which had to do with a more frequent successful repairing. In 5.10.3 below,

NNS17B indicates that he corrected his output by repairing the verb form ‘está’ (‘is’), since what he originally wanted to convey was ‘el hombre está abriendo la botella’ (‘the man is opening the bottle’). Thus, he corrects the verb form, by applying the appropriate perfect tense ‘el hombre ha abierto la botella’ (‘he has opened the bottle’) for the action that he was describing. It is interesting to note that this learner was able to appropriately correct this verb form, but none of the other two errors he also made related to gender: ‘lo mismo’ instead of ‘el mismo’ (‘the same man’) and then ‘un botella’ instead of ‘una botella’ (‘a bottle’). This behaviour is different from NNS2A in 5.10.2 above, who is able to *repair* a gender-related problem, but not the one regarding a verb form. It seems that some learners may be more aware of ‘serious problems’, as Poulisse (1997) suggests, and thus tend to pay less attention to those items that, although grammatically inappropriate, do not risk the interlocutor’s understanding of the speaker’s message. In fact, the Level B learners’ *repairing* of more complex structures, such as verb inflections, was also observed in a few other instances, and it accounted for a frequency slightly higher than the Level A learners (normalised frequency – level B: 3.4 – Level A: 2.1).

Example 5.10.3

NNS17B: ...y después eh tengo eh lo mismo eh hombre ah está eh no ha eh ha abierto eh un botella de cham(pagne)
 ... and after eh I have eh the same eh man ah is eh no he has eh has opened eh a bottle of cham(pagne)

Retrospective comments NNS17B: I was trying to say ‘he’s just opening the bottle’ but then I was unsure if I could use the continuous so I said ‘he has opened’ so I just corrected it, I thought it was gonna be wrong.

The data shows that the learners from both levels are able to *repair* their own output in communicating, and that they tend to repair mostly grammar related problems. This latter fact seems to be in line with Green & Hetch (1993:157), who found that this mechanism ‘was most frequent and effective with morphological errors’ in EFL students with different proficiency levels. García Mayo’s study (2005) also found these types of problem-related instances to be more common in the output of EFL advanced learners, thus showing that, even at higher proficiency levels, grammar-related instances are still problematic. This would explain, to some extent, the types of difficulties that the learners of both groups in this study aimed at repairing. Moreover, the fact that not only the more proficient learners, as expected, resorted to this CS appears to be partially concurrent with Prebianca (2009). She reported a high use of *error repair* on the part of the pre-intermediate level learners, and an

even higher use by the intermediate level subjects in contrast to the advanced group. This finding attracted her attention, in that she expected the more advanced learners to be the ones able to repair their performance more often than the lower levels, since such a process requires ‘a certain degree of metalinguistic awareness...usually a feature of more proficient learners’ (p.20). She then concluded that ‘this might indicate that learners seem to improve their capacity to think about language and monitor their own speech as their IL system develops’ (p.28). However, this scholar did not examine the use of this CS by both levels in more detail, which might have revealed differences in its use. The further analysis carried out in this study, on the other hand, showed some slight differences in the output of both groups. The more proficient learners were able to repair their L2 performance successfully or appropriately more often than the lower levels, confirming the influence of these learners’ competence. Poulisse (1999) found similar results, in that the most proficient groups in her study were able to repair a higher percentage of their speech errors, contrary to the least proficient subjects ‘whose ordinary speech production already takes up a great deal of their attentional resources [and thus] are somewhat restrained in their correction of [L2] errors’ (p.61). This attentional factor, together with the fewer L2 linguistic resources available to the less competent learners, seem to corroborate the effects that the proficiency variable produce on the use of this CS. A second aspect which emerged from the analysis has to do with an apparent tendency for both groups to favour the correction of certain aspects of their utterance over others. Although the evidence is not enough to draw any definite conclusions in this respect, it may be the case that the learners, depending on their proficiency level, prefer to correct problematic instances that they feel are more or less important in order to communicate their message. As was observed in the excerpts above, some of the more proficient learners tended to correct problems related to verb forms as in 5.10.3, suggesting that they may be more concerned with the repairing of more complex structures, and which for them can risk more their communication. The less proficient subjects, on the other hand, seemed to favour those problematic instances related to gender as in 5.10.2, which may be seen as less complex structures and, therefore, easier to repair for the less competent learners. Similar evidence was observed in the use of *grammatical substitution*, where the only noticeable difference between groups appeared in a relatively higher use of this CS for solving gender-related instances, on the part of the lower level, which is considered a less complex structure in contrast to verbal inflections (Oliva *et al*, 2010). This tentative rationale also finds support in Poulisse’s proposal (1997) previously mentioned, as to some of the reasons for speakers to *repair* their utterances. One of these reasons is related to how serious speakers consider their errors to be, which will require from them extra effort to repair: ‘they adapt the effort they expend to the importance of their goals’ (p.60). Her other claim, based on Levelt (1983), is that speakers tend to be more concerned with the correction of real

errors, 'which are more likely to hamper communication', than with words that are 'merely inappropriate' (p.60). All in all, this proposal points to the same main factor: the learners' preference for repairing structures whose degree of complexity corresponds with their proficiency level. That is to say, the learners, according to their L2 resources available, will be more prone to correct those structures that they feel are more necessary to communicate meaning, and will be less concerned with those structures that do not hinder communication.

In conclusion, the analysis on *error repair* further validates the effects of the proficiency variable on the strategic use of the language. The more competent learners are able not only to monitor their L2 performance, but more importantly, to successfully repair it. In addition, the evidence examined makes it possible to tentatively suggest that this factor may also affect the ways in which the learners *repair* their speech, depending on the complexity of the type of error that they attempt to correct, and on how important they consider them to be when communicating their message.

The other CS which produced a high frequency within this main category is *own accuracy checks*. These mechanisms are defined as 'checking that what you said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question intonation' (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:373). They are also considered 'pre-repair mechanisms' since they 'elicit feedback from the interlocutor regarding the problem area'. As shown in table 4.8 above, this CS was applied by both levels, and the difference between the two groups is almost negligible, as a qualitative exploration of the data also confirmed. The only difference is therefore a slightly higher frequency by the lower level, which shows again that these learners' low competence makes them feel more uncertain about their own output, hence their need to monitor their message slightly more often than the more proficient subjects.

5.2.7 Analysis of 'PSM related to other-performance problems'

The next main category to be analysed is 'PSM related to other-performance problems'. The following table provides the results obtained for this category and the CSs for each level. In addition, the frequencies of CSs per 1000 words are presented.

Table 5.10 Results for PSM related to other-performance problems

PSM related to O-P problems	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
<i>meaning negotiation</i>				
asking for repetition	0	0.0	3	0.3
asking for clarification	11	1.7	1	0.1
expressing non-understanding	20	3.1	11	1.1
asking for confirmation-check	6	0.9	5	0.5
guessing	6	0.9	4	0.4
other-repair	2	0.3	4	0.4
feigning understanding	9	1.4	7	0.7
other-completion	11	1.7	15	1.5
Total for category	65		50	

Table 5.10 shows that this type of mechanism was not much employed by any of the groups with, therefore, no substantial differences between the levels. These results are expected since these mechanisms depend primarily on the NS type of interlocutor – a variable which does not constitute the focus of this chapter – as they are triggered by problems in the interlocutor’s message and thus by the NNSs’ output. Thus, the analysis of these CSs will be presented in chapter 7 where this variable will be fully examined.

5.2.8 Analysis of ‘Interactional & paralinguistic PSM’

The last main category to be discussed is the ‘interactional & paralinguistic CSs’. This category, as explained in the previous chapter, was divided into those mechanisms employed by the ‘receiver’ and the ‘giver’. The former concept refers to the speaker who is having problems in communication, and the latter to the one who gives assistance. The next table shows the results obtained in each of these subcategories together with the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 5.11 Results for Interactional and Paralinguistic CSs

Interactional-paralinguistic CSs	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
Receiver	196	30	164	16.2
Giver	19	2.9	20	2.0
Total for category	266	41	228	22.5

As can be observed in table 5.11, the subcategory that produced a more frequent use of CSs within this category was the ‘receiver’. This result was expected, since it is the speaker who experiences problems in communicating the one who needs to resort to CSs more often. The following table provides the results obtained for this subcategory together with the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 5.12 Results for Interactional & Paralinguistic CSs-Receiver

Interactional-paralinguistic CSs Receiver	Level A	CSs/1000 words	Level B	CSs/1000 words
response-repeat	24	3.7	29	2.9
response-repair	3	0.5	1	0.1
confirm help/correction	70	10.7	47	4.7
confirm understanding/comp.	9	1.4	2	0.2
reuse-of a word	7	1.1	8	0.8
<i>appeals for help</i>				
direct appeal for help	1	0.2	3	0.3
direct appeal for help-to-oneself	3	0.5	2	0.2
indirect appeal for help	38	5.8	44	4.4
<i>Paralinguistic</i>				
Mime	41	6.3	28	2.8
Total	196	30	164	16.2

Table 5.12 shows that the Level A learners made more frequent use of this type of CSs, yet most of these mechanisms show low normalised frequencies for both groups. When looking at the profiles of each group (reading down the table), it can be noticed that both levels resorted more frequently to *confirm help/correction*. The remaining figures show a different order of strategic use in each level; however, both groups made a frequent use of the three CSs highlighted (*response-repeat*, *indirect appeal for help* and *mime*). When comparing both profiles (reading across the table), it can be observed that the more substantial differences appear in the use of *confirm help/correction* and *mime*, more frequently used by the Level A learners. Nonetheless, and as in the previous category, the main discussion of these mechanisms will be presented in the chapter focusing on the interlocutor variable, as the use of these CSs depends primarily on this factor.

5.3 Summary of findings

In conclusion, one of the more specific research questions (2a) of this study can be answered, in that the findings indicate that the proficiency variable affects the use of these learners' CSs. First of all, and as predicted from most empirical evidence, the lower level learners needed to resort to a higher number of CSs, and more frequently, than the more proficient learners. Additionally, the learners' choice of the different mechanisms clearly demonstrates their level of L2 competence, in that each group employed the CSs in order to tackle the type of problem which was more salient for each level. Lexis-related aspects seemed to be the main problematic area for the less proficient learners. This was not only confirmed by the high frequency of lexical CSs, such as *code-switching* and *sub-approximation*, but also through their use of *grammatical reduction*. In the use of this latter CS, these lower level learners tended to omit grammatical items, and opted for communicating meaning through

mostly content words, showing again their concern for lexis over grammar; a fact which was further validated by their higher use of *lexical tip of the tongue*. The more proficient learners, on the other hand, were more prone to solving grammar-related problems, which was reflected in their higher use of *morphological tip of the tongue*. This was also demonstrated, albeit tentatively, in their slightly higher tendency to successfully *repair* problems related to verb forms, as opposed to the less proficient learners, who tended to favour the *repairing* of gender-related problems. This last CS usage, on the part of the lower level, pointed to another differentiating feature between groups – also related to the proficiency variable – in that although these learners encountered grammar-oriented difficulties, these were considered less complex in comparison to the problems related to verb inflections met by the more proficient subjects. In this respect, it was observed that in the use of *literal translation* and *grammatical substitution*, the main differences between levels was a slightly higher use, on the part of the less proficient learners, to solve problems relating to the use of prepositions and gender, respectively. In contrast, the higher level learners appeared to favour more complex structures, such as verb inflections. Hence, the proficiency variable influenced these learners' strategic behaviour in that it made them encounter communication problems in specific linguistic areas. Moreover, it seems that the less competent learners are trying to progress towards the use of more complex grammar structures, whereas the more proficient subjects, as having already undergone a lexis-focused stage, appear to be now more concerned about verbal constructions and, thus, about more complex L2 structures. Finally, it should be considered that the small differences observed for these two groups may indicate the need for analysing learners' L2 performance with more differentiated oral proficiency levels.

CHAPTER 6
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS FOR
THE TYPE OF TASK

6.1 Type of task

The following analysis discusses the results obtained for the second variable being investigated, the type of task, with the aim of addressing the second research question proposed in this study: the extent to which this variable influences the learners' use of CSs. As in the previous chapter, results will be quantitatively and qualitatively analysed considering first the totals obtained for this variable, and then following with a more detailed examination of findings.

In order to analyse these task effects on the use of the different CSs, the demands that each activity imposed will be first presented considering all their requirements for the participants of this study. This overview of the different task demands will serve as a baseline to use on the subsequent examination of the data.

Closed task: Jigsaw activity

General requirements:

For this task, two jigsaw activities were used. As part of the instructions for this task, the learners were told that the activity consisted of one story divided in two parts; each half of the story was given to each participant by means of pictures which depicted each one's part of the story. Thus, in order for them to complete the task, they had to describe their sets of pictures to each other and try to narrate the events in the possible order of the sequence, so that together both speakers could find out the sequence of the whole story they both shared. This also implied that they needed to ask each other questions so as to try to figure out together the sequence of the story. A time limit of 10 minutes was given to perform the task, and although there was no requirement for them to complete it, they were asked to try their best to accomplish the final aim of the task.

Linguistic demands:

These were imposed through the visual support given by the pictures which each learner had to use to perform the task. This meant that each subject was constrained to use the specific language for the entities and events depicted in these pictures in order to narrate their own part of the story, and so be able to carry out the task.

Cognitive demands:

These were reduced by the context already given to the learners, through the pictures provided, as they helped them to know what kind of information they needed to convey in order to perform the activity. These demands, on the other hand, may have been increased by the task familiarity factor (Skehan, 1998), that is to say, whether or not the participants were

familiar with this type of activity, an aspect which may have influenced their L2 performance. Thus, in order to minimise the possible effects of task unfamiliarity, on those occasions where some speakers were not acquainted with this type of activity, they were given another, simpler one to practice with for a few minutes before carrying out the data-elicitation task.

Demands of the situational context (Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Lujan-Ortega, 1997):

These were imposed by the time allotted for each task, since the participants were told that the activity could not last more than 10 minutes; after this, the task had to be stopped as I wished for roughly the same amount of data from each dyad. However, they were not obliged to complete the task during the time provided.

Communicative demands:

These were reduced by the task requirements, together with the pictures provided to each speaker, since the visual support shared by the participants aided the listener to better comprehend the speaker's message, and help them in their attempts to convey that information.

Open task

General requirements:

This task consisted of a free-conversation activity with the following topics: 'talk about someone who has influenced you the most', 'talk about your best holidays ever', 'talk about situations that cause you stress and how you cope with them'. The participants were instructed to speak freely about the topic given and to try to interact as much as possible, asking questions when necessary.

Linguistic demands:

These were reduced through topic familiarity, since the topics provided prompted the speakers to talk about themselves and so to use the language more freely. In this respect, there was no language constraint as in the jigsaw activity.

Cognitive demands:

These were posed by the absence of visual support, and thus of a given context for the learners to rely on, which increased the 'cognitive complexity'¹¹ of the task by means of the

¹¹ This construct is subdivided into 'cognitive familiarity' (background knowledge) and 'cognitive processing' (processing of the information).

‘cognitive processing’¹² (Skehan 1998) involved. The processing of this type of information, which might have not necessarily been part of their previous knowledge, increased the task difficulty in that the learners were obliged to process, activate and produce information related to a given topic, all at the same time and without previous preparation.

Demands of the situational context:

As in the realisation of the closed task, the learners were instructed about the time limits of this free conversation activity. However, in this case the learners were less pressured since there was not a final aim to accomplish, but simply to talk to each other about the topic provided.

Communicative demands:

These were imposed by the lack of visual aids, which made the communication between the speakers more difficult as they did not share the information to be conveyed. This, therefore, may have decreased the listener’s understanding of the speaker’s message, and so the help provided to the speaker to get their message across.

6.2 Analysis and discussion of results for the task variable

Turning to the quantitative analysis of the most general results, the total normalised frequencies according to CSs per 1000 words will be first briefly examined, so as to be able to compare the results obtained for each type of task. Hence, the following table presents the total amount of language generated in each task, the total number of CSs produced by the learners when carrying out each of the activities, and the normalised frequency of strategies per 1000 words. For a more detailed description of the task elicitation procedures, please refer to the method chapter and to appendices B1,B2 for the pictures of the closed task. It should be noted that for the qualitative analysis, as in the previous chapter, the results that show a strategic frequency of 3 times per 1000 words and over, by at least one of the two groups, will be examined.

Table 6.1 Results for the type of task according to frequency of CSs

Type of task	Language production	CSs	CSs per 1000 words
Open (free conversation activity)	8602	1628	189.3
Closed (jigsaw activity)	8092	1974	244

¹² Cognitive processing: information organisation, amount of computation, clarity and sufficiency of information given, and information type (Skehan 1998:99).

As can be seen from table 6.1, the open type of task generated slightly more language than the closed task. Nevertheless, in terms of strategy use, the difference between the tasks is more marked with the closed task, the jigsaw activity, being the one that generated the higher amount of CSs. Similarly, the normalised frequency of CSs confirms that the closed task was the activity that produced a higher frequency. These overall results, regarding language production and frequency of strategic use, are not surprising since they show fairly similar results to the ones obtained in the pilot study. This type of task was the one that generated a high number of CSs and more language production, in comparison to the other tasks tested in that small scale study. The high frequency of CSs generated by the jigsaw activity also conforms to some of the evidence found in the literature, which shows that this type of story narration activity has been quite often used for elicitation purposes in the area of CS research (Tarone, 1977; Hyde, 1982; Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Marrie & Netten, 1991). This type of closed task has been found to be more beneficial for elicitation and identification purposes, because it aids the researcher to have more control over the task contents, and thus be able to some extent to anticipate the problems the learners might encounter in communication (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Fernández Dobao, 2004).

With regard to the open type of task, two activities of this kind have been used in other studies related to CSs: interviews (Rababah & Bulut, 2007; Lujan-Ortega, 1997; Hastrup and Phillipson, 1983; Labarca and Khanji, 1986), and conversations (Lujan-Ortega & Clark-Carter, 2000; Fernández Dobao, 2001). Interviews have been observed to produce better results in terms of a higher CS elicitation, which may be due to the fact that an activity like this can also be controlled to some extent by the interviewer. Conversations, on the other hand, which in these studies in particular were carried out between learners and NSs only, generated fewer CSs than the closed types of activities. Nevertheless, in the area of second language learning, some studies have observed that the free conversation activity, also called opinion-exchange task (Pica, 1990), usually generates more and more elaborated language, (Duff, 1986) in addition to providing more opportunities to produce more complex structures (Skehan, 1998). This evidence, therefore, supports the findings of this study regarding the fairly high amount of language produced by this activity. However, as the frequency of CSs generated by this task is not substantially lower than the closed task, the distribution of the CS categories of both tasks will be now analysed, so as to start elucidating in more detail the possible influence of the task variable on these learners' use of CSs. The following tables present the distribution of the various categories of CSs from the more general to the more specific results.

Table 6.2 shows the results obtained for each of the main CS categories in relation to the type of task together with the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words (in parentheses).

Table 6.2 Main CS categories by type of task (frequency per 1000 words)

Types of task	CS categories					
	L2 resource deficit	Processing time pressure	Own output problems	Other performance	Interactional-Paralinguistic	Totals
Open	780 (91)	481 (56)	199 (23.1)	47 (5.5)	121 (14.1)	1628
Closed	742 (92)	640 (79.1)	246 (30.4)	68 (8.4)	278 (34.35)	1974
Totals	1522	1121	445	115	399	3602

As observed in table 6.2, the overall results show a markedly higher frequency of all the CSs categories in the closed type of task, with the exception of ‘L2 resource deficit’ and ‘other performance’ CSs, where the differences are quite small. In relation to the raw distribution of the different CS categories produced in each task, the main differences reside in a higher use of ‘processing time pressure’ and ‘interactional-paralinguistic’ types of mechanisms, which were proportionally more used in the jigsaw activity. In terms of the profiles of the two tasks, it can be observed that they are quite similar with ‘L2 resource deficit’ showing the highest frequency, followed by ‘processing time pressure’, and with ‘other performance’ showing the lowest frequency in both tasks. However, the order of higher to lower frequency differs in the third and fourth categories more frequently used in each task: in the open task, the learners favoured ‘own output problems’ CSs followed by the ‘interactional-paralinguistic’ category, whereas in the closed task this order was reversed. It is also worth noting that in general the differences in the patterns of distribution are statistically significant ($df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 61.407$, $p = .000$), indicating differential use of the various CS categories by the learners in the two types of tasks. These results, therefore, seem to confirm what empirical evidence has shown so far regarding the effects that the task produces on the learners’ use and choice of CSs (Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Poulisse, 1987, 1990; Lujan, 1997; Safont Jordá, 2001; Rababah & Seedhouse, 2004; Fernández Dobao, 2002, 2004; Rababah & Bulut, 2007) in addition to the fact that some studies have also observed that task-related factors may even overrule the effects of the proficiency level (Poulisse & Schils, 1989; Poulisse, 1987).

The more specific and substantial differences regarding the ‘processing time pressure’ and ‘interactional-paralinguistic’ categories, more frequently used by the learners in the closed task, may be tentatively explained by the requirements of this activity. The jigsaw task

demanded from the learners not only to narrate a story – which obliged them to use specific linguistic items and to ensure that the relevant details of the story were explained to the interlocutor – but also to find out the real story sequence, which could only be achieved by means of both interlocutors working together. These demands may have therefore forced them to gain time, through various stalling mechanisms, in order to compensate for the problems encountered when trying to communicate those specific items. In addition, they needed to rely on their interlocutor so as to be able to overcome the difficulties found in such a collaborative type of activity, which is reflected in the higher use of the ‘interactional-paralinguistic’ types of CSs. Thus, the fact that in this study the jigsaw activity generated a higher frequency of all the CS categories, as was expected, suggests that this type of closed task because of its demands presents, in general terms, more communication difficulties to the learners, and thus a more frequent use of the various categories is necessary. It should be noted, however, that there is no significant difference in the use of ‘L2 resource deficit’ CSs, which suggests that at this most general level of CS use, the task variable is not a factor in the use of this category in particular. Nonetheless, the different task-related factors, which may have affected the learners’ strategic performance, cannot be observed through quantitative data only and at this most general level. Hence, as with the data on the proficiency variable in Chapter 5, a qualitative analysis of the results is necessary in order to have a more complete picture of how the learners attempted to accomplish these tasks by means of CSs. What follows therefore is the examination of all the main CS categories and subcategories in an attempt to shed light on the possible effects that this variable might produce on the learners’ use of CSs.

6.2.1 Analysis of results for each CS category

The next table presents the results obtained for the first main category, ‘PSM related to L2 resource deficit’, and its subcategories together with the frequencies of CSs per 1000 words for each task. Subsequently, each subcategory within this classification will be analysed.

Table 6.3 Results for PSM related to L2 resource deficit

CSs Categories and subcategories	Open task (free conversation)	CSs/1000 Words	Closed Task (jigsaw)	CSs/1000 words
PSM related to resource deficit				
R.D. lexical	331	38.5	312	38.6
R.D. grammatical	358	41.6	331	41
R.D. phonological-articulatory	91	10.6	99	12.2
Totals for category	780	91	742	92

As can be seen in Table 6.3, the results obtained for this first main category are not statistically significant showing similar frequencies in both tasks. The only small difference observed between the tasks has to do with a slightly higher frequency of the ‘phonological-articulatory’ type of mechanisms generated by the jigsaw activity. Thus, the profiles for both tasks are the same with grammatical PSM showing the highest frequency, followed by lexical PSM and then phonological-articulatory PSM. This fairly equal use of the CS subtypes within this main category in both tasks, as previously mentioned, demonstrates that at the most general levels of analysis, the task variable is not a factor in the use of this category. Hence, the following in-depth observation of each of these CS subtypes will help to determine whether there are any differences at more delicate levels of categorisation.

6.2.2 Analysis of ‘lexical PSM-L2 resource deficit’.

The next table provides the results obtained for the first subcategory, ‘lexical PSM’, for each type of task in addition to the frequencies of CSs per 1000 words. Results which seem of particular interest are highlighted.

As can be observed in table 6.4 (overleaf), the major subcategories of ‘lexical PSM’ show statistically significant differences ($df = 4, \chi^2 = 12.9, p = .0117$) demonstrating a differential use of these types of CSs by the learners in the two tasks. However, in terms of the profiles of both tasks (reading down the table), they show some similarities with ‘substitution’ and ‘substitution plus’ showing the highest CS frequencies. The main difference concerns the order of use of these two subtypes, which for the open task is ‘substitution plus’ followed by ‘substitution’, and for the closed task is the inverse order. The remaining order for both is the same: ‘macro-conceptualisation’, ‘content reduction’ and ‘micro-conceptualisation’. When observing the profiles of each task (reading across the table), a few small differences can be noticed: in the open task, there was a slightly higher frequency of the subcategory ‘content reduction’, although none of the CSs that comprise it show a considerable difference between the tasks. The other small difference relates to the use of *literal translation*, within ‘substitution plus’, which was slightly more generated by the open task.

Table 6.4 Results for lexical PSM-L2 RD

CSs	open task (free conversation)	CSs/1000 words	closed task (jigsaw)	CSs/1000 words
PSM related to RD				
LEXICAL PSM				
<i>Content Reduction</i>	42	4.9	29	3.6
message abandonment	20	2.3	15	1.9
message reduction	12	1.4	6	0.7
message replacement	10	1.2	8	1.0
<i>Substitution</i>	98	11.4	118	14.6
code-switching	33	3.8	38	4.7
approximation	31	3.6	45	5.6
sub-approximation	19	2.2	20	2.5
use-of-all-purpose word	8	0.9	4	0.5
complete omission	7	0.8	11	1.4
<i>substitution plus</i>	119	13.8	112	13.8
Foreignising	9	1.0	15	1.9
grammatical-word coinage	5	0.6	9	1.1
Literal translation	103	12.0	88	10.9
use-of-cognates	2	0.2	0	0.0
<i>macro-conceptualisation</i>	57	6.6	31	3.8
Restructure	57	6.6	31	3.8
<i>micro-conceptualisation</i>	15	1.7	22	2.7
Circumlocution	9	1.0	18	2.2
offer two-alternatives	6	0.7	4	0.5
Totals for lexical PSM	331		312	

The more noticeable differences shown in the table above have to do with a proportionally higher production of *restructure*, within ‘macro-conceptualisation’, in the open task and of *code-switching* and *approximation* (‘substitution’) generated by the jigsaw activity. This more substantial difference regarding the preference for the ‘substitution’ CSs¹³ in the jigsaw task, and in particular through *code-switching* and *approximation* may be due first to the task requirements. As already mentioned, due to the requirements stipulated for this task, the

¹³ ‘Substitution’ CSs are those devices used for substituting the message or part of it by means of the changing or omission of the original plan for an alternative one (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998).

learners knew what they had to talk about – because of the pictures they were provided with (context) – nevertheless, the realisation of the task also involved the likelihood that there would be a number of specific linguistic items that they did not know or remember in their L2, and which they needed in order to complete the task. All this, coupled with the time constraints, might have imposed difficulties on the learners in order to find those specific items within a limited time, triggering the use of less informative, shorter and more effective types of CSs (Poulisse & Schils, 1989) such as *approximation* and *code-switching*. These mechanisms helped them to compensate for their L2 lack of lexical resources, and were probably more effective for these specific task demands.

Approximation refers to the substitution of a lexical item for a related one that shares semantic features with the target word. The data revealed that this L2-based CS was employed by the learners, when performing the jigsaw activity, in order to substitute specific lexical items which were recurrent problems when trying to describe their pictures. These items, in most cases, referred to certain actions that the learners needed to narrate, such as: ‘subir/bajar las escaleras’ (‘go up/down the stairs’), ‘servir vino’ (‘pour the champagne’), ‘vestir/llevar’ (‘s/he is wearing...’), or to very specific words that seemed to be problematic for most learners: ‘traje’ (‘suit’), ‘techo’ (‘ceiling’), ‘corcho’ (cork) amongst others. The following example illustrates the use of this CS.

Example 6.1 approximation

NS: ¿cómo va vestido? ¿cómo viste el hombre?

What is the man wearing?

NNS17B: en un eh chaqueta y pantalones ne negros

in a eh jacket and bla black trousers/pants

Retrospective comments NNS17: There I just didn’t know the word for ‘suit’ so I tried to say ‘jacket and pants’.

In the excerpt above, it can be observed and confirmed through the learner’s comments that the problem he found had to do with the lexical item ‘suit’ (‘traje’). He signals this problem when hesitating before uttering the approximated term ‘jacket and pants’, thus compensating for a specific lexical item that he needed to continue communicating his message. This type of CS has been found to require ‘less processing effort and less time to be uttered’ (Lujan-Ortega, 1997:45) which, in this activity in particular, makes it more useful in view of the specific context. This context, provided through the set of pictures given to each speaker, helped them to deduce information and so ‘compensate for the degree of vagueness in the

strategies used' (Lujan-Ortega, 1997:45), which seemed to be the case in some of the data observed.

The demands of this closed task also prompted the learners to resort to *code-switching*. This CS refers to the use of L1 or L3 words with L1/L3 pronunciation when communicating in the target language. Although the use of this L1 based mechanism has been found 'to take a high risk if it is not understood by the interlocutor', it also demands 'very little processing effort and time' and so it means that it is 'economic' (Lujan-Ortega, 1997:46). This risk factor mentioned above was decreased in the present study by the fact that the learners interacted with NNSs – who are more likely to comprehend their peers – and with NSs who knew English, thus making this CS a more useful mechanism under such circumstances (see further discussion in Chapter 7). Hence, *code-switching* appears to be a useful and effective CS when lacking the specific words to communicate meaning. The data in this respect showed that as happened with *approximation*, the learners resorted to their L1, and on a few occasions to their L3, when attempting to communicate specific items or 'target referents' (Fernández Dobao, 2004) such as, 'escaleras' ('stairs'), 'traje' ('suit'), 'decoraciones' ('decorations'), 'comisaría' ('police station'), etc. They also employed this CS when either trying to gain time or indirectly asking for help ('what you call it, I can't remember') as well as a discourse marker ('so', 'I mean') to connect their ideas when trying to communicate their message.

Example 6.2 Code-switching

NNS4A:...y hay una eh eh (0.3) no recuerdo la palabra eh (0.2)- **gestos-(box-risa)-gestos** eh en mi lo siento en...

...and there is a eh eh (0.3) I don't remember the word eh (0.2)-gestures-(box laugh)-gestures eh in my sorry in...

In the excerpt above, it seems that NNS4 cannot avoid *switching* to her L1 in order to continue expressing her message, since she signals that she is having problems first through hesitation, and then by verbally expressing that she does not remember the word. Additionally, she *mimes* the word that she is trying to convey before deciding to *switch* language, which she does by almost mumbling the word in English ('box'). She then apologises for using her L1, which confirms the fact that she used this CS as a last resort when not being able to remember the appropriate target item. It was also observed that, on other occasions, the learners did not signal that they were experiencing problems until they *switched* to English; a kind of behaviour which was usually complemented with *own-accuracy checks*, thus indirectly appealing to their interlocutor for help.

Thus, these ‘substitution’ CSs proved to be useful and effective in this type of closed task, mainly due to the control of the linguistic contents established through the context, which demanded from the learners the use of specific terms. These lexical CSs are less informative and shorter (Poulisse & Schils, 1989), and so provide a quicker and efficient way of using the L2 resources available, especially when resorting to *approximation*. The main difference regarding these mechanisms relates to the cognitive demands that each of these strategies require from the learners. On the one hand, *code-switching*, considered an L1 or transfer CS, entails a quicker process and, therefore, it is considered to be less cognitively demanding, whereas *approximation* involves a more complex process in that the learners need to exploit exclusively their knowledge of the target language (Fernández Dobao, 2004). All in all, both CSs were useful for the learners to compensate for the specific lexical items (nouns and verbs) needed, as was observed in the data examined as well as in the excerpt above, a type of difficulty which corresponds with the nature of this task, in that it demanded the use of specific target referents controlled by the pictures provided. Thus, the linguistic specificity required by this task constituted one of the main effects on these learners’ strategic use of the language.

The second more noticeable difference found between the tasks, within the lexical PSM, has to do with a more frequent use of *restructure* generated by the open task. This CS was also analysed in the previous chapter as being more often employed by the more proficient learners, and thus its main characteristics have already been analysed. It was observed that the learners resort to this achievement mechanism once they have already started their message, and suddenly realise that they cannot continue communicating the original meaning because of their lack of resources, hence their need to compensate for those gaps with an alternative message. It is worth adding that the open task – a free conversation activity – was designed first to resemble a more real life situation in contrast to the jigsaw activity, and as such it is a relatively uncontrolled and open-ended task. Additionally, as there was no context to make use of, as in the closed task, the learners may have been prompted to *restructure* their message more often in an attempt to communicate more language (see Table 6.1) and more elaborated language (Duff, 1986; Nakahama *et al*, 2001). Although these factors make this task more demanding, as the language to be used is unexpected, it also gives the speakers the possibility of using the language more freely, aspects which may push the learner to reword their message more often. The following excerpt exemplifies this CS usage.

Example 6.3 Restructure

NNS13B: pero pero a veces mm se necesita al al mm una persona para mm estar muy eh sin
(0.2) sin eh emociones sobre su
but but sometimes mm you need to to mm a person to mm be very eh without (02.)
without emotions about your

NNS14B: [sí

NNS13B: [si-tua-ción↑ Como
[si-tua-tion↑ like

Retrospective comments NNS13: There I was trying to say like ‘sometimes you need someone to not be so understanding, be so eh on your side all the time, you need someone to get yourself in action’ I guess. Not like encourage your emotions I think. (You said first ‘estar muy’ and then ‘sin’) that was a different idea.

In this example, it is clear that NNS13 is having problems to communicate her message because of the *repetition* and *umming*. This is later confirmed in her comments, where she explains what she originally wanted to convey, which as can be seen involved more complex language as well as structures. This makes her *restructure* and also *reduce* her message so as to be able to communicate what she intended to. Thus, it seems that the fact of having a given topic, which they can approach as they want (unexpected language), and which gives them the freedom to adjust their linguistic resources as they go through the conversation, provides a more suitable context for them to *restructure* meaning. Through this type of task, the learners are more able to stretch their L2 resources, and thus to get their message across by means of *restructuring* an original message and communicating it through alternative means. From the little empirical evidence regarding a wider use of CSs in relation to task effects, Rababah & Bulut (2007) found that another type of open task, the interview, also produced more use of *restructure* – as well as of most of the compensatory CSs analysed – than the closed task. They concluded that as the questions in the interview were unexpected, it made this activity a more demanding task prompting a higher use of strategic language. As previously presented in the different demands of this type of task, the free-conversation activity did pose more cognitive demands on the learners in terms of ‘cognitive complexity’. The unexpected information required by the topics given, although referring to the learners’ own background knowledge – and so of a more familiar topic – forced them to improvise what to say, as there was not visual support for them to rely on, leading them to *restructure* their output more often.

As previously mentioned, there were two other small differences between the tasks: one of them relates to the subcategory ‘content reduction’, in particular through the use of *message abandonment* and *message reduction*, and the second one to *literal translation* (‘substitution plus’), all slightly more often generated in the open task. However, as the two former CSs show low frequencies, and so small differences between the tasks, the following analysis will focus on *literal translation*, since it was the CS which produced the highest frequencies within this category.

As was observed in table 6.4, *literal translation* does not contribute to the task-based variation since the results show rather similar frequencies in both tasks. Nonetheless, due to its high frequencies in the two tasks, the data from both activities will be observed in order to find out any differences at a more delicate level of analysis. As already mentioned, the open task required more knowledge of the target language, since it demanded slightly more language production as well as a more elaborated output, features of the learners’ output which can be observed in the following excerpt.

Example 6.4.1 Literal translation – open task

NNS12A: y eh él entonces él siempre hacer *todos los cosas primera, él él fue él fue a eh
viajar a universidad primero siempre y eh yo siempre mirar a él

*And eh he so he always to do *everything first, he he went he went to eh to travel, to
university first always and eh I always to look at him*

*[‘todos los cosas primera’, target word: ‘todas las cosas primero’, ‘everything
first’]*

Retrospective comments NNS12: I was trying to say like ‘he does everything first’ like ‘he went travelling first’, ‘he went to university first’ so ‘he always sets the example’. Then ‘I always look up to him’.

The data obtained from the open task firstly evidenced a higher amount of language, which the learners need to produce in order to develop the conversational topic provided. In addition, it was observed that the learners try to elaborate more on their ideas, which then triggers the use of more complex L2 structures, and thus the need to resort to their L1 by means of this type of transfer CS. In 6.4.1 above, where the topic is ‘someone who has influenced you’, NNS12A is talking about her older brother, and how he has influenced her since he has done most things first. From her comments, it becomes clear that she meant to say more things, which leads her not only to employ a reduced, sometimes incomprehensible

output, but also to transfer some words literally from her L1. This can be seen in the underlined utterance: ‘siempre mirar a él’ which was *translated literally* from the L2: ‘I always look up to him’, as she later confirmed, instead of producing the appropriate L2 equivalent: ‘lo admiro’. This task made NNS12 expand her L2 speech which, together with her lack of linguistic resources in the target language, forced her to resort to this L1 or transfer CS, a perhaps quicker and easier way of using her linguistic L2 repertoire available.

When examining the data from the closed task, a few differences emerge as illustrated in the following excerpt. It was observed that the learners use their L1 knowledge because of specific information they are trying to convey in the L2, and not because of an attempt to elaborate more on their ideas, as happened in the open task. In 6.4.2 below, it can be observed how NNS14B is also trying to communicate a structure in Spanish with the English verb form ‘he’s been robbed’. However, as occurred in most instances, this structure cannot be applied literally in Spanish, where the correct form is ‘(al hombre) le han robado dos veces’. On this occasion, the speaker also confirms that she opted for using her L1 in order to convey her message.

Example 6.4.2 Literal translation-closed task

NNS14B: sí eh y pienso que *el hombre eh con las reyes eh ha sido eh robado dos veces↑

*Yes eh and I think that *the man eh with the kings eh has been eh robbed twice↑*

[‘el hombre con las reyes’, target word: ‘el hombre de rayas’, ‘the man in stripes’]

Retrospective comments NNS14B: (is that what you had in mind?) yeah ‘he’s been robbed twice’; I think I was trying to say that from English.

In this closed more restricted task, the learners encountered problems specifically related to certain structures, which they needed to communicate in order to describe and narrate their pictures. As happened in the use of *approximation* and *code-switching*, the specificity of the language required by this task also prompted the transfer of structures and verb forms as well as of specific lexical items, as most of the data showed. Moreover, when looking at the comments given by some speakers, regarding the two tasks, it can be seen that they also corroborate the difficulties that each task presented and which made them resort to their L1, as NNS23B in particular mentions.

NNS23B: I think that as this task (free-conversation) as being so free it was hard to keep talking sometimes, to think what else to say 'cause you are thinking of what to say in English and how to say that in Spanish and so you make more mistakes.

NNS17B: There was a lot of more freedom in the conversation, whereas in the other task I was trying to search for like the sentence scripts. I felt more confident when I could speak a bit more.

NNS15A: I can talk freely in the conversation and the vocabulary isn't so specific as in the other task.

Hence, it becomes clearer how the different task demands presented by both activities prompted the learners to transfer information from their L1 in order to convey their message in Spanish. The free-conversation activity triggered the learners' attempt to elaborate more on their ideas, and to use more complex language in order to be able to communicate personal information. This personal investment, therefore, prompted the use of more conceptually complex ideas, all leading to a higher use of *literal translation*. The jigsaw activity, on the other hand – because of its language specificity – pressured the learners to find particular words/structures to express the meaning they needed to convey in order to carry out the task. Although this aspect involved the use of conceptually simpler terms, it also forced them to rely on their L1 in an attempt to express the precise items in the L2. It seems that as this CS is said to be an 'easy' type of mechanism, in that it 'requires the least processing effort'¹⁴ (Poullisse, 1993:184), it constituted a more affordable and useful CS for the task demands posed by both activities. In relation to what other studies have found in this respect, Poullisse (1993) also observed a high use of transfer CSs in the open task (interview) used for data elicitation, where it was highly used even by the advanced levels. Fernández Dobao (2002), in a study on proficiency and task-related factors, also observed a high percentage of transfer CSs generated in the conversation activity in comparison to the closed tasks used. In the present analysis regarding task-effects, it seems that this variable does not influence the learners' use of this CS, as the learners use it in similar frequencies in both tasks. The only difference observed was reflected in the type of language produced, which varied according to the different demands imposed by each activity.

To sum up, the different linguistic and cognitive demands that each task imposed on the learners seem to have triggered specific lexical CSs. On the one hand the jigsaw activity, a

¹⁴ Poullisse (1993) refers to the 'Least Effort Principle' proposed by Grice (1975).

more controlled type of task in terms of contents – because of the context provided – prompted a more frequent use of two mechanisms: *code switching* and *approximation*; both found to be quicker, shorter and less informative (Poulisse & Schils, 1989), and so more beneficial for the linguistic demands imposed by this task. On the other hand, the free conversation activity, a more real-life, less linguistically restricted type of task, generated a high frequency of *restructure*, a more cognitively demanding process more favourable for a task with this kind of cognitive requirements. Finally, the use of *literal translation* in both tasks, which produced no significant differences in terms of CS frequencies –thus not affecting the use of this CS – only showed linguistic differences reflected in the learners’ L2 output, which depended on the distinct task demands.

6.2.3 Analysis of grammatical PSM-L2 resource deficit

The following table presents the totals obtained for the subcategory ‘grammatical PSM’ in each task together with their frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 6.5 Results for Grammatical PSM -L2 RD

Grammatical PSM	Open Task Free conversation	CSs/1000 words	Closed Task jigsaw	CSs/1000 words
grammatical substitution	108	12.55	74	9.1
grammatical reduction	167	19.41	168	20.8
Grammatical reduction- substitution	35	4.07	67	8.3
use of prepositions	48	5.58	22	2.7
Totals	358	41.6	331	41

As can be observed in table 6.5, the raw results obtained for the ‘grammatical PSM’ show statistically significant differences ($df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 25.031$, $p = .000$). When looking at the profiles of each task, the order of strategic use is quite similar, with *grammatical reduction* followed by *grammatical substitution* more often produced in both activities. The remaining order in the open task is *use of prepositions* followed by *grammatical reduction-substitution*, with the reverse order for the closed task. The main differences observed in both profiles have to do with a higher frequency of *grammatical substitution* and *use of prepositions* in the open task, and a higher use of *grammatical reduction-substitution* in the closed task. It is worth noting the similar high frequencies obtained for *grammatical reduction* in both activities, which indicate that this CS does not contribute to the task-based variation, and therefore a more in-depth analysis will be necessary in order to investigate whether there are any differences in the ways this CS was employed in each task.

As mentioned above, one of the main differences between the two tasks is a higher frequency of *grammatical substitution* in the free-conversation activity. As this CS was fully examined in the previous chapter, its relation to the task variable will be more concisely analysed. The following excerpt illustrates the most frequent CS usage in the open task (normalised frequency of 4.9), instances where the learners were observed as encountering problems related to the verb form. On these occasions, as explained in the previous chapter, the learners transferred some structures from their L1 or overgeneralised an L2 grammatical construction. As can be seen in 6.5.1, NNS4A clearly indicates that she did not use the correct verb tense, and that she meant to use the preterite form ‘I had the ...accent but not anymore’ (‘tuve el acento...pero ya no’) but, as can be seen in her utterance, she opted for overgeneralising present perfect tense instead.

Example 6.5.1 Grammatical substitution- open task

NNS4A: [entonces, sí eh he (0.3) tenido el *accento de Andalucía **risa** pero no no ahora es es gone **risa**

*[so, yes eh I have (0.3) had the Andalucía accent-**laugh**-but not not now it is is gone-**laugh***

[‘accento’, target word: acento, ‘accent’]

Retrospective comments NNS4A: That’s the wrong tense; I was trying to say ‘I had the Andalucía accent after being there but not anymore’. I was not sure of the verb form and I knew I was wrong.

The learners’ need for resorting to this mechanism more frequently in the open task, and especially to solve problems related to verb forms, suggests that again the demands of this type of task influence the learners’ strategic use of the language. It was observed that the learners’ communicative desire to speak about themselves prompted them to produce more L2 language, which led them to try to convey meaning through more complex structures, hence their need to compensate for this type of problems more often than when carrying out the closed task. Nakahama *et al* (2001:391) also observed that in this type of task, as opposed to the more controlled information gap activities they used in their study, ‘the NNS interlocutors tended to produce utterances that were clearly more elaborated in grammatical terms...’. The jigsaw activity, in contrast, not only produced a lower frequency of this mechanism, but primarily other linguistic difficulties, which thus triggered the use of this CS but in a different way. When carrying out this closed task, the learners resorted to *grammatical substitution*, mostly, in order to solve problems related to gender (normalised

frequency of 3.8), as can be seen in 6.5.2 below, and less frequently to cope with verb forms (normalised frequency of 1.5) as opposed to what occurred in the open task. From a closer examination of the data, it was observed that the learners encountered this kind of problem more often, because of the repeated words which they needed to produce in order to carry out the activity, and which were demanded by the visual context. Hence, the requirements of this task imposed a relatively high use of gender-related structures, for which the learners tended to overgeneralise the masculine form as shown in 6.5.2. The learners opted for applying masculine articles before words ending in ‘o’ because of its grammatical masculine connotation, and before ‘e/es’ for its ambiguity regarding which gender to apply. In this respect, a NNS commented about this aspect in particular by indicating: ‘I always put the masculine and then I have to think, I just automatically say that’.

Example 6.5.2 Grammatical substitution-closed task

NNS21: (0.2) eh (0.2) y pienso que *los eh los dos (0.1) fotos son primero
(0.2) eh (0.2) and I think that the eh the two (0.1) photos are first

[‘los dos fotos’, target word: ‘las dos fotos’, ‘the two pictures’]

Retrospective comments NNS21: I meant ‘these two pictures were the first’.

From this further analysis, it becomes apparent why this CS was employed in both tasks. On the one hand, the demands posed by the free topics provided in the open task – in addition to the learners’ personal investment in the conversations – made this activity more cognitively demanding. This prompted the use of more complex structures, particularly, of verb forms, thus producing a slightly more frequent CS usage in this task. The jigsaw, on the other hand, through the visual support provided, limited the learners’ output to the use of specific items, especially nouns, which thus triggered more problems related to gender, although in a lower frequency.

The other phenomenon observed as more frequently produced in the open task concerns an inappropriate *use of prepositions*. A closer examination of the data did not provide any clear patterns in the learners’ choice of the incorrect prepositions, which was due to its varied use, and also because in most cases there were no comments provided by the speakers, which made it impossible to find any rationale for such uses. The high CS frequency obtained for this grammar-related problem (normalised frequency of 5.6) comes, therefore, from those instances where it was not possible to identify which were the CSs employed by the learners in order to select those inappropriate prepositions. Thus, it appears that again the cognitive

demands of this type of task can be corroborated, in that the free topics provided by this activity prompted the learners to attempt to communicate meaning by means of more language as well as more complex structures, which seems to have caused them to encounter this type of problem more often than in the closed task. This can be observed in the excerpt below, where it is clear that the learner tries to elaborate more on her ideas in order to try to express what she wants, as indicated in her comments, as well as to keep the flow of the conversation. All this seems to suggest that because of the learners' attempts to try to communicate more, they might have just selected the wrong prepositions without thinking too much about which should be the appropriate one. This kind of behaviour might be linked to what was mentioned in the previous chapter regarding the IP model proposed by VanPatten (1996). Although this model refers to the proficiency variable in relation to second language processing, it does propose that the learners (in early stages) favour the processing of lexical items and ignore grammatical items, especially those considered as having little communicative value. In the present context, regarding task-related factors, this core idea may be extended to the production of L2, and so it might help to explain why the learners – when trying to communicate more L2 language – seem not to worry too much about this type of grammatical items in particular, as they may be considered as having a lower communicative value.

Example 6.6 Use of prepositions

NNS8: si, piensas que eh debería ser *una diferencia más grande de la universidad aquí en Inglaterra a la universidad en España, pero para tí no es
yes, you think that eh there should be a bigger difference of the university here in England to the university in Spain, but for you it's not

NS: ¿en qué sentido?
In which sense?

NNS8: no sé pero eh...
I don't know but eh...

['una diferencia...de la Universidad aquí...a la...', target word: 'una diferencia...entre la universidad aquí y la...']

Retrospective comments NNS8: I wanted to say: 'I would have thought that there would have been a difference' and then I didn't know what in what sense I just thought there would be differences between universities...

In contrast to the previous CSs, *grammatical reduction* produced high and similar frequencies in both tasks (Table 6.5). The figures suggest therefore that there is no relationship between this CS and the task variable, but a closer examination of the output produced in both tasks is necessary to confirm these results. When further analysing and comparing the data from the two activities, only one difference emerged related to the way this CS was employed. This difference has to do with a higher reduction of ‘está’ for ‘es’, more often generated (normalised frequency of 4.3) in the closed task, as illustrated in the excerpt below. This example represents the way in which the learners reduced this verb form when expressing information related to location and actions in the present progressive. The former use can be observed in the first underlined utterance ‘el hombre es afuera’, which as can be confirmed in the NNS’s comments, referred to ‘he is outside’, and which should have been appropriately expressed through the verb form ‘está’, as it refers to location. The latter usage can be observed in the second utterance underlined ‘el hombre mira las ventanas’, which meant to describe what the main character is doing in the pictures the learners were provided. On this occasion, NNS15 realised her error indicating that she was not sure about the verb tense, which should have been properly conjugated as in ‘el hombre está mirando’ since it is describing a continuous action in present.

Example 6.7 Grammatical reduction-closed task

NNS15: y eh cuando el hom cuando el hombre es afuera pienso que eh (0.2) luego (0.2) eh el hombre es eh el hombre es mm eh mira un mira las ventanas en un eh tienda
and eh when the ma when the man is outside I think that eh (0.2) after (0.2) eh the man is eh the man is mm eh looks a looks the windows in a eh shop

Retrospective comments NNS15: I wanted to say that ‘he is outside he’s then looking at a shop window’ but I couldn’t and just said ‘then’ and moved on-**laugh**. I was hesitant when I said ‘mira’ because I knew it wasn’t the right person or even the right tense.

This type of reduction, more frequently produced in the closed task, corresponds with the task demands imposed by this activity – through the pictures provided – since the learners were required to describe and narrate the actions happening in each one’s part of the story. This aspect, consequently, pushed the learners to employ the present progressive tense, although unsuccessfully, as opposed to the open task, where the information to be conveyed was not constrained in terms of language. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the task variable affected the use of *grammatical reduction* only in relation to the closed task.

The last phenomenon observed as producing a more frequent use in the closed task only refers to *grammatical reduction-substitution*, which as explained in chapter 4 was added for analytical reasons. From a closer examination of the data, it was found that as happened with *grammatical substitution*, the demands imposed by this task – through the visual context – forced the learners to produce the specific items presented in the pictures in order to carry out the task. Concurrently, these recurrent words, mostly nouns, posed problems particularly with regard to gender, as its high frequency showed (normalised frequency of 5.2). Nevertheless, in these instances, as opposed to what was observed for *grammatical substitution*, it was not possible to identify the reasons of the learners' linguistic behaviour – which also explains the name given to this phenomenon – since it is not clear whether the learners are overgeneralising or transferring gender. That is to say, it was not possible to determine whether the learners were overgeneralising masculine gender as in 'el otro foto' ('the other picture'), or if they were reducing the language as in 'un fiesta' ('a party'), and so using a reduced form of the article instead of the correct one 'una fiesta'. This inappropriate and unexplained use of gender can be clearly seen in the following phrases: 'una de los hombres' ('one of the men'), 'uno de las fotos' ('one of the pictures'), where it is not possible to know why the learners employed the indefinite articles with a different gender to the one used in the corresponding definite articles and nouns, where it was correctly applied. The same can be evidenced in: 'la espejo' ('the mirror'), 'chaqueta negro' ('black jacket'), where it cannot be determined why the learners used a feminine article ('la') and masculine adjective ('negro') for nouns ending in 'o' and 'a', whose grammatical gender can be easier to determine.

Hence, it can be deduced that the task factors affected the use of most of the grammatical PSM. The free-conversation activity, as being more cognitively demanding – because of the free topics provided and the lack of visual support – caused the learners to face more grammar-related problems, primarily, with regard to verb forms, as a high frequency of *grammatical substitution* showed. Moreover, the higher frequency of problems related to an incorrect *use of prepositions* suggests that the learners' desire to convey more meaning and more complex structures (Nakahama *et al*, 2001) prompted them to make an inappropriate use of these types of grammatical items. For this latter strategic behaviour, it was tentatively suggested that this inadequate and largely random-seeming use of prepositions may be due to the low communicative value that the learners may have assigned to these items, thus making them less concerned about their use. Conversely, the jigsaw task, a more restricted activity in terms of its language specificity – through the pictures provided – also produced grammatical problems, demonstrated in a high frequency of *grammatical reduction-substitution*, but specifically related to an inappropriate use of gender. This problem,

however, was also observed as being associated with lexis, since the items the learners needed to employ for the realisation of the task – and which required the use of gender agreement – referred to lexical items (nouns). This seems to suggest that the closed task, in view of its language specificity, is more lexis-oriented as opposed to the open task, which appeared to produce more grammar-related problems. Finally, it was also found that both tasks triggered a frequent use of *grammatical reduction*, thus showing no effects of this variable. Nevertheless, the only difference observed was related to a more frequent reduction of the copula form ‘está’ for ‘es’ in the closed task, in contexts referring to location and actions in the present progressive, an aspect which corresponds with the main verb form required to be used in this more lexis-oriented task.

6.2.4 Analysis of phonological-articulatory PSM-L2 resource deficit

The following subcategory within ‘L2 resource deficit’ to be analysed refers to the ‘phonological-articulatory PSM’. The table below shows the total figures obtained for these CSs in each task and the proportions of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 6.6 Results for phonological-articulatory PSM – L2 RD

Phonological-articulatory PSM	Open Task Free conversation	CSs/1000 words	Closed Task jigsaw	CSs/1000 words
tip-of-the-tongue (morphological)	39	4.5	36	4.4
tip-of-the-tongue (lexical)	42	4.9	51	6.3
use-of-similar-sounding word	10	1.2	12	1.5
Totals	91	10.6	99	12.2

Table 6.2 shows that the totals for this subcategory show a slightly higher frequency generated in the closed task, although the profiles of both tasks are quite similar, with *lexical tip of the tongue* being the CS most often used, followed by *morphological tip of the tongue* and *use of similar sounding word*. As can be observed, the CS which contributes the most to the difference in the overall total is *lexical tip of the tongue*; hence the following account will focus on this mechanism.

On a closer examination of the output produced in the closed task, a plausible reason emerges for this more frequent CS use in the closed task. It seems that as happened with *code-switching* and *approximation*, the learners encountered problems in coping with the specific lexical terms that this task required through the context provided. Thus, as the subjects were not completely certain of the target referents needed to convey their message, they were obliged to retrieve and articulate these items, mostly nouns, in an attempt to

produce the optimal form, as shown in the excerpt below. It can be observed that NNS22 is having problems with two of these referents ‘corcho’ (‘cork’) and ‘techo’ (‘ceiling’), which were recurrent problems in one of the jigsaw activities. This problem is not only noticeable by the use of this retrieval CS, but also because of the NNS’s hesitation by means of *own-accuracy check*, laughing and also *miming*. All this hesitation is confirmed in her comments, where she indicates her uncertainty about the correctness of the word ‘cork’ in particular.

Example 6.8

NNS22: **risa**-es posible que el cor corcho corcho↑-risa

laugh-it is possible that the cor cork cork↑-laugh

NS: [el corcho si
[the cork yes

NNS22: *es eh entre las eh los cosas en el el techo↑-gestos

is eh among the eh the things in the the ceiling↑-gestures

NS: si

[‘el corcho es entre’, target word: el corcho esté entre, ‘the cork is among’]

Retrospective comments NNS22: it sounded weird when I said it {referring to ‘cork’} so I wasn’t sure I was saying it right anymore and then when I was explaining it I think.

The main difference in the use of this CS, with respect to the open task, can be perceived not only in the lower frequency observed, but primarily in the more varied range of items that the learners attempted to retrieve, such as adjectives, pronouns, conjunctions, etc., and so not only nouns as in the jigsaw. This aspect also corresponds with the demands of the open activity, which forced the learners to make use of more language, and therefore of a more varied kind of speech. Thus, the effects of particularly the closed task can be again confirmed with regard to this phonological retrieval mechanism. This CS was necessary, primarily, for the demands that this activity posed to the learners in terms of its linguistic specificity. The use of this mechanism, together with the use of the lexical CSs previously analysed, *code-switching* and *approximation*, also help to demonstrate the lexis-oriented characteristic of this type of task.

In light of the examination of all the mechanisms within this first category, ‘PSM related to L2 resource deficit’, it can be concluded that a fairly significant number of the CSs which comprise it are in fact influenced by the task variable. This qualitative analysis provides a

more revealing picture than what was observed in the overall results presented in Table 6.2, where at the most general level of analysis, it seemed that the task variable did not affect the use of this CS category. The main findings so far show that each task generates different types of linguistic problems, on account of their different demands: the free-conversation appears to be more grammar-oriented as opposed to the more lexis-oriented nature of the jigsaw task.

6.2.5 Analysis of ‘PSM related to processing time pressure’

The following category ‘PSM related to processing time pressure’ will be now examined in an attempt to continue elucidating the task effects on the use of the different CSs. The following table presents the total results and their frequencies of CSs per 1000 words obtained in each task.

Table 6.7 Results for PSM related to processing time pressure (PTP)

PSM related to PTP	Open Task Free conversation	CSs/1000 words	Closed Task jigsaw	CSs/1000 words
<i>Non-lexicalised pauses</i>				
unfilled pauses	102	11.9	165	20.4
umming/erring	101	11.7	158	19.5
sound lengthening	38	4.4	68	8.4
<i>lexicalised pauses</i>				
Fillers	7	0.8	3	0.4
<i>Repetitions</i>				
self-repetition	233	27.1	246	30.4
Totals for category	481	56	640	79.1

Table 6.7 shows a higher total frequency of strategic use for this subcategory in the closed task as well as of most CSs which comprise it. It can be also observed that the profiles of both tasks are similar with *self-repetition* being the CS more frequently used, followed by *unfilled pauses*, *umming/erring*, *sound lengthening* and *fillers*. When comparing the profiles of each task, the main differences emerge from the latter three CSs mentioned above, which show higher frequencies in the closed task, in addition to another, albeit small difference shown by a slightly higher frequency of *self-repetition*, also generated in the closed task. For the following analysis, therefore, those CSs highlighted as presenting the highest frequencies of CS use will be firstly examined. The first two ‘non-lexicalised pauses’ (*unfilled pauses* and *umming/erring*) will be analysed and illustrated in conjunction, as both CSs were coded only when being used together. *Self-repetition* will also be examined in view of its high

frequencies obtained for both tasks, yet a brief analysis of its use in each activity will be necessary to determine any relevant differences in the learners' strategic behaviour.

As can be observed in the following examples, and as was also shown in the previous chapter, the learners resorted to these stalling mechanisms in order to gain time to think of the words necessary to convey their message. Thus, in the jigsaw activity they needed time to recall the specific items or actions the subjects needed to express when describing or narrating each one's part of the story. In 6.9.1 below, it is clear that NNS1 is trying to narrate an action from one of the pictures she has to describe, which was a recurrent problem in the realisation of this task. The following excerpt (6.9.2), which illustrates the use of *sound lengthening*, shows that this CS was also employed as a way of gaining time to think of the words needed, which in this case refers to 'dibujo' ('picture/drawing'); a word which is finally provided by the NS.

Example 6.9.1 pausing & umming

NNS1: eh mi primera (0.3) pienso que es en una comisaría eh (0.3) y hay un hombre que que está eh como se llama eh (0.4) eh (0.2) -**risa**-ah
*eh my first (0.3) I think that is in a police station eh (0.3) and there is a man that that is eh what's the word eh (0.4) eh (0.2)-**laugh**-ah*

Retrospective comments NNS1: I was there trying to work out how to say what was happening in the picture. I was trying to explain that 'he was walking up to talk to the policemen'.

Example 6.9.2 Sound-lengthening

NNS18: y ah uno unnn un otro ah es ah el mismo ah hom hombre un otro otro
And ah a unnn an other ah is ah the same ah ma man an other other

NS: otro dibujo?
Another picture?

NNS18: sí sí...
Yes yes...

Retrospective comments NNS18: I think I didn't have the word for picture 'dibujo' so I was like 'un otro' I was trying to think of it and then just said 'un otro' instead.

The following excerpts illustrate *self-repetition*, which presented higher although similar frequencies in both tasks, which is why it will be briefly examined in both activities in order

to identify any differences in its strategic use. The data from the closed task revealed that again the learners resorted to this mechanism in instances where they had problems with specific words, as evidenced in the excerpt below, or with the description of an action. In 6.10.1, the speaker's hesitation with respect to the word 'alimentos' – which is another proper way in Spanish of referring to 'food' – can be seen through her use of *sound lengthening*, and then the *repetition* previous to uttering this specific word. By resorting to these CSs she is also gaining some time to think of the appropriate term needed to describe her picture.

Example 6.10.1 self-repetition – closed task

NNS19: si yyy puede ser que él está saliendo para para comprar eh alimentos yyy

yes aaand it could be that he is going out to to buy eh food aaand

NNS20: mm ah si

mm ah yes

Retrospective comments NNS19: (why you are a bit hesitant there?) I couldn't think of 'comida', I lost the word 'comida' in my head so I just said 'alimentos'.

With respect to the open task, the only difference observed has to do with the kind of speech produced, which again can be related to the demands imposed by each task. In the free-conversation, as illustrated below, the learners also resorted to this CS in order to gain time to think of what to say when attempting to produce a more elaborated L2 output. In the closed task, the learners used this mechanism for the same reasons, but their L2 speech differs in that they need time to describe specific items/actions in order to realise the activity. In the excerpt below taken from the open task, it is apparent that the learner is trying to expand on her ideas, which cause her to hesitate, by means of *umming* and *self-repetition*, and so CSs which give her some time to think of what to say and be able to continue communicating.

Example 6.10.2 Self-repetition – open task

NNS8: si, pienso que hay hay eh oh una diferencia cuando eh las personas no eh no viven con sus con sus padres eh porque pueden vivir una vida diferente de nosotros porque eh vivo con mis padres durante el resto del tiempo...

yes, I think that there is there is eh oh a difference when eh people don't eh don't live with their with their parents eh because they can live a different life of us because eh I live with my parents the rest of the time...

Retrospective comments NNS8: (did you hesitate a bit there?) yeah because I wasn't sure I wanted to say whether 'they live with their parents' or whether 'they were going to university away from his parents' cause then I started to talk about the differences, people who go to uni or go to work, and I didn't know exactly where I was going like what verb I was going to use.

To summarise, this time-gaining mechanism was employed by the learners in both tasks, as a way of having more time to think of what to say next. Hence, the task variable did not influence the learners' way of using this mechanism, but again it was reflected in the type of L2 output produced when attempting to convey either specific information, or more elaborated speech. The slight difference favouring its higher use in the closed task suggests that the different demands imposed by this activity, in terms of context, time, and final aim put more pressure on the speakers, and thus their need to resort to this mechanism slightly more often than in the open task.

The preliminary conclusions suggested for the general results obtained (Table 6.2) for this subcategory can therefore be confirmed. The task requisites imposed by the closed task prompted the learners to resort to these CSs more frequently than in the open task. In addition, the learners' retrospective comments were also useful to demonstrate their need for this type of CSs. Most NNSs expressed that when using these CSs, they were trying to think of what to say or how to say something. They also indicated that they did not know or were not sure of what they wanted to say or how to explain it, and on other occasion a speaker indicated her concern for not being silent. All this proves how useful these CSs are for L2 learners in order to get their message across, particularly, for beginner levels, as the previous analysis of the proficiency variable demonstrated, and when carrying out a closed-ended type of task, as the analysis of this variable has corroborated.

6.2.6 Analysis of 'PSM related to own-output problems'

What follows is the examination of the next category, 'PSM related to own-output problems', for which the results obtained are presented in table 6.8. The raw figures obtained for each task as well as the CS frequencies per 1000 words are also provided.

Table 6.8 Results for ‘PSM related to own-output (O-O) problems’

PSM related to O-O problems	Open Task Free conversation	CSs/1000 words	Closed Task jigsaw	CSs/1000 words
<i>self-correction</i>	111	12.9	129	15.9
error-repair	101	11.7	108	13.3
appropriacy repair	8	0.9	17	2.1
rephrasing-repair	2	0.2	4	0.5
<i>check questions</i>	88	10.2	117	14.5
comprehension checks	0	0.0	1	0.1
own-accuracy checks	84	9.8	110	13.6
Self-own accuracy checks	4	0.5	6	0.7
Totals for category	199	23.1	246	30.4

As can be observed in table 6.8, the profiles of the two tasks are similar, with *own-accuracy checks* being the most frequently used mechanism, followed by *error-repair*, *appropriacy repair*, *self-own accuracy checks*, and *rephrasing-repair*. The total results show again a higher use of this type of CSs in the closed task, with the main differences appearing in the use of *own-accuracy checks* and *error-repair*. These two CSs will be therefore closely examined so as to identify the task effects on their use, as well as to clearly determine any differences of CS use in each task. However, as these two mechanisms were already examined in the previous chapter, their examination regarding task-related effects will be more briefly presented.

What is noticeable when observing the data from the closed task is a higher frequency of *lexical own-accuracy checks* (normalised frequency of 9.6), followed by *grammatical checks* (normalised frequency of 3.6). Because of the task demands, in terms of the restricted language imposed by the visual context, the jigsaw presented more problems to the learners regarding specific lexical items referring to objects and actions needed to describe what is happening in each one's pictures of the story. In 6.11.1 for example, NNS15 is not completely sure of the word 'habitación' ('room/bedroom'), not only shown by the question intonation employed when uttering the word, but also through her hesitation when *repeating* some words before, as well as *miming* what she was trying to convey; all of which is later confirmed in her comments.

Example 6.11.1 lexical own-accuracy checks – closed task

NNS15: ...eh pero pienso que la pr la eh la primera eh es cuando en un en un-gestos-eh (0.3)
en un habitación en un habitación y *es eh eh es solo y es en un silla eh (0.2) pienso
que es la primera pero no sé-**risa**

*...eh but I think that the fi the eh the first eh is when in a in a-gestures-eh (0.3) in a
room in a room and is eh eh is alone and is in a chair eh (0.2) I think that is the
first but I don't know-laugh*

*[es solo y es en un silla, target word: (el) está solo y está en una silla, he is alone
and he is on a chair]*

Retrospective comments NNS15: I didn't know if I was using the right word for 'room' so I think I was just miming space-**laugh**- to see if NNS16 knew what I was trying to say. I just wanted to say 'a room' in general not a bedroom.

The output produced in the closed task demonstrates again that the linguistic specificity imposed by this task triggered a higher frequency of these 'pre-repair' mechanisms. This CS helped the learners to check whether the word/s they were producing were appropriate, and also aided them to gain more confidence to be able to continue communicating their message. In the open task, similar results were observed, although in a slightly lower frequency. It was found that the *lexical own-accuracy checks* were also more predominant with a normalised frequency of 6.3, followed by the *grammatical checks* (normalised frequency: 2.3). The only although slight difference is reflected in their communicative attempts to express more complex structures, as when trying to produce – albeit incorrectly – expressions like: 'me pongo rojo' ('I go red'), 'el mundo abre' ('the world opens up'), 'mejor que nunca' ('better than never' instead of 'better than nothing'); and phrases such as, 'te echo de menos' ('I miss you' instead of 'I miss my home'), 'voy andando' for 'salgo de paseo' ('go for a walk'), 'tengo sueño' ('I am sleepy' for 'I am tired). This small difference (normalised frequency of 0.9), seems to point again to the linguistic freedom offered by this type of task, since the learners attempted to convey more language, as well as a more varied type of output, through expressions and phrases like the ones mentioned above. This also corresponds with the topics provided in this task, which prompted the learners to speak about familiar issues, and so pushed them to try to produce more language in order to explain their ideas. Nakahama *et al* (2001) also found that the conversational activities used in their study produced not only longer turns, but also more complex constructions (syntactic and morphological) than in the information gap task used. These aspects have also been demonstrated through the different examples so far presented from the output generated in

the open task, and whose use of *lexical own-accuracy checks* is illustrated below for further evidence.

Example 6.11.2 lexical checks – open task

NNS5: Si es difícil y cuando tenemos un eh ((student loan)) tenemos que pensar qué es eh eh lo más lo más importante para comprar y y algunas veces tengo que (()) situ situa-ción↑ cuando no tengo mucho y y tengo que eh hablar con mi mamá-**risa**-y
Yes it is difficult and when we have a eh ((student loan)) we have to think what is eh eh the most the most important to buy and and sometimes I have to (()) situ situa-tion↑ *when I don't have much and and I have to eh speak with my mom-**laugh**-and...*

Retrospective comments NNS5: I wanted to say ‘you have to decide what’s most important and what you need to spend money on’, it was hard to convey that so just said ‘important things to buy’. I was trying to think ‘when you have a situation’ but couldn’t think of the word in Spanish, ‘when you have a situation when you don’t have money’.

In this example, it can be seen that the learner is aiming at elaborating more on her ideas, which thus triggers more communication problems, and so her need for employing more CSs, such as these pre-repair mechanisms. NNS5 is not sure of how to say ‘when you have a situation when you don’t have money’, as explained in her comments, which is why she hesitates before uttering ‘situation’, and then uses question intonation when producing the word. She also indicated that it was difficult to express all that, which also shows how high her communicative expectations, or communicative investment, are when carrying out this task.

The other mechanism within this category observed as producing high and similar frequencies in both tasks concerns *error-repair*, a CS used by the learners in order to monitor their own L2 output. As was also found in the analysis of the proficiency variable, this mechanism was primarily used to repair grammatical errors (morphosyntactic). In addition, the same difference observed in the previous chapter is also noticeable between the tasks: there is a slightly more frequent production of successful repairs in the closed task (normalised frequency of 9.9) than in the open task (normalised frequency of 7.8). The following excerpts exemplify these successful *self-repairs* as generated in each type of task. In both activities, some of the learners were able to monitor their own L2 speech, by first noticing the error and then appropriately *repairing* it, as shown in the examples below, where the speakers were also able to comment on the process employed to solve their

communication problem. The other feature observed relates to the type of language produced in each activity which, in the present analysis, has been a common differentiating characteristic of the learners' L2 speech in the two tasks. As expected, the demands posed by the jigsaw resulted in the generation of a more restricted target language, more focused on the description of actions, objects, and on some occasions, assumptions about the pictures that were provided to each speaker. In the free-conversation on the other hand, the topics provided were used only as a starting point for the interaction. Thus, in most cases the learners, as in 6.12.2, freely elaborated on their own ideas, which triggered not only more language, but also more complex structures in order for the learners to try to convey their message.

Example 6.12.1 error-repairs- closed task

NNS13: hay una otra eh con el mismo señor eh y está se está sentando↑ en una eh mm en una silla eh con una copa de eh del alcohol {this last part was slowly uttered}
there is an other eh with the same gentleman eh and is is sitting↑ *in an eh mm in a chair eh with a glass of eh of the alcohol*

Retrospective comments NNS13: There I had to correct myself 'cause with reflexive verbs I always go like straight into saying the verb and then like oh no! I need to put the reflexive at the beginning.

Example 6.12.2 error-repairs- open task

NNS19: por ejemplo mis abuelos son tienen eh opiniones políticas muy muy fuertes yyy
*siempre nos dicen eh sus opiniones y me han influido mucho en mis opiniones políticas también...
for example my grandparents are have eh very very strong political opinions aaand they always tell us his opinions and they have influenced me a lot in my political opinions too...

[‘(ellos) siempre nos dicen sus opiniones’, target word: ‘nos dan sus opiniones’, ‘they give us their opinions’]

Retrospective comments NNS19: (anything there?) I realised I started off saying 'they are very political' which is English so I said 'son' and then I realised that you should say 'tienen opiniones políticas...' so I corrected it.

To sum up, the only albeit small difference observed in the use of this CS has to do with its slightly higher frequency produced in the closed task, and so of its higher frequency of successful *self-repairs*. This small difference seems to suggest that again the demands imposed by this task made the learners encounter more specific communication problems. This specificity in the language they had to produce may have helped them to notice their problems – thus their errors – more frequently than in the open task, where the linguistic freedom allowed the learners to *restructure* their speech more often, as previously shown in the current analysis. The effects of the open task, therefore, may have prompted the learners to opt for changing their message more often than *repairing* it. Similarly, the linguistic restrictions imposed in the closed task also triggered a slightly higher frequency of *lexical own-accuracy checks*, which pushed the learners to check the language produced more often than in the open task. However, a small difference was also observed in the use of this pre-repair mechanism in the two tasks. It was found that in the realisation of the open task, on a few occasions, some learners *checked* whether more complex structures such as expressions/phrases that they were trying to convey were correct. This seems to be in line again with the more elaborated type of L2 speech that the free-conversation activity generated due to its freer language requisites.

6.2.7 Analysis of ‘PSM related to other-performance problems’

The following category involves those meaning negotiations CSs used in order to solve problems in the interlocutor’s L2 speech. The following table presents the raw results obtained for these mechanisms together with the frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 6.9 results for ‘PSM related to other-performance (OP) problems’

PSM related to O-P problems	Open Task Free conversation	CSs/1000 words	Closed Task jigsaw	CSs/1000 words
<i>meaning negotiation</i>				
asking for repetition	3	0.3	0	0.0
asking for clarification	8	0.9	4	0.5
expressing non-understanding	22	2.6	9	1.1
asking for confirmation-check	3	0.3	8	1.0
guessing	0	0.0	10	1.2
other-repair	1	0.1	5	0.6
feigning understanding	6	0.7	10	1.2
other-completion	4	0.5	22	2.7
Total for category	47	5.5	68	8.4

As in the previous chapter, the mechanisms which comprise this category do not show high frequencies of CS use (as shown in table 6.9 above). The only slightly more noticeable result relates to the use of *expressing non-understanding*. However, as this mechanism was mostly employed by the NNSs in response to the NS's message, its analysis will be presented in the following chapter, where the interlocutor variable will be examined.

6.2.8 Analysis of 'Interactional-paralinguistic CSs'

The last main category within the analytical framework utilised in this study has to do with those 'interactional-paralinguistic' mechanisms employed by the receiver (the speakers experiencing a problem) and the giver (the speaker who gives assistance) in order to communicate meaning and keep the flow of the conversation. The following table presents the figures and frequencies of CSs per 1000 words obtained for these CSs regarding each speaker.

Table 6.10 Results for interactional-paralinguistic CSs

Interactional-paralinguistic CSs	Open Task	CSs/1000 words	Closed Task	CSs/1000 words
Receiver	103	12.0	257	31.8
Giver	18	2.1	21	2.6
Total for category	121	14.1	278	34.35

As shown in table 6.10, the higher frequencies of this type of CSs were observed, as expected, for the speaker who experiences communication problems when trying to express meaning, the 'receiver'. Nevertheless, as above stated, because the use of these types of CSs is related primarily to the interlocutor variable, the observation of all the results obtained for this category will be presented and discussed in the following chapter.

6.3 Summary of findings

In conclusion, the second research question (2b) can therefore be answered by confirming the task influence on these learners' use of certain CSs. The different demands and requirements imposed by each task were found to generate the use of specific mechanisms. The open task, because of the linguistic freedom provided – through its conversational topics – seems to have prompted the learners to invest more in the conversation, by attempting to produce more L2 language, and so more conceptually complex ideas, which made the learners frequently *restructure* their message. It was also found that this activity was more grammar-oriented, in that it produced more grammar-related problems, as a slightly higher use of *grammatical substitution* demonstrated, particularly, through the learners' attempts to

mostly compensate for verb forms. This aspect was also confirmed by their high frequency of an inappropriate and apparently seemingly random *use of prepositions*. Hence, although this task was less demanding, in terms of topic familiarity – thus prompting the learners to talk more freely about themselves – it demanded more L2 processing of unexpected information, and so more linguistic improvisation on their part. All this made this task a more cognitively demanding activity and more grammar-oriented. The closed task, in contrast, due to its linguistic restrictions – through the context provided – resulted in a more linguistically demanding activity, in addition to being more lexis-oriented. This language specificity, through primarily the lexical items that this task required, triggered the use of *code-switching* and *approximation*, quicker and more affordable CSs for these specific items. The learners' need to compensate for these lexical items, mostly nouns, also produced one type of grammar-related problem, reflected in a high use of *grammatical reduction-substitution*, and particularly, through a high frequency of gender-related problems, a type of problem, however, also triggered by lexis. This lexical nature of the closed task was also confirmed through a more frequent use of *lexical own-accuracy checks*. The linguistic demands of this activity also influenced the participants' use of *error-repair*, in that the more restricted language necessary for its completion helped them to be able to notice more the communication problems encountered, and so their errors, which they were able to appropriately repair, slightly more often than in the open task. Finally, not only the linguistic demands, but also the requirements imposed by this activity generated a higher use of stalling mechanisms, such as *pausing/umming* and *sound lengthening*, more effective CSs for the time constraints and the final aim stipulated for this activity. Thus, as was also observed in the analysis of the proficiency variable, a grammar-lexis distinction has emerged when further observing the task-related effects on the learners' strategic use of the language. The free-conversation places more demands on more grammar-related aspects of the learners' L2 output, as opposed to the jigsaw whose linguistic specificity makes it more lexis-oriented.

CHAPTER 7

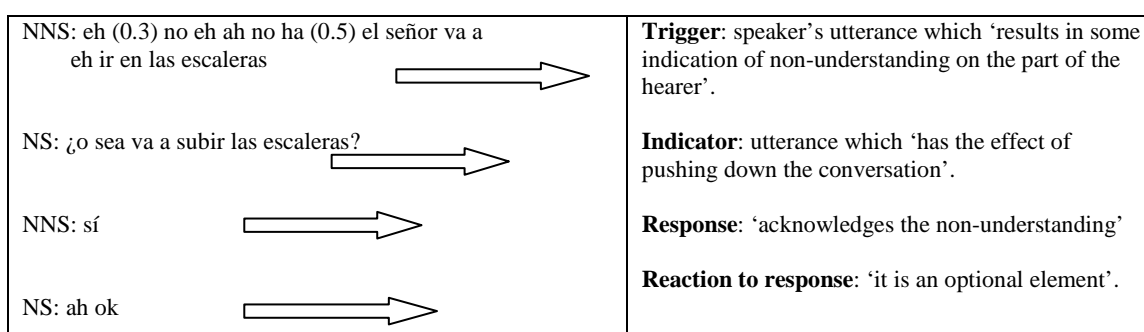
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS: TYPE OF INTERLOCUTOR

7.1 Type of interlocutor

The interest in examining the way that L2 learners together try to solve the communication problems that arise in conversation originated in the interactional view of CSs (Tarone, 1977, 1981; Yule & Tarone, 1997; Paribakht, 1984). This perspective emphasises the analysis of the interactional mechanisms employed by both speakers when trying to solve problems in communication, and thus to achieve meaning by means of their mutual collaboration. Having this in mind, the focus of this chapter will be on the type of interlocutor and on how it affects the way the learners try to solve their communication problems when interacting with a different type of interactant. For this purpose, the present chapter will address those CSs which are influenced by this variable in two different dyads: a learner/non-native speaker in interaction with a learner/non-native speaker (NNS-NNS) and a learner/non-native speaker in interaction with a native speaker (NNS-NS). The aim will be to present and discuss the results obtained for this third variable in order to determine its possible effects on the learners' use of CSs. Results will be quantitatively and qualitatively examined, as in the previous chapters, considering first the most general figures to continue with a more detailed observation of findings.

Previous to the analysis of results, the main interactional elements characteristic of meaning negotiation sequences will be presented as they will be used in the qualitative examination of the different CSs that may be affected by the interlocutor variable. Additionally, the possible effects that each type of interlocutor in each dyad may produce on the learners' strategic behaviour will be briefly described. The following information is based on Varonis & Gass model for negotiation of meaning (1985).

Figure 7.1 Model for negotiation of meaning – basic elements (Varonis & Gass, 1985:74-77)



7.1.1 Interlocutor's effects

NNS-NNS pairings

Familiarity between speakers:

The degree of familiarity was high in these dyads since as it was necessary, for methodological purposes, to pair students according to a similar proficiency level, they were recruited from the same language classes, and therefore at the time of the data collection, the learners already knew each other and in some cases they were friends. In fact, as most of the participants attended the same classes, in most cases they selected their own partners. This factor may have given them more confidence when trying to communicate in the L2 and thus facilitated their interaction. This was confirmed through their retrospective comments where most of them indicated that they felt more comfortable talking to another learner because of this familiarity aspect.

Speakers' roles in relation to type of task:

This aspect has to do with the control of information which has been found to be an important variable in interactions of this kind. This is based on the premise that 'interlocutors seeking particular information are more likely to initiate negotiation than interlocutors holding the information' (Varonis & Gass, 1985:87). This feature is less likely to be present in the NNSs dyads because of the speakers' shared linguistic characteristics. Their shared level of L2 proficiency and the familiarity between speakers might overrule any possible roles that the tasks may produce.

Shared linguistic background and 'shared incompetence':

The former term refers to the learners' L1, which in this study was shared by all the NNSs. The latter term has to do with the proficiency level, which was also shared by the learners, as they were paired according to a similar level. These two factors are said to influence the number of interruptions within a conversation, that is to say, 'when the interlocutors share a common background...the turn-taking sequence is likely to proceed smoothly...' (Varonis & Gass, 1985:72). Therefore, the negotiation exchanges in this study, which can influence the use of CSs, may also be affected by these aspects. The learners commented on this aspect when indicating that the fact of sharing a relatively similar level with their peers gave them more confidence to communicate, and it also made them feel less worried about making mistakes. Other learners also mentioned that they felt comprehension was easier when interacting with a peer. They attributed this to their equal L2 competence, which made them use fairly similar structures thus producing similar types of mistakes. Finally, some of the

learners also indicated that they felt that they did not make as much effort to use the L2 correctly as they did with the NSs.

NNS-NS pairings

Familiarity between speakers:

The degree of familiarity was much lower in this type of dyad, since the speakers did not know each other until the moment of the data elicitation. This may have influenced the learners' use of CSs in that they may have felt less comfortable talking to an unfamiliar interlocutor as opposed to their peers, who were either their acquaintances or friends, thus encountering more problems to communicate and so resorting to more CSs. In addition, the fact that the learners did not know whether their interlocutors would understand their L1 (English), may have pushed them to try to communicate meaning in the L2 more appropriately in their attempt to make their own output comprehensible, hence encountering more communication problems.

Speakers' roles in relation to the type of task:

Although the tasks used for elicitation purposes were not oriented towards a type of role (giver-receiver), both activities may have prompted an uneven language production, as occurred in the pilot study with the open task¹⁵, and therefore may have influenced the CS production on the part of the NNSs. This may be tentatively explained because of the roles characteristic of this type of dyad, where the NS – as the more expert speaker – may tend to lead the conversation by guiding the learner on what to talk about (open task) or what to describe/narrate (closed task), when they feel that the learners are experiencing problems to communicate their message. Moreover, as the NSs are seen as a potential source of language, their role in this type of dyad may be more relevant as they may feel more responsible for providing support and/or assistance to the learner. The NSs commented on this indicating that on most occasions the learners did not ask them directly for help, but *indirectly* through their gestures or puzzled looks, yet as the NSs had been instructed to talk as naturally as possible, they helped them only when it was necessary. In a few instances, the NSs expressed that they had to switch to English after their unsuccessful attempts to *repeat* or *rephrase* the message, as a last resource when comprehension seemed hard to achieve.

¹⁵ On some occasions in the pilot study the NS had to initiate the conversation by asking the learner questions which made the NS interlocutor take an interviewer type of role.

Shared background and 'shared incompetence':

As these two factors were not present in this dyad, the effects of a different language and proficiency background may have produced, as suggested by Varonis & Gass (1985), more interruptions within the conversations, and thus more meaning negotiation exchanges, affecting therefore the NNSs' strategic use of the L2. The speakers' non-shared status may have produced more interruptions because of the possible problems of comprehension generated, on the one hand, by the NS's more elaborated input, causing the learners to resort to more CS usage. On the other hand, the NNS's less coherent speech may have also caused non-understanding routines also leading to a higher use of CSs. The participants referred to this aspect when indicating that they felt less comfortable speaking to a NS, since they were more afraid of making mistakes, and because they thought that the NSs would be more prompt to pick up on those mistakes. This was also mentioned by some NSs, who confirmed that some learners looked nervous and scared, or embarrassed to communicate in Spanish, which they thought it was due to interacting with someone with more expertise in the L2, and so can perhaps notice their mistakes more easily.

7.2 Analysis and discussion of results: type of interlocutor

Turning now to the results obtained for this variable, the following table shows the total number of CSs produced by the NNSs in each type of dyad together with the learners' amount of language production. The normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words have been added so as to be able to compare results between the types of pairings. It is worth adding that the language produced by the NSs has not been included here as their linguistic behaviour is not the focus of the research. However, NS production of CSs will be presented in the qualitative analysis because they help to throw light on the use of CSs by the NNSs.

Table 7.1 Results for the type of dyad according to CS frequency

Type of dyad	Language production	CSs	CSs per 1000 words
NNS-NNS	7616	1635	215
NNS-NS	9078	1967	217

It should be first noted that the number of interactions for both pairings was different: for the NNS-NS dyad, there were 24 interactions, and for the NNS-NNS there were 12 interactions, yet the amount of relevant data obtained was designed to be similar, since in the NNS pairings both interlocutors were learners and thus both contributed to the totals shown above. As shown in table 7.1, the amount of language produced by NNS subjects in the NNS-NS pairings was relatively higher than in the NNSs dyads. In terms of the total raw numbers of CSs generated in each dyad, it can be seen that there is a small difference favouring a higher

use of CSs in the NNS-NS dyad; however, when looking at the normalised frequencies obtained for both pairings, it can be seen that this difference is not marked, showing similar frequencies for both groups. Therefore, the main difference between pairings, at this most general view of results, has to do with this higher production of language observed for the NNS-NS dyad. This result may be related to what has been observed in other studies, in that there is generally a higher production of interactional moves in NNS-NS dyads (Pica, 1988; Alcón & Guzmán, 1994) – usually attributed to the non-shared characteristics of this type of dyad – which may generate more L2 output. The different linguistic background and the obviously different competence of these speakers may have imposed more communication difficulties, which pushed the learners to use more language in their attempt to communicate their message and make their L2 output comprehensible. Regarding the similar results obtained for both dyads in terms of frequencies of CS use, they show that at this most general level the interlocutor variable does not present any effects on the learners’ use of CSs. Nevertheless, as these results involve the use of all the different categories of CSs, and not only the ones that directly relate to the interlocutor variable, the results need to be more specifically examined. Hence, it is expected that the following overview of all the CS categories analysed will help to start elucidating any possible effects of this variable at more delicate levels of analysis. The following table presents the total results obtained for each of the main CS categories analysed together with the normalised frequencies (shown in parentheses).

Table 7.2 The main CS categories by type of dyad (frequency per 1000 words)

Types of dyad	CS categories					
	L2 resource deficit	Processing time pressure	Own output problems	Other performance	Interactional-Paralinguistic	Totals
NNS-NNS	731(96)	528(69)	188(25)	47(6.2)	141(18.5)	1635
NNS-NS	791(87)	593(65.3)	257(28.3)	68(7.5)	258(28.4)	1967
Totals	1522	1121	445	115	399	3602

Table 7.2 shows statistically significant overall differences in the patterns of distribution of the different categories of CSs ($df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 24.584$, $p = .000$). However and as was also observed in Table 7.1, the small differences obtained for the strategic use of most of these main categories can be corroborated. As can be seen, the main differences have to do with those CS categories to which the interlocutor variable is directly related, that is, ‘PSM related to other performance problems’ and ‘the interactional CSs’, where the differences between dyads are relatively more marked. These results were expected since, as opposed to the other categories which were observed as being more related to the proficiency and task variables in the previous chapters, these two latter CS classes correspond to those meaning

negotiation mechanisms ‘triggered by perceived problems in the interlocutor’s rather than in one’s own speech’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:374). Thus, they require a mutual understanding and a collaborative solution to the communication problems encountered by the speakers ‘whereby the participants carry out trouble-shooting exchanges cooperatively, and therefore mutual understanding is a function of the successful execution of both parts of the exchange’ (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:199). What follows, as in the previous chapters, is an examination of each main CS category and subcategory, but those mechanisms oriented towards the interlocutor will be given primary attention. As in the previous analyses, only the results which show CS frequencies of 3 times per 1000 words and over, as produced by at least one type of dyad, will be examined.

7.2.1 Analysis of results for each CS category

The following table presents the results obtained for the main category ‘PSM related to L2 resource deficit (RD)’ together with the corresponding frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 7.3 Results for PSM related to L2 resource deficit

CSs Categories and subcategories	NNS-NNS	CSs per 1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs per 1000 words
PSM related to L2 RD				
R.D lexical	323	42	320	35
R.D grammatical	326	42.8	363	40
R.D phonological-articulatory	82	11	108	12
Totals for category	731	96	791	87

As can be seen in table 7.3, the general results obtained for this first main category are not substantially significant ($df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 3.198$, $p = 0.2$) showing similar frequencies of ‘L2 resource deficit’ CSs in both types of dyads. In fact, the profiles for both dyads are the same with ‘grammatical PSM’ showing the highest CS frequency, followed by ‘lexical PSM’ and then ‘phonological-articulatory PSM’. The only small difference concerns the ‘lexical’ subcategory, where there is a slightly higher frequency on the part of the NNS pairing. As also observed in table 7.2, at this most general level of analysis, the interlocutor variable does not affect the learners’ use of CSs. Hence, each of these subcategories will be now briefly examined so as to confirm or deny these general results.

7.2.2 Analysis of ‘lexical PSM-L2 resource deficit’

The next table presents the results for the first subcategory ‘lexical PSM’ together with the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 7.4 Results for lexical PSM-L2 RD

CSs	NNS-NNS	CSs per1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs per 1000 words
PSM related to L2 RD				
LEXICAL PSM				
<i>Content Reduction</i>	33	4.3	38	4.2
message abandonment	16	2.1	19	2.1
message reduction	9	1.2	9	1
message replacement	8	1.1	10	1.1
<i>Substitution</i>	110	14.4	106	11.7
code-switching	32	4.2	39	4.3
approximation	50	6.6	26	2.9
sub-approximation	17	2.2	22	2.4
use-of-all-purpose word	4	0.5	8	0.9
complete omission	7	0.9	11	1.2
<i>substitution plus</i>	119	15.6	112	12.3
Foreignising	16	2.1	8	0.9
grammatical-word coinage	10	1.3	4	0.44
Literal translation	91	12.0	100	11
use-of-cognates	2	0.3	0	0
<i>macro-conceptualisation</i>	37	4.9	51	5.6
Restructure	37	4.9	51	5.6
<i>micro-conceptualisation</i>	24	3.2	13	1.4
circumlocution	18	2.4	9	1
offering two-alternatives	6	0.9	4	0.44
total for lexical PSM	323	42	320	35

As can be observed in Table 7.4 again the results obtained for this subcategory do not show significant differences ($df = 4$, $\chi^2 = 6.122$, $p = 0.2$) in relation to the type of interlocutor. The only difference has to do with a more frequent use of *approximation* on the part of the NNS dyad. When examining the data, it was firstly observed that this mechanism also produced a slightly more frequent use in the closed task, which suggests that the task factor is here acting as a subvariable affecting, to a lower extent, the use of this CS in particular. With

respect to the interlocutor effects, it seems that the ‘familiarity’ factor and the ‘shared’ characteristics of this type of pairing may have facilitated the learners’ communication in that, as they felt more comfortable and less afraid of speaking with another learner, they may have tried to find related terms for the items needed in the closed task more often than when interacting with a NS. In order to confirm this rationale, this CS in this type of dyad will be now illustrated and examined.

Example 7.1 Approximation

NNS24: con con su eh-**gestos**-como se llama

with with his eh-gestures-what is it called

NNS23: (no lo sé tampoco)-**risa**-pero ya entiendo-**risa**

(I don’t know either)-laugh-but I understand-laugh

NNS24: eh chaquete

*eh *jacket*

NNS23: sí

yes

*[*jacket, target word: chaqueta, ‘jacket’]*

Retrospective comments NNS24 yeah I remember the word ‘jacket’, ‘chaquete’ no, I wanted to say, oh ‘abrigo’ that’s the word isn’t it? **NNS23:** I knew what she was saying, but I couldn’t think of the word either.

NNS23: I think that as we were explaining to each other as long as the other person understood what you’re saying you kind of use the same thing again because we’d got the gist of it so, **NNS24:** yeah exactly.

The excerpt above shows a fairly frequent, and most characteristic, use of this mechanism (normalised frequency: 2.6), representing those instances where the approximated terms used are to some extent inappropriate. NNS24 is trying to remember the word ‘abrigo’ (‘coat’), as she indicates, and so resorts to several other CSs such as *self-repetition*, *miming* and *indirect appeal for help* before *approximating* the term. All this triggered NNS23’s response by *confirming the comprehension* of the message, and also acknowledging the fact that she did not know the word either, until NNS24 finds a related term to what she was looking for: ‘chaquete’. Nonetheless, although the term is accepted and confirmed by NN23, and NNS24 is also pleased with it, the word is not appropriately pronounced as in ‘chaqueta’. This shows that although the approximated term is not entirely correct, the interlocutor does not acknowledge this inappropriateness, but *confirms* it and so communication continues. This

kind of interaction, in which the two NNSs are comfortable in using this CS, can be contrasted with the following comment from a subject about interacting with a NS interlocutor:

Retrospective comments NNS7 on the type of interlocutor: I felt more nervous with a NS ‘cause I don’t have a lot of confidence and wanted to get it right and understood what she wanted to tell me... and then it’s difficult if someone is talking to you and thinking in their language and trying to get across what they are saying, you don’t want to show necessarily that you don’t understand, and you want to listen to them because that’s part of communicating.

Hence, this strategic behaviour with this type of interlocutor, as its high frequency shows, seems to confirm the preliminary explanation given above. It appears that as the learners feel more comfortable when interacting with another learner – mainly because of their similar linguistic status – they feel less afraid of making mistakes in communication with their peers. All this prompted them to attempt to *approximate* the intended terms more often, despite the problems they may encounter when doing so. This can also be confirmed through the learners’ comments presented above, where it becomes clear that they do not have the L2 resources to help each other by providing the appropriate word. In addition, as NNS7 indicated, the learners do not feel confident enough to comfortably communicate with a NS, which further confirms their more frequent attempts at *approximating* the intended terms when in interaction with their peers and not with a NS.

7.2.3 Analysis of grammatical PSM-L2 resource deficit

The following table shows the results obtained for the following resource deficit subcategory that of ‘grammatical PSM’. Results for both dyads together with the normalised frequencies of CSs are presented.

Table 7.5 Results for Grammatical PSM -L2 RD

Grammatical PSM	NNS-NNS	CSs per 1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs per 1000 words
grammatical substitution	91	12.0	91	10.0
grammatical reduction	150	20.0	185	20.0
grammatical reduction-substitution	47	6.2	55	6.1
use of prepositions	38	5.0	32	3.5
Totals	326	42.8	363	40

Table 7.5 shows that the results for this subcategory are not statistically significant ($df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 2.82$, $p = 0.4$) showing similar CS frequencies in both dyads as well as similar profiles. The mechanisms more frequently used in both pairings are *grammatical reduction*, followed by *grammatical substitution*, *grammatical reduction-substitution* and *use of prepositions*. Hence, it can be observed that the interlocutor variable does not influence these types of strategies as they are more oriented to the learners' own L2 production.

7.2.4 Analysis of phonological-articulatory PSM-L2 resource deficit

The subsequent table presents the results obtained for the last 'resource deficit' subcategory, 'phonological-articulatory PSM'. The raw numbers of CSs obtained for each dyad together with the normalised frequencies per 1000 words are provided.

Table 7.6 Phonological-articulatory PSM – L2 RD

Phonological-articulatory PSM	NNS-NNS	CSs per 1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs per 1000 words
morphological tip-of-the-tongue	37	4.9	38	5.0
lexical tip-of-the-tongue	38	5.0	55	6.1
use-of-similar-sounding word	7	0.9	15	1.7
Totals	82	11	108	12

From the table above, it can be observed that again the results obtained for this subcategory are not substantially significant ($df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 2.529$, $p = 0.28$). The only although small difference regards the use of *lexical tip of the tongue*, which was slightly more often employed in the NNS-NS dyad. The interlocutor variable, therefore, does not affect the use of these CSs as again they are more related to the learners' own L2 speech production.

7.2.5 Analysis of 'PSM related to processing time pressure'

The table below presents the results for the second main category 'PSM related to processing time pressure'. The raw numbers obtained for each dyad as well as the normalised CS frequencies have been added.

Table 7.7 PSM related to processing time pressure (PTP)

PSM related to PTP	NNS-NNS	CSs per 1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs per 1000 words
<i>Non-lexicalised pauses</i>	272	35.7	360	40
unfilled pauses	113	15.0	154	16.7
umming/erring	111	14.6	148	16.3
sound lengthening	48	6.3	58	6.4
<i>lexicalised pauses</i>	7	0.9	3	0.3
Fillers	7	0.9	3	0.3
<i>Repetitions</i>	249	32.7	230	25.3
self-repetition	249	32.7	230	25.3
Totals for category	528	69	593	65.0

Table 7.7 shows that the results for this category are statistically significant ($df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 10.874$, $p = .004$) although the differences with regard to the normalised frequencies are not high. The main difference can be observed in the subcategory ‘non-lexicalised pauses’, a type of CS which is producing this statistical significance. The higher frequency of these mechanisms with NS interlocutors may be related to the differences in the speakers’ status, which may have caused the learners to feel more pressured, thus forcing them to resort more often to this type of *stalling mechanisms* when feeling uncertain of their L2 output.

7.2.6 Analysis of ‘PSM related to own-output problems’

The next table presents the results obtained for the following main category ‘PSM related to own-output problems’. The general results of these CSs together with their normalised frequencies are provided.

Table 7.8 (overleaf) shows that the results for this main category are not very significant ($df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 2.746$, $p = .097$) with *own-accuracy checks* producing the main difference, as this CS was more frequently employed by the NNSs in interaction with a NS. This mechanism has been already analysed in the previous chapters as being also influenced by the proficiency (lower level) and task (closed) variables. The finding observed here was expected since it reflects the fact that the learners are beginning to look to the interlocutor for some type of confirmation, thus the interest in examining this mechanism further and so start determining the interlocutor effects on the learners’ use of CSs.

Table 7.8 ‘PSM related to own-output (O-O) problems’

PSM related to O-O problems	NNS-NNS	CSs per 1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs per1000 words
<i>self-correction</i>	110	14.4	130	14.3
error-repair	89	11.7	120	13.2
appropriacy repair	17	2.2	8	0.9
rephrasing-repair	4	0.5	2	0.2
<i>check questions</i>	78	10.0	127	14.0
comprehension checks	1	0.1	0	0
own-accuracy checks	73	9.6	121	13.3
self-own accuracy checks	4	0.5	6	0.7
Totals for category	188	25.0	257	28.3

Own-accuracy checks have been defined as ‘checking that what you said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question intonation’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:373). The data obtained from the interlocutor variable shows that, as reported in the previous chapters, the learners resorted to, particularly, *lexical own-accuracy checks* in order to check the correctness of their speech in instances where they were producing the appropriate terms, were intending to utter the correct words or generated the wrong ones. The following excerpt illustrates the use of this CS in the NNS-NS dyad.

Example 7.2.1 Own-accuracy checks

NNS18: *a la derecha sí sí derecha está un otro ah hombre que que ah pienso *que (0.2) es
 está ah preparando para ah (0.2) lucharlo no no sé exactamente ah para ah robar
*to the right yes yes right is an other ah man that that ah I think that (0.2) is is ah
 preparing to ah (0.2) fight him I don't don't know exactly ah to ah rob*

NS: (robar)
 (rob)

NNS18: robar (0.2) este eh (0.2) hombre sí (0.2) y eh (0.2) y el ter el tercera
rob (0.2) this eh (0.2) man yes (0.2) and eh (0.2) and the thi the third

NS: (sí)
 (yes)
*[a la derecha está un otro hombre, target word: a la derecha hay otro hombre, ‘to
 the right there is another man]
 [que está preparando, target word: que se está preparando, ‘who is getting ready
 to’]*

Retrospective comments NNS18: I was trying to think of the word ‘to rob’, ‘robar’ but I couldn’t get it in my head so I was trying to think of a synonym so I just changed the verb to one I knew rather than trying to have an unnecessary pause and try to find another verb, then I got it. Then I was thinking ‘is it tercera? Is it not?’ So I said it in a question form to see if it was right.

Excerpt 7.2.1 clearly shows the different instances where NNS18 is not certain about the correctness of the words she is producing. This can be confirmed in her comments, where she indicates that first she was trying to find the correct word for the verb ‘robar’ (‘to rob’), which is why she seeks confirmation from the NS by means of *own-accuracy check*. She did the same with the previous, although incorrect verb that she used ‘luchar’ (‘to fight’), but as she was more certain about the inappropriateness of that verb, instead of waiting for the NS’s confirmation, she decides to immediately change it for the correct one ‘robar’. In this instance, although she realises that she is finally producing the right verb, she still needs the NS’s confirmation to continue communicating her message. On the last problematic occasion, where she is trying to describe ‘the third picture’, she again resorts to this CS confirming the use of question intonation when producing the word: ‘in order to see if the word is right’. Thus, as can be seen in this excerpt and the comments provided, the learner does not feel confident enough about her L2 speech, and needs to rely on the interlocutor for support in order to continue communicating her message. When examining the data from the NNS dyad, the only difference that emerges points to the interlocutor’s reaction to the speaker’s *own-accuracy checks*. It was observed that on most occasions the learners were not able to provide some kind of confirmation of their peer’s message primarily because of not having the necessary L2 resources to do so. The following comments confirm this difference with respect to the NNS-NS dyad:

Retrospective comments NNS10: I was trying to think of the word ‘enero’. I was trying to say ‘it was in January when we had exams’ (when you said that with a question mark, were you expecting help?) I expected a bit of confirmation. (Did you understand what NNS10 say?) **NNS9:** no, I don’t know what ‘enero’ was (but you didn’t say anything) no I didn’t want to go like ‘what?’ ‘cause I wanted to keep flowing it and she seemed to know what she was talking about-laugh.

From these comments, it can be seen that although the speaker was expecting some confirmation from her peer, the interlocutor was not able to provide it as he did not understand the word used by NNS10. Consequently, although in both dyads the use of this CS was quite frequent, the further analysis of the data reveals differences in the way the

learners used this mechanism. In general terms, in the NNS-NS dyads, the learners do not only seem to look for some kind of confirmation from the NS – as shown in the excerpt above – but it is also clear that the NS is able to provide this support much more often than the NNSs. This last aspect can also be confirmed through the number of *response-confirm* instances (shown in Table 7.12.1 below) on the part of the NSs. In the NNSs pairings, on the other hand, although there is also a relatively high frequency of *own-accuracy checks*, the reaction of the interlocutor is not the same as a small number of *response-confirm* instances on their part demonstrates (in Table 7.12 below). Thus, as expected, the analysis of this type of mechanism provides another view on the type of interlocutor, in that it gives further evidence of the NS's role as 'experts' of the language. It is clear that the NSs are more able to provide support, because of their linguistic expertise, and as the NNSs are aware of this, they expect that assistance more often than in interaction with another learner, hence the higher frequency of this CS in NNS-NS dyad. However, although the learners (givers), when interacting with other learners (receivers), may notice the problematic situations of their peers, they cannot always provide some kind of confirmation and so opt for continuing with the conversation. Similarly, it seems that the learners-receivers do not expect confirmation from their peers as much as when in interaction with NSs. The effects of the type of interlocutor are therefore evident: the NSs as more expert 'givers' are able to provide more support and thus some kind of confirmation when the learners need it. The NNS 'givers' on the other hand are less likely to provide some confirmation as their fewer L2 resources do not give them enough confidence to do so.

It is worth adding that in this same CS category and type of pairing, it was also observed that the NSs resorted on 6 occasions to *comprehension checks*. Although the CSs employed by the NSs are not part of the present study, it is noteworthy that it is the learners' strategic use of the language which triggers this behaviour on the part of the NS. This CS has been defined as 'asking questions (e.g., do you understand?) to check that the interlocutor can follow you' (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:373), and has mostly been investigated as one of the interactional moves within interactional or meaning negotiation studies. From these few instances examined, it was found that the NS's language caused the learner difficulties to fully comprehend their speech, and thus the NNS signalled this by means of CSs or through other indications, which then prompted the NS to *check the comprehension* of their message. The NS's reaction served to clarify their message in an attempt to give support to the learner, and also to 'anticipate and prevent a breakdown in communication' (Long, 1983a:136).

7.2.7 Analysis of ‘PSM related to other-performance problems’

The following table presents the results obtained for the category ‘PSM related to other-performance (OP) output’ together with the corresponding CS frequencies per 1000 words. The raw number of CSs employed by the NSs has been added as these mechanisms primarily involve the action of the interlocutor. However, as above mentioned, the focus will be on the learners’ CSs used as triggers for the NSs’ strategic reaction.

Table 7.9 PSM related to other-performance (O-P) problems

PSM related to O-P problems	NNS-NNS	CSs/1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs/1000 words
<i>meaning negotiation</i>				
asking for repetition	0	0	3	0.3
asking for clarification	2	0.3	10	1.1
expressing non-understanding	6	0.8	25	2.8
asking for confirmation	2	0.3	9	1.0
guessing	7	0.9	0	0.0
other-repair	5	0.7	0	0.0
feigning understanding	1	0.1	15	1.7
other-completion	24	5.2	0	0.0
Total for category	47	6.2	68	7.5

Table 7.9.1 Results for O-P problems: CSs employed by the NS

PSM related to O-P problems	NS’s CSs
<i>meaning negotiation</i>	
asking for repetition	0
asking for clarification	7
expressing non-understanding	4
asking for confirmation	22
guessing	40
other-repair	54
feigning understanding	0
other-completion	45
interpretive summary	1
Total for category	173

As shown in Table 7.9 above, in general terms, this type of meaning negotiation mechanisms did not produce high CS frequencies in either pairing, with the only exception of *other-completion* which shows the highest frequency in the NNS pairing. Similar low results can also be observed in the NNS-NS dyad, where the only CSs that show higher frequencies,

although in smaller numbers, are *expressing non-understanding* and *feigning understanding*. These latter results were expected for this type of dyad, since the fact of interacting with a NS – who may provide more elaborated input – may have imposed more communication difficulties for the learners in order to understand their message and be able to follow the conversation. The higher frequency observed for *other-completion* in the NNS pairing, also constitutes an expected result, because of the learners' shared characteristics and the familiarity factor; aspects which may have encouraged the learners' to try to complete their peers' message when necessary. With regard to the raw figures observed in table 7.9.1 for the NS speech, as already mentioned, they will be here analysed only in cases where they were triggered by CSs used by the learners (in bold). Those CSs that were more employed by the NSs such as *other-repair*, *other-completion*, *guessing* and *asking for confirmation* will be subsequently examined in more detail.

As already mentioned, the CSs slightly most frequently used by the learners in interaction with a NS were *expressing non-understanding* and *feigning understanding*. Nonetheless, as the results obtained for these CSs are small (below 3), their analysis will be limited to a brief account of what was observed in the data.

The former mechanism has been defined as 'expressing that one did not understand something properly either verbally or nonverbally' (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:375), which as explained by these scholars can be due to the speakers' lack of L2 knowledge. The latter has been considered a 'zero-negotiation' mechanism since

instead of indicating the trigger and thereby eliciting a response, the speaker decide[s] to feign understanding and carry on the discourse, relying at the same time on his/her knowledge of the discourse context and using inferencing mechanisms to guess the intention of the interlocutor (p.376).

The data revealed that with respect to *expressing non-understanding*, the learners mostly resorted to nonverbal gestures, such as puzzled looks to show their non-understanding of the interlocutor's message. On a few other occasions, the learners also verbally expressed their lack of comprehension, by directly telling the NSs that they did not understand their message as well as by *asking them for clarification*. In these instances, the learner's difficulty in comprehending the interlocutor's message was also acknowledged by the NS, who then usually *rephrased* their message in a different and simpler way so that the learner could comprehend the meaning.

Feigning understanding, on the other hand, was used by the NNSs in order to avoid a break in the interaction as, on most occasions, the learners expressed that by doing this they were at least able to get the gist of the message and thus able to maintain the conversation. In this CS use, therefore, there is no negotiation of meaning as Dörnyei & Kormos (1998) mention, but instead the learner tries to infer the information that is being conveyed in their attempt to continue with the conversation.

The learners therefore resorted to these CSs more frequently when interacting with a NS because of the demands that this type of interlocutor imposes. It is apparent that the NS's L2 speech produces comprehension problems, which the learners try to overcome by means of either *expressing their non-understanding* – which leads both speakers to use other CSs – or by *feigning understanding* in their attempt to avoid a communication break. These difficulties imposed by the NS interlocutor can be confirmed through the following comments:

Retrospective comments NNS2: with a NS you feel it's a lot harder to understand them and you feel they are not understanding you. There I was quite confused with what he was saying, I kind of pretended I understood more than...I just got some phrases he used to describe like what he's wearing, the ceiling... I couldn't really put it together and when he paused I realised he had asked me something. He was talking quite fast so I was confused (but you didn't say 'I don't understand or...)' no, maybe because he's Spanish, but I don't really know why, perhaps just because I didn't want to look stupid, but instead wanting to be able to speak and communicate so you don't want to ask...

Retrospective comments NNS13: There I didn't understand what she meant by 'no queda' (but you seemed to understand) yeah **laugh** I think I lied (why didn't you say so?) because sometimes I think that if I don't understand the whole concept then I make half a concept because it's easier to do that and also because we had a time limit and thinking I can't just keep saying 'what's that', best just say it and keep the flow going. There when she said 'llevar' I don't think I understood either ('llevar la botella') to open the bottle? (no...but you could still continue with the task?) That's why I think I don't always ask because I think a lot of it it's intuition and then if you keep stopping then you are over thinking.

These comments corroborate the main demand imposed by the NS interlocutor. The language used by the NS is not always understood by the learners and thus, as shown in the comments above, they try to solve this problem by *feigning understanding*. As they indicate, they resort to this CS in particular – instead of *expressing their non-understanding* – because

they feel that they can still comprehend part of the message, and so infer what the NS is communicating, instead of directly asking them for the meaning; action that as they mention would lead to a break in the conversation.

In contrast to the previous mechanisms observed, the next CS to be examined, *other-completion*, produced a fairly frequent use but in the NNS-NNS type of dyad. As mentioned in chapter 4, this CS was not present in any of the two frameworks on which the analytical tool for this study is based, but the data indicated that it was necessary to include it in the present framework. This CS is simply defined as when the speaker completes the interlocutor's message when noticing that s/he is having problems in order to find a specific word. Although this phenomenon has not been reported in studies related to CSs, it has been mentioned in research regarding negotiation of meaning (Pica & Doughty, 1985, Pica *et al*, 1995). In these studies, it has been referred to as 'completion', since they are 'utterances in which interlocutors supply appropriate words or phrases to complete each other's utterances' (Pica *et al*, 1995:32). These latter scholars found that this mechanism was not used as part of meaning negotiation sequences, but as a type of scaffolding 'in that they are another way for interlocutors to continue communication by supplying each other with input to move the discourse forward' (p.32). The following example illustrates this phenomenon.

Example 7.5 Other-completion

NNS23: entonces creo que el primero es él eh solo (0.2) enn en la

so I think that the first is he eh alone (0.2) inn in the

NNS24: en casa solo sí

at home alone yes

NNS23: [sí en casa y después se va para comprar cosas

[yes at home and then he goes to buy things

NNS24: sí sin duda

yes indeed

NNS23: entonces yo tengo uno afuera de la tienda y tú tienes (0.2) otro

so I have one outside the shop and you have (0.2) another

NNS24: yo yo tengo él él volviendo a casa con las cosas entonces si si tú tienes la tienda y dentro de la tienda creo que ese es

I I have he he coming back home with the things so if if you have the shop and inside the shop I think that it is

NNS23: [son juntos

[they go together

NNS24: sí

Retrospective comments NNS23: I was gonna say 'en la habitación' but I couldn't think, I was thinking 'en el cuarto' but I didn't know. I think NNS24 said casa and I said yeah 'casa'-**laugh**

NNS24: I was trying to say 'I think they go together', but then I think she said straightaway like 'juntos' or something like that, (NNS23: I think I interrupted you) no but you knew what I meant anyway (NNS23 I think that you'd have thought of that if I hadn't done that) well yeah eventually, but you said what I'd been wanting to say. **NNS23:** I was like when you guess the end of the other person's sentence, I was doing that-**laugh**

In the excerpt above, it can be observed how this CS was used on two occasions by these learners when carrying out the closed task. When examining these two instances of strategic use, it can be seen that in the first one, NNS23's hesitation signals trigger the use of this CS on the part of NNS24. On the second occasion, however, this pattern does not occur since there are no signals of a communication problem on the part of NNS24, yet her peer still opts for *completing* her utterance with the appropriate words. All this can be confirmed through both learners' comments where, regarding the first instance, NNS23 indicates that although she was looking for another word 'habitación' ('bedroom'), she accepted her peer's help – by means of *confirm-help* and *response-repeat* – as she could not think of the exact word she was looking for. With regard to the second strategic instance, NNS24 confirms that the word provided by her peer was the one she needed, but it is also clear that she did not have enough time to think of the word since her interlocutor *completed* her message immediately after her utterance, yet NNS24 acknowledged this help and thus *confirmed* it. The use of this CS is also confirmed by NNS23 who mentions the fact that she guessed the end of her interlocutor's utterance, but it is clear that she was not guessing but *completing* the message as there is not a signal of uncertainty in her speech.

From the excerpt above, it is evident that the learners did feel less pressured when communicating with their peers – with whom they had more characteristics in common – and thus felt more confident in their attempts to provide assistance. The familiarity aspect and the linguistic status shared by the speakers, in this type of dyad, encouraged the learners to try to help their peers by attempting to complete their message; strategic behaviour which would not be possible when in interaction with a NS because of this interlocutor's linguistic expertise in the target language. The fairly frequent use of this CS in NNS dyads finds support in meaning negotiation studies, where it has been observed that this type of phenomenon is in fact more salient in NNS interactions than in NNS-NS dyads (Pica & Doughty, 1985; Pica *et al*, 1995). Pica *et al* concluded that, in view of the lower quantity of

meaning negotiation produced in their NNS-NNS dyads, the high number of ‘completions’ observed in the learners’ interactions indicate that ‘it is possible that there were other sources of input and opportunities to produce output’ (p.33).

The following mechanisms to examine concern those CSs most employed by the NSs, as shown in Table 7.9.1, but whose main interest for the present study lies in the mechanisms which trigger them, that is to say, the learners’ signals of communication problems by means of CSs. Therefore, the following analysis will focus on these triggers (in bold) and the way the learners employed them.

As the use of *other-completion* has just been analysed in the learners’ dyads, it will be now examined as being employed by the NSs in order to assist the learners to get their message across. As was observed in the tables above (7.9 and 7.9.1), this CS produced a higher use in the NNS-NS dyad in terms of the raw figures obtained. Thus, the following examination of this mechanism aims at clarifying such difference in number with respect to the NNS-NNS dyad.

Example 7.6 Other-completion

NNS21: solo uno el otro no no tiene gafas

just one the other hasn't hasn't got sunglasses

NS: no

NNS21: pero tiene una-**gestos**-{**apunta a su bufanda**}

but he's got a-gestures-{points to her scarf}

NS: [bufanda]

[scarf]

NNS21: bufanda sí y eh eh la persona conn gafas eh tiene una-**gestos**

scarf yes and eh eh the person wiith sunglasses eh has a-gestures

NS: [un palo]

[a stick]

NNS21: un (palo)

A (stick)

NS: un palo sí y tiene gorra?-**gestos**

a stick yes and has he got a hat?-gestures

NNS21: sí

NS: sí

NNS21: **(0.3) eh (0.2) puede puede ser el**

(0.3) eh (0.2) it could could be him

NS: [el atracador
[the mugger

NNS21: sí

NS: sí no↑

Retrospective comments NNS21: I didn't know how to say 'scarf' or anything around my neck' **laugh**. And I didn't know how to say eh 'stick' so I just thought like mime it and I thought it would be something like 'bat' and then she said the word so yeah I just said 'yeah that' **laugh**.

The excerpt above illustrates the use of this CS by a NS in interaction with a NNS also when carrying out the closed task. In this example, as happened in the previous one (in 7.5), the NNS's signals of communication problems – which *indirectly appeal* for the NS's help – trigger the use of this CS on the part of the NS on three occasions. As can be confirmed through the learner's comments, she had problems finding specific words and thus opted for *miming* in most cases in order to prompt the NS's assistance. From a closer examination of the data from both dyads, it was observed that in general both pairings resorted to this CS in more instances when carrying out the closed type of task, and so the words they helped to provide had to do with mostly specific lexical items. The main difference in both pairings has to do with the frequency of *confirm-help* instances (see Table 7.11) produced in each pairing, which was much higher in the NNS-NS dyads than in the NNS dyad. This fact, together with the higher raw results shown for this CS in the NNS-NS dyad, help to demonstrate again the NS's linguistic superiority and main supporting role for the learners to get their message across. As shown above in NNS21's comment and in the following one from NNS19, the NSs have the necessary L2 knowledge to provide the learners with the words they need to communicate meaning:

NNS19: I couldn't say the word I needed to say, I was trying to say it but couldn't (so what did you do?) she finished it off for me **laugh**, in a way I kind of waited for her to finish it for me.

Thus, it becomes evident how the NS interlocutor influences the learners' strategic behaviour, in that they not only signal their need for help – by means of various CSs – but also expect this assistance, as they are aware of their non-shared linguistic status, hence of the interlocutor's linguistic expertise in the L2. In the NNS dyads on the other hand, although the learners are also able to assist their peers – albeit not as much as the NSs – their similar level of proficiency and their familiarity appear to produce an implicit understanding

between them, and so it seems that there is no need for them to *confirm* the assistance provided as much as when in interaction with a NS, as the following comments suggest:

NNS15: I know what I am saying is not right but I knew NNS16 would understand.

NNS5: I think I just relied on NNS6 to understand what I wanted to say.

The following CS, *guessing*, was also observed as producing a high number of instances on the part of the NSs in response to the communication problems signalled by the learners. This CS is simply defined as guessing part of the interlocutor's message in those cases where there is 'partial understanding or uncertainty about understanding' (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:376). The following example illustrates this mechanism and the learners' strategic behaviour which triggered its use (in bold).

Example 7.7 Guessing

NNS14: *un otro dibujo eh (0.2) eh otra vez dos hombres *pero un es el mismo hombre y un otro eh y el mismo hombre del otro dibujo está **eh-gestos- no sé la palabra- risa-gestos- al a su pie eh-gestos**

an other picture eh (0.2) eh again two men *but an is the same man and an other eh and the same man of the other picture is **eh-gestures-don't know the word-laugh-gestures-to the to his foot eh-gestures*

NS: ¿a los pies?
the feet?

NNS14: sí es-**gestos- no sé-risas**
yes is-gestures-don't know-laugh

NS: [¿está señalando?]
[is pointing?]

NNS14: sí sí seña sí (eso)
yes yes poin yes (that)

NS: [vale
[ok

*[*un otro dibujo, target word: otro dibujo, 'another picture']*

*[*pero un es el mismo, target word: pero uno es el mismo, 'but one is the same']*

Retrospective comments NNS14: I was very unclear there (any problem there? Is that the word you wanted to use?) yes like 'pointing'.

In the excerpt above, it can be clearly observed how the learner prompts the NS's strategic behaviour by means of *miming*, *pauses* and *repetitions* as well as *indirect appeal for help*. The use of these various CSs triggered the NS's reaction by attempting to *guess* what the learner is trying to convey, and thus help them to get their message across. It can be seen that the learner *confirms* the assistance given through a positive reply and/or by trying to repeat the word provided. From a closer examination of the data, it was firstly observed that, as occurred with the use of *other-completion*, this mechanism was employed in order to compensate for the lexical items needed in the closed task. Secondly, it was found that the learners' most used CSs – and which triggered this mechanism on the part of the NS – were *miming* and the different *stalling* mechanisms observed above. On a few other occasions, the learners also resorted to *code-switch* and *own-accuracy checks* as a way of eliciting help from the NS. In addition, the learners' response to the NS's assistance was in most cases positively acknowledged by means of *confirm-help*. Hence, the learners' signals of trouble through the various CSs used, together with the NS's expertise, seem the ideal context for this CS to be used. It seems that as the learners are aware of this difference in status, they take advantage of it and thus try to elicit help from their interlocutor very frequently, triggering a high use of this CS on the part of the NS, a mechanism which is more likely to be employed by expert language users (Sato & Lyster, 2007)

The next CS to analyse concerns *other-repair*, which was frequently employed by the NSs in response to the different mechanisms used by the learners in order to signal trouble, and so elicit some kind of assistance. This CS is defined as 'correcting something in the interlocutor's speech' (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:375). However, when considering a broader view of what this mechanism implies Nakahama *et al* (2001:379) point out that

repair negotiation is portrayed as a process of clarifying an utterance (or utterance part) that at least one interlocutor experiences as problematic or perceives as not mutually understood. This 'speaker's perception...acts as the trigger for the negotiation of meaning and the overt signal of this perception... is the observable [mechanism] that the speaker produces

The following excerpt illustrates these 'observable' mechanisms, that is to say, the CSs that the learners employ to signal these perceived communication problems.

Example 7.8 Other-repair

NS: ...entonces lo de la comisaría a lo mejor es la última
...so the one in the police station is perhaps the last one

NNS21: sí eh

NS: (la última a lo mejor...) {apunta el número en el dibujo}
(the last one perhaps...) {writes the number down}

NNS21: y tengo una foto también **en en *la comisie-ra↑** {mira a NS}
And I have a picture too in in the police sta-tion↑ {looks at NS}

NS: en la comisaría
at the police station

NNS21: comisaría sí pero probablemente está antes dee del último eh son siete y ocho
police station yes but probably is before thee the last one eh they are seven and eight

[*comisiera, target word: comisaría, 'police station']

Retrospective comments NNS21: I tried to guess what 'com, the police station' was 'comi-sa-ria'? or something like that and then got it a bit wrong again and she corrected me.

As can be seen above, the learner evidences her problems to communicate by means of CSs which trigger the NS's reaction to *repair* their speech. In this example, NNS21 attempts to *reuse the word* that the NS had previously produced 'comisaría' ('police station'), but as she realises that she is not completely certain whether she is saying it appropriately, she thus resorts to *own-accuracy check* and *indirect appeal for help* as a way of eliciting some assistance. When further analysing the data, it was observed that the learners' signals of a problematic situation was mostly characterised by the use of *own-accuracy checks*, as shown above, as well as various other mechanisms used in conjunction. In fact, the majority of the instances of *other-repair* were characterised by the learners' signals of communication problems by means of CSs. With regard to the learners' reactions to this repairing, on most occasions, they again acknowledged the assistance provided by means of *confirm-help/correction* and/or *response-repeat*. All these features in the strategic use of the target language, on the part of the learners, prompted the *repairing* of their speech by the NSs, a response which has been found as characteristic of the NSs when in interaction with learners (Long, 1983b). The NS's linguistic expertise seems to again influence more the learners' strategic behaviour, since as they are aware of their fewer L2 resources available, they are more likely to rely on the NS for correction resorting therefore to different CSs in order to elicit this help.

The last CS within this main category observed as producing a relatively high use on the part of the NSs has to do with *asking for confirmation*. This CS is defined as ‘requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly’ (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998:375). This mechanism has been examined in interactional studies, where it has been referred to as ‘confirmation checks’ (Long, 1981) as part of the different negotiation moves characteristic of NNS-NS interactions, and thus moves ‘which are provided when a learner’s utterance is not clear in terms of meaning (Fuji & Mackey, 2009:268). Sato & Lyster (2007) coded these types of moves as ‘confirmation requests’ with or without modification of trigger: ‘to confirm an interlocutor’s incomprehensible and/or inaccurate utterance [by either modifying it or not]’ (p.130). Williams *et al* (1997) also investigated this type of move, but as a CS through which NNS-NS dyads can negotiate meaning, and thus their interest focused on this move as a CS based on a purely interactional point of view. The following excerpt taken from the NNS-NS data illustrates this mechanism and the learners’ CSs which triggered its use.

Example 7.9 Asking for confirmation

NNS6: si eh (0.3) tengo eh un un una foto donde el señor eh (0.3) eh *se veste una chaqueta y eh sale salí de su casa o habitación y **eh hay eh las es escale escaleras↑ (can't remember the word) esca escaleras**
*yes eh (0.3) I have eh un un a picture where the man eh (0.3) eh is dressed in a jacket and eh goes out went out his house or bedroom and **eh there is eh the st sta stairs↑ (can't remember the word) st stairs***

NS: mhm

NNS6: sí

NS: ¿sube las escaleras o baja las escaleras?
goes up or down the stairs?

NNS6: eh (0.3) no eh ah **no ah (0.5) el señor va a eh ir en las escaleras**
Eh (0.3) no eh ah no ah (0.5) the man is going to eh go in the stairs

NS: ¿o sea va a subir las escaleras?
so he is going up the stairs?

NNS: sí

NS: ¿pero está en su casa todavía?
but is he still at home?

NNS6: mhm

*[*se veste, target word: se viste, ‘he is wearing/he is dressed’]*

Retrospective comments NNS6: I couldn't think how to say 'to go down' so I thought if I just put across that there are some 'stairs' and then figure out how to say 'to go down' in a minute. But then I couldn't think how to say 'go down'...

In the excerpt above, it is apparent how the learner's incomprehensible speech triggers the use of this CS on the part of the NS, producing a meaning negotiation sequence. In this example, NNS6 needs to resort to various CSs such as *indirect appeal for help*, *own-accuracy checks*, and *grammatical reduction*, amongst others, to be able to communicate her message. Thus, all these communication problems make her speech difficult to comprehend, and the NS needs to *confirm* what she thinks the learner is trying to convey. In doing so, she needs to modify the part of the learner's utterance that was more incomprehensible by adding the words needed by the NNS: 'go down the stairs' ('bajar las escaleras'). This *request for confirmation*, at the same time, prompts the NNS to modify her message by *restructuring* part of the original meaning with the aim of clarifying it. However, as the learner still encounters problems to communicate this, she thus relies on *literal translation*, so as to get her message across in her following intervention, which leads her again to produce an inappropriate message. The NS therefore needs to *confirm* the information provided by the learner on two other occasions. This kind of sequence was the main characteristic in the use of this CS. On those occasions where the learners' experienced difficulties to communicate, resorting to various CSs and thus producing an incomprehensible output, the NS's reaction – triggered by the CSs employed by the learners – was to *ask for confirmation* about their message so as to check their understanding of the meaning. In doing so, the NSs were able to assist the learners by providing the words needed through their modified response. It was also observed that, as shown in the analysis of *other-completion* and *guessing*, this mechanism was more used when performing the closed type task, which was found to impose more linguistic demands through the specificity of the language required. The fact that there was a fairly high use of this CS on the part of the NSs relates again to what has been noted here so far regarding the effects of this interlocutor. The NSs are in a better position, in terms of their L2 knowledge and resources, to provide assistance to the learners, as happened in this particular case through the modification of the learners' utterance, assistance which was also evidenced through the use of *guessing*, *other-repair* and *other-completion*. Similarly, studies related to interaction have also observed that in NNS-NS pairings, because of the differences in the speakers' linguistic competence, NSs usually need to resort to this type of checks so as to comprehend the learner's message (Long, 1981; Mackey 2007; Fujii & Mackey, 2009).

The analysis of these ‘PSM related to other performance problems’ has primarily shown how the learners need to resort to various CSs in order to signal the problems they experience in communication, and thus elicit the NS’s help. The effects of the type of interlocutor, therefore, could be clearly observed in, for example, the fairly frequent use of *other-completion* in the NNS-NNS dyad, where the familiarity as well as the status shared by the interlocutors fostered a more comfortable context for some learners to try to provide assistance to their peers. Nonetheless, the NS’s linguistic expertise produced a higher number of this CS on their part in the NNS-NS dyad. This difference in status in this type of pairing was also evidenced in the learners’ need to *express their non-understanding* as well as *feign understanding* in this type of dyad. The more elaborated language provided by the NSs – together with the difficulties imposed by the task subvariable – prompted a slightly more frequent use of these two phenomena. Finally, the higher use of mechanisms, such as *guessing* and *other-repair*, and to some extent *ask for confirmation*, on the part of the NSs has also helped to confirm the influence of the interlocutor, in this case the NS’s role, on the learners’ strategic use of the L2. This is a role that does not only affect the learners’ output in terms of the expert assistance that the NSs are able to provide, but also the learners’ perception of that role, since they are aware of that expertise, and so expect their help and rely on them by means of the different CSs which they use as triggers. This is confirmed by Lafford (2004:214) who points out that during NNS-NS interactions,

students expect the expert L2 speaker to provide help when they search for the proper way to express an idea and even to understand their message when it contains L1-based strategies. In turn, the instructors recognize their obligation to provide such feedback for the learner to adjust his or her interlanguage system

Thus, not only the NS’s expert role but also their own perspective on how to communicate with an L2 learner – as a provider of assistance – and the learners’ expectations of this type of interlocutor, all influence the learners’ strategic L2 production.

7.2.8 Analysis of ‘interactional and paralinguistic CSs’

The following tables present the results obtained for the last main category within the analytical framework, the interactional-paralinguistic types of CSs. Table 7.10 shows the overall results for the two subcategories which comprise these CSs, and which were divided depending on the type of interlocutor. The following two tables present the figures obtained for each of these subcategories in more detail together with the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words. The CSs employed by the NSs in response to the learners’ strategic behaviour have also been added in separate tables (7.10.1 and 7.12.1 below).

Table 7.10 Results for interactional-paralinguistic CSs

Interactional-paralinguistic CSs	NNS-NNS	CSs/1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs/1000 words
Receiver	106	14	254	28
Giver	35	4.6	4	0.4
Total for category	141	18.5	258	28.4

Table 7.10.1 Interactional-paralinguistic CSs employed by the NS

Interactional-paralinguistic CSs	NNS-NS
Receiver	0
Giver	95
Total	95

Table 7.10 shows the results for this category indicating, as expected, a more frequent use of CSs on the part of the receiver, that is, the speaker who has problems in communicating her/his message. The giver, on the other hand, shows a small frequency of CS use, a result also expected, since the learner-giver – due their more limited L2 knowledge – are less likely to be able to assist their peers. This is corroborated in table 7.10.1, which shows high raw figures of CS use for the NS (speaker-giver) showing the NS’s different status in relation to the learner-giver. What follows presents the analysis of the different CSs employed first by the learners-receivers in the NNS-NNS and NNS-NS dyads. Afterwards, those mechanisms produced by the learners-givers (in NNS-NNS dyad) will be examined, to finally observe the CSs most used by the NS, in response to the problems encountered by the learners and signalled through CSs, which will be the main focus of this analysis.

7.2.8.1 Analysis of interactional and paralinguistic CSs used by the ‘receiver’

The following table shows the results obtained for this category in relation to the ‘receiver’. Data from both dyads is presented together with the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 7.11 below shows that the results for this category in relation to the speaker-receiver are statistically significant ($df = 2, \chi^2 = 24.507, p = .000$). The general results show a more frequent CS production by the learners in the NNS-NS dyad with the only exception of *mime*, which was equally employed in both types of pairings. The highest frequencies therefore favour the NNS-NS dyad particularly in the use of *confirm-help*, *response-repeat*, and *indirect appeal for help*, although these latter CSs present a lower frequency. The CSs here mentioned will be now qualitatively examined so as to clearly observe the effects of the interlocutor in the learners’ strategic use of the language.

Table 7.11 Interactional-paralinguistic CSs employed by the ‘receiver’

Receiver	NNS-NNS	CSs/1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs/1000 words
	38	5	162	18
response-repeat	7	0.9	46	5.1
response-repair	1	0.1	3	0.3
confirm help/correction	22	2.9	95	10.46
confirm understanding/comp.	2	0.26	9	1
reuse-of a word	6	0.78	9	1
<i>appeals for help</i>	36	4.7	55	6.1
direct appeal for help	2	0.26	2	0.2
self-direct appeal for help	3	0.4	2	0.2
indirect appeal for help	31	4.1	51	5.6
<i>Paralinguistic</i>	32	4.2	37	4.1
Mime	32	4.2	37	4.1
Totals	106	14.0	254	28.0

The CS with the highest frequency in the NNS-NS dyad, *confirm-help/correction*, was previously mentioned in the production of mechanisms such as *guessing*, *other-completion* and *other-repair*, where the learners usually confirm the assistance provided by the interlocutor. As explained in chapter 4, this mechanism was included in the theoretical framework in order to account for those instances where the learner-receiver acknowledges that the help or correction provided by the giver corresponds with the word/s the receiver is attempting to use. The more frequent use of this CS in the NNS-NS interactions corresponds to what was previously observed: the NSs were more likely to provide the necessary assistance – as more expert interlocutors – which explains the high frequency of *confirmation* on the part of the NNSs for the help provided. In the NNS dyad on the other hand, this help was not frequently offered, because of the learners’ fewer L2 resources, producing therefore fewer opportunities to acknowledge and *confirm* the help provided. In order to clarify this, the present CS will be illustrated and briefly examined considering its use in both dyads.

Example 7.10.1 Confirm help/correction

NS: [dilo dilo no más ¿qué palabra ibas a decir? La qué la li
[say it say it what word were you going to say? The what the li

NNS2: liqua-**risa**-no
liqua-laugh-no

NS: el líquido
the liquid

NNS2: si ess-**gestos-risa**-eh (0.2) esss (0.4) el hombre (0.2) ve-**risa-gestos**

Yes iss-**gestures-laugh**-eh (0.2) isss (0.4) the man (0.2) looks-**laugh-gestures**

NS:

[el ¿techo?]

[the ceiling?]

NNS2: sí y...

Retrospective comments NNS2: I was trying to say ‘the wine is spilt everywhere’ and that’s why I said ‘abierta’. Then I wanted to say ‘liquid’ the contents of the wine, I said ‘liquada’ I wanted to make it sound Spanish but I knew it was not right that’s why I laughed. I didn’t know for sure but I thought he would tell me the correct word. I was trying to say ‘he’s looking’, to watch, ‘he’s looking towards the ceiling’. (Were you expecting his help?) I think a little bit but I thought I had no idea what to say so I was waiting for him to give some indication he understood or not or say a phrase I might repeat or...

The data evidenced that most learners *confirmed* the help provided by the NS by means of a positive reply, as shown above, and also by means of *response-repeat*. In the excerpt above, two instances of this mechanism can be observed. The first one originated in a previous intervention of NNS2, where she attempted to express part of the intended message, by trying to retrieve the word ‘líquido’ (‘liquid’) by means of *tip of the tongue*, and finally through *foreignising*, as confirmed in her comments. However, as she knows that that is not the correct word, she indicates her uncertainty by laughing and expressing that she does not know the word, and so *indirectly* eliciting the NS’s help. The same behaviour can be observed in the second instance, where she is trying to express ‘the man is looking towards the ceiling’, as she indicated, and thus after the interlocutor’s assistance, she resorts to *confirm help/correction* by positively acknowledging such help. Thus, on these two occasions the NS provided the necessary assistance triggering a positive *confirmation* from the learner, assistance which in fact she was expecting as can be confirmed in her comments.

When comparing the data from both dyads, the only difference was observed in the learners’ strategic behaviour, which was evidenced on seven occasions where, even though the learners *confirmed* the help given by their peer interlocutor, the words provided were not appropriate. NNS4, for example, when trying to give her peer the word needed ‘año nuevo’ (‘New Year’), produces instead ‘nuevo año’, which although is not completely incorrect, still sounds odd. On this same occasion, a similar linguistic behaviour is produced by NNS3, who attempts to express ‘smart clothes’ (‘ropa elegante’), but as she cannot recall that word, she opts for *approximating* it with the term ‘beautiful’ (‘precioso’), which was not only

incorrectly pronounced, as in ‘preshiosas’, but was also inappropriate for this context. However, her peer acknowledges the assistance given, even though the word is not appropriate.

As can be seen, the high frequency of this CS in the NNS-NS dyad points again to the effects of the NS interlocutor, through the NS’s expertise, on the learners’ strategic use of the L2. The linguistic superiority – characteristic of this type of interlocutor – affects the learners’ CS usage, in that they are more likely to appropriately assist the learners when necessary, triggering therefore a high frequency of the learners’ *confirmation* of such support. In the NNS-NNS dyad, on the other hand, the learners are less capable of providing some kind of assistance, and as shown above, of providing the appropriate assistance.

The next CS to examine concerns *response-repeat*, which was the second mechanism most frequently employed in the NNS-NS dyad. This CS is in direct relation with the device analysed above, since through this CS the learners also *confirm* the interlocutor’s help. The data showed that some learners not only acknowledged this assistance by means of a positive response, but also by *repeating* the word suggested or corrected by the interlocutor, as shown in the following example.

Example 7.11

NNS20: ...eh eh si la verdad es que en la universidad es una experiencia muy estresado

...eh eh yes certainly at university is a very stressed experience

NS:

[estresante]

[*stressing*]

NNS20: estresante sí sí eh *nunca eh eh eh te tenía experiencia así...

stressing yes yes eh I had never eh eh eh ha had experience like this...

[*nunca tenía experiencia así, target word: nunca había tenido..., ‘I had never had’*]

Retrospective comments NNS20: I just copied her because obviously what she was saying was correct, and I was just having a go so then I could correct myself because of what she’d said.

In this excerpt, NNS20 *repeats* the word suggested by the NS, in addition to his positive response, acknowledging therefore the NS’s assistance, in this case through *other-repair*. As can be seen in his comments, NNS20 realised that the word provided was the appropriate form of the word he had previously produced. It was also observed that this CS was again

mostly employed in order to compensate for the lexical problems encountered in the closed task.

Hence, through the examination of these mechanisms it is possible to observe again the interlocutor's effects. The difference in status in this type of dyad is more marked due to the NS's L2 expertise, which allows them to be of more assistance and particularly of providing the appropriate assistance, which then triggers mechanisms such as, *confirm help/correction* and *response-repeat*. It seems that as the learners are not able to assist their peers as much as the NSs, they do not attempt to do so and if they do, they risk not being able to provide the appropriate help. However, their peer interlocutors still acknowledge their help as correct, which is perhaps also due to their restricted L2 resources. Additionally, this shared status also encouraged them to avoid a break in the conversation, and thus they opted sometimes for *feigning understanding* or, as shown above, for *confirming* inappropriate words, a fact which can also be confirmed through the following comments:

NNS2: (why do you think you didn't tell her that you didn't understand?) It's just maybe that I don't want to look stupid...maybe I faked a bit because I did understand half of it, and then I didn't want to say 'no entiendo' and then we had to start all over again, I didn't want to break the conversation 'cause I had understood half of it anyway.

The following mechanism, *indirect appeals for help*, also more frequently employed in the NNS-NS type of dyad, has been defined as 'trying to elicit help from the interlocutor indirectly by expressing lack of a needed L2 item either verbally or nonverbally' (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:91). Færch & Kasper (1983) distinguish them as cooperative CSs if 'the learner decides to signal to his interlocutor that he is experiencing a communicative problem and that he needs assistance [for which] he makes use of the strategy of "appealing"' (p.51). When this appeal is indirect 'the learner often supplements the appeal by another CS...[or with] non-linguistic strategies [which are often used] to signal [this] appeal to the interlocutor...or to support other strategies' (p.52). In terms of empirical studies in this respect, some have also observed a higher use of this CS in interactions between NNSs and NS interviewers (Grañena, 2003) as well as in NNS-NS dyads (Numata 2009). The following example illustrates this mechanism as observed in the present data.

Example 7.12.1 Indirect appeals for help

NNS17: champán y eh ah el-gestos-ah ah no se la palabra

champagne and eh ah the-gestures-ah ah don't know the word

NS: el tapón

the top of the bottle

NNS17: posiblemente eh-gestos {destapa una botella}

possibly eh-gestures {as if opening a bottle}

NS: el corcho?

the cork?

NNS17: cor-cho ah si si si corcho-risas-y...

cor-k ah yes yes cork-laugh-and...

Retrospective comments NNS17: I completely forgot the word for 'cork' and then I was like (but she said 'tapón') yeah maybe that was a different variation from what I knew 'cause it didn't click with me, I thought of 'sacacorchos' that's why it clicked...

As can be seen in the excerpt above, the learner *indirectly* attempted to elicit help from their interlocutor by means of verbal and nonverbal signals. NNS17 not only *mimes* the action of 'opening a bottle', in order to elicit the word 'cork', but also verbally expresses a lack of the intended meaning by saying 'I don't know the word'. These CSs triggered the NS's assistance, who provided the word needed, but as this was not a word the learner knew, he then opts for *miming* again the same action prompting the NS to provide a synonym, and so the word that the learner was looking for and which thus helps him to continue communicating his message. The data observed for this dyad revealed that in general the learners *indirectly asked for help* by means of various mechanisms. In half of the CS instances, they verbally indicated that they were experiencing difficulties by expressing 'I don't know/remember (the word)'. On other occasions, they signalled this through *miming* and/or various *stalling* mechanisms, and in other instances they also made eye contact with their interlocutor in order to indicate that they needed help. Other CSs, such as *code-switch* and *own-accuracy checks* were also used in conjunction with the mechanisms mentioned above. The interlocutor, in most instances, *guessed or completed* the learner's utterance in response of this *indirect appeal for help*. Finally, it was also observed that again the closed task acted as a subvariable. When comparing the data from both dyads, it was observed that the only difference relates to the interlocutor's reaction to this *appeal for help*. In the NNS dyad, this reaction was restricted to confirming their understanding of their peer's message,

through *confirm comprehension*, as opposed to the NS interlocutors who, as shown above, either tried to *guess* the word needed or opted for *completing* the learner's utterance.

Accordingly, the higher frequency of this CS in the NNS-NS dyad seems to be related to the learners' awareness of the differences in status, and so of the NS's expertise, as they know that if they attempt to *indirectly elicit help* from their interlocutor, they will be more likely to receive it. In the NNS-NNS interactions on the other hand, the data revealed that although the learners also attempt to request some help, they are less likely to obtain it, since their peers are less able to do so due to their more restricted L2 knowledge. The other possible rationale may be related to the concept of 'linguistic cooperation', suggested by Færch & Kasper (1983:230), which 'is a function of the foreigner role which allows for treating the other person as linguistically handicapped without this being intended or perceived as a face-threatening act', thus supporting the fact that the NSs will be more willing to respond to this type of appeal by providing the language needed by the learner. All in all, these are factors that again demonstrate the marked influence of the interlocutor, the NS, who as experts of the L2 affect the way the learners communicate. It seems that the learners take advantage of the NSs' linguistic knowledge, and perhaps 'linguistic cooperation', when experiencing communication problems, and thus tend to rely more often on their assistance through this type of *appeals*.

The following CS concerns the paralinguistic CS, *mime*, which as opposed to the previous CSs showed similar results in both dyads, although with lower frequencies. This mechanism is directly related to the CS above analysed, in that they serve to 'signal an appeal to the interlocutor' (Færch & Kasper, 1983:52) as was observed in the previous excerpts. This CS is simply defined as 'describing whole concepts nonverbally or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration' (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995:162). Both of these functions were observed in the use of this CS in both dyads as the following examples illustrate.

Example 7.13.1 NNS-NS Describing a concept

NNS5: [eh eh pero antes de de este es una cuando está-**gestos**-eh con las llaves

[eh eh but before before this is one when is-**gestures**-eh with the keys

NS:

[intentando abrir el

coche

[trying to open the

car

NNS5: eh no abré-**gestos**-pero cuando cosa es seguro es-**risa**

Eh does not open-**gestures**-but when thing is safe-**laugh**

Retrospective comments NNS5: I wanted to say ‘he’s locking’ but I didn’t know how to say ‘lock’ so I was trying to say ‘when the thing is safe’.

The excerpt above illustrates the most common usage of this CS in the NNS-NS dyads, that is, in order to describe whole concepts. Here NNS5 *mimes* the action of ‘locking a car’, as was later confirmed in her comments, a non-linguistic signal which aids her in eliciting help from the NS, who does not provide the exact word needed, but still helps the learner to continue trying to convey the meaning. The data examination also revealed that, on most occasions, the NSs assisted the learners by providing them with the words needed by means of *other-completion* and *guessing*, as shown above. It was also observed that the learners, particularly the lower level, resorted to this CS primarily to describe whole concepts needed in the closed task. This strategic behaviour will be now compared to the data obtained for the NNS-NNS dyad so as to find out any differences in the use of this CS.

Example 7.13.2 As a visual complement

NNS23:[...creo que *el mío son después de esto porque (0.2) ay no puedo explicarlo-**risa**-eh se se abrió↑ se abrieron↑-**gestos-y-gestos**-eh (0.2) bueno cuando se abre un botella de champagne↑ esto
[...I think that mine are after this because (0.2) ay I can’t explain it-laugh-eh it it opened↑ they opened↑ gestures and gestures eh (0.2) well when a bottle of champagne↑ is opened this

NNS24: [si si si yo entiendo eh yo tengo uno...

[yes yes I understand eh I have one...

[el mío son, target word: el mío es/va, mine is/goes]

Retrospective comments NNS23: I’m trying to say about these pictures, I didn’t know the words for like ‘explode’ so I was thinking how to say that ‘the cork had gone up’ I didn’t know the word for ‘cork’ either so I was just confused.

When examining the data from the NNS dyad, it was found that the learners made use of this CS not only to describe whole concepts, as shown above for the other pairing, but also as a visual complement as illustrated in 7.13.2 above. This example shows how NNS23 opts for complementing through *miming* what she is trying to explain by means of various other CSs. As can be seen in her comments, she intended to explain a recurrent problematic action from the closed task, that the ‘cork had gone up’ or ‘exploded’, and finally manages to

communicate by means of *circumlocution* together with *miming*, which is then *confirmed* by her interlocutor.

From a closer examination of the data, the main difference observed in the two dyads have to do with this more specific use of *miming* for describing whole concepts in the NNS-NS dyad, in contrast to the NNS pairings, where this CS was also used as visual complement of other CSs. A possible explanation for this difference seems to point to what has been previously suggested. It appears that the learners do take more advantage of the NSs' L2 knowledge, and thus attempt to elicit, in this case, the specific lexical items needed for the completion of the task, knowing that their interlocutor will be able to provide the specific type of language. This is not only confirmed through the appropriate responses given by the NS interlocutors, but also through the responses provided by the NNS interlocutor. The learners were not able to properly assist their peers, and so primarily opted for just *confirming* their *understanding* of their peer's message, as was also observed for *indirect appeal for help*. Additionally, on the very few occasions where the learners attempted to assist their peers, the words provided were not appropriate as has been observed in some previous examples.

7.2.8.2 Analysis of interactional-paralinguistic CSs employed by the 'giver'

The following mechanisms have to do with the same CSs above examined, but which were employed by the 'giver'. Data from both dyads is presented together with the normalised frequencies of CSs per 1000 words.

Table 7.12 Interactional-paralinguistic CSs employed by the 'giver'

Giver	NNS-NNS	CSs/1000 words	NNS-NS	CSs/1000 words
response rephrase	5	0.65	0	0.0
response restructure	0	0.0	0	0.0
response expand	2	0.26	0	0.0
response confirm	10	1.3	3	0.3
response repeat	2	0.26	0	0.0
confirm comprehension	16	2.1	1	0.1
Totals	35	4.6	4	0.4

Table 7.12 shows the results obtained for the speaker-giver which, as expected, did not produce high CS frequencies because of their role as provider of assistance; a characteristic less likely to be present in the learners' performance. The CSs most employed by the NSs in assistance of the learners' signals of communication problems will be now analysed.

Table 7.12.1 Interactional-paralinguistic CSs used by the NS

Interactional-paralinguistic CSs Giver	NNS-NS
response rephrase	35
response restructure	1
response expand	8
response confirm	35
response repeat	9
confirm comprehension	7
Total	95

The table above shows the CSs employed by the NSs in response to the learners' communication problems triggered by other mechanisms. As can be observed, the CSs most used by the NSs within this main category were *response-rephrase* and *response-confirm*. These are expected results since, because of the non-shared characteristics of the NNS-NS dyad, the learner is likely to find more difficulties to comprehend the NS's message, thus triggering the *rephrasing* of the original meaning. Similarly, the learners' uncertainty about their L2 output, together with their awareness of the NSs' expert knowledge, encourages them to rely on the NS for *confirmation* much more often than when interacting with another learner.

Response rephrase, simply defined as 'rephrasing the trigger' (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:192), was observed as being primarily prompted by the learner's non-understanding signals, such as puzzled looks and/or the repetition of the NS's original message, as illustrated in the following example.

Example 7.14

NS: ...yo cuando llego tarde

...me when I am late

NNS11: [tarde {puzzled look}]

[late

NS: eh cuando no soy puntual eh no llego a la hora indicada

eh when I am not punctual eh I am not on time

NNS11: [ah sí sí

[ah yes yes

Retrospective comments NNS11: (Did you understand that?) yeah I think I got the gist of it.

In the excerpt above, it is clear that NNS11 did not understand what the NS meant by ‘cuando llego tarde’ (‘when I am late’), which is why he *repeats* part of the trigger, probably the word he had most problems with, in addition to his puzzled look. All this prompted the NS to *rephrase* her original message so that the learner was able to understand the meaning. This non-understanding sequence was found to be a recurrent pattern in the use of this CS, thus triggering the NS’s reaction of assisting the learner, in this case through *rephrasing* their message. These communication difficulties imposed by NS – because of the non-shared status with the NNS – help to explain the higher production of this type of non-understanding sequence in this dyad, and so the need for the NS’s to *rephrase* their message.

The following and last mechanism concerns *response confirm*, defined as ‘confirming what the interlocutor [receiver] has said’ (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:192). As was observed in the previous CS, the analysis of the data revealed a recurrent pattern of CS usage, and which is illustrated below.

Example 7.15

NNS22: y eh tengo uno eh *después de abrir el champan
and eh I have one eh after to open the champagne

NS: mhm

NNS22: y eh (0.2) salpicar↑

and eh (0.2) to spill↑

NS: si

NNS22: risa-eh y el (0.2) eh cor↑ cor-cho

laugh-eh and eh (0.2) eh cor↑ coork

NS: [corcho

[cork

[después de abrir, target word: después de que (él) abre, after he opens/after opening]

Retrospective comments NNS22: I didn't know the word for 'spill' so I just thought that would be the action of spilling and there are too many words I didn't know there. I wanted to say like 'the cork like exploded and hit the ceiling and then fell and broke the glass'.

As can be seen in the excerpt above, two instances of the NNS's communicative uncertainty triggered the use of *response-confirm* on the part of the NS. On both occasions, NNS11 resorts to *own-accuracy checks* relying on the NS for some assistance, by means of *confirming* that what she has just said is correct, or at least comprehensible. The influence of the NS interlocutor can be again confirmed in that this speaker's higher linguistic status prompts the learners to rely on them for help much more often than when interacting with other peers. This explains the NS's frequent use of *response-confirm*, as a way of acknowledging that what was said by the NNS is correct or comprehensible, in those instances where the learners seek some confirmation by means of other CSs used as triggers.

The examination of this last category, 'interactional-paralinguistic CSs', has again emphasised the influence of the NS in the use of specific mechanisms. This has been evidenced by the learners' higher frequency of *confirm help/correction* as well as *response-repeat*, mechanisms used to confirm the greater support given by the NS interlocutor. Similarly, the learners' fairly frequent use of *indirect appeal for help* and *mime* in order to trigger this help confirms the relevance of the NS's status with regard to the learners' communication needs. The use of these CSs as triggers, together with the learners' *confirmation* for the help provided, support the fact that the NSs, as experts of the language, are in a much better position – than other NNSs – to assist the learners when experiencing communication problems. Additionally, the learners' awareness of the NS's linguistic superiority prompts them to elicit this assistance by means of various CSs, since they know that the NSs will be able to provide it. All this coupled with the NS's willingness to assist the learners when in need, set the perfect context for these interactional CSs to be employed. Finally, the fact that *response rephrase* and *response confirm* were the CSs most used by the NSs corroborate the effect of this non-shared status. The former mechanism was triggered by the learners' non-understanding signals – because of their difficulties to comprehend the NS's message – through again various CSs, which prompted the NS to *rephrase* their original message and thus aid comprehension. The latter CS, *response confirm*, was also needed in order to help the learner when being uncertain about their own output. Therefore, although these two last mechanisms were more employed by the NSs – who are not the main focus of this study – their use reinforce the fact that the learners, due to the different communication problems experienced particularly when interacting with a NS, need to resort to various CSs in order to elicit their help and be able to continue communicating their message.

7.3 Summary of findings

Hence, the preliminary conclusions proposed for the general results obtained with respect to the interlocutor variable can now be confirmed, and the last more specific research question (2c) can be answered. The linguistic as well as background characteristics of each dyad was observed as greatly affecting certain aspects of the learners' strategic behaviour, particularly, in relation to the NNS-NS dyad. It was found that the type of interlocutor affects primarily the use of those mechanisms which involve some negotiation of meaning between the speakers, that is, those CSs directly related to cooperative 'trouble-shooting exchanges': 'PSM related other-performance problems' and 'interactional-paralinguistic CSs'. In this respect, the qualitative analysis of the data revealed that the non-shared background and linguistic characteristics of the NNS-NS dyad were the main factors affecting the learners' strategic use of the L2, as suggested in the introduction to this chapter. Moreover, the learners' awareness of the NS's linguistic superiority prompted them to resort to some of these CSs in order to elicit their help, which was willingly provided probably because of the NNS's linguistic cooperation (Færch & Kasper, 1983). It was also found that these effects were intensified in most instances by the linguistic difficulties imposed by the closed task and the learners' low proficiency level – subvariables which were observed as intervening with the interlocutor variable. The communication difficulties which these effects imposed on the learners' strategic use of the language were mainly observed through their signals of trouble by means of CSs, such as *own-accuracy checks* – the only mechanism pertaining to own-output PSM – *indirect appeal for help* and *mime*. Through these mechanisms, together with other various CSs used as triggers, the learners were able to signal that they were experiencing problems and were therefore able to elicit the NS's help. The support provided by the NS – and which helped the learners to communicate their meaning – was observed through their *confirmation* of the correctness or comprehensibility of the learners' output, and by *guessing*, *completing* or *repairing* part of their L2 message. In the NNS dyad on the other hand, although their shared status in terms of the familiarity and proficiency aspects also generated the use of CSs, such as *mime* – together with other CSs and indicators – which also served to signal their communication problems, the interlocutor in most cases was not able to provide the assistance required. Thus, they opted for just acknowledging their peer's message in their attempt to avoid a communication breakdown and continue with the conversation. The only exception to this pattern was observed in the learners' use of *other-completion* and *approximation*, which suggests that the less pressure caused by their shared status encouraged them to attempt to assist their peers – although not always appropriately as was particularly evidenced in the use of *approximation*. It was also observed that in this dyad, as the learners were also aware of their similar level of proficiency, it seemed that they do not expect this assistance as much as when with a NS. On the few occasions in which this

help was in fact provided, the word/s supplied were not appropriate, yet their peers still confirmed this assistance, showing again their preference for avoiding a break in their interaction.

CHAPTER 8

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS: INTERACTION OF VARIABLES

8.1 Interaction of variables

As in the previous chapter it was observed that the interlocutor-effects were enhanced by the demands imposed by, primarily, the closed task, and to a lesser extent by the learners' lower level of competence, a possible relationship between two or all three of the variables was suggested. This finding led to the last research question (2d) of this study which will be examined in this chapter. The final aim is to find out which particular CS categories are more or less affected by the possible combination/s of these variables so as to determine any influence on the learners' strategic communication. Due to time constraints, this phenomenon was examined according to the main CS categories, thus from a more general point of view only. Therefore, the following account will begin with an overview of the results obtained from a loglinear analysis (see method chapter, section 3.4.3.) for all the main CS categories, and then continue with the examination of some of these categories. It is worth adding that the loglinear analysis has been carried out from the proficiency level perspective, that is, the level has been used as the main variable or layer for this statistical test.

8.2 Overview of results

The following figure presents a summary of the results obtained from the loglinear analysis carried out for each of the five main categories of CSs. In the first row, the type of interaction between the variables as shown by this statistical analysis is presented. In the following row, the statistically significant association between the variables is given. As can be seen, the only difference in these results involves the category 'PSM related to other-performance problems', which produced a 2-way interaction of variables and thus needed further individual Chi-square tests.

As can be first seen in Figure 8.1 below, the results obtained from the loglinear analysis confirm that in most of the categories, there is a 3-way interaction of the variables, that is to say, the three variables in interaction with one another affect the use of most of the CS categories, the only exception being 'other-performance' CSs, which presents a 2-way interaction. It can also be observed that, in most of the categories, there is a highly significant association between the type of task and the type of interlocutor, variables which are interacting with the level, although in different ways. These associations vary according to the level and the CS category.

Figure 8.1 Overview of results for each CS category: Loglinear analysis

CS categories				
Resource deficit	Time-pressure	Own-output	Other-performance	Interactional-Paralinguistic
<p>3-way interaction Highly significant (.003)</p> <p>For Level A there is a highly significant association between task-interlocutor (.001)</p> <p>NNS ↔ closed T NS ↔ open T</p>	<p>3-way interaction Highly significant (.001)</p> <p>For level B there is a highly significant association between task-interlocutor (.001)</p> <p>NNS ↔ open T NS ↔ closed</p>	<p>3-way interaction Highly significant (.001)</p> <p>For both levels: there is a significant association between task-interlocutor (A: .037/B: .011)</p> <p>A: NNS ↔ closed T NS ↔ open T</p> <p>B: NNS ↔ open T NS ↔ closed T</p>	<p>2-way interaction Highly significant (.001)</p> <p>Task-interlocutor significant (.006)</p> <p>Level-interlocutor significant (.000)</p>	<p>3-way interaction Highly significant (.003)</p> <p>For level A: there is a significant association between task-interlocutor (.008)</p> <p>NNS ↔ closed T NS ↔ open T</p>

From a preliminary view of these results, it can be seen that the interactions of the three variables are in fact affecting most of the learners' use of CSs, thus confirming what was tentatively suggested in chapter 7 for those mechanisms related to the type of interlocutor only (other-performance & interactional-paralinguistic). The following account, therefore, will present an overview of the way these variables interacted with one another in relation to the different CS categories. However, as the effects of each of these variables have already been thoroughly analysed, only the three categories, which appear to show the most interesting interactions will form part of this further examination. In this respect, 'PSM related to L2 resource deficit' will be firstly examined, considering its importance as a category which comprises what may be regarded as the most central areas of CS usage in L2 communication. Secondly, 'PSM related to own-output problems' will be also analysed, as it was the only category which yielded significant results for both levels of proficiency. The last category to examine will be 'PSM related to other-performance', in view of the different type of interaction that this category produced.

8.3 Analysis of results: PSM related to L2 resource deficit

For the CSs within this category, the three-way loglinear analysis produced a final model that retained all effects. The likelihood ratio of this model was $\chi^2(0) = 0, p = 1$. This indicated that the highest-order interaction (the level x task x interlocutor interaction) was highly significant, $\chi^2 = 11.173, p = .001$. The Chi-square tests performed for the levels show that for Level A only there was a highly significant association between the type of task and interlocutor, $\chi^2 = 12.075, p = .001$. This suggests that there is a fundamental difference

between levels: as examination of the observed and expected counts shows (see appendix F1), Level A learners are more likely to make proportionally more use of this type of CS in the closed type of task, and when in interaction with another learner. Conversely, the same learners need to resort more than expected to these CSs in the open task and when with a NS. In order to explain these associations, the data produced in these particular settings will be analysed.

8.3.1 RD CSs - Level A: open task ———→NS

The association between lower level proficiency, NS interlocutor and the open task will be first illustrated and examined, for this purpose it is useful to show a longer extract than has so far been used.

Example 8.1.1 Level A: open task ———→NS ('best holidays')

NS: ¿Cuáles han sido tus mejores vacaciones?

Which are the best holidays you have ever had?

NNS15: eh cuan cuando era niña fui aaa fui Francia con mi con mi familia y eh no nosotros

eh camp camping↑ Camping en Francia y conducir conducir todos de la-gestos-

(0.3) conducir a In Inglaterra↑ En Francia-gestos

eh whe when I was a child I went tooo went France with my with my family and eh

we we eh camp camping↑ camping in France and to drive to drive all of the-

gestures- (0.3) to drive to En England↑ in France-gestures

NS: ah ¿fuiste hasta Francia en coche?

Ah you went to France by car?

NNS15: Si-**risa**

Yes- laugh

NS: oh!

NNS15: hay y hay siete personas en mi familia so en el coche eh en el coche es muy

There are and there are seven people in my family so in the car eh in the car it is

very

NS:

[muy estresante-**risa**

[very stressing-laugh

NNS15: si-**risa**-eh si pero

Yes-laugh-eh but

NS: [y que

[and what

NNS: [pero es dive muy dive era muy divertido

[but it is fu very funny it was very funny

NS: y ¿qué visitasteis en Francia?

And what did you visit in France?

NNS15: en Francia eh xx, xx en Francia

In France eh xx, xx in France

NS: no lo conozco

I don't know it

NNS15: en el en el sur suro suroeste↑ En el suroeste de Francia

In the in the south southe southeast↑ *in the Southeast of France*

NS: ¿fuieste a Disneyland?

Did you go to Disneyland?

NNS15: oh Disneyland si eh por mi eh por mi eh cum eh cumpleaños cuando eh cuando tengo dieci dieciocho años eh fui a fui a-risa-Disneyland-**risa**

Oh Disneyland yes eh for my eh for my eh birth eh birthday when eh when I am eight eighteen years eh I went to I went to-laugh-Disneyland-laugh

NS: ¿otra vez fuiste a Francia?

Did you go to France again?

NNS15: {puzzled look}

NS: ¿fuieste dos veces a Francia?

Did you go to France twice?

NNS15: sí y fui a Disneyland por mi por mi cumpleaños cuando eh dieciocho era muy divertido pero mm

yes and I went to Disneyland for my for my birthday when eh eighteen it was very funny but mm

NS: [muy infantil]

[too childish]

NNS15: si eh tengo...

Yes eh I have...

Considering the characteristics of the different variable effects analysed in chapters 5 to 7, what can be first noticed in the excerpt above relates to the type of L2 speech produced. As this is a free-conversation, and thus open-ended activity, the speakers are free to talk, in this case, about the holidays they liked most, having therefore more linguistic freedom to communicate. This less restricted linguistic environment, however, prompts NNS15 to try to tell the NS – with whom she does not share the same linguistic background – a story in the past tense involving different actions and people, aspects which present more difficulties for this lower level learner to communicate. The different grammatical and lexical problems

encountered in this cognitively demanding task, need therefore to be compensated with the use of the different ‘L2 resource deficit’ mechanisms, such as the ones underlined: grammatical reduction and substitution, lexical tip of the tongue, wrong use of prepositions. What is also noteworthy here is the NS’s role in leading the conversation, by asking the learner questions so as to encourage her to continue elaborating on the topic as well as to confirm or clarify her message. This can be evidenced through the questions and comments made by the NS, which to some extent push the learner to develop more the conversation topic – forcing them to try to explain more complex ideas – which makes them encounter more problems in communicating, thus leading them to resort to more CSs of this type. NNS15 comments on this fact when explaining part of her strategic behaviour:

Retrospective comments NNS15: (what did you want to say after that?) I think I wanted to say ‘there’s a lot of noise, a lot of people’ but I just couldn’t say it and then I looked at the card {with the instructions for the task} and the NS said there’s a lot of stress (was that ok?) yeah. (What happened there when you said ‘divertido’) I think I thought I’d said it wrong the first time so I said it again hoping it was right. I didn’t know if that was right so I repeated it (when you repeated it was it for her?) yeah it was for her to nod me to say that she understands.

These comments confirm the fact that the NNS is prompted to develop more complex ideas not only because of the task demands, but also because of the NS’s questions or comments, as was observed in the excerpts above. It is apparent that NNS15’s intended meaning was not only to try to narrate a story, which happened in the past, but also to explain the way she felt in that situation (‘fue estresante’ (‘it was stressful’), ‘fue divertido’ (‘it was fun’); all aspects which thus trigger the use of these CSs.

In order to further confirm the analysis proposed here, the extract above will be contrasted with an excerpt of the same setting, but with a NNS interlocutor.

Example 8.1.2 Level A: open task ———▶NNS (‘stress and how to cope with it’)

NNS10: ¿si? eh también eh no me gusta cuando tu eh empezar una nuevo trabajo es muy muy difícil para mí porque no sé las cosas eh a hacer y (0.2) uff no sé eh
yes? Eh also eh I don’t like when you eh to start a new job it is very very difficult for me because I don’t know the things eh to do and (0.2) uff don’t know eh

NNS9: **risa** (0.4) sí eh sí ah eh cuando ah ah cuando tiene eh cuando tengo una eh eh cosa a hacer eh por deberes eh eh pienso eh de eso todo el tiempo eh porque ess importante de de lo hacer pero eh eh me gusta ah hacer...

laugh (0.4) yes eh yes ah eh when ah ah when has eh when I have one eh eh thing to do eh for duties eh eh I think eh of that all the time eh because iss important of of do it but eh eh I like ah to do...

NNS10: ¿si? Risa eh también tengo eh eh los exámen exámenes orales es más más más difícil para mí cuando no me gusta hablar en una otra lengua-**risa**-en frente en en una situación formal eh con el profesor-gestos- es escribe-**gestos**-en el (note) no sé-**risa**-y eh ah mee me pongo rojo↑ **gestos-risa**-y eh no me gusta es ho es horrible yes? *Laugh* eh also I have eh eh the oral exam exams is more more more difficult for me when I don't like to speak in an other language *laugh* in front in in a formal situation eh with the teacher *gestures* wri writing *gestures* in the (note) don't know *laugh* and eh ah I blush↑ *gestures-laugh* and eh I don't like it's ho it's horrible

NNS9: sí eh es muy difícil difícil eh te eh pienso que eh es la misma por eh por espa el español pero eh estudio el francés y eh y es eh muy fácil eh para mí es eh difizil es es difícil pero es eh muy fácil eh de español porque eh eh estudiamos el español eh después solamente uno año
yes eh it is very difficult difficult eh you eh I think that eh it is the same for eh for spa the Spanish but eh I study the French and eh and it's eh very easy eh for me it's eh difficult it's it's difficult but it's eh very easy eh of Spanish because eh eh we study the Spanish eh after only one year

NNS10: si-**risa**

Yes laugh

NNS9: eh y es muy difícil de hablar

Eh and it's very difficult to speak

NNS10: eh y también no me gusta...

eh and also I don't like...

In the excerpt above, it can be observed that these lower level learners encounter the problems characteristic of this type of open-ended task, with no visual support; difficulties which are coupled with the learners' lack of L2 resources, as shown in the previous analysis. The NNS interlocutor; however, does not seem to impose the same demands observed when in interaction with a NS. In this NNS dyad, as both speakers lack the necessary L2 knowledge, they are not able to interact as much as when with a NS, whose L2 expertise enables them to prompt that interaction. This aspect can be evidenced in these speakers' turns, which are longer and do not appear to be connected with their interlocutor's previous message, as shown in the underlined interventions, producing a less fluent conversation. As opposed to the excerpt previously analysed, here the issues that the learners attempt to talk about seem to be less varied and more briefly developed. On some other occasions, it was

also observed that the learners' message was not necessarily related to the topic given, and that the learners changed the subject quite frequently, as they were not able to develop one particular subject for too long.

8.3.2 RD CSs - Level A: closed task ———→NNS

I now turn to the interaction between lower level proficiency, closed task and NNS interlocutor as illustrated in the following excerpts.

Example 8.1.3 Level A: closed task ———→NNS

NNS3: eh en mi pictura hay un un hombre eh solo eh ell eh eh esta fumar↑ en ah puede ser en su habitación↑ con una mesa y una ventana, pero pienso queee está (0.2) eh o esto eh es el primero↑ no sé (0.3) y tú?

Eh in my first picture there is a a man eh alone eh hee eh eh is smoke↑ in an could be in his room↑ with a table and a window, but I think thaaat he is (0.2) eh or this eh is the first↑ I don't know (0.3) and you?

NNS4: eh creo que la primera pictura es eh cuando un hombre, solo también, es ah caminar a los eh (0.2) sss-risa-no no recuerda la palabra-risa-pero es una 'steps'-gestos-ah y en eh pero es en eh creo que es eh en una eh restaurante↑ eh y el es eh en un eh un jaqueta↑

Eh I think that the first picture is eh when a man, alone too, is ah walk to the eh (0.2) sss-laugh- I don't don't remember the word-laugh-but is a 'steps'-gestures-ah and in eh but it's in eh I think that it is in a eh restaurant↑ eh and he is eh in a eh in jacket↑

NNS3: [sí

.....

NNS3: pero eh también en mis picturas ah *ha abrido↑ abrido ah unaaa eh botella↑ de de cham *champagne y es es to todo el eh champagne eh eh (0.4) eh (0.2) no sé cómo se dice es como eh (0.2) mucho mucho agua no sé es

but eh also in my pictures ah he has opened↑ opened ah aaa eh bottle↑ of of cham champagne and is is a all the eh champagne eh eh (0.4) eh (0.2) I don't know how to say is like eh (0.2) much much water I don't know

NNS4: ¿dónde en tu picturas?

Where in your pictures?

NNS3: eh no sé, como no no agua pero *champagne {in English} es como

Eh I don't know, like no no wáter but champagne is like

NNS4: [oh vale]

[oh ok]

NNS3: eh mucho champagne eh en ah en desde eh la botella-gestos-(rápido)

Eh much champagne eh in ah in from eh the bottle-gestures-(fast)

NNS4: ah vale

Ah ok

[‘ha abrido’, ‘h’ is pronounced as in English, target word: ‘ha abierto’, ‘he has opened’]

[‘champagne’ is pronounced in English]

These two excerpts form part of the same interaction within this type of setting. As can be observed, most of the effects of this type of task and interlocutor – which were summarised in the previous section – can be here identified. It is clear that the different demands imposed by the three variables in interaction triggered these learners’ use of various ‘L2 resource deficit’ CSs, such as *grammatical reduction*, *foreignising* (‘pictura’/ ‘jaqueta’), *approximation* (‘caminar a los’/ ‘jaqueta’), and *code-switch*, amongst others. These learners’ primary need to compensate for the lexical items required to carry out this closed task is observed as being quite frequent; a factor which is enhanced by their low proficiency. In addition, it can be seen how the NNS interlocutor, as opposed to the NS interlocutor analysed above, is not able to provide the assistance required by their peer. The following comments provided by these learners, help to clarify some of their problems encountered when carrying out this activity and, particularly, when interacting with another NNS.

Retrospective comments from both speakers:

(when you do miming, is that a way of asking for help?) NNS4: no, first in that case it was to help her to show her what I meant but I think I use my hands a lot in English and Spanish and also when I am nervous.

NNS4: I understood when she said ‘desde la botella, muy rápido’, I realised when you opened the bottle of champagne, but before that I wasn’t really sure.

As can be seen, the speakers’ shared background and lower level of competence, together with the visual support they also shared in this particular task, promoted a mutual understanding between the speakers. This can be observed in the underlined comments above, where NNS4 explains that she complemented her output with *miming* not as a way of eliciting help, but to help her peer to understand her message and so aid comprehension. Something similar is evidenced in the last underlined comment, where the same learner confirms that she understood the way NNS3 attempted to communicate something related to the ‘opening of a bottle of champagne’, although NNS3’s message is grammatically reduced

and so not very coherent. This demonstrates that the fact of interacting with another NNS, fostered a more comfortable setting for the learners to try to use their rudimentary L2 language, and thus to resort to more CS usage in order to carry out this linguistically demanding type of task.

Hence, each type of task involved high demands particularly for these **less proficient learners**, triggering the production of 'L2 resource deficit' CSs. Nonetheless, the particular associations which emerged from the statistical analysis seem to highlight some distinct factors in each setting. It seems that the **open task** is more related to the **NS** interlocutor, because of the NS's major leading role, which directs the conversation and guides the learners in what to talk about, but imposes more linguistic demands, in this freer context with no visual support. Thus, in this setting, the learners feel more pressured to try to convey more complex ideas, in their attempt to talk about more personal information – as the free topics of this task required – leading to a higher use of these types of CSs. The **closed task**, on the other hand, is more related to the **NNS** interlocutor because, although the learners are faced with problems related to the language specificity imposed by this task – and by their lack of L2 resources – the visual support provided helps to direct their interaction and guide them in what to talk about. Therefore, the context shared by both speakers together with their equal linguistic status – which also aided comprehension – provided the learners with a better context to try to communicate with the few L2 resources available, which concurrently triggered a frequent use of this type CSs.

8.4 Analysis of results: PSM related to own-output problems

For the CSs within this category, the three-way loglinear analysis produced a final model that retained all effects. The likelihood ratio of this model was $\chi^2(0) = 0, p = 1$. This indicated that the highest-order interaction (the level x task x interlocutor interaction) was highly significant, $\chi^2 = 10.519, p = .001$. The Chi-square tests performed for both levels show that there was a significant association between the type of task and interlocutor for both levels. For Level B there was a highly significant association between the type of task and interlocutor $\chi^2 = 6.502, p = .011$, and also for Level A, although the significance was slightly lower $\chi^2 = 4.347, p = .037$. Therefore, the analysis seems to confirm again the same kind of difference between levels as was found in the previous CS category analysed. Examination of the observed and expected counts (see appendix F2) shows that Level A learners are more likely to make proportionally more use of these CSs in the closed task and in interaction with another NNS. Correspondingly, these learners tend to use more of these CSs than expected in the open task when with a NS. For Level B, however, this association is reversed since the learners seem to use proportionally more of these CSs in the closed task

when interacting with a NS, and in the open task when with a NNS. In order to explain these tendencies in each level, the different associations will be now examined and illustrated.

8.4.1 PSM related to O-O problems – Level A: closed task ———▶NNS

The association between lower level proficiency, NNS interlocutor and the closed task will be first examined and illustrated.

Example 8.2.1 Level A: closed task ———▶NNS

NNS16: eh el primero es un hombre que (0.2) su (subier↑)-gestos-los eh (escalando↑) eh (0.3)

Eh the first one is a man that (0.2) go (goin↑)-gestures-the eh (climbing↑) eh (0.3)

NNS15: escaleras?

Stairs?

NNS16: escaleras si

Stairs yes

NNS15: escaleras eh pero pienso que la pr la eh la primera eh es cuando en un en un-gestos-
eh (0.3) en un habitación↑ en un habitación y es eh eh es solo y es en un silla eh (0.2) pienso que es la primera pero no sé-**risa**

stairs eh but I think that the fi the eh first eh is when in a in a-gestures-eh (0.3) in a room↑ in a room and is eh eh is alone and is in a chair eh (0.2) I think is the first but I don't know-laugh

NNS16: **risa**-eh pienso que en el primera eh el hombre (vol-ve↑) a su (casa↑)

laugh- eh but I think that in the first one eh the man (retur↑) to his (house↑)

NNS15: pero eh pero el mío es eh es en su casa ya...

But eh but the mine is eh is in his house already...

.....

NNS16: [eh tengo una (cuadro↑) cuando el hombre salir↑ su casa↑ También

[eh I have one (picture↑) when the man leave↑ his house↑ too

NNS15: salir si salir pero eh luego eh eh pienso que el hombre eh volve vol volvas↑ Volvas a su casa con el botella y y eh y pone en un mesa y hay decoración-**gestos**-eh

leave yes leave but eh then eh eh I think that the man eh retur re return↑ to his house with the bottle and and eh and put in a table and there are decoration-gestures-eh

NNS16: si

NNS15: pero eh pienso eh número cinco? Eh tiene número cuatro? (0.3){waits for NNS16 to answer}'so' uno, dos, tres and cuatro

but eh I think eh number five? Eh do you have number four? (0.3) {waits for NNS16 to answer} 'so' one, two, three and four

NNS16: [si cuando el hombre volva a su casa
[yes when the man come back to his house

The excerpts above, taken from the same interaction, clearly show the use of ‘own-output problems’ through *own-accuracy checks*. As can be seen, the learners resorted to this CS because of their uncertainty regarding their L2 output. Communication problems which have mainly to do with their limited L2 resources and the specificity of the language imposed by this type of task, which prompt them to check not only lexical items, but also verb forms in order to describe the pictures provided, and which they needed for the completion of the task. The learners’ use of these types of checks demonstrates their reliance on the interlocutor in order to elicit some kind of confirmation, or acknowledgement regarding the comprehension of their L2 output. In other words and as evidenced above, these speakers seek the interlocutor’s confirmation that they have understood the intended meaning, even though they are aware that the language may not be completely appropriate. This, as well as the other aspects observed in the excerpt above, can be confirmed in the following comments.

Retrospective comments from both learners:

NNS15: (why do you say the word out loud, for yourself?) it’s for her to look at me and to see if she can help me say the right one? For her to see if she even understood and if she did, is this right? NNS16: yeah like I got what you’re saying

NNS15: (when you say ‘y pone en un mesa’, is that ok?) mmm I know it’s not right but I think she will understand it.

NNS15: I think I wasn’t sure about the vocab I was using because I didn’t know what ‘sitting’ was and I didn’t know that wasn’t ‘chair’ but that’s the only way I could use.

NNS16: I said ‘cuadro’ but I wasn’t sure I couldn’t remember what it was exactly, I was trying to say ‘he leaves the house’ but I wasn’t sure of how to say in that person so I just said ‘salir’ the verb in its infinitive.

As can be observed, the lower level learners encountered difficulties due to the linguistic specificity demanded by this task, which coupled with their lack of L2 resources, intensified their uncertainty regarding their L2 output. This is corroborated by both speakers above who indicate that they were not sure of the vocabulary that they were producing in order to carry out this task. All this forced them to frequently monitor their message by means of checking that the words they were producing were appropriate or at least comprehensible to their interlocutor. NNS15 refers to this last fact when she talks about the way she was trying to conjugate the verb ‘volver’. She explains that when doing so – and thus resorting to *own-*

accuracy checks – she was in fact eliciting some confirmation from NNS16, so that the word she was attempting to produce was acknowledged as correct or not, and/or to see whether her message was understood. Similarly, when commenting on another problem, NNS15 also indicates that although she knew that the words were not correct, her interlocutor would still understand. This demonstrates what was also already mentioned regarding the learners’ mutual comprehension – which is due to the learners’ shared linguistic status – and awareness of their peers’ fewer L2 resources, and so of their L2 limitations to provide the necessary kind of confirmation.

Hence, this type of mechanism was more used in the closed task and in interaction with a NNS, because of the linguistic specificity demanded by this task, which was increased by the learners’ lower L2 competence. These task and proficiency effects, concurrently, made them rely on their interlocutor for some kind of confirmation, primarily regarding the comprehensibility of their L2 output, as they were aware of their shared lack of L2 resources and so that their peers were less likely to confirm the accuracy, and so correctness of their message. Thus, this dyad’s similar characteristics, together with the visual support also shared in this type of task, generated a context where the assistance expected – triggered by means of *own-accuracy checks* – was not related to a confirmation of their message accuracy, but only of comprehensibility.

8.4.2 PSM related to O-O problems – Level A: open task —————>NS

What follows is the analysis of the second association within Level A.

Example 8.2.2 Level A: open task—————>NS (‘somebody who has influenced you’)

NNS12: mm eh mi mamá es un profesor de francés y alemán y por eso tengo un poco
interés en

*mm eh my mom is a teacher of French and German and for that I have a bit
interested in*

NS: [(es
 [(is

NNS12: [en idiomas↑
 [in languages↑

NS: [sí (interesada)
 [yes (interested)

NNS12: [sí y tam y en en Liverpool yo estudio español con
 geografía↑

[yes and al and in in Liverpool I study Spanish with

Geography↑

NS: mhm

NNS12: es un poco raro ra no raro

It is a bit strar stra no strange

NS: [¿raro?]

[strange?]

NNS12: sí, pero eh me gusta...

Yes, but eh I like it...

.....

NS: y ¿dónde has estado? ¿qué has visitado de España, has estado alguna vez o no?

And where have you been, what have you visited in Spain, have you ever been or not?

NNS16: eh cuando era eh doce años↑ Eh (0.3) fue

Eh when I had eh twelve years↑ eh (0.3) (he) went

NS: [fui

[(I) went

NNS16:

[fui-risa-eh a Bar Barelona

[I went-laugh- eh to Bar Barcelona

NS:

Barcelona

NNS16:

[eh con mi

escuela↑ escuela eh para jugar en en una banda

[eh with my

school↑ school eh to play in in band

NS: ¿para qué?

To what?

NNS16: eh para que eh tocar

Eh to what eh play

NS:

[ah que tocas un instrumento!

[ah you play an instrument!

NNS16:

[una flau-ta↑

[a flu-te↑

NS: sí

NNS16: sí eh con una banda eh

Yes eh with a band eh

NS: [como un concierto o algo de eso...
[like a concert or something like that...

When comparing the association here illustrated with the previous one, the main difference has to do with the speaker's expectations of the interlocutor's assistance, also triggered by means of *own-accuracy checks*. In this type of task, the learners also encountered difficulties to communicate because of their little L2 resources and therefore, as in the closed task, they need to monitor their L2 production. Nevertheless, when interacting with a NS, the learners are aware that they are more likely to obtain some kind of confirmation regarding the appropriateness of their message, a response which was not always possible when interacting with another NNS. In this setting, the NS interlocutor generally replies with a positive response to the learners' appeal, confirming the word used and thus its correctness, which aids communication. The following comments confirm some of the problems encountered by these lower level learners when doing this type of task. They also comment on their interaction with a NS, showing that they are aware of their non-shared status, since both learners indicated that they had noticed the NS's non-understanding of their L2 output. In addition, NNS12 confirms her attempts to elicit some confirmation from the NS.

Retrospective comments NNS12: 'I have like a little bit of interest in languages 'cause she is...' (why the repetition?) 'cause I said it wrong (why is that for?) 'cause I noticed I was wrong and she didn't understand, there was recognition so I just repeated and then waited for her to like nod her head.

Retrospective comments NNS16: I say 'to play in a band' but 'jugar' is not the right verb, 'play' in like play a musical instrument I think is 'tocar', then I realised that that's to play a sport (how did you realise that?) because she didn't understand.

The use of this CS in this second setting, as also observed in the previous category analysed, seems to be again related to the role of the NS as a provider of assistance. In this open-ended activity – with no visual context for the learners to direct their conversation – the learners tended to rely more on the NS in order to check the appropriateness of their L2 output, as they were aware of their interlocutor's linguistic expertise, and so that they were more likely to obtain this kind of assistance. In the closed task, however, even though the NNSs also needed their peer's support – which was evidenced in their use of this CS – the speakers' equal status and the shared visual support provided by the task, prompted the learners to seek confirmation only regarding the comprehensibility of their message, as their shared competence also fostered comprehension between them.

8.4.3 PSM related to O-O problems – Level B: closed task —————>NS

I now turn to the analysis of the associations shown for Level B. The first combination between higher level proficiency, closed task and NS interlocutor will be now illustrated and examined.

Example 8.2.3 Level B, closed task —————>NS

NNS22: y eh tengo uno eh después de abrir el champan

And eh I have one eh after opening the champagne

NS: mhm

NNS22: y eh (0.2) salpicar↑

And eh (0.2) spill↑

NS: sí

NNS22: risa-eh y el (0.2) eh cor↑ cor-cho

Laugh-eh and the (0.2) eh cor↑ cor-k

NS: [corcho]

[cork]

NNS22: corcho si eh está eh no sé la palabra está en en la {apunta al techo}

Cork yes eh is eh I don't know the word is in in the {points to the ceiling}

NS: ¿está en el techo?

Is it in the ceiling?

NNS22: techo si-**risa**-y después eh es eh romper eh el vaso↑ porque el eh eh corcho es eh sobre el

*ceiling yes-**laugh**-and after eh is eh break eh the glass↑ because the eh eh cork is eh on the*

NS: [el vaso]

[the glass]

NNS22: sí-**risa**

*Yes-**laugh***

.....

NNS13: ah ok si y tengo muchos eh dibujos de un otro señor creo que es un otro señor eh porque no está eh vistiendo↑

ah ok yes and I have many eh pictures of an other gentleman I think that it is an other gentleman eh because he does not eh dress↑

NS: [no está]

[he does not]

NNS13: [un traje↑

[a suit↑

NS: ah (no lleva un traje)

Ah (he is not wearing a suit)

NNS13: eh es eh solamente en eh en un abrigo también eh (0.2) con (0.1) un (0.1) sombrero↑

eh he is eh only in eh in a coat also eh (0.2) with (0.1) a (0.1) hat↑

NS: con un sombrero

with a hat

The excerpts above show how this type of task also prompted the more proficient learners to monitor their L2 output with a NS, by means of *lexical own-accuracy checks*. Through this mechanism, the learners attempted to elicit some kind of confirmation from the NS, so as to check the appropriateness of especially the L2 lexical items they needed to describe and narrate their part of the story. As can be seen, on most occasions, this type of assistance was provided by the NS, who possesses the necessary L2 expertise and willingness, or linguistic cooperation (Færch & Kasper, 1983) to do so. The difficulties observed, primarily imposed by the linguistic specificity of this task, can be again corroborated through the following comments, where NNS22 refers to the specific language required, and indicates the problems that she encountered when trying to convey meaning. What is also noteworthy is the learner's communicative desire to try to use the correct words so as to express more accurately what was illustrated in her pictures. This, therefore, makes her encounter more problems to try to communicate her message, and so she attempts to elicit some confirmation from the NS in order to check the appropriateness of her L2 output.

Retrospective comments NNS22: I didn't know the word for 'spill' so I just thought that would be the action of spilling and I didn't know like there's too many words I didn't know there, so I was like not knowing what to say, and I wanted to say like 'the cork ah like exploded and hit the roof and then fell and broke the glass' but there's like four verbs that I didn't know so I was struggling to say anything laugh.

The more appropriate type of language that this learner was attempting to produce can be observed in the first excerpt above. It can be seen that she does manage to get her message across, but not in the way she wanted to, which aimed at describing the whole action of 'the cork exploded and hit the roof and then...'. NNS13's comments below also demonstrate this communicative desire to produce a more correct output to match the pictures she needed to describe/narrate. This is evidenced in the second excerpt above, where she tries to communicate her message in the way she had planned to, which leads her to the use of various CSs, including *lexical own-accuracy checks*. The use of this type of checks, as she

indicates, serves as a way of eliciting some assistance from the NS in order to acknowledge the correctness of the words she is trying to produce.

Retrospective comments NNS13: (why do you hesitate there?) mm ‘solamente en un abrigo’? I was trying to say the difference like ‘he’s not wearing a suit he’s only wearing a coat’... (Any problem with the word ‘sombrero’?) I thought there was a better word to use for a ‘hat’ but I don’t know why, I thought that might not be such a colloquial term for some reason I knew ‘sombrero’ was for a hat but maybe in this context is not really like a hat (why did you use question mark at the end...) for her to say ‘yeah that’s ok’.

From the data and comments here analysed, it can be concluded that this lexis-oriented type of task imposed more linguistic difficulties on these higher level learners, because of the more restricted L2 language that they needed to produce. These difficulties were intensified by their communicative desire – prompted by their slightly more L2 resources available – for producing more appropriate language in order to describe/narrate in a more precise way what their pictures depicted. Under these circumstances, the NS interlocutor appears as the best source of knowledge and provider of help in those instances where the learners elicit such assistance. Thus, even though this task provided a visual support to guide the learners in what to talk about, these learners’ higher communicative expectations to properly communicate what is illustrated in their pictures, makes them resort to this type of CS more, and so rely on the NS in order to confirm the appropriateness of their message.

8.4.4 PSM related to O-O – Level B: open task ———→ NNS

What follows is the analysis of the second association observed for Level B.

Example 8.2.4 Level B: Open task ———→ NNS (‘Somebody who has influenced you’)

NNS21: ...voy a regresar a casa por un un semana ah esta semana ah ah en sábado↑ antes de los exámenes **-risa-** está bien pero ah te echo te echo↑ de meno↑ eh (to miss)↑ **-risa-** eh mi casa **-risa-** y mi ah padrastra también me enfluje enfluje↑ (enfluir) (enflue)
...I am going to return home for a a week ah this week ah ah the Saturday↑ *before the exams laugh, it is ok but ah I miss you I miss you*↑ *miss*↑ *eh* (‘to miss’) *laugh eh home, laugh, and my eh step-father also influe influe*↑ (influence) (enflue)

NNS22: [(()fluir)]

.....

NNS22: y habla español para su trabajo?

And does she speak Spanish for her work?

NNS21: no eh oh probablemente un poco eh porque es una azafata↑

No eh oh probably a little eh because she is an air hostess↑

NNS22: oh! sii

NNS21: si eh (0.2) pero probablemente eh (0.2) ha ol olvi olvidado↑

Yes eh (0.2) but probably eh (0.2) she has for forgo forgotten↑

NNS22: si-risa

NNS21: **risa**-eh mucho pero eh probablemente sabe más que yo-**risa**

Laugh** eh much but eh probably she knows more than me **laugh

(‘best holidays’)

NNS18: [para los para los los parques

[for the for the the parks

NNS17: [sí eh

[yes eh

NNS18: [(()) los parques eh no sé no sé la palabra pero hay eh ah
mucho adrenalino↑ No no no sé la palabra

*[(()) the parks eh I don't know the word but there is eh ah
much adrenaline↑ I don't don't know the word*

NNS17: sí sí

NNS18: sí, es ah es creo que es muy divertida muy divertido↑

Yes, it is ah it is I think is very funny very funny↑

NNS17: si

What can be first noticed in the excerpts above is the more elaborated kind of language that these more proficient learners attempted to convey, which is prompted by the freer linguistic context (with no visual support) given by the topics provided in this task. The communication difficulties, which these learners encounter in this setting, are reflected in their use of *own-accuracy checks* and, on some occasions, *error-repair*. In relation to the type of interlocutor, and considering all the evidence already examined regarding this variable, it seems that again the implicit understanding generated in this dyad – as a result of the learners’ shared linguistic status and their mutual awareness of this equality – leads the learners to expect a different kind of assistance in comparison to their interaction with a NS. In this case, the assistance expected is related to whether their message has been at least comprehended by their peers. The following comments demonstrate the linguistic difficulties faced by these learners in this type of task, and so their attempts to produce a more elaborated output. Furthermore, the mutual understanding more characteristic of this type of dyad is also evidenced.

Retrospective comments NNS22 & NNS21:

NNS22: how do you say it? 'se echo de meno'? NNS21: I had no idea, did you say it after in English? NNS22: yeah NNS21: yeah so that's when I knew what you were talking about, but normally when we've done that before and you've said something that we didn't really know like whether it was correct...I still understand.

NNS22: again it was like I don't know what the verb is for 'influence', so I was trying to remember what you had said. NNS21: yeah, because that form is not with a 'j', 'influje'? you were probably...but I knew what you were talking about laugh.

NNS21: (Were you expecting some help?) NNS21: yeah I thought she would know what I was talking about so I just mumbled it out-laugh

From these comments, it can be further observed how the learners' efforts to communicate more personal information, demanded by the type of task, pushes them to attempt to elaborate more in order to convey what they want to. This leads them to encounter more problems and to feel more uncertain about their L2 output, which prompts them to check, as already mentioned, the comprehensibility of their message. From the excerpts above, it is clear that the NNS interlocutors who, although possessing slightly more L2 resources, were still not able to provide confirmation regarding the correctness of their peers' message. Similarly, it can be again confirmed, particularly through NNS21's last comment, that when resorting to this CS in this context, the speakers do not expect the same kind of support as when with a NS. These learners' comments point again to this mutual and implicit understanding, which has been observed as characteristic of this type of dyad. NNS21 indicates that despite the problems they found to try to communicate – which make them produce L2 speech which they were aware might be inappropriate – they are still able to understand each other. The following comments from NNS18 also demonstrate her desire to produce a more complex language, which seems to make her monitor her message quite often by means of *own-accuracy checks*, as evidenced in the excerpt above.

Retrospective comments NNS18: I was trying to say 'theme parks', but instead just got 'los parques' (that's why you say 'no sé la palabra' later?) NNS18: yeah for 'theme'. Then I didn't know the word for 'adrenaline', so I just made it sound Spanish. (Why did you repeat the word 'divertido'?) I think I was trying to use a different word first I think I was gonna go for 'exciting' but I forgot the word so I just went for 'funny' instead.

NNS18 also aimed at producing a more elaborated language in order to try to convey what she had planned: 'theme parks', 'adrenaline', 'exciting'. This kind of language pushed her to try to elicit some confirmation from her peer, so as to check whether her message was at

least comprehensible; a strategic behaviour which, as observed in the second excerpt above, produced the expected response, since her peer showed understanding through his positive reply. Thus, it seems that the mutual understanding that these learners' similar status generates, aids their communication and so when trying to elicit their peer's help – reflected in their use of this CS – they do not expect the same kind of assistance as when with a more expert interlocutor, as it is the NS. In this setting, the learners resort to *own-accuracy checks*, in order to check comprehensibility over accuracy, as they are aware of their similar proficiency level.

Hence, the fact that the **Level B** learners made more frequent use of this type of CS in the **open task** with a **NNS** appears to be related first to the linguistic freedom provided by this activity. The task effects prompted these more competent learners to attempt to elaborate more and so encounter more problems to communicate. Concurrently, these more complex ideas made them feel uncertain about their L2 speech, leading them to monitor their message and so to try to elicit some confirmation from the NNS, by means of *own-accuracy checks*. In this context, these learners' equal status made the speakers' expectations of such assistance less demanding than when with a NS. That is, in this dyad the learners did not seek confirmation of their message accuracy, but comprehensibility, as they were aware of their mutual level of proficiency; a shared characteristic which has also been observed as promoting an implicit understanding between the speakers. In the previous setting on the other hand, because of the **Level B** learners' high communicative expectations, in order to try to describe/narrate accurately the pictures they were provided in the **closed task** – and which prompted them to resort to this CS – the **NS** interlocutor is seen as a better source of knowledge for the assistance required. The learners' awareness of the interlocutor's expertise and cooperation made them, therefore, expect some kind of confirmation regarding the correctness of their L2 speech.

8.5 Analysis of results: PSM related to O-P problems

The 3-way loglinear analysis for these types of CSs produced a final model that retained the level x interlocutor and task x interlocutor interactions. The likelihood ratio of this model was $\chi^2(2) = 4.996, p = 0.82^1$. In order to interpret these two interactions, each one will be

¹In order to interpret this data, Field (2009:723) suggests 'collapsing the data'. For this, the following conditions – which are present in these results – should be met: '(1) the highest-order interaction should be non-significant; and (2) at least one of the lower-order interaction terms involving the variable to be deleted should be non-significant'. The data in this case can therefore be collapsed, across the proficiency variable, and this 2-way interaction can be analysed by means of a Chi-square test on 'level x interlocutor and task x interlocutor', ignoring 'task and level' respectively. Then to interpret the Chi-square results, Field suggests calculating some odds ratios as shown in the present analysis.

first examined by means of individual Chi-square tests and subsequent odds ratio analyses. The results for the first interaction are presented below.

8.5.1 Results for level x interlocutor interaction

The level x interlocutor interaction was highly significant $\chi^2(1) = 14.004, p = .000$. To interpret this, the odds ratio will be calculated from the figures below. According to Field (2009), we can calculate the odds that Level A learners used more CSs when with a NS than with a NNS, by dividing the number of CSs that the lower level produced with a NS by the number of CSs produced by the higher level when with a NS (as shown below: 49/20). The same calculation is then applied for the other setting involving the NNS. Thus, the odds of outcome 1 v/s outcome 2 are the probability (frequency) of outcome 1 divided by the probability (frequency) of outcome 2.

Table 8.1 Results for the level x interlocutor interaction

			Type of interlocutor		Total
			NNS	NS	
Proficiency level	A	count	17	49	66
		expected count	26.7	39.3	66.0
		% of total	14.7%	42.2%	56.9%
		Count	30	20	50
	B	Expected count	20.3	29.7	50.0
		% of total	25.9%	17.2%	43.1%
Total		Count	47	69	116
		Expected count	47.0	69.0	116.0
		% of total	40.5%	59.5%	100.0%

From table 8.1 it can be observed that, from the perspective of the lower proficiency level subjects, the odds that the NS will influence this type of CSs were $49/20 = 2.45$. However, the odds that the NNS will affect the use of these CSs were $17/30 = 0.57$; thus, the odds ratio is $2.45/0.57 = 4.3$. This means that the odds that the **lower level proficiency** will elicit more of these CSs are 4.3 times greater with a NS than with a NNS.

8.5.2 Results for task x interlocutor interaction

For the task x interlocutor interaction, the results were also significant $\chi^2(1) = 7.571, p = .006$. To interpret this, the odds ratio will be calculated according to the following results.

Table 8.2 Results for task x interlocutor interaction

		Type of interlocutor		total	
		NNS	NS		
Proficiency level	A	count	35	34	69
		expected count	28.0	41.0	69.0
		% of total	30.2%	29.3%	59.5%
		Count	12	35	47
	B	Expected count	19.0	28.0	47.0
		% of total	10.3%	30.2%	40.5%
		Count	47	69	116
	Total	Expected count	47.0	69.0	116.0
		% of total	40.5%	59.5%	100.0%

Table 8.2 shows that, from the perspective of the open task, the odds that the NS will influence this type of CSs were $35/34 = 1.03$, and the odds that the NNS will influence these CSs were $12/35 = 0.34$. Therefore, the odds ratio is $1.03/0.34 = 3.0$, which means that the odds that the **NS** will influence this type of CSs are 3.0 times greater in the **open task** than in the closed task.

It is worth adding that the figures obtained for these combinations are quite low as observed in both tables above. This is due to this type of CSs, which are primarily triggered by the interlocutor's communication problems, that is to say, comprehension problems mostly generated by the NS's speech and evidenced in the learners' use of CSs such as *asking for repetition/clarification/confirmation, expressing non-understanding, feigning understanding*. A further factor, in many cases, had to do with the NS providing help through CSs such as, *guessing, other-repair and other-completion* – CSs which are not included in this account – and which were not much employed by the NNS. This explains the small number of CSs as they only show those mechanisms used by the learner-receivers when in interaction with a NS, and by the learner-givers when with another NNS. As can be seen in the results obtained from the loglinear analysis, the present category shows a different outcome from the previous CS categories, where it was observed that the three variables were producing effects in interaction with one another (level x task x interlocutor). The types of interactions shown in the use of these meaning negotiation CSs, specifically, the particular combinations which emerged from the odds ratio analysis (NS – Level A / NS – open task), seem to confirm what was suggested in chapter 7. It was observed that as this category and the interactional-paralinguistic CSs were more oriented to the interlocutor – since the solution of the speaker-receivers' problems depend on the speakers' mutual negotiation of meaning – these CSs were mainly influenced by the NS. The particular combinations obtained for this

category may be tentatively explained, particularly for NS – Level A, by taking into account first the more complex L2 speech produced by the NS, together with the lack of L2 resources characteristic of the lower level learners, which intensified the NNS's difficulties not only to communicate, but especially to comprehend their interlocutor's message, leading them to the use of some of the CSs mentioned above. The second combination (NS – open task) may be related to the effects of this open-ended type of task – which were thoroughly analysed in chapter 6 as well as in the present section – whose freer linguistic context may have prompted the NS to communicate more and more elaborated language, thus presenting more difficulties for the learners to comprehend their message. An additional factor to consider, when there was a problem of comprehension in both of these combinations, has to do with the NNS's awareness of the NS's ability to provide assistance, and so of the learners' tendency to elicit this help. This was less likely to occur with a NNS interlocutor, since their similar level of proficiency aided comprehension between the speakers and, at the same time, discouraged the learners from *expressing their non-understanding* in their attempt to avoid a break in their communication.

8.5.3 Analysis of level x interlocutor interaction

In order to corroborate these tentative hypotheses, some of the learners' retrospective comments regarding their interaction with a NS will be analysed. The first combination of **lower level proficiency** and **NS** will be now examined.

As has already been observed, the NS interlocutor did not only benefit these learners in general, in that they were perceived as a source of L2 knowledge, but also imposed more difficulties on them. These difficulties were found as being related to the ways in which the NS pushed the learners to elaborate more on their ideas in order to clarify their L2 output. Moreover, the more complex input provided by the NS's speech also generated comprehension problems, which were usually solved by the learners' use of some of the CSs which comprise this category, such as *asking for repetition/ clarification* or *confirmation*, *expressing non-understanding* or simply *feigning understanding*. The following comments support the rationale suggested above.

NNS15A: I didn't understand this part I think there's one verb she says I didn't understand what it was about, and you can see it in a minute, I think I thought I had understood, but then when she asked me I was like 'oh no actually I don't understand what you're saying'. Then I didn't understand 'boroto?' but I understood 'ruidoso' and that's why my look there **laugh**. (you asked her to repeat here) I didn't understand her at the time, but when she said it again I understood because I had to think in my head what 'vez' was and then I knew I understood.

it just took me longer to process it. Then I was trying to think for the word for ‘we walked so we walked around everywhere’ I just leave it because I can’t think what it is, I know she was saying something about a car but, I just went along with it because I didn’t know how to say what I wanted to say (that you walked?) yeah **laugh**.

These first comments further confirm the kinds of comprehension problems that these learners found, primarily because of the more complex language produced by the NS, a difficulty which was intensified by these learners’ lower proficiency level. Because of this, the NNSs tried to focus on understanding the main ideas since, as they indicated, it was difficult for them to comprehend all the words the NS used. As can be seen above, these communication problems were normally signalled through the learners’ facial expressions or the eye contact made with the NS in order to, for example, *express* their *non-understanding*, which prompted the NS to rephrase the message or used similar words. On other occasions, as NNS15A also indicates, the learner’s *request for repetition* of the NS’s message was also necessary, as they needed more time for the processing of the information given. Additionally, and as evidenced in this learner’s last underlined comments – because of these comprehension problems together with their lack of L2 resources – she opted for *feigning understanding* so as to maintain the conversation. The following comments provide additional evidence regarding these learners’ interaction with a NS.

NNS10A: I was trying to say like ‘informal clothes’ like ‘he’s not wearing normal clothes’ but I just said ‘no formal’ like trying to think of a way to say it. (And she said ‘the gala’) like normal clothes? Is that? (no but you said ‘yes’) what did she say? (very formal clothes) **oh laugh** I thought she had said ‘regala’ so I thought it was going to be like ‘regular’ **laugh** so that probably confused her **laugh** (so you thought you understood?) **yeah** but I didn’t. (why didn’t you ask for repetition?) **laugh** ‘cause I thought I got the most important bit, and probably also because of not knowing her, you know like being like sorry ‘what did you say’ you know laugh (so how about with another NNS?) well maybe here just worrying about what I am saying more, and listen to what they say and understand little bits, and trying to think of what I am gonna say and don’t get caught up on what they’ve said. I think it’s like I just wanna get what I have to say out of the way **laugh**.

NNS11A: I understand more now when watching the video (you didn’t want to say that you didn’t understand?) well I got the gist but I didn’t understand the actual words, now I do. (Why did you say there ‘lo siento’?) Just apologising for my Spanish, I was very conscious at this point because it got better as we went on, I was a bit nervous.

NNS12A: I was also thinking I wondered what she thinks my level of Spanish was, if it was better or worse than NNS11 laugh. (Did you understand the second time? After you asked what she meant) yeah I kind of understood the first time, but didn't really get it...

The comments above add evidence in relation to these learners' comprehension problems as being enhanced by the speakers' non-shared status. NNS10A, for example, speaks about her *feigning understanding* regarding the word 'gala', which she thought it corresponded with the word she was trying to convey, but as she found out later, it did not; a mistake which, as she indicates, might have caused even further comprehension problems for both speakers. The same CS usage can be evidenced in NNS11A' comments, where he indicates that he understood the NS's message more when watching the video of their interaction in the post-interview, thus implying that he also *feigned understanding* when communicating with a NS. Additionally, it can be observed how NNS12A needs to *ask for clarification* in order to fully comprehend the NS's message. It is therefore evident that this dyad's unequal status – coupled with these learners' lower competence – enhances their difficulties to understand the more complex speech produced by the NS. It is also noteworthy that the learners' awareness and concern regarding this non-shared status with this type of interlocutor intensifies the problems encountered. It can be observed that these learners are conscious about their low level of Spanish, and so feel more uncomfortable when interacting with a NS, which thus imposes an additional demand on them. This is clearly substantiated in NNS10A's comments, where she describes all the different processes which she needs to pay attention to when with a NS, and particularly in order to comprehend their message and so maintain the conversation.

Thus, the NS's more complex language, together with the non-shared status – characteristics which were exacerbated by the learners' lower competence – triggered the learners' use of these CSs in their attempt to achieve a general or superficial understanding of their interlocutor's message, and be able to maintain the conversation.

8.5.4 Analysis of task x interlocutor interaction

I now turn to the analysis of the combination **NS** interlocutor and **open task**, which was observed for the task x interlocutor interaction.

One of the first issues which can be observed in the following comments concerns the demands of this type of task. The freer linguistic context provided by this open-ended task – and which imposed not only linguistic but also cognitive difficulties – produced even more problems for most learners to try to maintain the communication, particularly with a NS.

Thus, on some occasions, the NNS did not only have problems to understand the NS's speech, but also to think of what to say because of the topic provided, as shown in the comments below. Concurrently, this less restricted language context seems to have encouraged the NS to speak more freely about the given topic – an aspect which was reflected in the varied and more complex language observed in this task – hence generating more difficulties for the learners to comprehend their message. In this respect, the comments below demonstrate the learners' strategic use of the language in order to cope with these comprehension problems. NNS11A explains that because of his non-understanding – which was signalled by his puzzled look (as observed in the video) – the NS opted for rephrasing her output, but instead of clarifying the meaning it caused him more troubles to comprehend. In NNS15A's comments, on the other hand, it can be observed how the learner had to resort to *feigning understanding* when not comprehending the NS's question.

NNS11A: I was just trying to think of some conversation laugh. There I was just using what she's saying actually laugh, and then she tried to change what she had said, because she realised I didn't understand, and I think she tried to change what she was saying but it was more difficult...

NNS15A: I didn't have much vocab so I couldn't say 'I get stressed', even in English I can't think of anything I get stressed about, so it was harder because I didn't know what to talk about. I didn't know that's what she was asking; I thought she had asked if I'd been to Spain.

The comments below add further evidence to the demands imposed by the NS interlocutor, and which prompted the learners to use this type of CSs. It is clear that in this task, in particular, the learners had more troubles to understand the NS, because of their more varied and more complex language, in addition to their fast-paced speech, as NNS16A mentions. It is also apparent, especially through NNS4A's comments, that on some occasions, the learners opted for *feigning understanding* instead of *asking for repetition* or *clarification*, in an attempt to maintain the conversation, and also because of politeness, as they did not want to interrupt the flow of the interaction.

NNS16A: (did you understand there?) no laugh I didn't understand anything she's going too fast. (is that what you wanted to say?) Yeah but again I wasn't sure if that was what she was asking me so I was a bit hesitant.

NNS4A: I don't think I understood that, you can see that I asked him to repeat that. I don't know what that means so I must be pretending. Then, I don't think I understood him, you

can see it in my face **laugh** (Why don't you generally say so?) I think it was probably because I was nervous and I thought we've gone too far and he's said too much for me to say I don't understand. And it's just politeness of me nodding and...I think I understood the whole word but together it's a bit too much.

The results obtained for this category – a two-way interaction of level x interlocutor and task x interlocutor – can thus be confirmed in that they emphasise one variable in particular: the NS interlocutor. As shown in the comments above, all the learners pointed to the same kind of comprehension problems, which prompted their use of CSs such as, *asking for repetition/clarification*, *expressing non-understanding* and *feigning understanding*. Their incomplete understanding, on most occasions, of the NS's output was the main difficulty experienced by most learners, comprehension problems which were intensified by the lower level of proficiency and by the demands of the open task.

8.6 Summary of findings

Hence, the last specific question (2d) can be answered: the learners' CS usage is affected by the interaction of the distinct variables, although in different ways, since it depends on the type of CSs employed by the learners. Some CSs, such as RD and O-O are influenced by the three variables in conjunction producing different settings for strategic communication, where the effects of each variable are intensified by each other. In the O-O CSs, however, this strategic setting was more marked by the NS effects, which particularly influenced the learners' strategic use of *own-accuracy checks*. The expectation of the assistance sought – by means of this CS – depended on the type of interlocutor and their shared/non-shared status: the NS being the one able to confirm the accuracy of the learners' L2, whereas the NNS was only able to confirm comprehension. Finally, in the OP CSs, where there was a 2-way interaction of the variables, the main effects were also produced by the NS interlocutor through the language demands imposed, which were then intensified by the lower level proficiency and the open task effects.

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

9.1 Final conclusions

This final chapter draws conclusions from the main findings in this study and acknowledges the limitations of this research. It also presents some implications for language learning and teaching together with some suggestions for further research within this field of enquiry. The purpose of this research was to explore the way English speakers learners of Spanish communicate face-to-face with other learners and native speakers of Spanish by means of CSs. For this, three distinct variables (proficiency level, type of task, type of interlocutor) and their possible effects on these learners' strategic use of the language were examined; thus NNS-NNS and NNS-NS dyads belonging to two proficiency levels were observed when carrying out two different tasks. Although the literature in this field is quite extensive, few studies have, like this one, considered these three variables in conjunction, and particularly, CSs used in an interactional context – with a different interlocutor and in face-to-face interactions – and fewer studies have considered Spanish as an L2 under these research conditions. Hence, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the CSs used by English learners of Spanish when interacting face-to-face with other learners and native speakers?
2. How do different variables affect the learners' use of CSs?
 - 2a. To what extent does the proficiency level affect the CS usage?
 - 2b. Do the CSs used vary in accordance to the type of task performed?
 - 2c. Does the type of interlocutor (NS-NNS) influence the CS use?
 - 2d. Is the CS usage affected by the interaction of these variables?

What follows presents the main conclusions drawn from this study in relation to each of these research questions.

9.2 Summary of findings: General research question

What are the CSs used by English learners of Spanish when interacting face-to-face with other learners and native speakers?

From the main results obtained, it was observed that at the most general level of analysis, the learners in this study favoured the use of 'PSM related to L2 resource deficit' and 'PSM related to processing time pressure'; the least used CS category was 'PSM related to other-performance problems'. For the most used CSs, and from the subsequent and more detailed analysis of each variable, it was possible to conclude that the learners in general had to resort more often to RD PSM because of their fewer resources in the target language. The primary lexical and grammar-related problems that the learners encountered made them rely on this

type of mechanism more often as well as on PSM related to PTP. These latter stalling mechanisms were useful for the learners in order to gain time to think of the words needed and thus compensate for the lexical/grammatical gaps faced in Spanish L2 communication. PSM related to OP problems, on the other hand, were less often used as these CSs are triggered by problems with the interlocutor's speech. Hence, this CS use primarily reflects the comprehension problems encountered by the learners when interacting with a different interlocutor and when carrying out a different task. The lower frequency of CSs therefore seemed to be related to the focus of these mechanisms which is on 'speech perception' over 'speech production' processes, as opposed to most of the other CS categories which were related to both types of processes.

9.3 Specific research questions: How do different variables affect the learners' use of CSs?

This second more specific question aimed at exploring the effects of each of the variables under examination; these findings will be summarised in the following section.

9.3.1 To what extent does the proficiency level affect the CS usage?

The learners' proficiency levels did affect their strategic use of the language, which was reflected in a differentiated use of CSs by each group. The primary and more general distinction had to do with a more frequent use of CSs on the part of the less proficient learners. This finding is consonant with most studies which have found that lower levels, because of their lack of L2 resources, encounter more problem-related instances in communication, and thus need to resort to CSs more often than higher levels. The second and more specific finding entails the types of problem that each level attempted to solve, and which corresponded to those problematic instances considered more salient for each proficiency level. There was a more frequent use of lexical CSs on the part of the lower level learners, and they showed a preference for communicating their message through primarily content words omitting grammatical words. The higher level learners, on the other hand, focused relatively more on tackling grammar-related problems, and specifically, problematic instances which may be considered more complex, an issue which concurrently points to the third finding observed in relation to the proficiency variable. This last finding showed that, as opposed to the most proficient learners –who tried to cope with more complex types of grammar-related problems such as verb inflections – the less competent subjects were more prone to dealing with less complex problems, such as instances related to the use of prepositions and gender.

9.3.2 Do the CSs used vary in accordance to the type of task performed?

A second specific conclusion reached from findings in this study relates to the task-effects on the learners' CS usage. The quantitative and more general analysis demonstrated a more frequent CS use generated by the jigsaw task, which was due to the more restricted and specific language required by this closed task, and which demanded from the learners to try to convey these items necessary to complete the activity, thus forcing them to resort to a more strategic use of the L2. The free-conversation task, in contrast, demanded more language production, as its freer linguistic context prompted the learners to invest more in the conversation by trying to convey more complex concepts, which also pushed them to the use of CSs, although slightly less frequently than in the closed task. In addition, the more detailed qualitative examination of results indicated again a distinction of lexis-grammar between the two tasks. The closed, more linguistically restricted, task triggered more lexis-related problems, hence a more frequent use of lexical as well as stalling mechanisms, amongst other CSs, were necessary to communicate the vocabulary needed. On the other hand, the open, linguistically freer, activity resulted in a more grammar-oriented and cognitively demanding task. This was due to the learners' higher communicative desire to attempt to elaborate more on the topics given, which prompted them to encounter slightly more grammar-related problems.

9.3.3 Does the type of interlocutor (NS-NNS) influence the CS use?

Another important outcome of this study entailed the effects of a different type of interlocutor on the learners' L2 strategic communication. In this respect, the NS interlocutor primarily influenced the learners' CS usage because of their non-shared linguistic status. The NS's linguistic expertise – and the NNS's awareness of this inequality together with the NS's linguistic cooperation – prompted the learners to resort to certain CSs which demanded some kind of assistance on the part of the interlocutor, support which was more likely to be provided by the NS. Similarly, the NNS interlocutor also produced the use of other specific mechanisms, but this time the effects were mostly reflected in the interlocutor's linguistic inability to assist their peers. This was due to their shared linguistic status, which promoted a mutual understanding between the speakers even of incorrect utterances. In addition, they were conscious of their similar lack of L2 resources, and so did not expect this assistance as much as when with a NS. Furthermore, when this help was provided, the support given was generally not appropriate, yet their peers acknowledged it so as to avoid a break in their communication. It is also noteworthy that in the examination of this variable – which mainly affected the use of other-performance and interactional CSs – as the NS's main role was that of provider of assistance, it was found that they also needed to resort to CSs quite frequently. Nonetheless, as that was not the focus of the present study, the analysis concentrated on the

learners' CSs used as triggers for the NS's strategic behaviour. This more detailed examination also confirmed the importance of the NS interlocutor not only as a provider of help, but also as a trigger of comprehension problems, which then pushed the learners to stretch their resources – in order to clarify their message – and so to use their strategic means of communication. Finally, it was also observed that in various cases the interlocutor-effects were enhanced by the demands imposed by, primarily, the closed task, and to a lesser extent by the learners' lower level of competence. This latter finding led to the last research question (2d) of this study whose main results are presented below.

9.3.4 Is the CS usage affected by the interaction of the three variables under examination?

One of the last and perhaps most interesting findings has to do with what was tentatively suggested from the results obtained for the interlocutor variable, and which led to this last research question. The statistical test applied made it possible to confirm the interaction of the variables with one another as affecting the learners' use of specific CS categories. This test also allowed the identification of the associations which contributed more to the significance of each type of interaction for each CS category. In addition, the qualitative analysis of these associations demonstrated more clearly how the different effects of each variable were intensified by one another influencing in conjunction the learners' strategic behaviour. In the RD category, it was observed that the learners' lower level of proficiency was intensified by the demands of each task. This made them resort to a proportionally higher use of these CSs with the NS in the open task because of the freer linguistic context that this task demanded, for which they needed some guidance to direct their conversation. In the closed task, on the other hand, the same level learners had to also rely more on these CSs but with a NNS as the visuals shared in this task helped them to guide their interaction. In the O-O category, where the associations were significant for both levels, the effects of each variable were enhanced by the type of interlocutor. This was demonstrated by the learners' specific use of *own-accuracy checks* used to either check the accuracy of their output or the understanding of their message. The former was more related to the NS who was more likely to provide the assistance needed, whereas the latter was more related to the NNS. Finally in the OP CSs – only category which produced a 2-way interaction – the main effects were produced by the NS. The language demands imposed by this interlocutor were increased by the learners' lower level of competence, and the difficulties posed by the open task, respectively.

9.4 Limitations of the study

Some limitations of this investigation will be acknowledged in this section. They are primarily related to some practical considerations with regard to the research methodology.

The first limitation concerns the need for analysing learners' performance whose proficiency levels are more differentiated. Although in the present study the two groups did show some distinct differences, the results obtained particularly in relation to the proficiency variable could have been more strongly substantiated. This might have resulted in even more marked linguistic distinctions between groups. More advanced learners, such as those students attending the last year of their language course – after their gap year in a Spanish speaking country – might be considered for future research. Thus, the L2 performance of these advanced learners might be more easily contrasted with beginner levels, yielding more marked differences.

Another limitation has to do with the NSs' regional accents and their possible effects on the learners' strategic communication. Although this aspect of the situational context was not a variable considered in this study – as it is expected that language learners are usually exposed to various listening difficulties such as this one – their possible impact on the learners' linguistic behaviour should be taken into account in future studies.

A final drawback of the study is also related to the situational context and the way in which the data was elicited. The laboratory setting used for the data collection – necessary for a more accurate elicitation of this type of mechanisms – might have influenced the learners' linguistic behaviour, as it is considered an unnatural or artificial setting. However, as explained in the methods chapter (p.46), this was minimised as far as possible by creating a friendly and comfortable environment previous to the learners' participation, and also by not including the first few minutes of recording in the data analysis. It should be added that, although the learners expressed their nervousness regarding the video camera, they also commented on how they had forgotten it once they started carrying out the activity, a fact which was noticeable in the videos of them performing the tasks.

9.5 Implications for L2 teaching and language learning

This study gives several implications regarding the use of these CSs for teaching and learning purposes in the L2 classroom.

One of the first pedagogical implications which emerge from this study concerns the learners' training in the use of CSs. Although there was certain controversy regarding the

teaching of CSs during 1980's, on the grounds that there is no need to teach CSs since learners already possess strategic means of communicating in their L1 (see Dörnyei, 1995 for details), later studies have advocated the benefits of direct CS use training (Dörnyei, 1995; Manchón, 2000; Faucette, 2001; Lam, 2006, 2010). They argue that instruction in the use of these strategies may develop learners' autonomy in that they may more efficiently manage their own L2 resources and be able to tackle problematic situations arising not only in the classroom but also in the real world (Manchón, 2000; Faucette, 2001). In view of this, the video/audio recorded data available in this study of L2 learners communicating with other NNSs and NSs via CSs, could serve as a starting point to be used in CS training, a teaching resource suggested by Dörnyei (1995) as way of 'providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs' (p.63). By doing this, those CSs which may be considered more effective in L2 communication can be used as examples for learners to analyse other L2 learners' use of CSs, become aware of their benefits, and be able to employ them.

From the previous point regarding the debate on a direct instruction of these CSs, the benefits for tutors and students can be clearly drawn. In my opinion these mechanisms should be overtly taught within the L2 classroom as they may greatly favour the students' oral production skills. This type of instruction may benefit particularly lower levels, in that they can gain more confidence when using the language, and feel more encouraged to try to make use of their restricted L2 resources, thus developing their strategic communication. They might not only feel more prepared to cope with the problems arising in communication, but this CS usage might also help them in their interlanguage transition to the use of more complex linguistic structures. The higher levels may also benefit from this instruction, in that they can make more efficient use of their available resources by strengthening the strategies already used, and learn other ways of how to face more complex problems encountered in communication. In addition, learners at all levels may benefit particularly from the interactional type of CSs, in that through a collaborative strategic communication both speakers can help each other to get their message across, thus contributing to each other's learning. Furthermore, from the teachers' point of view, I think that by training students in the use of CSs tutors may be more likely to help them to develop fluency in the target language as well as make them more aware of their own L2 performance, thus leading them to monitoring their own learning.

A final implication can be drawn in relation to CSs and their possible aid to L2 learning. This issue was also observed in the present research, albeit indirectly, as the learners' strategic use of the language demonstrated their focus on certain aspects of L2 communication. It was observed that the lower level focused more on attempting to solve

lexis-related instances over grammar, and in those instances where they had to cope with grammar-related problems, they were primarily concerned about solving less complex problems, such as instances related to gender and prepositions. The higher level, in contrast, seemed to favour the solution of grammar-related situations, particularly regarding verb inflections, which suggested their orientation towards tackling more complex problems. The thorough qualitative examination of the data seemed to indicate that these learners' CS usage reflected their learning stages which, as has also been found by research in L2 development (Guntermann, 1992a,b; Myles, 2005; Marsden & David, 2008; Dussias, 2003), tends to progress from the use of primarily lexical items, less complex, and reduced – less coherent – structures, to more complex structures. Although this distinction was not quantitatively marked, it supports existing evidence relating to L2 development and, therefore, suggests possible benefits of CS usage in L2 learning processes. For this purpose, longitudinal studies may be more beneficial in order to investigate CS usage in time, according to different as well as more marked proficiency levels. This type of research has proven to be advantageous in this field particularly by the work carried out by Lafford (2004) who investigated CS use through time, but in relation to the students' learning context. She analysed the output of English L2 Spanish learners within a classroom environment in the United States as opposed to their counterparts studying and using the L2 in a Spanish speaking country. Although she analysed the learners' output elicited by an oral interview conducted by a NS – and not from different dyads' interactions – and from a learning context perspective, the results obtained showed interesting findings. The comparison of students' CS usage prior and after their study term (one semester) in each context demonstrated clear distinctions between groups: lower use of CSs and a focus on meaning on the part of study abroad learners, and an increased number of CSs and a focus on form by those students at home. A longitudinal study such as this one, but with similar research objectives as the present one may therefore help to confirm and evidence more clearly the lexis-grammar distinction which was observed here.

8.6 Suggestions for further research

This final section aims at considering some issues which have emerged from this study, but which could not be investigated because of time and space constraints. The following issues therefore are suggested for further research.

Taking account of the limitations discussed above, one of the first suggestions for future research concerns methodological issues, such as considering a greater differentiation of proficiency levels, and ensuring standardisation of NS accents. By utilising more and more differentiated levels it would be possible to obtain more marked results and distinctions

between groups, which concurrently would produce stronger evidence with regard, for example, to the learners' L2 learning stages. The NS accents, as already mentioned, can also affect the learners' L2 performance, and therefore it is an aspect which might be worth controlling in future studies.

A second suggestion for future studies relates the CSs and their possible communicative effectiveness. Drawing on the dataset already available in this study, the learners' output produced in the two settings (lower-higher levels, NNS-NS interlocutor, and open-closed task) could be used to assess the effectiveness of CS usage. This issue was only incidentally examined in this study when observing the 'PSM related to own-output problems', specifically, when looking at *error-repair*, which was the only mechanism whose use could be classed as 'successful' vs. 'unsuccessful', according to the linguistic outcome of the learners' repairing. A slight difference was observed, particularly, with regard to the learners' different proficiency levels and the tasks carried out. It was found that the more proficient subjects were able to successfully *repair* their own output slightly more frequently than the less competent learners; the same finding was observed as occurring more often in the closed task. Although the figures in this respect were not very substantial, they suggest that certain CSs can in fact be more effective than others, and that it may be possible to measure their degree of effectiveness. The few studies which have already examined this issue (Marrie & Netten, 1991; Littlemore, 2003) suggest that raters assess the learners' oral production according to certain oral criteria of what could be considered effective L2 communication. For this, aspects such as the following could be considered: comprehension between speakers, communication of what the task/s require, fulfilment of task objectives, etc., This would allow the researcher to determine which CSs are more effective than others for the learners to successfully communicate and comprehend each other's message according to their level of proficiency, the task used for interaction, and the type of interactant.

Finally, it would be of great importance to investigate further the relationship of particular grammar areas of Spanish as L2 which trigger CS usage. The broader range of CSs which were analysed in this study allowed the examination of mechanisms employed to cope with grammatical problems, confirming the complex nature of Spanish as L2. CSs such as *grammatical substitution* and *grammatical reduction* together with other phenomena observed in the data – incorrect use of prepositions and gender-related problems – demonstrated the complexities encountered by the learners when using this target language. Through these mechanisms they tended to overgeneralise an L2 grammatical construction, or transfer an L1 structure, aspects which were related, for example, to the use of specific verb

forms. They also tended to reduce their output, when for instance opting for the ‘es’ form of the copula *ser/estar* instead of the appropriate one ‘*está*’, and also by omitting grammatical words and communicating meaning by mostly content words, processes which helped them to tackle the many grammar-related problems found. To this end, studies focused on these specific types of CSs in L2 Spanish communication – which could also be compared with other target languages – would certainly enrich existing knowledge not only relating to CS use, but also to the learning of Spanish.

Hence, it is expected that this exploratory study may provide a baseline for future research in L2 strategic communication and language teaching and learning in view of the many benefits that most of these CSs proved to produce in these learners’ communication. The detailed qualitative analysis carried out considering different proficiency learners in interaction with other NNSs and NSs in the realisation of two distinct tasks – coupled with the subjects’ retrospective comments – has not only broadened the empirical evidence, but has also highlighted other relevant issues within this field which had not been fully considered.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Language Background and Proficiency Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning foreign language learning. This survey is conducted by Maritza Rosas, PGR student from the School of English, University of Liverpool, and it aims at gathering useful information about possible participants for a research project. The contents of this form are absolutely confidential; information identifying the respondent will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

This is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. I am interested in your personal opinion.

Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!

Section I: Personal information

Last name		First name	
Age		Gender	

Section II: Language Background

1. Please say which is your first language (mother tongue) and list any foreign language/s that you also know:

1st language: __ _____

other language/s: _____

2. Please indicate how many hours a week (approximately) you are currently exposed to Spanish as a foreign language:

3. Please describe how you have learned Spanish. Leave the second column blank if it does not apply to you.

	formal setting (e.g. school, university)	informal setting (e.g. at home, stay abroad) –if applicable
In what kind of setting have you learned Spanish?		
Approximately how much Spanish learning (hours, months, years) have you had?		

Section III: Level of Proficiency

1. How confident do you feel when speaking Spanish? Please mark the phrase you feel suits you best.

1 Very confident	2 Confident	3 Fairly confident	4 Not very confident	5 Not confident at all
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2. How would you rate your level of proficiency when communicating orally in Spanish? Please mark the sentence you feel represents your level best.

1 I can speak very fluently on most topics	2 I can communicate fairly well	3 I can communicate enough to have a simple conversation	4 I can communicate only basic information	5 I can hardly communicate
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3. Please give any final grade/s from any oral Spanish language exam or Spanish course you have recently taken. If you prefer you can leave this blank.

4. Do you feel that you need more practice to communicate orally in Spanish? Please underline the phrase that suits your needs best.

1 Not at all	2 Not really	3 Some	4 Quite a lot	5 Very much
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Now that you have filled in this questionnaire please send it attached to the following e-mail address:

maritza.rosas@liv.ac.uk

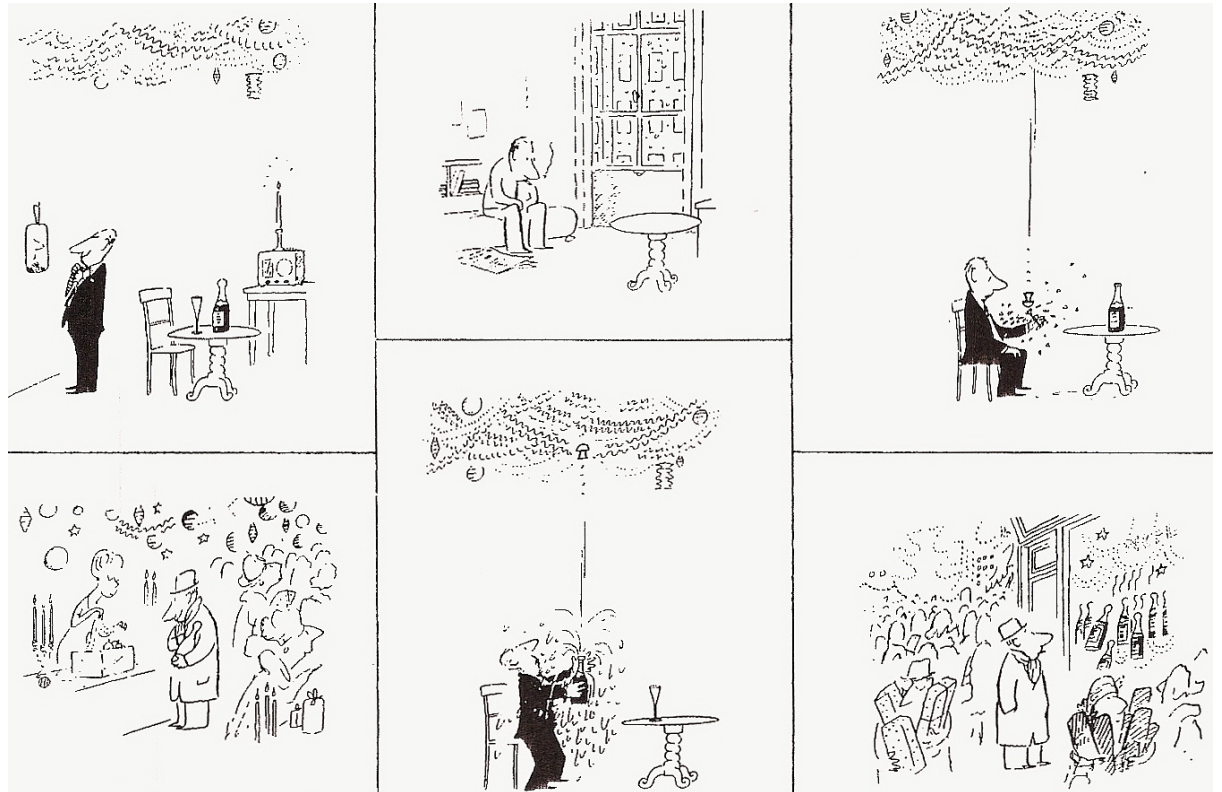
If you have any questions about this questionnaire or my research project please feel free to contact me by this e-mail address or by phone: 07532 150757. You can call me or text me!

Appendix B: elicitation tasks

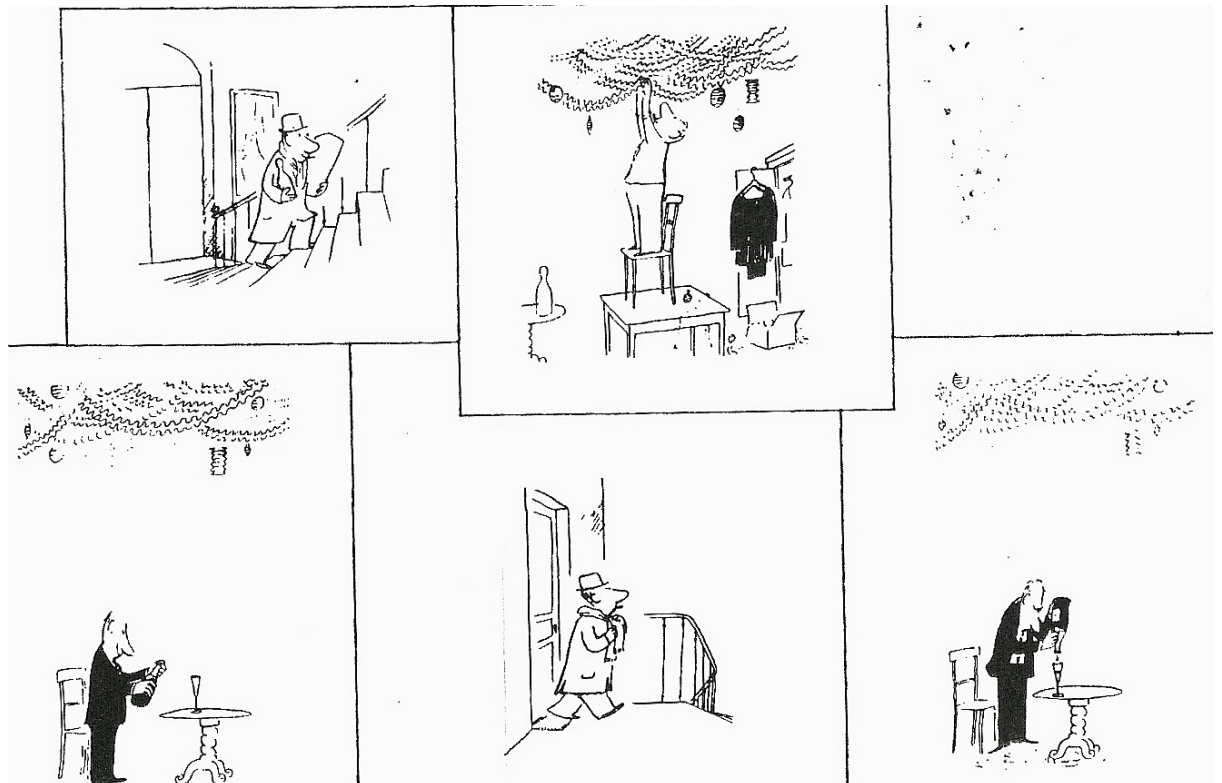
Appendix B1: jigsaw task N°1 (Klippel, 1984:150)

Work with your partner: the pictures are in jumbled order. Describe to your partner what is happening and together try to work out the complete story in the correct order.

Picture set A



Picture set B

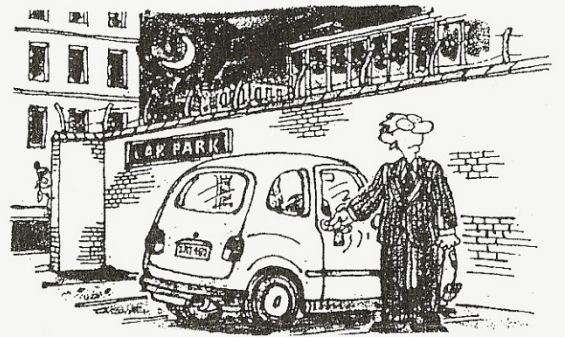
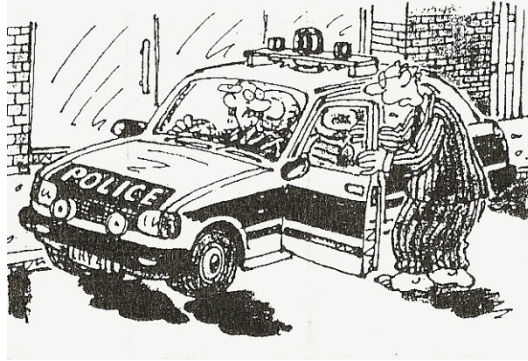
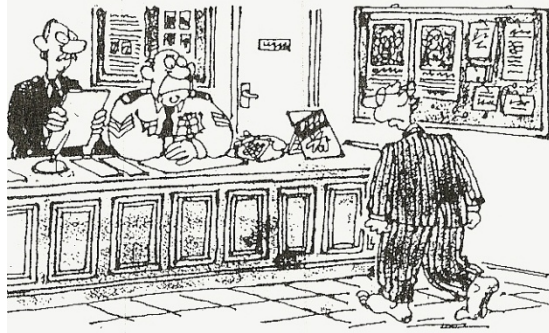


Appendix B2

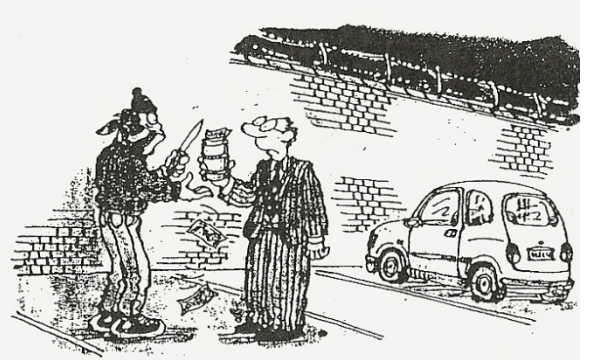
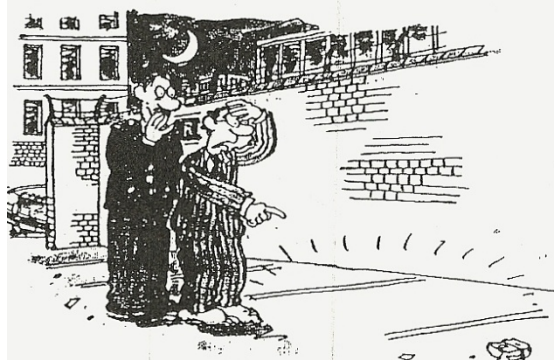
Jigsaw task N°2 (This task was supplied by a teacher who had used it in class and recommended it, however, the original source is unknown)

Work with your partner: the pictures are in jumbled order. Describe to your partner what is happening and together try to work out the complete story in the correct order.

Picture set A



Picture set B

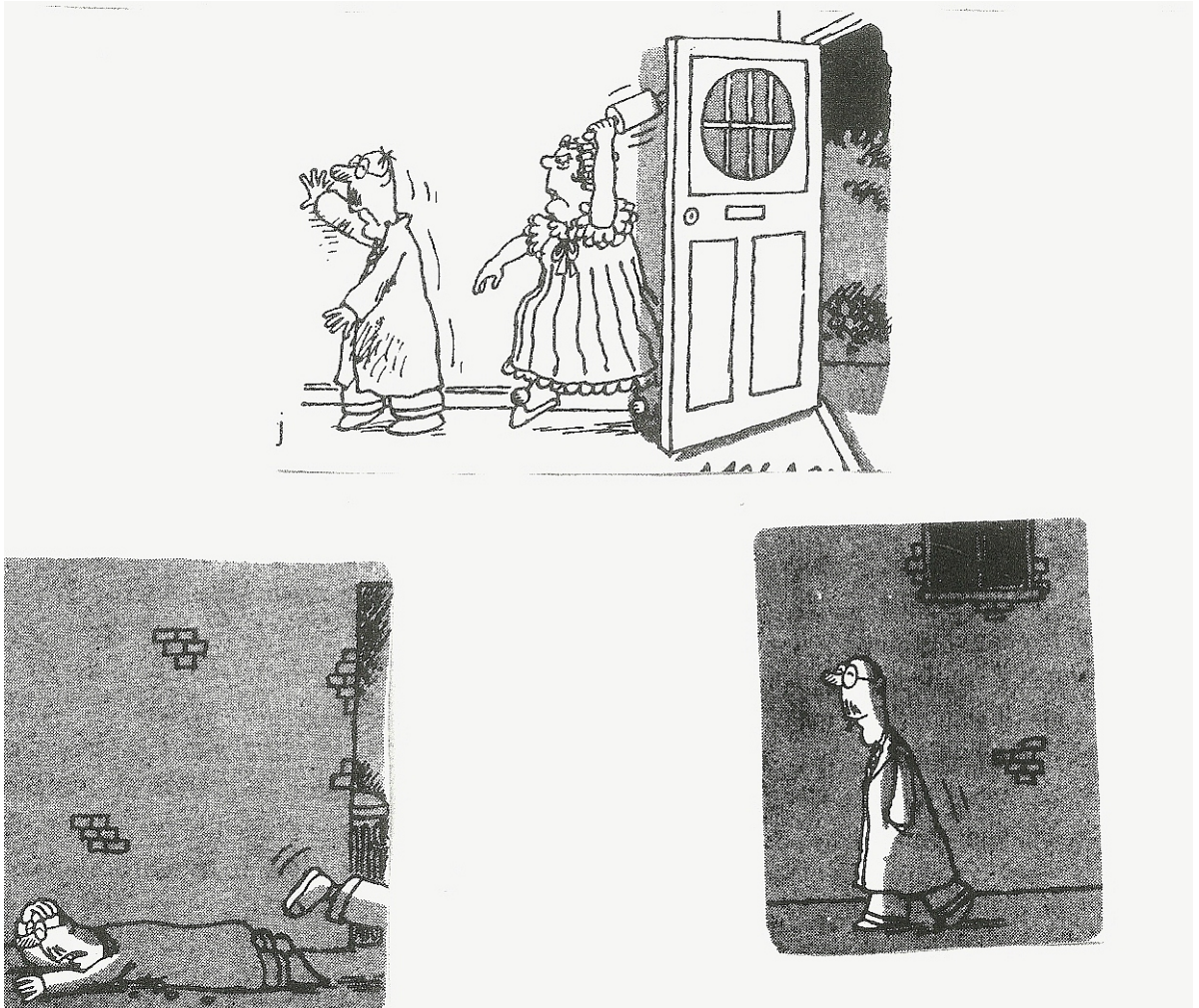


Appendix B3

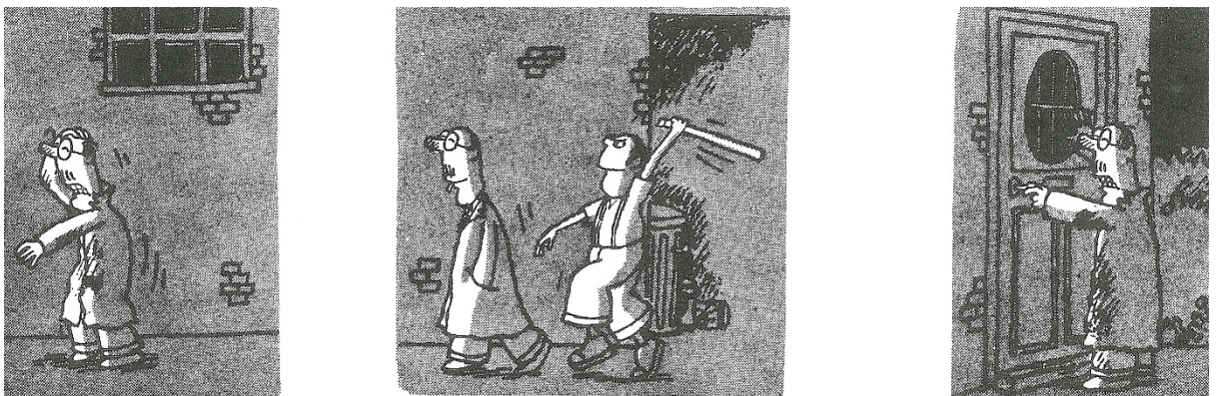
Jigsaw practise-task (Ur, 1981:63)

Work with your partner: the pictures are in jumbled order. Describe to your partner what is happening and together try to work out the complete story in the correct order.

Picture set A



Picture set B



Appendix C

Participants' debriefing

Participant information

Communicating strategically in Spanish as L2

A PhD research study by Maritza Rosas, School of English, University of Liverpool.

Before you decide whether to participate in my research study please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask me if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand.

The research study

This study is being carried out as part of a research project into the communication strategies used by English learners of Spanish. It will involve the filming and recording of two short conversations between English learners of Spanish interacting with another learner and with a native speaker of Spanish. There will be a post-interview done in the subjects' mother tongue which will be audio-recorded only. The whole session will take approximately 90 minutes. The purpose of this study is to see how learners of these languages manage to communicate in an L2 with other learners and/or native speakers.

If you want to be part of it

Participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation and without any disadvantage to you. You will not receive any money for taking part, but you may find the process itself interesting and enjoyable.

If you decide to withdraw at any time, results up to the period of withdrawal may be used if you are happy for this to be done. Otherwise they will be destroyed and no further use will be made of them. The data will be transcribed onto Word documents and text files and stored on secure servers and it will not be labelled or identified in any way with your name. Only my supervisor and I will have access to your information.

In case of any problem

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know by contacting Maritza Rosas on 07532 150757 or Geoff Thompson (Supervisor) on 0151 794 2770 and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you think we cannot deal with, you should contact the University of Liverpool Research Governance Officer on 0151 794 8290 (ethics@liv.ac.uk). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

If you choose to participate thank you very much and you can contact me at any time with any questions:

Maritza Rosas
School of English
University of Liverpool

maritza.rosas@liv.ac.uk

**Appendix D
Participants' consent form**

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Communicating strategically in Spanish as L2

Researcher(s): Maritza Rosas Maldonado

**Please
initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [_____] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected.
3. I understand that I can, at any time, ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant Name

Date

Signature

Name of Person taking consent

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

The contact details of the Supervisor are:

Geoff Thompson
School of English
University of Liverpool
Liverpool L69 7ZR

geoff9@liv.ac.uk

Appendix E

Stimulated recall protocol for NNSs

1. Did you have any difficulties when communicating to your partner? If so,
2. What was the problem?
3. How did you solve that problem?
4. Do you think that the solution was effective for your partner to understand your message?
5. On those occasions where you were not able to solve the problem, what did you do?
6. Did you have any difficulties to understand your partner's message?
7. Can you recognise any thing you did to try to understand your partner's message?
8. Do you feel there was any difference when interacting with a different interlocutor (NS/NNS)
9. Were there any times when you expected your partner to help you?

Stimulated recall protocol used for NSs

1. Did you have any difficulties in understanding the learner's message? If so,
2. Can you recognise any thing you did to try to understand the message? Was that effective?
3. Do you feel that there were certain occasions where your partner asked you directly or indirectly for help? Do you think you helped her/him?
4. Do you think there was a time where you had to correct your partner's message? How did you do that?

Appendix F: Results for PSM related to L2 RD

Appendix F1 observed and expected results for L2 RD CSs

Table F1: results for PSM related to L2 RD

type of task * type of interlocutor * proficiency level Crosstabulation						
proficiency level			type of interlocutor		Total	
			NNS	NS		
level A	type of task	closed T	Count	193	178	371
			Expected Count	169.5	201.5	371.0
			% of Total	26.1%	24.1%	50.1%
	open T		Count	145	224	369
			Expected Count	168.5	200.5	369.0
			% of Total	19.6%	30.3%	49.9%
	Total		Count	338	402	740
			Expected Count	338.0	402.0	740.0
			% of Total	45.7%	54.3%	100.0%
Level B	type of task	closed T	Count	178	193	371
			Expected Count	186.4	184.6	371.0
			% of Total	22.8%	24.7%	47.4%
	open T		Count	215	196	411
			Expected Count	206.6	204.4	411.0
			% of Total	27.5%	25.1%	52.6%
	Total		Count	393	389	782
			Expected Count	393.0	389.0	782.0
			% of Total	50.3%	49.7%	100.0%

Appendix F2

Observed and expected results for PSM related to O-O problems

Table F2: results for PSM related to O-O problems

type of task * type of interlocutor * proficiency level Crosstabulation						
proficiency level			type of interlocutor		Total	
			NNS	NS		
A	type of task	Count	46	49	95	
		closed Expected Count	39.0	56.0	95.0	
		% of Total	24.9%	26.5%	51.4%	
	open	Count	30	60	90	
		Expected Count	37.0	53.0	90.0	
		% of Total	16.2%	32.4%	48.6%	
	Total	Count	76	109	185	
		Expected Count	76.0	109.0	185.0	
		% of Total	41.1%	58.9%	100.0%	
	B	type of task	Count	55	96	151
			closed Expected Count	65.0	86.0	151.0
			% of Total	21.2%	36.9%	58.1%
open		Count	57	52	109	
		Expected Count	47.0	62.0	109.0	
		% of Total	21.9%	20.0%	41.9%	
Total		Count	112	148	260	
		Expected Count	112.0	148.0	260.0	
		% of Total	43.1%	56.9%	100.0%	