CHAPTER IV

A REFORMULATION OF THE NOTION OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

The discussion in the earlier chapters has focussed on the use of English in an ESL context, and its relationship to the notion of communicative competence. This chapter begins by considering strategic competence in relation to the ESL context, and as a central feature of the notion of communicative competence. Communication strategies are viewed as the outcome of the individual's strategic competence. Various definitions of communication strategy are reviewed in order to deal with problems of taxonomy. The three features of communication strategy central to this study are : Effectiveness, Manipulation and Interaction; these three features form the basis for the classification system developed to analyse communication strategies.

2. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

2.1 Strategic Competence in the ESL Setting

In an ESL setting such as India, the phenomenon of contact between English and the other Indian languages,[1] is

accompanied by a complex pattern of inter-relationships between the cultures associated with these various languages. Such linguistic and socio-cultural proximity has led to the development of a range of functions/purposes that English serves; it is the language predominantly used for academic, professional and administrative purposes, in addition to which is signals a range of social functions. Favourable attitudes to English are associated with the status and the social values attributed to English. It is important for the Indian learner to acquire competence in using not only the written but also the spoken form. Fluency in English is as much at a premium as accuracy.

Communicative competence in English in the ESL setting, accordingly, involves not only linguistic competence on the part of the individual; it also requires considerable socio-cultural competence, facility in interacting with others and in selectively implementing one or more of a range of available linguistic/sociocultural options for a specific situational/interpersonal context. It is, therefore, necessary to accept the relevance of the interactionist and the ethnographic perspectives to the notion of communicative competence in the ESL setting. This would imply that the joint negotiation of meaning by interlocutors within the framework of a social setting is central to the process of communication. Consequently, appropriacy is as essential as accuracy. This

shifts the focus away from error towards manipulation of available communicative resources by the individual. In the ESL setting, therefore, the ways in which the individual uses and blends English and the other Indian languages represents his/her strategic competence. It is this strategic competence that enables that individual to navigate through the complex network of languages and cultures in contact, in order to reach a communicative goal.

2.2 Strategic Competence and Communication Strategy

The literature on communicative competence has identified a range of competencies involved (as discussed in Chapter III). The individual's communicative competence also requires the operation of differential competence (Hymes, 1970; Ellis, 1985; Riley, 1985b); the communicative demands of a situation may require the individual to demonstrate greater linguistic competence than social competence, or vice versa.

The definition of communicative competence offered by Canale and Swain (1980) and by Canale (1983) includes the features of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. According to this definition, the term "Strategic competence" appears interchangeable with the term "communication strategy".

The view of strategic competence adopted for the present study involves a slightly different categorisation. The different components of communicative competence - grammatical/linguistic competence, discourse competence and sociocultural/sociolinguistic competence - are all subsumed under strategic competence, which represents a centralised capacity for co-ordination, and sychronises the functioning of the various competencies. The individual's strategic competence enables him/her to externalise and manifest these competencies through the various communication strategies : intra/inter-lingual strategies, reformulation strategies and code-switching strategies. Although one would hesitate to claim absolute one-to-one equivalence between the different communicative competencies and the types of communication strategies, it is possible to draw certain broad parallels between the types of competencies and the types of strategies used.

2.3 Taxonomy for the Analysis of Interlanguage Data

In recent years, there has been a shift of emphasis in language teaching; the concern for acquisition of formal properties of the language system has been replaced by a more functional perspective, with a corresponding shift in emphasis towards the notion of communicative competence, thus placing a greater value on fluency rather than accuracy, on language use rather than usage (Hymes, 1970; Widdowson,

1978). The relative value of fluency versus accuracy assumes even greater significance in a complex ESL situation of the sort that exists in India. In such a context, it would be more meaningful to approach the process of second language acquisition from a "learning" perspective rather than a "teaching" one. As has been suggested earlier (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1976), there is a need to shift the focus away from teaching methods and onto the interpretation of the learner's interlanguage.

It has been widely recognised that interlanguage data forms an important source for research in second language acquisition. Studies in contrastive analysis and error analysis (Lado, 1957; Richards, 1971) have been the basis for a considerable body of research on the learner's interlanguage. However, one of the hazards facing the researcher in this field is that of taxonomy : the lack of consensus regarding basic terminology, as well as regarding the sub-categories for identifying and analysing interlanguage behaviour. For instance, though there has been considerable discussion of the terms "Communication strategy", "production strategy"[2] and "learning strategy"[3] (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1976; Corder, 1978; Tarone, 1981b; Faerch and Kasper, 1983a; Haastrup and Phillipson, 1983), the literature has yet to provide clearly distinguishable and universally accepted definitions of these terms and concepts. There is considerable

overlap and argument regarding the demarcations - if any - to be drawn between these terms, which have been variously treated by researchers as referring to identical/related/discrete phenomena. Moreover, it needs to be recognised that the various strategies are not mutually exclusive, and need not be rigidly compartmentalised. A single segment in the data very often involves the operation of two or more strategies simultaneously; thus multidimensionality adds to the complexity of the analysis. There has been considerable work in developing theories to account for interlanguage; there is now an urgent need to systematically operationalise these theories and apply them extensively to interlanguage data. The problem facing the researcher is that of developing an adequate taxonomy for analysing communication strategies. Such a taxonomy can be truly satisfactory and can reconcile the various conflicting/overlapping definitions, if the terms used are made fully operational in such an exhaustive manner that the taxonomy may be readily applied to any interlanguage data. At the outset, one needs to clarify the question of the equivalence, or otherwise, between the terms interlanguage and communication strategy. The term interlanguage has, in the literature, been used to refer to intermediate stages in the process of second language learning; interlanguage is considered from the target language point of view, where the target language in native-speaker terms forms the end-point,

the ultimate goal for the language learner.[4] For the present study the term interlanguage is referred to in a slightly different sense : it may not aim at native-speaker-like use at all. In fact for the ESL learner, the "target language" could be a version of what the native-speaker would call "interlanguage" - perhaps the speech of the educated bilingual which is a composite of the speaker's linguistic and cultural experience in both cultures. It is suggested in the present study, that interlanguage is manifested through the use of communication strategies, which reflect manipulation of all resources towards a communicatively effective goal through negotiation at the interpersonal level. It would be useful to examine how shifts in emphasis may provide a range of different perspectives on a given phenomenon, to the extent that, at times, one finds a single term being used to refer to two or more different phenomena. It is proposed that the notion of communication strategy be used as a point of reference for the present study. Different views of interlanguage have resulted in a series of definitions of communication strategy. Some of the definitions that have been frequently cited in the literature on interlanguage are presented below. These definitions provide a basis for analysing the underlying concepts - stated or implied - in different interpretations of the term communication strategy.

a. Tarone, Frauenfelder, and Selinker (1976, p. 4) :

"a systematic attempt by the learner to express meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed."

b. Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976, p. 5) :

"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."

c. Tarone (1981b, p. 72) :

"a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared."

d. Corder (1978, p. 16) :

"a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty."

e. Faerch and Kasper (1983a, p. 36) :

"potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal."

f. Bialystok (1983, p. 102) :

"attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication."

g. Dechert (1983, p. 176) :

"procedures involved in using language".

h. Ellis (1985, p. 182) :

"psycholinguistic plans which exist as part of the language user's communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and serve as substitutes for production plans which the learner is unable to implement."

3. FEATURES OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

A review of these definitions reveals that the notion of communication strategy covers a range of different features. Some of these features are analysed in detail below, to arrive at a reformulation of the notion of communication strategy.

Three features that are implicitly or explicitly referred to in the definitions cited above have been selected for discussion. The perspective on communication strategy adopted in the present study is based on these three features :

1. Effectiveness

2. Manipulation

3. Interaction

3.1 Effectiveness

Early studies of interlanguage began with the notion of "error". Selinker (1972) states that communication strategies would account for certain classes of errors made by second language learners , while Richards (1973) equates communication strategies with errors deriving from the fact that heavy communication demands are made on the second language.[5]

Several other definitions, though they do not explicitly state communication strategies to be erroneous behaviour, still imply that they fall short of the target language norm. Such a view of inadequacy of the learner's interlanguage is promoted by :

a. Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976, p. 5) :

> "situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed."

b. Varadi (1980, pp. 79-80) :

> "a simple gap - or hiatus - in the learner's knowledge of the target language as a source of errors... the learner is in (perhaps temporary) ignorance of particular areas of the target language."

c. Bialystok (1983, p. 102) :

> "attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system."

Subsequently this notion of linguistic inadequacy has been modified. Schachter and Celce - Murcia (1977) suggest that error analysis produced only partial accounts of interlanguages. Error analysis ignores what the learner does correctly, leading to a somewhat lopsided analysis of language. Corder (1978) rejects, as being simplistic, the assumptions in earlier studies of communication strategies, that :

a. the native speaker has "perfect" command of the language system and the topic of discourse.

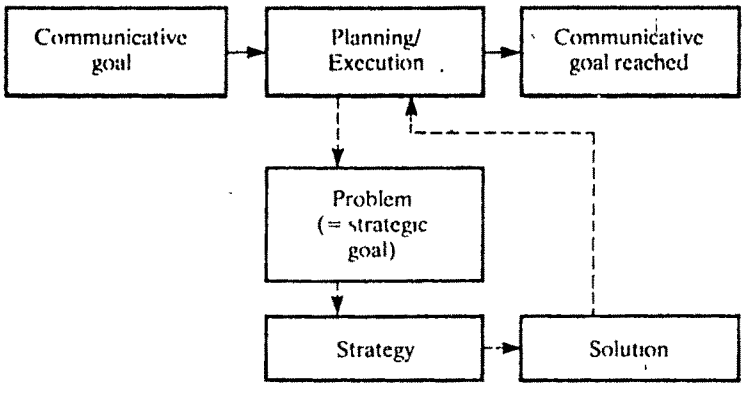
b. "difficulty" refers uniquely to the learner's inadequate command of the language used in the interaction.

Definitions of communication strategy no longer exclude the native speaker. Tarone (1981b) focusses in her definition, on "interlocutors" rather than "learners" and considers communication strategies to arise out of situations where "requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared". A similar focus is implied by Haastrup and Phillipson (1983, p. 143) who discuss communication disruptions as occurring when "mutual comprehension is impaired by one of the speakers misunderstanding the other, or when the learner is manifestly in trouble in putting across what he/she wants to say." Similarly, Faerch and Kasper (1983a)

refer to problems faced by the "individual" rather than the "learner". However, the focus in these definitions/ discussions continues to remain on the occurrence of a breakdown in communication.

A corollary to the relationship between communication strategy and error is the emphasis placed on problematicity as a defining criterion for communication strategies. Faerch and Kasper (1983a) have argued that some communicative goals present themselves as individual "problems", and only plans relating to such goals would be considered as strategies (See Figure 5). They base their usage of the term "problem" on the definition provided by Klaus and Buhr (1976, p. 974) : "recognition by an individual of the insufficiency of his existing knowledge to reach a goal and of the consequent need for expanding this knowledge." Though Faerch and Kasper (1983a) include "problems" faced by both L1 and L2 learners they exclude occasions when the individual faces no difficulty in reaching the communicative goal.[6]

A point of departure from earlier views, was provided in the literature on language transfer, in the case of borrowing/code-switching as a communication strategy,[7] which underwent a shift in perspective. Whereas in the conventional framework of Contrastive Analysis, borrowing from the L1 was an unwanted and uncontrollable feature, Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1953) refer to the intentional use of interference



Source : Faerch, C. and Kasper, G. (1983a). "Plans and Strategies in Foreign Language Communication", in Faerch, C. and Kasper, G. (eds.), Strategies in Interlanguage Communication. New York : Longman, 33.

Figure 5 : Communicative and Strategic Goals

structures by bilinguals. Weinreich suggests that there may be affective considerations in the occurrence of transfer; Haugen mentions that the deliberate use by the bilingual of loan translations is motivated by social factors. This is similar to the view presented by Gumperz and Hernandez - Chavez (1970) that there may be social reasons for code-switching.[8]

Gumperz (1982) extends this notion to a detailed analysis of conversational code-switching as a discourse phenomenon by which speakers generate conversational inferences. According to him code-switching is used for effect in order to "convey semantically significant information in verbal interaction." (p. 63). It therefore does not necessarity indicate imperfect knowledge of the grammatical system in question. Based on the bilingual's awareness of alternative modes of behaviour and communication, Gumperz suggests that "in bilingual situations the participants' awareness of alternative communicative conventions becomes a resource, which can be built on to lend subtlety to what is said" (p. 65).

More recently, researchers have begun to present a view not just of code-switching, but of communication strategies in general, that reflects this notion of strategies being used "for effect". Wagner (1979) criticises earlier definitions of communication strategies as potentially

misleading, since they "imply that learners have recourse to strategies in very special types of situations... in case of emergency only" (p. 159). In place of earlier investigations which have analysed only "marginal, if not deficient, cases of communication" (p. 160), he presents a case for viewing each individual utterance as strategic. Dechert (1983) cites the Competing Plans Hypothesis (CPH) (Baars, 1980) as providing a theoretical description of language processing, which does not consider errors as deviations to be avoided but as a necessary ingredient in the system. According to the CPH, "the competition of speech plans is responsible for the various disruptions, disfluencies, and errors which occur not only in the speech of second-language learners, but of any speaker whatsoever" (p. 185). Similarly Raupauch (1983) mentions that one of the problems facing the analyst is the fact that "the learner's activation of 'successful strategies' generally passes unnoticed" (p. 199). The present study explores the possibility of identifying and analysing not only obvious instances of problems facing the learner, but also his operation of successful strategies.

Tarone (1981a) had earlier proposed a different approach to communication strategies with reference to the notion of problematicity, suggesting that "at least in speech perception, strategic competence may be of central importance and operate not just in cases of communication breakdown, but constantly" (p. 61). Bialystok (1984), in her discussion of the criteria for interlanguage strategies, argues that the criterion of problematicity as used by Faerch

and Kasper (1983a) would exclude an important aspect of strategic behaviour, viz., ordinary communication by native speakers who are not necessarily concerned with overcoming a problematic impasse, but with appropriate selection from a range of options to achieve a communicative goal. The model on which Bialystok bases her approach, is drawn from cognitive psychology and places language processing within the more general field of cognitive information processing.

The views on problematicity and error are related to the discussion in the following section, which places the notion of communication strategy within the framework of "strategy" in general. It is suggested here that the notion of communication strategy be extended to include not only errors/problems/breakdowns in communication, but also the operation of these strategies for effect. This would parallel the shift made by Gumperz (1982) from the view of code-switching as a lapse, to the recognition of code-switching as a tool for conveying "semantically significant information." Such a shift could be extended to account for several other categories of communication strategy, not merely as a means of compensating for an inadequate grasp of the target language, but also as strategies for effective communication within a specific context. The focus would therefore be on the use of successful strategies as well. The problem now facing the researcher would be that of establishing criteria for

identifying successful strategies. "Success" would now be judged in terms of whether communication has been successful, rather than whether error has been avoided or not. The outcome of such a view would be acceptance of the fact that all language users, including native-speakers, adopt communication strategies. Earlier studies of communication strategies had been largely based on the interlanguage of non-native speakers, since the occurrence of these strategies can be more readily perceived in non-native speaker talk. However, as Corder (1978) states, "strategies of communication have essentially to do with ends and means" (p. 17). The use of a communication strategy would thus be necessary whenever ends and means are not in balance - such a situation could arise not only from inadequate command over the target language, but also from contextual factors such as the topic of discussion, or features of the process of interaction. We find that we have thus move away from the earlier linguistic view of communication strategy to a more sociolinguistic focus.

The view that one adopts with regard to error is an outcome of the more general perspective on the appropriate model of the L2. There has been a long tradition of upholding the native-speaker model as the ultimate that the learner ought to achieve. This may be relevant in an EFL context, where the learner's goal would be to achieve as close an approximation as possible of English as used by native

speakers. In an ESL context, however, the native-speaker model may not be the most appropriate norm.[9] In a situation such as in India, where one cannot identify any one single clearly defined model of Indian English, and where the second language is often largely used as a vehicle of intra-national communication, the earlier attitudes to errors and fossilisation of language use are no longer relevant. Contact between English and the other Indian languages creates a complex socio-cultural situation, where the use of each language affects the others. Weinreich (1953), in discussing deviations, suggested that deviations have an impact on the norms of either language exposed to contact. Thus in the second language context, not only the L2, but also the L1 gets modified as a result of the interplay of various social factors.[10] The earlier view of the inter-language continuum as starting with the L1 and culminating in the L2, does not account for the complexity of the sociocultural forces at work in a second language situation. In India, in most cases, the learner already has a certain amount of the L2 at his disposal, so that the L1 alone is rarely the starting point. Moreover, if one accepts that the target language for the Indian user of English in such an ESL situation is not the native-speaker model, one also necessarily views what has traditionally been called "error" from a different perspective. In this context it is not a

comparison between the native language and the target language (of the kind that has been undertaken in contrastive analysis) that is as important as the interplay between the languages in contact, in terms of social/cultural/functional factors. Studies in interlanguage had often used the term "inappropriate" as synonymous with "non-native-like". The present study is based on the assumption that even in cases of a communicative problem the learner's communication strategy, though unlike the native-speaker model, ften provides an equally viable alternative. Successful operation of the strategy is thus de-linked from accuracy/appropriacy in target language terms.

3.2 Manipulation

Communication strategies have been variously referred to in the literature, as :

- "attempts" (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1976; Tarone, 1981b; Bialystok, 1983)
- "procedures (Dechert, 1983)
- "processes" (Selinker, 1972)
- "techniques" (Corder, 1978)
- "plans" (Faerch and Kasper, 1983a; Ellis, 1985)

Though there is considerable overlap between the views of researchers, the use of these different terms carries

implicit connotations as to what constitutes a communication strategy.

In the definition offered by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976), the learner, though operating within a systematic framework of interlanguage, appears to have minimal control, achievement of the communicative goal apparently being a process of trial and error. Tarone (1981b) in her revised definition ("... a mutual attempt of two interlocutors") shifts the focus to the reciprocity of the attempt, thus distributing the implied control between the two interlocutors. Bialystok (1983) views the term "attempt" as slightly more deliberate and includes the notion of manipulation by the learner, in her definition. In fact Bialystok makes specific reference to the learner's degree of control over the exercise of the strategy.

The use of the term "attempt" in all these definitions suggests that in implementation, the strategy perhaps falls short of the communicative goal, as viewed in target language terms. "Attempt" thus seems to imply inadequacy, an approximation towards a target language norm, rather than acceptance of the communication strategy as a viable alternative to the target language norm.

Though it occurs earlier historically, Corder's definition of communication strategy (1978) moves away from the inadequacy implicit in the term "attempt". Corder defines

communication strategy as a "technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty", apparently allowing for a greater degree of control over the implementation of the strategy. Corder accepts communication strategy as an effective alternative, while steering away from the earlier focus on the target language as a norm. The use of the term "technique", here, accounts for communication strategy at the level of skill. Subsequent use by researchers of the terms "procedure" and "process" imply a different level of complexity in the phenomena involved.

A somewhat different perspective is offered by Dechert (1983), who places the notion of communication strategy within the computation paradigm. In the context of language as information processing, his use of the term "procedure" implies a shift away from the earlier view of communication strategy as a somewhat inadequate attempt to reach a target language goal.[11] Dechert refers to Simon (1979) in describing procedures as a "fixed set of elementary information processes that are evoked by both aspects of the external environment, and the internal representation of the problem "(p. 85).

Much of the literature on interlanguage has dealt with communication strategy as referring to the same class of phenomena as the term "process". Faerch and Kasper (1983a)

provide the following overview of implicit/explicit definitions of the notions of "process" and "strategy" :

- "Process" and "strategy" are interchangeable terms : Levenston and Blum (1977)
- "Strategy" is a subclass of "process" : Selinker (1972)
- "Strategy" and "process" both belong to the same superordinate class of mental activities :

  a. "process" : Over a period of time : Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1978)
     "strategy" : at a specific point in time

  b. "process" : obligatory : Bialystok (1978)
     "strategy" : optional

  c. "process" : universal : Frauenfelder and Porquier (1979)
     "strategy" : optional

Faerch and Kasper (1983a) offer an alternative categorisation in which "process" and "strategy" are viewed as different phenomena. They follow Brown (1976, p. 136) and

Klaus and Buhr (1976, p. 990), in viewing "process" as "continuing development involving a number of changes", and "a dynamic sequence of different stages of an object or system". Communication strategies, on the other hand, are not viewed as a sub-class of "process", but are located within the model of speech production presented by them as a sub-class of "plans". The distinction thus appears to echo a process/product distinction. Ellis (1985) further clarifies Faerch and Kasper's distinction between "process" and "strategy" by considering a sequence of operations as process and a single operation as strategy.

The complex relationship between "process" and "strategy" appears to share certain conceptual features with Dechert's view of strategy as a "procedure". The paradigm of information-processing used by Dechert may be related to Faerch and Kasper's view that strategies "steer, monitor or control speech execution" (p. 30) and form a part of the planning process.[12] Faerch and Kasper thus categorise communication strategies as a subclass of plans. Such a description implies distinct manipulation of respurces by the learner in operating the strategy, in order to reach a communicative goal.[13]

A closely related issue is that of "consciousness". Faerch and Kasper (1983a) placed a strong emphasis on "consciousness" as a defining criterion for communication

strategies.[14] This criterion is related to their locating communication strategy within a general model of speech production. Borrowing the model of goal-related intellectual behaviour from Leont'ev (1975), their model of communication strategy suggests that the individual has to choose, more or less consciously, between various alternative responses.[15]

If we assume that the terms "attempt" and "plan" form two ends of a continuum representing degree of control by the speaker, it would be more appropriate to place communication strategy towards the latter end of the continuum. The term "strategy" implies a degree of intent that is lacking in the term "attempt". This raises certain questions for research. Can one establish a cut-off point along the continuum, where an utterance no longer represents an attempt but a strategy ? If it is possible to make such a distinction, what are the features that characterise a communication strategy ? Would frequency of use form one of the distinguishing characteristics of communication strategy ? Unlike an attempt, does a communication strategy also imply a certain amount of practice/rehearsal ?

The view subscribed to in this study places communication strategy within the general class of all strategic behaviour. A strategy of any sort refers to a deliberate, planned course of action, a form of manipulation in order to reach a goal, thus involving a fairly high degree of control

by the speaker. This control is manifested in the speaker's ability to manipulate all available resources in order to reach the communicative goal. Such control, however, does not refer to linguistic control over the target language, nor does it refer to the grammatical "correctness" of the product. All that it does refer to is the ability to mobilise available resources towards effective communication. If these resources are minmal, the final outcome in terms of the target language may not be grammatical or formally accurate - yet it may still be communicatively successful. Thus the existence of such manipulative behaviour is viewed as distinct from its outcome in TL (Target Language) terms.

3.3 Interaction

The views on effectiveness and manipulation provided in the earlier sections lead us to a consideration of interaction as a feature of communication strategy. By accepting that communication strategies represent deliberate manipulation of resources for effect, and that they may reflect successful communication despite the use of non-native-like forms/structures, we are led to place greater emphasis on language as it is actually used in social interaction.

One of the few definitions of communication strategy that have incorporated the notion of interaction, can be found in Tarone (1981b). She refers to the reciprocity of

communicative behaviour, in her description of communication strategy as "mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning", and introduces the notion of shared meaning structures, both linguistic and sociolinguistic. Wagner (1979) implies a similar view when he refers to "ensuring mutual comprehension" (p. 170) Raupauch (1983) again describes communication strategy as a function of the inter-relationship between the speakers.

Closely related to the interactional aspect of communication strategy, is the tendency of the individual to adapt his use of strategy to his assessment of the communicative situation he finds himself in. It is interesting to note that one of the few explicit statements regarding situational assessment is made by Faerch and Kasper (1983a), who otherwise explicitly subscribe to the cognitivist approach and not to the interactionist view. Following Leont'ev (1975) and Rehbein (1977), Faerch and Kasper state : "In order for the plan to match the goal, the individual has to base the construction or selection of a plan on an analysis of the given situation and its resources with regard to the goal" (p. 23). However Faerch and Kasper do not pursue the issue at greater length; the effect of situational assessment on communication strategies does not receive prominence in their discussion.[16]

The notion of actual language "use" rather than "usage" (Widdowson, 1978) is also related to the interactional aspect

of communication strategies. According to Tarone (1981b), the learner utilises his limited knowledge to cope with various communication situations. Though Tarone mentions the need to incorporate this notion of language use in a definition of communication strategy, her own version of the definition (cited earlier) does not specifically include this feature. A more direct reference is made by Dechert (1983) who defines communication strategies as "procedures involved in using language" (p. 176). However, though researchers like Tarone and Dechert have suggested the usefulness of an interactionist approach, their studies have not systematically established and analysed the interface between the utterances of interlocutors in connected discourse.[17] Research on communication strategies needs to account for the interpersonal dimension,[18] and focus on the constant process of transaction/negotiation inherent in all communication.

It might be useful at this point to consider the relationship between communication strategies and communicative competence. One aspect of communication strategy that has not always featured prominently in the literature, and therefore needs to be emphasised, is the dimension of actual language use. The recognition that communication strategies reflect actual language use helps to establish a link between communication strategy and communicative competence.[19] Canale

and Swain (1980) propose a broadened definition of communicative competence as including strategic competence, in addition to linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence. In her discussion of Canale and Swain's definition, Tarone (1981b) suggests that communication strategy (which she apparently considers as being synonymous with strategic competence), is a means of compensating for linguistic/sociolinguistic inadequacy.

It might be more useful to view strategic competence in transactional terms, viz., in terms of the impact on the interlocutor. Such an approach would go beyond the notions of "accuracy", which is the domain of linguistic competence, and "appropriacy", which is the domain of sociolinguistic competence, and would recognise the effectiveness of strategic competence as a third dimension that is distinct from, and perhaps even independent of, both linguistic accuracy and sociolinguistic appropriacy. Whereas both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence are related to the view that the native-speaker model forms the target language, strategic competence accounts for the interaction between individuals, and is therefore more relevant in an ESL context. Such an approach thus assumes that all three components of communicative competence - linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence - are manifested through the use of communication strategies.

The preceding discussion has attempted a reformulation of the notion of communication strategy. The view that emerges from this discussion places communication strategy within the general framework of all strategic behaviour. The three essential features of communication strategy, therefore, are effectiveness, manipulation and interaction. Other features such as inaccuracy/inappropriacy, problematicity and consciousness may not be present in all cases. The taxonomy of communication strategies developed for the present study will therefore be based on the framework provided by the discussion in this chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. It is deliberately implied here, that English is one of the Indian languages.

2. In one of the early definitions of "production strategy" (Tarone, Frauenfelder and Selinker, 1976) there appears to be dichotomy between "production strategy" and "communication strategy." In a later attempt at defining interlanguage terminology, Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976, p. 5) appear to be concerned with the term "production" as being opposed to "comprehension"; in order to account for both the production and the comprehension aspects, they have broadened the term by referring to it as "communication strategy", which has been defined 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." Thus the term "communication strategy" as defined here may be considered to subsume both production strategy and comprehension strategy.

However, Tarone (1981b) subsequently rejects these earlier definitions and attempts to distinguish "communication strategy" from "production strategy" on the basis of the absence of an interactional focus on the negotiation of meaning. According to this definition, production strategies appear to be almost automatic, being applied with a minimum of effort. Corder (1978) and Haastrup and Phillipson (1983) also discuss both the productive and receptive aspects of communication. While accepting comprehension as a valid dimension of communication strategies, for the purpose of this study however, receptive strategies have been excluded from the analysis.

3. Researchers in the past have also distinguished between "communication strategy" and "learning strategy" (Corder, 1978; Tarone, 1981b; Faerch and Kasper, 1983a). The relationship between the two has been discussed in greater detail in Chapter VII.

4. Corder (1971), Nemser (1971) and Selinker (1972) refer to the idea that the learners constantly undergo a process of revising the underlying grammatical systems as they move towards the target language.

5. In fact the notion of communication strategy has emerged from the early literature on Error Analysis.

6. Later, Faerch (1984) does acknowledge what he calls the problematicity of "problematicity", at least with reference to receptive strategies, where problem-solving is rather the rule than the exception.

7. Referring to the fact that borrowing has traditionally been considered as one of the interference phenomena, Corder (1983, p. 92) tersely states that "nothing whatever is being interfered with".

8. Though Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) also acknowledge the existence of social motivations for a strategy such as code-switching, they have excluded these factors from the scope of their analysis.

9. Dulay and Burt (1983) make a useful distinction between "second language acquisition" and "bilingual acquisition".

10. See also, Vanikar and Dalal (forthcoming): "Coping with Cultures : An Analysis of Culture Transfer in Second Language Acquisition".

11. Dechert's standpoint is further clarified by his subsequent rejection of the notion of "erroneous behaviour" that dominated earlier studies in interlanguage.

12. Faerch and Kasper (1983a) in their model of speech production, distinguish between the planning phase and the execution phase. Although they state that "communication strategies can best be placed within the planning phase" (p. 30), the occurrence of strategies may arise from problems in either the planning or the execution phase. Thus the notion of "plan" is extended to include modifications in theplanning process, resulting from problems in the execution phase.

13. Faerch and Kasper's definition of communication strategies as "plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" appears to include the view that such problems result from language use rather than merely from inadequate knowledge of the target language.

14. As a defining criterion for "communication strategy" however, Faerch and Kasper (1983a) consider "consciousness" to be subordinate to "problem-orientedness."

15. The notion of choice is also included in the views, of Weinreich (1953), Haugen (1953), Gamperz and Hernandez-Chavez (1972), Gumperz (1982) and Kellerman (1983).

16. Greater prominence is provided to situational assessment in Dechert (1983).

17. It is likely that a change in the composition of the dyad/group (for instance from NS-NNS to NNS-NNS) would affect the quality of the interaction itself.

18. It is probable that the interpersonal factor has not frequently surfaced in earlier research on inter-language on account of the mode of elicitation, which has generally focussed on one-way communication tasks.

19. Such a view has implications for the development and implementation of teaching/learning programmes in ESL, and would be explored more fully in Chapter VII.