CHAPTER   VII

IMPLICATIONS

1.'   IMPLICATIONS   OF   THE   STUDY

The present study has attempted to describe the
range/frequency of use of different communication strate-
gies by individual learners, in relation to communicative
competence in English, self-rating on communicative compe-
tence in English, coping strategies and interactional skills.
Findings from the study indicate that communicative compete-
nce in English, and interactional   skills are closely
related to the use of several communication strategies. One
of the basic conclusions of the study is that communication
strategies are used differentially by learners who have
different levels of communicative competence in the TL and
who have different patterns of interaction within a peer-
group setting; hence it may also be assumed that changes in
the level of communicative competence in the TL, or in the
patterns of interaction, are likely to be accompanied by
changes in the learner's use of communication strategies.
The implications of such a view, for both theory and peda-
gogy, in relation to second language learning will be
examined in greater detail in Sections 2 and 3 of this
chapter.

This section focusses on implications for future research studies, in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the learners' differential use of communication strategies. It might be interesting to examine whether the medium of instruction at school, or the nature of prior learning experiences is related to differences in communication strategy use. The former is likely to be closely related to the frequency with which certain communication strategies are used, because in an ESL context as in India, the medium of instruction at school is a major factor determining the degree/duration of exposure to the TL; the medium of instruction at school, therefore, has a significant bearing on the learner's level of communicative competence in the TL.

Another variable that might be related to differences in communication strategy use, is academic achievement. It is likely that high academic achievers use learning strategies that are somewhat different from those of low academic achievers, for language learning, as well as for learning in other subject areas; it is therefore possible that there will also be differences in the patterns of communication strategy use of high achievers and low achievers.[1]

A third area for further research is the context within which communication strategies are used. It might be worth investigating whether different types of communication strategies are associated with different types of tasks

("free" vs. "structured" tasks), differences in the difficulty level of the task, the phase of progression of the task, the clarity of instructions to the learner, the familiarity of the topic/propositional content, the proximity of the content to the NL or the TL Culture, the extent of interference/ participation by the teacher or observer, the interlocutor's level of communicative competence in the TL, and the interlocutor's interactional style. Personal factors might also be considered, such as age, family background, extent/type of interaction in English outside the classroom, frequency of exposure to English in the media, knowledge of languages other than the NL and the TL, aptitude, attitudinal factors, motivation,[2] etc.

Yet another area for study would be the relationship between communication strategy use, cognitive functioning, and learning styles, such as field dependence/independence, preference for a linear/deductive/inductive approach, convergent/divergent thinking, and visual/verbal orientation.[3]

A longitudinal study of the communication strategy use of L2 learners would involve observing changes over a period of time, in the frequency of use of different strategies. It would also relate these changes to the level of communicative competence; it might be interesting to investigate whether learners with lower competence in the TL

gradually develop more frequent use of strategies that occur

in the talk of learners with higher competence in the TL.

The nature of the tasks used for elicitation, and the role

of the interlocutor, are also likely to influence the type

of strategy used.[4] Finally, it would be interesting to analyse

the effectiveness (not only in linguistic terms, but also

in terms of communicative success) of various communication

strategies[5]; such a study would thus attempt to measure the

learner's strategic competence.

2.   COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND SECOND LANGUAGE
      LEARNING

2.1   Goals of Second Language Learning

        The theoretical implications of the study involve a

reconsideration of the relationship between communication

strategies and second langauge learning. Considerable

misunderstanding has resulted from the belief that the goals

of L2 learning are identical to the goals of L1 development.

The present study considers these goals to be determined by

the sociocultural context within which the language functions.

It would, consequently, be unrealistic to expect senohd

language learning to attain native-speaker norms. In L1

development, the native speaker expands his linguistic/socio-

linguistic system to accommodate all the functions and

purposes that are served by language; in L2 learning, on the

other hand, the speaker learns to selectively use either the

L1 or the L2, for various functions/purposes. The goal of second language learning, therefore, is not native-like competence, but learning to exercise appropriate communicative options; consequently, it is the message itself that should be the focus of L2 learning, rather than the TL form in which that message is encoded.

2.2   The ESL Context, Communicative Competence and
        Communication Strategies

Communicative competence in the ESL context involves not only the individual's linguistic competence, but also sociolinguistic competence (facility in the interpersonal aspects of bilingual communication), socio cultural competence (selectively drawing from the cultures associated with the NL or the TL), and strategic competence (manipulation of linguistic and sociocultural resources towards effective communication).

According to the present study, strategic competence refers to the individual's ability to use strategies effectively towards successful communication; the use of communication strategies is therefore viewed as the manifestation of the individual's strategic competence. Selection from among the three types of communication strategies (Intra/Inter-lingual Strategies, Reformulation Strategies and Code-switching Strategies), reflects the individual's orientation towards one or other of the strategic competen-

cies. The attempt to locate clusters of strategies along a continuum of communicative competence reflects a concern with appropriacy as well as accuracy. The study dispels the notion of "native-like accuracy" in the ESL context. If we accept that strategic behaviour is a manipulation of resources towards a certain goal, even when the resulting utterance is, strictly speaking, "inaccurate", then we also need to recognise that strategy may be an alternative to syntax, in the ESL context.

The emphasis in this study on the interactive aspect of communicative competence is similarly reflected in the relationship between clusters of communication strategies and patterns of interactional skills. The findings of the study indicate a close relationship between differences in communication strategy use, and differences in patterns of interaction. The findings therefore suggest that the individual's strategic competence relfects linguistic, socio-linguistic and sociocultural competencies.

2.3   Communication Strategies and the Process of Second Language Learning

The preceding discussion of communication strategies and communicative competence in the ESL context is further viewed in relation to various theories of the process of second language learning. The first of these is the Accul-turation Model presented by Schumann (1978a; 1978b), which

views second language acquisition as being influenced by the
learner's acculturation to the target language group. The
Acculturation Model is relevant to the present study, which
views communicative competence in the ESL context as an
outcome of languages and cultures in contact. However, one of
the implications of this study is that in an ESL context the
"target language" and the "target culture" are not always
the language and culture of the native-speaker of English;
more often than not they represent the language/culture
associated with an indigenous group of Indian speakers of
English. The suggestion in Schumann's pidginisation hypothe-
sis, that the non-native speaker uses the L2 predominantly
for the communicative function rather than for the inte-
grative function, therefore needs to be reviewed in the
light of the distinction made in this study between ESL and
EFL. In an ESL situation, the learner's interlanguage is not
restricted to the communicative function; it is also used
for the integrative function, to denote membership of indi-
genous social groups. Thus second language learning in the
ESL context may be related to the learner's degree of
acculturation to the target group of Indian speakers of
English. The present study, with its focus on interaction,
suggests that the use of communication strategies for intera-
cting in the classroom would involve the "communicative" as
well as the "integrative" functions of language.

Another theory of how a second language develops, is related to discourse, and views language learning as a discovery of the meaning potential of language, by participating in communication. Parallels are drawn between acquisition of the L1 and the L2. The suggestion made by·Halliday (1975) that the structure of language reflects the functions it serves, and may therefore be learnt by learning to communicate, is related to the L2 learner's use of the TL. The Discourse Theory of second language acquisition proposed ·by Hatch (1978) and Candlin (1983) is therefore central to the present study. One of the basic implications of the present study is that the negotiation of meaning through the learner's use of communication strategies, is integral to the process of second language learning;[6] such a view therefore emphasises the interactional, rather than the cognitive aspects of second language learning.

The discussion by Krashen (1981; 1982) of the Monitor Model, and of the distinction between acquisition and learning, also needs to be considered in relation to the present study. Krashen's view of acquisition and learning suggests that the two are separate, independent processes. The present study, on the other hand proposes that learning (in the "formal" sense) may be fused with acquisition (as a result of "natural" communication), by allowing opportunities for the learner to use a range of communication strategies in the classroom.

The Variable Competence Model of second language development presented by Ellis (1984; 1985) provides an alternative to the duality of the Monitor Model; Ellis proposes that the learner's variable performance be viewed as a continuum of discourse types. Such a view is particularly relevant to the present study, where different L2 rules are related to different contexts of use, and different strategies may be associated with different types of discourse. One implication of the study, therefore, is that the learner's relative competence/incompetence in the TL on a particular occasion would reflect his competence in dealing with the demands of the communicative situation, as well as of the interlocutor.

This leads us to a discussion of the relationship between communication strategies and learning. In the literature on interlanguage, researchers have often made a distinction between "communication strategy" and "learning strategy" (Corder, 1978; Cohen and Aphek, 1981; Tarone, 1981b). According to Tarone (1981b), unconscious or subconscious language acquisition may occur "even if one is using a strategy solely to communicate a meaning" (p. 67). This suggests that the use of communication strategies may perhaps be far more central to the process of language learning than has been considered in the body of literature on interlanguage. Faerch and Kasper (1983a) expand this notion of the intera-

ction between communication strategies and learning : the function of learning assumes a certain centrality in their view of communication strategy. Apart from analysing communication strategies, they are concerned with hypothesis-formation and hypothesis-testing from a learning perspective; hence they examine the potential learning effects of various types of communication strategies, and consider achievement strategies to have greater potential for learning than avoidance strategies.

The present study views language learning in the wider sense, not merely as learning the target language, but as learning to communicate. In this sense it is suggested that all communication leads to learning.[7] The study therefore also recognises a role for avoidance strategies, as a form of learning. Avoidance is not necessarily considered as inadequacy; it may be a device for learning to communicate appropriately within the sociodynamics of a particular situation. All communication experiences are viewed as learning experiences, not only for the non-native speaker, but also for the native speaker. Any attempt at communication is accompanied by a constant process of negotiation of meaning; it is through this process of negotiation, that communication leads to learning.

3. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Researchers such as Hatch and Farhady (1982), Lightbown (1984) and Long and Sato (1984), have discussed issues involved in relating the theory of second language acquisition to its applications. Lightbown (1984) distinguishes between "scientific" theories, and "pedagogical" or "educational" theories. The essential distinction here is between theory generation and theory application. One accepts that the focus of research may vary from theories of second language acquisition, on the one hand, to investigation of specific pedagogical issues, on the other. However it is important to maintain a perspective that does not compartmentalise the two, but draws from one to feed into the other. Theories of the process of second language acquisition must highlight the pedagogical concerns in language learning; and pedagocal research derives its significance from the base-line provided by theories of second language acquisition. This suggests that there is no need for a separate theory of second language learning in the classroom.[8] The process of language learning is not necessarily different in the classroom setting and in the "real-life" setting. The ultimate goal of language learning in the classroom (and particularly the ESL classroom) is to enable the learner to use language outside the classroom, in more "natural" settings; thus the goals of language learning within and outside the classroom should

in fact, be indentical. It is suggested here that it would be
more meaningful to treat the classroom setting as having the
same goals as the "real-life" setting, and to develop appro-
priate learning situations accordingly.

3.1   The Teaching/Learning Situation

The view of the teaching/learning situation proposed
in this study is derived from Silberman's (1971) emphasis on
the Greek idea of education   by the community and the culture
("paideia") and Brumfit's (1984b) suggestion that education
involves "the positive intervention of institutions or
individuals in the lives of other individuals" (p. 312). All
learning, and particularly language learning, is an outcome
of the individual's interactions with other individuals,
within the sociocultural context. The language classroom,
therefore, needs to equip the learners for language use out-
side the classroom. At issue here, is the relationship between
learning and teaching (cf. Jackson, 1968; Milne, 1981;
Hughes, 1983; Allwright, 1984). The fact that teaching does
not necessarily equal learning poses a basic problem. One
needs to recognise that learning can only be effected by the
learner; the language classroom can only provide them with
the necessary exposure - transfer of classroom learning to
the outside world depends upon the learner (Allwright, 1984).
Since interaction involves the joint negotiation of meaning,
interaction in small groups in the classroom fosters more

frequent and varied use of communication strategies. These communication strategies serve to adjust the input to the needs of each learner; such personalised input is thus more likely to be converted into intake. The implications of the study with regard to the teaching/learning situation therefore highlight the personalisation of input through the use of communication strategies.

3.2   Syllabus Design

Rivers (1976) and Rivers and Melvin (1981) have stressed the importance of viewing language learners as individuals, and discovering their needs, wants and learning styles. Syllabus design for ESL courses should give due consideration to the fact that ESL learners need English as much for communicative/social/interactional purposes, as for academic ones, and that they need to acquire competence in speaking English, as much as in writing English. The syllabus, therefore also needs to take into account the fluid, dynamic, negotiable nature of language. Thus language learning needs to be viewed as synonymous with language use.[9] The pressure of actual communicative needs (a focus on the measage, rather than on the form) appears to be integral to the process of second language learning. The present study considers language learning to occur through modification of message rather than through manipulation of form.

The discussion of the learning aspects of communication strategies, and their relevance to the ESL context in India (See Section 2.3 of this chapter), needs to be placed within a pedagogical framework. Faerch and Kasper (1983a), Haastrup and Phillipson (1983) and Riley (1984) have suggested that bulding an awareness in learners regarding strategic competence, and providing systematic practice in the use of communication strategies, should form one of the components of a language learning syllabus. A pragmatic attitude to designing ESL courses would be to acknowledge the universality of strategic competence. It is believed that strategic competence in the L2 may not be very different from that in the L1; language courses should therefore recognise and exploit the potential of the learner's strategic competence in the L1, and use it to build bridges to strategic competence in the L2. The development of strategic competence would thus serve as a point of entry to the target language. At present, language courses often move from purely linguistic competence to strategic competence. The present study suggests that it might be more useful to reverse the process; development of strategic competence (developing the learner's facility in using a variety of communication strategies) would thus provide a basis for the development of linguistic competence. Consequently, such a syllabus would focus on the management of learning by the learner.

3.3   Methodology for the Language Classroom

It is also important to consider the relationship between language learning and the ways in which input is made available to the learner. The methodology for the ESL classroom is as integral to the process of language learning, as course content. Several researchers have hinted at a relationship between interaction in the classroom and language learning (Barnes and Todd, 1977; Bailey and Bridges, 1983; Allwright, 1984; Ellis, 1984; Long and Porter, 1985). For instance, Long and Porter (1985) have suggested that groupwork provides learners with more practice, more varied practice and greater opportunities for negotiation of meaning, leading to the adjustment of comprehensible input by the learner. Similarly, Barnes and Todd (1977) suggest that there is an interplay between the cognitive and communicative functions of speech, and that groupwork involves negotiation, which is integral to learning. It has also been suggested that interaction in the classroom builds a positive affective climate, which in turn influences language learning (The Bullock Report, 1975; Moskowitz, 1978; Brown, 1981; Brumfit, 1981).

Fin-dings from the present study suggest that interaction in small groups, is a useful methodology for the language classroom, because it encourages the use of a wide range of communication strategies by the learner. The study

indicates that patterns of interaction used by an individual are closely related to patterns of communication strategy use. Since the use of groupwork as a methodology allows the learner to negotiate for different interactional roles within the group, the process of negotiation provides the learner with exposure to a wide range of communication strategies, and consequently allows for the development of strategic competence in the second language. Learner-learner interaction in the ESL classroom involves the management of learning by the learners, and thus allows for the individualisation of learning.[10] It is in this sense that methodology in the language classroom helps to establish a link between communication and learning.

3.4. Teacher Training

A final implication of the present study is that research concerns need not be divorced from training concerns. The approach advocated in this study suggests a reconsideration of the role of the teacher. The focus of the study is on interaction among learners, and on their management of learning through the development of strategic competence in the second language. It would no longer be relevant, in such an approach, to consider the teacher as the sole source of "knowledge" about the target language, or as the person controlling the interaction. These roles, which were traditionally associated with the teacher, have now been given over

to the learners; the talk of other learners now serves as a resource for language learning, and interaction is shaped through joint negotiation among learners. Consequently, the new role of the teacher is that of "facilitator" (Cortis, 1977) or "learner trainer" (Allwright, 1984). The focus of an ESL programme would no longer be on "teaching"; the teacher would no longer be responsible for teaching the language, but for teaching the learners how to learn, how to adequately exploit their learning potential. Since such an approach involves a shift away from the earlier view of "teaching", it would be necessary to organise training programmes for ESL teachers. The programmes would no longer focus on language forms, but on processes of second language learning and would provide orientation regarding the role of the teacher in the ESL classroom; they would also provide opportunities to teacher trainees to experiment with ways of operationalising their new role in the ESL classroom.

4. CONCLUSION

The present study has attempted to identify patterns of communication strategy use by ESL learners. The frame of reference for the use of communication strategies in the ESL context was provided by emphasising the interactionist and the ethnographic perspectives to the notion of communicative competence. Communication strategies were considered to be the outcome of the learner's strategic competence, involving

effective selection from a range of communicative options,

manipulation of resources, and interaction. The study traced

the range, frequency and patterns of use of communication

strategies by individual learners, in relation to learner

profiles based on communicative competence in English, self-

rating on communicative competence, coping strategies in

dealing with situations in everyday life, and patterns of

interaction within the peer group. Findings from the study

revealed that the learners, regardless of their level of

communicative competence in English, had a wide range of

communication strategies at their disposal. Individual

differences among learners were reflected in differences in

the frequency of use of various communication strategies; the

learners' use of communication strategies formed clusters

which could be related to a continuum of communicative com-

petence, as well as to a continuum of interactional skills.

Finally, the study focussed on the interactionist perspective

as central to the process of second language learning in the

ESL context. It was felt that strategic competence develops

as a result of the process of interaction; this suggested

that communication (which involves the use of various communi-

cation strategies) leads to language learning. A shift is con-

sequently proposed in pedagogic concerns : it is suggested

that the central objective of ESL courses in terms of syllabus

design, classroom methodology and teacher training, should be

the development of strategic competence, by allowing for frequent and varied use of communication strategies in the ESL classroom.

FOOTNOTES

1.   Cf. Naiman et al. (1978) and Saville - Troike (1984).

2.   Cf. Gardner and Lambert (1969).

3.   For a discussion of learning styles, see Maley (1983).

4.   The influence of the experimental design on the learners' use of communication strategies, has also been suggested by Faerch (1984).

5.   See also the discussions in Bialystok (1983), Haastrup and Phillipson (1983) and Harley and Swain (1984).

6.   Cf. Barnes and Todd (1977) and Fraser, Rintell and Walters (1980).

7.   Cf. Hatch (1978).

8.   Cf. Ellis (1984, 1985).

9.   Cf. Ellis (1984).

10. Cf. Hughes (1983), Allwright (1984), Holec (1985), Riley (1985a).