Towards a Better Use of Speaking Strategies to Improve the Speaking skill

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Abstract

The speaking skill is one of the most important skills to acquire when one learns a foreign language. However, many foreign language learners find that skill very difficult because it requires a great deal of production on their part. Therefore, many studies in the field of foreign language acquisition research have investigated the role of the language learning strategies and have revealed that they greatly contribute to facilitating and improving the foreign language learning. Many of these researchers have focused on those strategies that are effective in helping learners to become self-reliant and to achieve communicative competence in speaking the target language. In this respect, the present paper aims at identifying the required strategies for the development of competencies in English as a foreign language and at analysing whether or not the communicative activities carried out by 2AS Algerian pupils (represented by a sample of 50 pupils from a secondary school in Annaba) encourage the learners to make use of speaking strategies which would in turn help them to develop their communicative competence.

ملخص

التعبير الشفوي أحد أهم المهارات الواجب اكتسابها في إطار تعلم اللغة الأجنبية، غير أن العديد من متعلمي اللغات الأجنبية يجدون أن هذه المهارة صعبة للغاية لأنها تتطلب منهم أنتاجا غزيرا، ولذا تناول العديد من الدراسات في ميدان اكتساب اللغات دور استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة وبينت أن هذه الأخيرة تسهم بشكل كبير في تسهيل تعلم اللغة وتحسينه، وقد ركز بعض الباحثين بشكل خاص على تلك الاستراتيجيات التي تدعم استقلالية المتعلم وتحققالكفاءة التواصلية في الكلام باللغة المراد اكتسابها. وفي هذا الصدد يهدف هذا البحث إلى تشخيص الاستراتيجيات المطلوبة لتطوير كفاءات في إتقان الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية ومعرفة ما إذا كانت الأنشطة التواصلية التي يقوم بها تلاميذ السنة الثانية ثانوي في الجزائر (ممثلين في عينة من خمسين تلميذ وتلميذة في إحدى ثانويات مدينة عنابة) تشجع التلاميذ على استعمال استراتيجيات التكلم التي ستساعدهم بدورها في تطوير كفاءتهم التواصلية.

Introduction

Research on learning strategies in second language acquisition was the result of a general preoccupation with identifying the characteristics of successful learners. Focus on the 'good language learner' by researchers in the field has made it possible to identify strategies reported by students or observed in language learning studies that seem to be conducive to effective learning. Efforts made in this respect have shown that students make use of learning strategies in the process of second language learning and have made it possible to describe and clarify these learning strategies. (O'Malley and Chamot 1990)

Definition

It is useful to go back to the origin of the word 'strategy' to better understand the meaning of 'learning strategy'. This word has a Greek origin 'strategia' meaning *generalship* or *the art of war* (Oxford 1990).

'Tactics' is another word that is related to strategies: Tactics are tools to achieve the success of strategies. These two words are sometimes used interchangeably. They share some basic characteristics: planning, competition, conscious manipulation and movement towards a goal.

The word strategy has become very influential in the field of education where it has renounces its aggressive and competitive aspects and where it has taken on a new shape: 'learning strategies'. Oxford (1990: 8) states that 'learning strategies are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information'. This definition can further be expanded by saying that 'learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations' (ibid:8)

Learning strategies aim at facilitating learning and are intentional on the part of the learner. The goal of strategy use is 'to affect the learner's motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes or integrates new knowledge'. (Weinstein and Mayer 1986: 315). This general description may apply to the following operations: centring one's attention on specific elements in the new information, analyzing and controlling information during the process of language acquisition, organizing and elaborating on the new information during the encoding process, evaluating the learning after its completion or convincing oneself of the success of learning in order to overcome anxiety. (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). On the basis of this description, one can say that language learning strategies have both and affective and conceptual basis, and they may affect the learning of simple tasks such as learning vocabulary, or complex tasks such as comprehension or language production.

Importance of learning strategies

Learning strategies play an important role in developing communicative competence as they are used as tools for active, self-directed involvement. Students use them as steps that enhance their learning. Thus, if they are appropriately used, they will lead to improved proficiency and greater self-confidence.

Features of language learning strategies

(Oxford 1990) describes a number of features of language learning strategies that further illustrate their importance:

1. Communicative competence as the main goal

All appropriate language learning strategies aim at achieving communicative competence as their major aim. The achievement of this aim certainly requires the use of meaningful and contextualized language by learners to carry out realistic interaction. The effective use of learning strategies will enable the learners to participate actively in such authentic and realistic communication.

A number of different language learning strategies interact and contribute to the achievement of communicative competence. The following will illustrate how this happens:

- **Metacognitive** (beyond the cognitive) **strategies** are useful in that they enable learners to control their cognition and to focus, plan, and evaluate their progress towards the achievement of communicative competence.
- **Affective strategies:** they help learners develop self–confidence and perseverance to involve themselves actually in language learning. This is a condition for the attainment of communicative competence.
- **Social strategies:** they ensure more interaction and positive understanding which constitute important qualities that help achieve communicative competence.
- **Cognitive strategies:** Learning to be competent in using a language is helped by the use of certain cognitive strategies such as analysing and some memory strategies such as key word technique.

- **Compensation strategies:** they contribute to the development of communicative competence because they help learners to overcome knowledge gaps and to carry on authentic communication.

2. New roles for teachers
The fact that learners take more responsibility for their own learning thanks to the use of language learning strategies implies that the teacher's roles will subsequently change. The teacher, thus, is no more an authority figure who controls everything that goes on in the classroom because such an attitude will hamper communication in any classroom, especially the language classroom. The teacher is rather a facilitator, a helper, a guide, a consultant, an advisor, a coordinator and a co-communicator.

3. Problem orientation
Language learning strategies are tools that are used by the learner to solve a problem, to accomplish a task, to achieve an objective. For example, memory strategies are used because there is something that must be remembered.

4. Action based
Language learning strategies are based on action. They are in fact specific actions or behaviours that learners perform to increase their learning. Taking notes, planning for a language task, self- evaluating and guessing intelligently are examples of such actions.

5. Involvement beyond just cognition
Language learning strategies are not related only to cognitive functions. They also involve metacognitive functions such as planning, evaluating and arranging one's own learning; and emotional (affective), social and other functions as well.

6. Direct and indirect support to learning
A type of learning strategies is called direct strategies and they consist of a direct learning and use of the subject matter, namely a new language. On the other hand such strategies as metacognitive, affective and social strategies are indirectly involved in learning. They are known as indirect strategies. Both direct and indirect strategies are equally important for language learning and they support each other.

1. Degree of observability
It is not always easy to observe learning strategies because some of them are mental operations, others are used outside the classroom in informal naturalistic situations that cannot be observed by the teacher.

2. Level of consciousness
Some researchers suggest that learning strategies reflect conscious efforts by learners to take control of their learning. However, learning strategies can become automatic after much practice and use. Oxford (1990) suggests that it is possible to help learners become more aware of the strategies they use and to assess their utility through strategy assessment and training.

3. Teachability

Learning strategies are easy to teach and modify through strategy training which is an important aspect of language education. Strategy training helps learners know why and when specific strategies are important, how to use these strategies and how to transfer them to new situations. Strategy training, therefore, helps learners become more conscious of strategy use and teaches them how to use appropriate strategies.

4. Flexibility

Language learning strategies are flexible. The way learners choose, combine and sequence strategies is subject to much individuality.

5. Factors influencing strategy choice

Degrees of awareness, stage of learning, task requirements, teacher expectations, age, sex, nationality, ethnicity, general learning style, personality traits, motivation level, and purpose for learning the language are all factors that affect the choice of strategies.

Classifications of language learning strategies

Many classifications of language learning strategies have been made by different scholars. The present paper deals with some of these classifications in what follows:

Tarone's classification (1981)

Tarone (1981 cited by Chamot and O'Malley 1990) classifies language learning strategies into learning, communication and production strategies. According to Tarone, research on learning strategies has focused on language acquisition whereas research on production and communication strategies has rather focused on language use. In this respect she maintains that learning, communication and production strategies have different aims:

•   **Learning strategies** aim at developing linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language. Use of these strategies is motivated by the desire to learn the target language rather than the desire to communicate.

•   **Production strategies** aim at achieving communication goals. They are motivated by the desire to use the language system efficiently and clearly but without much effort such as the use of prefabricated patterns.

•   **Communication strategies** aim at catering for the failure in realizing a language production goal. They are therefore useful in that they help the learner negotiate meaning with others, especially when linguistic structures or sociolinguistic rules are not shared between a second language learner and a native speaker of that language (eg. Circumlocution, mime, or message abandonment)

Although communication strategies are believed to be the result of a failure to realize a language production goal, they may also include a psycholinguistic solution to the communication problem other than a

mere negotiation of meaning. Such psycholinguistic solutions could be the reduction of language complexity to avoid errors, and expressions of the communication goal differently while keeping the same level of complexity (Faerch and Kasper (1984) cited in Chamot and O'Malley 1990)

Rubin's classification (1987)

Rubin distinguishes between strategies that directly contribute to language learning and those that indirectly do so. These strategies are of three types, learning strategies, communicative strategies and social strategies:

- **Learning strategies:** They are of two main types and they directly contribute to the construction of the language system by the learner. These two types are cognitive learning strategies and metacognitive learning strategies.
- **Communicative strategies:** They focus on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying the speaker's intention. Thus they are less directly related to language learning. These strategies are used by learners when the language they possess fails them in communicating their messages or when they cannot make themselves understood by a speaker.
- **Social strategies:** They are used in activities which offer the learners opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge. These strategies provide exposure to the foreign language but they contribute only indirectly to learning because they do not lead directly to obtaining, storing, retrieving and using the language. (Rubin and Wenden 1987).

Oxford's classification (1990)

Oxford's classification is not greatly different from Rubin's, but in fact it is more elaborate. According to Oxford (1990), language learning strategies fall into direct and indirect strategies. Each of these two categories consists of a group of strategies:

Direct strategies: Direct strategies (memory, cognitive and metacognitive) operate specifically and directly on the second language material to facilitate its storage and recall from memory but each one of them operates differently:

- **Memory strategies** such as grouping or using imagery help students store and retrieve new information.
- **Cognitive strategies** such as summarizing or reasoning deductively help students understand and produce new language by many different means.
- **Compensation strategies** like guessing or using synonyms allow learners to use the language despite their frequent large gaps in knowledge.

Indirect strategies: They are very important to language learning though they do not operate on the second language itself. They are used by students in order to place themselves in positive situations. They include

attempts to structure the learning process, create positive affect and seek social support. Examples of activities included in this group are keeping a diary, seeking practice opportunities, asking for error correction…etc. These strategies are:

- **Metacognitive strategies:** They help learners control their own cognition; that is, to coordinate the learning process by using functions such as centring, arranging, planning and evaluating.
- **Affective strategies:** They help to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes.
- **Social strategies:** They help students learn through interaction with others.

Both direct and indirect strategies are believed to be useful for language learning because they engage the learner with the material at hand at a deep cognitive level which improves verbal learning (Anderson 1980 cited in Gardner and McIntyre (1992)). This is clearly true for direct strategies whose purpose is to improve memory and comprehension processes, but this is also equally applicable to indirect strategies. In fact, it has been proved that language anxiety negatively affects cognitive resources that might otherwise be applicable to the task of language learning. Therefore, when a strategy reduces anxiety, it gives more opportunities to the learners to efficiently use their existing cognitive resources (ibid).

Classification of language learning strategies according to the language skills

Many scholars have made a classification according to the four language skills suggesting that each of these skills can be developed by the use of a set of learning strategies such as Harris (1997) and Oxford (1990). Therefore, there are listening strategies, speaking strategies, reading strategies and writing strategies.

Since the focus of this paper is the speaking strategies used by the Algerian secondary school pupils, then a brief account of speaking strategies will be made after giving their definition:

> Speaking strategies are techniques that a speaker uses to deal with breakdowns in communication especially those that result from an imperfect mastery of the foreign language. Examples of such strategies are the use of mime, gesture or paraphrase. (Graham 1997: 174)

In general terms, speaking strategies are resorted to by learners when they want to clarify the meanings they want to transmit in oral interactions. By so doing, they improve their interactional abilities. Consequently, they become self-reliant, self-confident and responsible for their own learning.

Some common speaking strategies

A fairly large list of categories of speaking strategies was presented and investigated by Tarone (1977, cited by McDonough 1995: 23) and by other researchers. These strategies fall under three categories, *paraphrase, borrowing* and *avoidance.*

Paraphrase: three speaking strategies fall under the category of paraphrase:

- **Approximation:** It consists of the use of the same target language vocabulary item or structure which the learner knows is not correct but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker.
- **Word coinage:** It consists of inventing a new word in order to communicate a desired object or idea.
- **Circumlocution:** It is an effective speaking strategy that helps learners to carry on an interaction. It consists of describing the characteristics or elements of the objects or actions instead of using the appropriate target language item or structure.

Borrowing: Four speaking strategies fall under the category of borrowing:

- **Literal translation:** The learner translates word for word from the native language.
- **Language switch:** the learner may mix two or more languages within the same interactional interchange in a attempt to carry on a conversation. He uses the native language term without any translation.
- **Appeal for assistance:** This is a social speaking strategy used to maintain control over interaction in which the learner asks for the correct term, or correct pronunciation.
- **Mime:** The learner may communicate in the classroom by using gestures or mime when he is short of the appropriate word (s) to convey a specific meaning.

Avoidance: Two strategies fall under this category:

- **Topic avoidance:** The learner avoids topics or concepts that he does not have the appropriate language for so as not to face problems.
- **Message abandonment:** This strategy is used to compensate for the learner's limitations in speaking. The learner prefers to stop in mid-utterance when he feels unable to continue because of a limitation in speaking.

Other speaking strategies are:

Taking risks wisely: This speaking strategy reveals the learner's courage in using the target language despite the possibility of failure. In this strategy the learner speaks the target language even if there is a possibility of making mistakes in front of the whole class. (Oxford 1990)

Self-encouragement: This strategy aims at minimizing anxiety; increasing self- confidence and creating a positive image of oneself in the others' eyes. During an interaction, learners use self-encouragement to incite themselves to carry on speaking in the target language.

Paraphrase: This speaking strategy is used to compensate for the lack of words or the limitations of the learners' vocabulary in the target language.

Time gaining: Learners may resort to the use of some hesitation expressions when they want to take time to think of a lacking word in order to carry on a conversation. This speaking strategy is important because it permits to keep communication channels open. Learners can do so by breathing or by using some expressions as 'ah, um, oh, boh…'

Classroom speaking activities

The present paper aims at identifying the learning strategies employed by Algerian secondary school pupils in dealing with speaking activities in the English language class. Therefore, it is worthwhile to begin with a concise description of the speaking skill followed by a short overview of some examples of speaking activities.

The speaking skill is among the most difficult skills to teach and many teachers realize throughout their teaching experience that the speaking fluency is the most difficult to develop by learners. The development of this skill requires many conditions in addition to linguistic and cultural knowledge. Some of these conditions are:

• A positive classroom atmosphere which provides opportunities for oral communication to take place and where learners feel free to engage in such communication.

• Clearly stated objectives to be achieved by the speaking activity so that pupils can think of the ideas they wish to express.

• Motivating topics and activities that enhance the learners' participation.

• Knowledge of the functional use of English

• A variety of learning activities including manipulative drills, guided conversation, communicative practice and free oral work such as discussions, debates, skills competitions, etc…

• Contextualised language in that the activity takes into account who is speaking, with who, where and why.

These requirements are not always present and this may account for the fact that the speaking skill is frequently neglected or often inappropriately taught in English classes (Al-Mutawa and Kailani 1989). Instead of developing the speaking skill, the common practice usually consists of placing emphasis on drilling patterns, reading passages and answering comprehension questions. In such situations, which are largely controlled by the teacher, the pupils speak very little English and when they do they usually simply answer questions asked by the teacher. This gives little opportunities for the learners to employ speaking strategies effective for the development of communicative competence.

Objectives of teaching the speaking skill

In teaching the speaking skill the leaner is expected to manipulate the elements of language, i.e., the lexical items, syntactic patterns, and sentence types orally, and select when, how, and to whom it is appropriate to use

these elements.(the style of the language in which the learner will express himself/herself, the register, the levels of discourse and the emotional overtones. (Rivers 1968)

Communicative activities

They aim at improving the speaking ability. They put learners in situations in which they can use and practice the target language in a way that would enable them to enhance their communication. Examples of such activities are:

- **Role play:** It consists of assigning fictitious roles to learners in which they can imitate situations that can be encountered outside the classroom. It is thus an authentic task that replicates real life language and which encourages the use of the target language. Because of this, it provides learners with concrete problems for which they will put in real use their acquired knowledge. It includes the elements of real-life conversation such as repetition, interruption, hesitations, changes of topics, facial expressions, gestures ...etc. Learners work collaboratively. Therefore, role play is of great value because it enables the learners to develop their socio-linguistic competence (by using the appropriate language in the appropriate context).

- **Dialogues:** In language classes, there is an extensive use of dialogues. They are very useful because they give each partner sufficient opportunities to use the target language orally. They may be used as the starting point for initiating learners to communicate creatively and freely in the target language.

- **Interviews:** They can develop different skills and motivate the foreign language learners. The latter can make them inside the classroom with one another or outside the classroom with other people.

- **Story telling/completion:** This activity motivates the learners to interact orally in such a way as to enhance their language proficiency. It develops creative thinking in learners who are required to retell a story narrated by their teachers or imagine their own stories. Each member gives part of the story and the next one carries it on until the story is completed. Through this highly motivating activity learners can develop their interactional abilities thanks to the use of some interactional strategies such as paraphrasing.

- **Discussion:** This is an effective activity that gives the learners an opportunity to express agreement or disagreement about a given topic. It can develop in learners skills such as critical thinking and quick decision-making. It also teaches them to express themselves and defend their opinions politely and to respect others' views.

- **Reporting:** This activity stems from a previous reading activity in the sense that learners are asked to report to the class materials which they have already read at home. But they can also report events related to their own daily life experiences. It should be noted that reporting should not be a mere reading aloud activity, but it should consist or referring to

notes and cards made by the learners themselves to be real speaking activities.

- **Picture description:** In this activity learners describe a picture given to them either individually or in groups. This encourages public speaking and fosters learners' creativity and imagination. Another type of this activity is 'find differences' which enhances learners' participation. Students work in groups and discuss similarities and differences between two pictures with some slight differences.

- **Problem solving:** This is an important activity that places learners in situations where they have to solve problems in such a way as to develop their thinking skills. The problem should be placed within a context that reflects the learners' real life. They have to work in small groups to solve a problem situation initiated by the learner.

- **Information gap:** In this activity, a student provides another with information that he does not have. Oral language is the means for carrying out this task. It calls for specific strategies such as asking for assistance, mime and cooperation.

The field work

If the fore mentioned speaking strategies are appropriately used by the learners in performing these speaking strategies, they will certainly enhance their speaking abilities and hence communicative competence. For the sake of investigating whether the learners make an appropriate and beneficial use of language learning strategies in carrying out communicative activities in the classroom, eight questions were asked to fifty 2AS pupils from a secondary school in Annaba. The pupils were chosen for no other reason than easiness of access.

(Note: Specialised terminology was explained to the pupils.)

Q1: Do you often speak English in the English language class?

a. Yes:	18
b. No:	32

Q2: If yes, in which case(s) do you do so?
The different answers were summarized as follows:

a. To answer the teacher's questions	07
b. To answer the questions in the activities	11

Q3: If no, why?
The answers were summarized as follows:

a. Speaking in English is difficult	19
b. I don't like the English lessons	09
c. I have nothing to say	04

Only 18 out of 50 pupils say that they often speak English in the English language class. In the following question, they explain in which cases they do so. Some of them say they speak English when they answer the

teacher's questions and 11 say they do so when they answer the questions in the activities. Both answers reveal that speaking activities are not appropriately practiced since they do not to real communication but are rather carried out in the form of automatic responses to questions. This does not contribute to the development of the speaking skill and does not give pupils opportunities to make good use of speaking strategies to promote their learning.

In answering question3, the pupils who said that they do not often speak English in the English class (32 pupils) give their reasons. Nineteen of them claim that speaking English is difficult. This further confirms the idea mentioned above that the speaking skill is not appropriately practiced. If it were, then it would have provided the learners with sufficient practice that would habituate them to the oral use of English so that they would not find it difficult anymore. Nine pupils reveal that they do not speak English in the class because they do not like this language and four others say that it is because they have nothing to say. Both answers converge to the same idea that in the absence of clearly stated objectives to be achieved by the speaking activity, the learners will neither be interested, nor find things to say in the classroom. This indicates a lack of motivation and implies absence of use of language learning strategies, especially if we know that among the factors influencing strategy use are motivational level and purpose for learning the language. (Oxford 1990)

Q4: Do you think that speaking activities are:

a. Interesting?	21
b. Not interesting?	29

The pupils' answers to this question confirm those of the first one. Indeed, 21 pupils think that speaking activities are interesting while 29 think that they are not. Interest provides learners with a genuine desire to use the language for communication and to employ speaking strategies to develop communicative competence. In the absence of interest such conditions are not available. Consequently, there are little possibilities for using speaking strategies.

Q5: When you practice role play, do you:

a. Invent new words	07
b. Translate word for word from Arabic	11
c. Use mime and gestures?	23
d. None of them?	09

Questions 5, 6 and 7 aim at finding out whether the pupils employ speaking strategies to carry out speaking activities. If they do so, this will enhance their speaking skill.

Answers to question 5 show that (23) pupils use mime and gestures when they practice role play. This is a paralinguistic communicative strategy which helps learners make themselves understood. However, it does not really contribute to developing the speaking skill as it does not involve language. Eleven pupils translate word for word from Arabic and seven others invent new words. Literal translation is not always successful and meaningful but is sometimes works and therefore it may help the learner communicate his ideas. The same thing can be said for word coinage. However, nine pupils say that they none of these strategies in practicing role play. This does not mean that they do not use any strategy at all (they may use others). But if this is not the case then this would signal a serious hindrance to communication since speaking strategies play an important role in enhancing the speaking skill.

Q6: When you practice interviews, do you:

a. Seek for the assistance of the teacher and classmates?	09
b. Mix Arabic and English?	17
c. Avoid topics, words or concepts which you do not have language for?	21
d. None of them?	03

The answers to this question indicate that the majority of the pupils (21 out of 50) simply avoid topics, words or concepts which they do not have language for. This strategy is used by learners to avoid embarrassment and problems. It is useful as it helps learners preserve their self-esteem. However, if taken to extremes it may hinder communication. Seventeen pupils mix Arabic and English when they practice interviews (code switching). This strategy is used by learners to carry on a language exchange in case they lack the appropriate words in the target language. It may be helpful in communication especially if the both speaker and listener share the same native language, in the hope that code switching will gradually disappear to give way to a fully target language exchange. Nine pupils seek for the assistance of the teacher and classmates when practicing interviews. It consists of asking for the correct words, correct translation or correct pronunciation. It helps learners improve their language proficiency and enhance their communicative skills. Three pupils use no strategy at all. The same comment made about the learners who use no strategy in the previous question can be made by these pupils.

Q7: When you participate in a class discussions, do you:

a . Take risks wisely?	02
b. Encourage yourself to speak?	02
c. Abandon the message completely or partially?	27
d. None of them?	19

Taking risks wisely is a very important speaking strategy that reveals the learners' courage to use the target language despite the possibility of making mistakes in front of the teacher and the classmates. It is

among the most conducive strategies to communication. Encouraging oneself to speak is another useful strategy that minimizes anxiety, increases self-confidence and creates a positive self-image in the eyes of oneself and of the others. The result is enhanced speaking abilities and therefore communicative competence. Unfortunately these two speaking strategies used by only four pupils (2 pupils for each). On the other hand, 27 pupils completely or partially abandon the message. This strategy is used to compensate for learners' limitations in speaking. Learners' limitation in speaking is the result of lack of practice of speaking which may be explained by lack of interest in speaking activities as was revealed by question3. Nineteen pupils do not use any of these strategies. This may reveal that this type of activity is not practiced at all in the classroom since 18 pupils have already said that they speak English in the classroom only to answer the teacher's questions or the questions in the activities (Q2). This confirms again that the activities dealt with in the class do not encourage communication and consequently do not encourage the use of speaking strategies.

Q8: When you report a material that you have read, do you:

a. Use extracts from the material as they are?	34
b. Paraphrase the material?	03
c. Use circumlocution?	05
d. None of them?	08

A striking majority of the pupils (34 out of 50) say that when they report material that they have read, they simply use extracts from the material as they are. This is not a learning strategy, but it has been incorporated with learning strategies as a criterion to check the use of other strategies. Unfortunately, the majority of the pupils have opted for it. It seems to be the easiest thing to be done and reveals the lack of communicative abilities in the learners due to the lack of the use of speaking strategies and incentives to do so (teachers' encouragement, interesting speaking activities…etc.). Three pupils paraphrase the material. Paraphrasing is a useful strategy that compensates for the limitations of the learners' vocabulary and language elements in the target language. It opens up ways for the learners to manipulate language according to their own capacities and therefore contributes to enhancing their speaking skill and communicative competence. Five pupils use circumlocution. This strategy consists of describing the characteristic of the elements in question instead of using the exact word or structure. It is useful because even though the learners lack the exact word or structure, they are able to use turnabout means communicatively to transmit their meanings across. This will enhance their communicative skills. Eight pupils do not use any of these strategies which indicates that they do not practice this activity at all (because if they practiced it, they could at least have copied extracts from the material as

they are). This confirms the lack of interest in speaking activities mentioned earlier.

Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of the learners' answers to the questionnaire is that the activities dealt with in the class do not encourage communication and consequently do not encourage the use of speaking strategies.

There is not enough interest in speaking activities. Absence of motivation, that creates interest, negatively influences the realization of these activities and does not encourage the use of speaking strategies. By definition, language learning strategies are used by **all** learners as tools for self improvement, but in case they are not appropriately used they need to be taught and this is the responsibility of teachers. According to Oxford (199) language learning strategies can become automatic after much use and practice. They are also easy to teach and modify through strategy training. The latter helps learners know why and when specific strategies are important, how to use these strategies and how to transfer them to new situations.

Teachers need also to motivate the learners to speak English by varying speaking activities and by clarifying the objectives to be achieved by these activities to give learners good reasons to speak and to use adequate speaking strategies to do so in such a way as to develop their communicative competence.

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