

**STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY EFL ENGLISH MAJORS  
FOR COPING WITH COMMUNICATION  
BREAKDOWNS**

**Quyên Bui Thi Thuc**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Studies**

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กลวิธีที่ใช้ในการแก้ปัญหาคำสื่อสารของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ  
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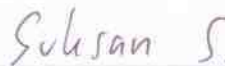
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การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ 1) เพื่อศึกษาความถี่ของกลวิธีการสื่อสารของนักศึกษาสาขาวิชา  
ภาษาอังกฤษของมหาวิทยาลัยในภาคใต้ของประเทศสาธารณรัฐสังคมนิยมเวียดนาม 2) เพื่อศึกษา  
การใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารของนักศึกษา โดยแบ่งตามเพศ ทักษะคิดต่อการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ ภูมิภาค  
โรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย โอกาสของการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาอังกฤษ และประเภทของสาขาวิชา  
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และใช้ไม่บ่อย

กลุ่มตัวอย่างในการวิจัยประกอบด้วยนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 3 และ 4 สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษที่  
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จำนวน 995 คน ได้จากวิธีการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบแบ่งชั้น สำหรับการหาค่าความเชื่อมั่นของ  
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ผลการศึกษาพบว่า นักศึกษาที่เรียนสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเป็นวิชาเอกในมหาวิทยาลัยที่  
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คือ กลวิธีการส่งสาร ไปยังคู่สนทนา (SGM) และกลวิธีการรับรู้สารจากคู่สนทนา (SUM) นักศึกษาที่  
มีทัศนคติต่อการพูดภาษาอังกฤษแตกต่างกันมีความถี่ของการใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารที่ต่างกััน  
อย่างมีนัยสำคัญ นักศึกษาที่มีทัศนคติต่อการพูดภาษาอังกฤษเชิงบวกมีการใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสาร  
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ความแตกต่างของทางเลือกของการใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารกับตัวแปร ด้านเพศ ภูมิภาค ภูมิภาค  
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ภาษาอังกฤษ พบเฉพาะในหมวด SGM และ SUM และในกลวิธีเฉพาะ

ในช่วงที่สอง สัมภาษณ์นักศึกษาจำนวน 44 คน ที่ได้จากการสุ่มแบบเจาะจง โดยใช้แบบสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้เทคนิคการกำหนดรหัส จากการสัมภาษณ์ พบว่า ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการใช้กลวิธีการสื่อสารทั้งกลวิธีที่ใช้บ่อยและใช้ไม่บ่อย คือ ความเชื่อส่วนบุคคล ความชอบส่วนบุคคล ปัจจัยด้านจิตวิทยา ประสิทธิภาพของกลวิธี และความสามารถทางภาษา



QUYEN BUI THI THUC : STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY EFL ENGLISH  
MAJORS FOR COPING WITH COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS.

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COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES/ COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS/  
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The present study aims (1) to investigate the frequency of communication strategies reported being employed by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam; (2) to examine whether choices of communication strategy use vary significantly by student's gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration; (3) to examine patterns of a significant variation in the frequency of students' report of communication strategy use at different levels with reference to the five variables mentioned above; and (4) to explore why students reported employing certain communication strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently.

The research participants were third- and fourth-year English majors studying at 11 universities in the South of Vietnam in academic year 2011. Two main phases for data collection were conducted almost simultaneously. The communication strategy questionnaire (CSQ) and the English speaking attitude questionnaire (ESAQ) were used in Phase 1 with 995 respondents sampled through the stratified random sampling method. For the internal consistency of the CSQ, the Alpha Coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) or Cronbach Alpha was used with the estimate value of 0.90. The statistical methods

employed for data analysis included descriptive statistics, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and the Chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ).

The findings reveal that English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam, on the whole, reported moderate frequency of communication strategy use. This level of frequency was also found in the reported use of strategies under the two categories, namely the strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor (SGM), and the strategies for understanding the message (SUM). Significant differences were found between the frequency of students' reported use of communication strategies and students' attitudes towards speaking English. Students with positive attitude towards speaking English reported significantly greater overall strategy use than did those with negative attitude. Significant variations in students' choice of communication strategies according the other variables, namely students' gender, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration, were found only within the SGM and SUM categories, and in individual strategy items.

In Phase 2, 44 students selected through the purposive sampling method as well as on the students' convenience and availability participated in the one-on-one semi-structured interview. The obtained data were analyzed with coding techniques. Five factors: personal beliefs, personal preference, psychological factor, the strategy's effectiveness, and improvement of language ability were found to be the reasons why the students reported using certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently.

School of Foreign Languages

Student's Signature\_\_\_\_\_

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Advisor's Signature\_\_\_\_\_

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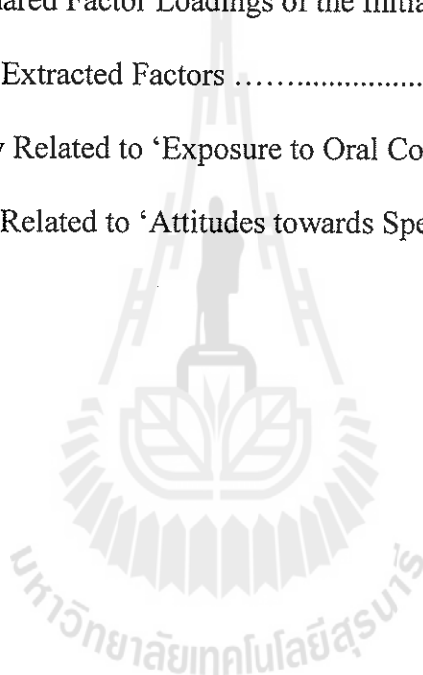
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANCOs	analytical conceptual Strategies
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CpSs	compensatory strategies
CSQ	Communication Strategy Questionnaire
CS(s)	communication strategy(ies)
EFL/ESL	English as a foreign/ second language
ESAQ	English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire
ESP	English for specific purposes concentration
FL	foreign language
HCMC	Hochiminh City
HI	high English proficiency
HUFLIT	Hochiminh City University of Foreign Language and Information Technology
HOCOs	holistic conceptual strategies
LE	low English proficiency

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (Continued)**

LLAQ	Language Learning Attitude Questionnaire
L1	first language
L2	second language
L3	third language
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
ME	moderate English proficiency
NNSE	non-native speaker of English
Non-ESP	English for general purposes concentration
N.S	not significant
NSE	native speaker of English
OCSI	Oral Communication Strategy Inventory
S.D.	standard deviation
SGM	strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor category
SILL	Strategy Inventory of Language Learning
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SUM	strategies for understanding the message category

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (Continued)**

SUT	Suranaree University of Technology
TL	target language
VWO	a type of Dutch secondary school prepares pupils for entrance into a university





# **CHAPTER 1**

## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Chapter**

This chapter first introduces the background to and context for the present investigation. It presents the definitions of terms used in the present study. Then, the background of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam is addressed. This part also includes the background of English major programs at the university level in Vietnam. It is followed by the research purposes and the benefits of the present study. The chapter ends with the outline of the thesis.

Nowadays, English has become the language of international communication. It has been used by many people for professional contacts, academic studies and business activities. However, with regard to the ability to communicate in English, Crystal (2003) estimates that approximately a quarter of the world's population has only reasonable competence in conversation. Therefore, the need for English language learners to be able to communicate effectively in real-life settings has been and should be a concern of English language teaching and learning. In response to that need, communicative language teaching has come into being; and thus far, it has played an important role in language teaching because it claims to help to develop language learners' communicative ability. With communicative language teaching, learners are expected to efficiently express their ideas in the target language, and to successfully achieve their goal for communication in real situations (Lightbown and Spada, 1999).

That is to say, their communicative competence, which includes factors required for communication: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence, is expected to improve under this approach (Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1991).

According to Mariani (2010), strategic competence plays a decisive role in communicative competence. It helps language learners to communicate successfully despite the difficulties due to “performance variables or insufficient competence” (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 10). Moreover, it also works when the learners want to enhance the effectiveness of their communication (Swain, 1983). As Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) put it, it is the underdevelopment of strategic competence that causes the lack of fluency and conversation skills which students often complain about.

Strategic competence, according Tarone and Yule (1989), is closely related to communication strategies. It can be observed through the use of communication strategies. In other words, strategic competence is considered as the ability to use communication strategies either to deal with communication breakdowns or to promote communication effectiveness.

As stated by Dörnyei and Scott (1997), the notion of communication strategies has been introduced since the early 1970s due to the mismatch between L2 learners’ linguistic knowledge and the communicative intentions. This mismatch results in cases where attempts are made in order to tackle the difficulties or breakdowns in oral communications (Corder, 1983; and Dörnyei and Scott, 1997). Moreover, according to Littlemore (2003), communication strategies are the processes taken by the language learners for the purpose of enhancement of the effectiveness of their communication. Astoundingly, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) assert that some learners

are believed to perform communication successfully with only one hundred words as they rely mostly on communication strategies.

Furthermore, communication strategies help language learners to become much more confident in communication. According to Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991), this may be because they can control the conversation even if something unexpected happens. This is in line with Zheng (2004, p. 72) who indicates that “there are stronger voices stating that strategic competence as a means to make students confident, flexible, and effective in communication, is feasible and to some extent inevitable”.

Communication strategies can be identified as learners’ attempts to maintain the conversation when faced with difficulties or to enhance the effectiveness of the conversation. These attempts involve the use of, for example, paraphrase, approximation, word coinage, literal translation, language switch, appeal for assistance, mime, and fillers or hesitation devices. They help the two interlocutors to reach their goal of communication despite the inefficiency in the knowledge of linguistic, sociolinguistic, or discourse rules.

So far, communication strategies have attracted many researchers and language teachers’ interests. A number of research works on communication strategies have been conducted. Some of them focused on the nature of communication strategies, namely, the definitions, identifications and classifications. Examples of this group are: Tarone (1977); Poulisse (1987); Bialystok (1990); Dörnyei (1995); Lam (2006); Nakatani (2006); and Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011). Other research works involve empirical studies which investigated the use of communication strategies in relation to different factors, such as communicative tasks,

learners' general language proficiency, or types of program. Corrales and Call (1985), Liskin-Gasparro (1996); Wannaruk, (2003); Rabab'ah and Bulut (2007); Paramasivam (2009); and Dong and Fang-pen (2010) are among these studies. Besides, the teaching of communication strategies is also a topic of research in the field of communication strategies. Experimental studies, for instance, Brett (2001), Nakatani (2005), Prinyajarn (2007), Lam (2010), and Kongsom (2010) have been carried out, proving that communication strategy instruction could be possible and beneficial. They also provide pedagogical implications to teachers and course designers so that appropriate actions could be taken to improve learners' oral communicative competence.

However, the available research works on communication strategies have shown that notwithstanding the important role of communication strategies in developing learners' ability in effective oral communication, very few studies have been conducted with Vietnamese students. Besides, no empirical works on communication strategy use have been carried out with English major students in the South of Vietnam. Furthermore, it is revealed that research on the relationship between communication strategies and five factors: gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration has been sparse. Therefore, the present investigation aims to fill the gaps.

## **1.2 Operational Definitions of Key Terms Used in the Present**

### **Investigation**

#### **1.2.1 Communication Strategies**

The term ‘communication strategies’ has been defined as attempts made by EFL English majors in order to deal with oral communication difficulties in getting the intended message across to the interlocutor and understanding the message sent from the interlocutor. They may be employed in pseudo-communication or real-life communication both inside and outside the classroom settings.

#### **1.2.2 Students**

The term ‘students’ refers to third- and fourth- year Vietnamese undergraduate students studying English major at the universities in the South of Vietnam. The students were divided into different groups according to the five independent variables under investigation, namely gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration.

#### **1.2.3 Attitudes towards Speaking English**

‘Attitudes towards speaking English’ and ‘English speaking attitudes’ have been used interchangeably. This term refers to the thought, feeling and emotion that the students have towards speaking English. Students’ ‘attitudes towards speaking English’ were classified into two groups: ‘positive attitude’ and ‘negative attitude’ based on their responses to the speaking English attitude questionnaire.

#### **1.2.4 Types of English Major Concentration**

The term ‘types of English major concentration’ refers to the focus of study under English major that students take from the third year. There are two types of

concentration: ESP and non-ESP. ESP concentration involves English for Tourism, English for Translation and interpretation, English for Business and Commerce, English for Office Management, and English for Science and Technology. Meanwhile, non-ESP concentration deals with English Language Studies or Teacher Training. In the present study, ‘types of English major concentration’ and ‘types of concentration’ have been used interchangeably.

### **1.2.5 High School Background**

‘High school background’ refers to the location of high schools where students attended before they started their university level. This variable was grouped into ‘urban schools’ and ‘rural schools’.

### **1.2.6 Exposure to Oral Communication in English**

‘Exposure to oral communication in English’ refers to the opportunities students can use English to communicate verbally. They may have a conversation in English with their teachers, their peers, or other people. This variable was classified into ‘limited to classroom settings’ and ‘non-limited to classroom settings’.

## **1.3 Background of English Language Learning and Teaching in**

### **Vietnam**

#### **1.3.1 English Language Teaching in Vietnamese Education System**

According to Đỗ (2006), English language teaching rooted in the education of Vietnam under the influence of the American presence during the Vietnam War (1954-1975), while the country fell apart into North and South. During that period, Chinese and Russian were the only two foreign languages taught at schools in the

North. Meanwhile, in the South, English and French were required subjects in secondary and tertiary levels.

In 1975, with the re-unification of the country, the whole educational system used Chinese and Russian as the main foreign languages. The teaching and learning of English and other foreign languages was on the decline. However, after suffering from downfalls in economics for some time, the need to expand business with more countries besides China and the Soviet Union was pinpointed. To cope with the new situation, in 1986 the ĐÔI MÓI policy came into being, reviving the use of English in the whole country (Đỗ, 2006). Since then, the teaching and learning of the English language has been promoted and considered the key to open the world of academic and economic development nowadays. As a result, English has been the foreign language of the first choice for almost all learners.

In 2008, Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg was signed by the Deputy Prime Minister, passing the ‘Teaching and learning of English in the national education system in period 2008-2020’ Project. This project aims to make a complete change in the teaching and learning of English in the national education system, i.e., English is a compulsory subject from the 3rd grade in primary schools to the tertiary level. English has also been one of the four foreign languages (English, French, Russian, and Chinese) for the entrance examination in higher education level. According to Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg (2008), the teaching and learning of foreign language, especially English has always been positively concerned by the Communist Party and the Government. Furthermore, in the Decision, it is emphasized that using a foreign language well and turning it to become Vietnamese people’s strength should be the main goal in education in the period 2008-2020.

In addition, in respect of the objectives stated in the ‘Teaching and learning of English in the national education system between period 2008-2020’ Project, it is necessary that as a social feature of the language teaching and learning, English contests in various forms among universities, colleges and vocational schools should be organized by the Ministry of Education in order to create interesting and practical teaching and learning campaigns. Some aspects of English education should be taken into consideration. These include the pedagogical changes; standardization of teachers of English; employment of technology and up-to-date materials in the curriculum; and attraction of international investments and sponsorships for the teaching of this language. According to the project, in 2020, it is expected that 60,000 English teachers will have accomplished the standardized criteria for qualification. Furthermore, the majority of Vietnamese people who graduate from vocational schools, colleges and universities should have sufficient ability and confidence to use the language independently in communication and to work in multi-lingual and multi-cultural environments.

### **1.3.2 English Major Programs at the University Level in Vietnam**

According to Decision 36/2004/QĐ-BGD&ĐT (2004), the general goal of a bachelor degree in English is to train students to become people who have knowledge, professional skills, political characters, ethics, professional behaviors and health so that they will be able to work efficiently in specialized areas where English is used. This is in accordance with the need for society and economic development in the period of globalization.

Additionally, Decision 36/2004/QĐ-BGD&ĐT (2004) states the specific objectives that help to achieve the prescribed goal. One of these is to enable students



to communicate in English effectively and confidently with native speakers and non-native speakers, using communication skills appropriately in different communicative situations related to common general or professional topics.

As required by the Ministry of Education and Training, all university students in Vietnam have to go through at least the 12-year academic training before entering universities. In most school, foreign language training starts from year 6. Accordingly, the university English majors of the present study have learned English in compulsory courses from grade 6 to grade 12, and they have passed the English written entrance examination to become university students.

The curriculum the English majors in Vietnam study follows strictly the training framework issued by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (Decision 36/2004/QĐ-BGD&ĐT, 2004). In the framework, ‘credit unit’ and ‘period’ are used to show the time allotted to each of the subjects that the students have to complete as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a bachelor’s degree. While a period lasts forty-five minutes, each credit unit equals thirty periods of in-class studies. In the whole program, as stated in the framework, speaking courses carry fifteen credits, listening courses carry fifteen credits, and subjects of concentration carry thirty-two credits. The curriculum is divided into two phases. Speaking and listening skills are among the core subjects in the first phase (years 1-2). In the second phase (years 3-4), speaking and listening skills remain in the syllabus but take fewer hours than in the previous phase because the focus of training in the second phase shifts to the other subjects under the concentration of students’ choice, i.e., ESP or non-ESP.

## 1.4 Objectives of the Present Investigation

The general purposes of the present research are:

1. to explore communication strategy employment by university English majors in the South of Vietnam in terms of frequency of their communication strategy use, as well as the relationship between communication strategy use and students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration; and
2. to investigate the reasons they reported employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently.

Therefore, the five independent variables which were examined in the present investigation are: students' gender (male or female), attitudes towards speaking English (positive and negative), high school background (urban schools and rural schools), exposure to oral communication in English (limited to classroom context and non-limited to classroom context), and types of English major concentration (ESP and non-ESP). In accordance with the general purposes, the specific purposes ( or the research objectives) can be stated as follows.

1. To investigate the frequency of communication strategies reported being employed by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam.
2. To examine whether the choices of communication strategy use vary significantly by students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration.

3. To examine the patterns of a significant variation in the frequency of students' report of communication strategy use at different levels with reference to the five variables, if they exist at all.
4. To explore why students reported employing certain communication strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently.

### **1.5 Benefits of the Present Investigation**

To date, a number of empirical research works on communication strategies have been carried out around the world. However, an extensive review of the available past research works on communication strategies revealed that three factors: attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, and types of English major concentration have never been investigated by any researchers in the field.

In addition, the other two factors: gender and exposure to oral communication in English have been explored by very few researchers. Gender has been examined by Margolis (2001), Lai (2010), Huang (2010), and Somsai (2011) but with inconsistent findings, while exposure to oral communication in English has only been taken into consideration in Somsai's (2011) study. Therefore, these factors remain the subject for investigation. Furthermore, these above-mentioned studies were conducted with Korean, Chinese, Taiwan, and Thai university students. Consequently, there still exists the need for exploration of the relationship between these factors, namely, gender as well as exposure to oral communication in English, and communication strategy use in other contexts, especially in Vietnam.

As far as the setting of the present study is concerned, to the best knowledge of the researcher, very few research works on communication strategies have been

conducted in Vietnam. The only one research reported so far concerns the training of communication strategies conducted by Lê (2006). This work was a case study investigating the effectiveness of the teaching of communication strategies on eight university students in Hue, situated the central part of Vietnam. As a result, the present investigation will be considered the first to explore the use of communication strategies of students in Vietnam, specifically of university English language majors, in a large scale.

Consequently, it is hoped that from the findings of the present investigation on communication strategies, language teachers will gain new insights into the way to improve their teaching of communication skills. With the information about why students use certain strategies more frequently and certain strategies less frequently in particular, teachers may be able to choose tasks more effectively to promote the use of different types of communication strategies in their classroom in order to help their students to become more successful communicators. The findings of the present study may also help language learners to develop their oral communication. Learners may take communication strategies into consideration and be more aware of which strategies they should employ when they encounter problems in conversation in order to become efficient speakers of English.

To sum up, the present investigation is important and beneficial for language teachers and learners as well. First, it contributes to the knowledge of the field of communication strategies. The present investigation adds more information to the whole picture about the employment of communication strategies of EFL learners around the world. Furthermore, it gives language teachers and related parties,

especially those in Vietnam, a better understanding on learners' use of communication strategies both inside and outside the language classrooms.

## **1.6 Outline of the Thesis**

The thesis includes seven chapters.

Chapter 1 provides the background of the present investigation. It gives the definitions of some terms used for this present investigation; and some background of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam, specifically the English major programs at the tertiary level. The research objectives and the benefits of the present investigation are also mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter 2 includes the review of related literature and available past research works on communication strategies. The chapter presents some significant aspects of communication strategies, namely, their definitions and classifications. Finally, some research works on communication strategies conducted in other countries and Vietnam are presented.

Chapter 3 mainly deals with the research methodology in communication strategies which has been applied for the present investigation. It consists of the theoretical framework and the rationale for selecting and rejecting variables for the present investigation. It also entails the research questions; the framework for data collection; the sampling methods; the rationale for selection of subjects; as well as the characteristics of the research subjects. The chapter ends with how to analyze the obtained data, and how to interpret the research results.

Chapter 4 is a description of the results of the analysis of the data obtained in Phase 1. It provides the research findings with regard to 995 Vietnamese English

majors' overall strategy use, use of strategies under the two categories: SGM and SUM, and use of individual CSs based on the holistic mean scores through the communication strategy questionnaire.

Chapter 5 explores significant variations and their patterns in frequency of 995 students' overall strategy use, use of strategies under the two categories, and use of individual CSs in association with the five investigated variable: students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration. In this chapter, the variations in students' reported overall strategy use and strategy use under the two categories are described through an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The Chi-square tests are also adopted for determining the variations of the students' reported strategy use at the individual level.

Chapter 6 reports the findings from the qualitative analysis of the obtained data through the use of semi-structured interviews in Phase 2 which were conducted with 44 students who were also the questionnaire respondents. The chapter gives an explanation on how information on why students reported using certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently was generated, and finally ends with a list of resulting reasons.

Chapter 7 summarizes and discusses the research findings of the present investigation in response to Researcher Questions 1-3, which were proposed in Chapter 3. This is followed by the implications of the research findings for the teaching and learning of conversational skills for English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam. The chapter also presents the contribution of the

present study before mentioning the limitations of the present investigation as well as proposals for future research.

## **1.7 Summary**

In this chapter, in an attempt to put the study in its context, the researcher has given a description of the background of the present investigation and defined some terms used for this present investigation. This chapter also introduced some background of English language teaching and learning in Vietnam, focusing on the English major programs in Vietnamese universities. After addressing the research objectives as well as the benefits of the present investigation, the chapter ended with the outline of the thesis. The next chapter provides the review of related literature in the field of communication strategies. It also presents the previous research works on communication strategies.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Chapter**

This chapter aims at reviewing related studies on communication strategies in order to provide a clear and detailed background for the present study. First, the chapter starts with a review of oral communication with its definitions and characteristics. Then, communicative competence and strategic competence are presented. This is followed by the definitions and the framework of communication strategies. Finally, the classifications of communication strategies and related research works on communication strategy use are examined.

Oral communication plays an important role in English language teaching and learning. This can be seen from the fact that it has been considered a means and an end of teaching and learning language. The history of language teaching and learning has witnessed periods when people learned another language in order to be able to communicate successfully in that language. Therefore, efforts have been put in finding the most effective and appropriate ways to help learners to do so. Approaches employed for this purpose are Direct Approach, TPR (Total Physical Response), Audio-Lingual Approach, and Communicative Approach, which have the primacy of oral communication as the fundamental of instruction. Furthermore, not only being the purpose of language learning, oral communication has also been promoted as the means of communication in language learning and teaching. This is because it is



believed that similar to the ways children acquire their first language, much of the second language acquisition happens through face-to-face interaction or oral communication (Long, 1983; and Pica, 1994). According Long (1983), linguistic and/or conversational adjustments during interaction lead to better comprehension which facilitates language acquisition. Besides, in order to make such adjustments, learners have to make use of different communication strategies. The more conversations in English they have, the more skillful in using communication strategies for adjustments they may become. This will help them to communicate more effectively.

Oral communication and communication strategies are closely related in the development of language learners' oral communicative competence. Therefore, it would be useful to have a brief review of oral communication background before discussing communication strategies.

## **2.2 Oral communication**

It can be said that oral communication, as a means and an end of language teaching and learning, gives opportunities for learners to develop their language ability, especially communication skills. So far, a number of research works have been conducted in this field, and several definitions and characteristics of oral communication have been proposed.

### **2.2.1 Definitions of Oral Communication**

To date, efforts have been made in defining the term 'oral communication'. The definitions are different or similar depending on the scholars' own views on how complicated 'oral communication' is. They may focus on what should be involved in

‘oral communication’. Besides, they may take into consideration the medium of interaction or/and the form of interaction between the two interlocutors. Some of the definitions are as follows.

- Widdowson (1978, p. 58) defines oral communication as an act of communication through speaking commonly performed in “face to face interaction and occurs as part of a dialogue or other form of verbal exchange”.
- Allwright (1984, p. 156) simply defines communication as “people talking to each other”.
- Florez (1999, p. 1) refers speaking (oral communication) to as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information”.

We can see from the definitions that though experts have used different ways to describe the term ‘oral communication’, there are certain aspects in common. It is that there should be an exchange and negotiation of information between the interlocutors who involve in the course of conversation. While Widdowson (1978) and Florez (1999) mention receiving, producing, negotiating information, Allwright (1984) only uses the phrase ‘talking together’. These common aspects of oral communication are explained in more detail in the characteristics proposed by several experts in the following parts.

### **2.2.2 Characteristics of Oral Communication**

Canale (1983, p. 3) lists the characteristics of communication proposed by Breen and Candlin (1980), Morrow (1977), and Widdowson (1978). Based on the nature of communication, oral communication:

- (a) is a form of social interaction, and is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction;
- (b) involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message;
- (c) takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretation of utterances;
- (d) is carried out under limited psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue, and distractions;
- (e) always has a purpose (for example, to establish social relations, to persuade, or to promise);
- (f) involves authentic, as opposed to text-book-contrived language; and
- (g) is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes.

Furthermore, as suggested by Bygate (2000, p. 6), oral communication “involves making decisions about communication, such as what to say, how to say, and whether to develop it, in accordance with one’s intentions, while maintaining the desired relation with others”. That means, besides the intended message, the way it is delivered and social relationship should also be considered parts of this process.

From these characteristics, it can be inferred that communicating orally effectively is not easy for language learners, especially those with low language ability. The following part discusses communicative competence, the term used by many experts to refer to the ability to communicate orally successfully.

## **2.3 Communicative Competence**

The need to find effective ways to help language learners to communicate effectively has led to efforts to answer the question what learners should know in order to be considered successful communicators. Consequently, a considerable debate has arisen on how ‘communicative competence’ should be defined.

### **2.3.1 Definitions of Communicative Competence**

The works by Chomsky (1965), Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980) should be considered to be the main and influential contributions to the development of communicative competence (Mei, 2009). We could say that because of their ideas about what language learners need in order to enable themselves to communicate successfully, communicative competence came into existence.

According to Brown (2000), the term ‘communicative competence’ was coined by Hymes (1967, 1972), a sociolinguist, as a reaction to Chomsky’s linguistic competence, which states that what a language user needs to be able to use the language is the knowledge of linguistic rules. Hymes (1972) argued that Chomsky’s definition of competence was too narrow. He posited that by listing only the linguistic system (or grammar) that an ideal native speaker of a given language has internalized as the only knowledge learners need in order to be able to use the language, Chomsky ignored the social and functional aspects of language. Furthermore, according to Hymes (1972), “there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless”. Hymes (1971, cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 13), therefore, suggested communicative competence should be defined as “the knowledge the speaker-hearer has of what constitutes appropriate as well as correct language behavior and also of what constitutes effective language behavior in relation to particular communicative

goal”. That it to say, in addition to the ability to use the language appropriately in different settings, the term should be referred to as “what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings” (Hymes, 1974, cited in Rivers, 1989, p. 14).

In line with Hymes (1971), Canale and Swain (1980) considered communicative competence as a combination of the underlying systems of knowledge about the language and skill to perform this knowledge when interacting in actual communication. Later, Savignon (1991, p. 264) defines communicative competence as “the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge”. As Savignon (1991, p. 267) puts it, this ability to interact with other speakers should go together with “an understanding of sociocultural context of language use”. The definitions of communicative competence after Hymes (1971) show the interpersonal construct rather than the intrapersonal construct mentioned in Chomsky’s linguistic competence. This construct can also be seen in the framework of communicative competence proposed by Canale (1983) as the revision of its former version developed by Canale and Swain (1980).

### **2.3.2 Framework of Communicative Competence**

Canale and Swain (1980) developed a framework of communicative competence which took grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (communication strategies) into consideration. Later, it was determined by Canale (1983) that the three components of this framework were inadequate. With these three components only, there was no guarantee that language learners could produce appropriate language related to different genres. Consequently,

Canale (1983) revised this framework, adding discourse competence. As a result of this modification, his proposed framework of communicative competence comprises four main areas: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

1. *Grammatical competence* is a competence concerning the mastery of features and rules of the language, namely: vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling and linguistic semantics. It has the direct focus on the knowledge and skills required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances, which goes with Chomsky's linguistic competence.
2. *Sociolinguistic competence* concerns the mastery of the sociocultural rules. It relates to the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in both form and meaning in different sociolinguistic contexts. This is dependable on contextual factors such as status of participants, purposes of the interaction, and norms or conventions of interaction.
3. *Discourse competence* concerns the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres, such as an oral or written narrative, an argumentative essay, or a scientific report. This kind of unity can be achieved through the use of cohesion devices for form and coherence for meaning.
4. *Strategic competence* addresses the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be utilized for two main reasons: (a) to compensate for communication breakdowns due to limited conditions in actual communication (e.g. momentary inability to recall something) or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence; and (b) to enhance the effectiveness of communication (e.g. deliberately slowing down for a rhetorical effect).

With the integration of strategic competence into their model, Canale and Swain (1980) made their main contribution to communication competence theory (Mei, 2009).

### **2.3.3 Strategic Competence as Communication Strategies**

Strategic competence, one of the four main components in communicative competence deserves noticing due to its decisive role in communicative competence (Mariani, 2010). In terms of learning, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) assert that strategic competence is crucial to foreign language learners. Because of the lack of this competence, learners with a firm knowledge of grammar and a wide range of vocabulary may get stuck, and may be unable to carry out their communicative intent.

- **Definition of strategic competence**

Swain (1984, cited in Mariani, 2010, p. 39) defines strategic competence as “the mastery of communication strategies that may be called into action either to enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for the breakdowns in communication”.

Based on Canale and Swain’s (1980) framework of communicative competence, Tarone and Yule (1989, p. 105) expand strategic competence, referring this term to as “the ability to select an effective means of performing a communicative act”.

Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991, p. 17) refer strategic competence to as “the ability to get one’s meaning across successfully to communicative partners, especially when problems arise in the communication process”.

Bailey (2005, p. 3) defines strategic competence as “the learner’s ability to use language strategies to compensate for gaps in skills and knowledge”.

It can be seen in the definitions that strategic competence not only entails the ability to tackle problems ('breakdowns' or 'gaps') in communication, but also the ability to promote the effectiveness of communication. No matter how strategic competence has been defined, it involves the use of 'means' or 'strategies'.

- **Strategic competence as communication strategies**

According to Canale and Swain (1980), strategic competence is the ability to use communication strategies. It is made up of two elements: verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be utilized when breakdowns in communication occur due to performance variables or insufficient competence. Besides, strategic competence includes the compensatory and enhancement characteristics of communication strategies (Canale, 1983). This means that besides the ability to use communication strategies to solve difficulties in communication, strategic competence also involves the ability to use communication strategies to enhance communication. This is consistent with the above-mentioned definitions of strategic competence.

In respect to how strategic competence works, Tarone and Yule (1989, p. 105) state that "strategic competence is gauged, not by degree of correctness (as grammatical competence) but rather by degree of success, or effectiveness". They also propose two areas related to strategic competence: (1) the speaker's skill to transmit and interpret the information successfully; and (2) the ability to use communication strategies of the speaker or listener to solve their communication problems.

In short, communication strategies are considered the main part of strategic competence. Therefore, strategic competence can be observed through the use of



communication strategies, and they, as the core of strategic competence, will be discussed in the subsequent section.

## **2.4 Communication Strategies (CSs)**

‘Communication strategies’ has been the topic of many research works in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Since the early 1970s, several scholars have tried to define ‘communication strategies’ – the ways which learners rely on when managing to overcome oral communication problems or to enhance the effectiveness of their communication.

### **2.4.1 Definitions of CSs**

So far, many different definitions have been proposed regarding the CSs of second language learners. They have been formulated according to the personal perceptions and beliefs held by the experts and the contexts of their research. As Kasper and Kellerman (1997) put it, it is the difference in how CSs are conceived that causes the lack of agreement on the definition of CSs.

- Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976, p. 78), define CSs as “a systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed”.
- Tarone (1980, p. 420; 1983, p. 65) refers CSs to as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures [which involve linguistic and sociolinguistic rule structures] do not seem to be shared”.

- Bialystok (1983, p. 102) defines CSs as “all attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication”.
- Canale (1983, p. 10) refers CSs to as “verbal and non-verbal strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to limited conditions in actual communication or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence, and to enhance the effectiveness of communication”.
- Corder (1983, p. 16) defines CSs as “a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty”.
- Færch and Kasper (1983b, p. 36) define CSs as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal”.
- Stern (1983, p. 411) defines CSs as “techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language”.
- Paribakht (1985, p. 132) defines CSs as “the means that speakers use to solve their communicative problems”.
- Bygate (2000, p. 115) refers CSs to as “ways of achieving communication by using language in the most effective way”.
- Lam (2006, p. 142) defines CSs as “tactics taken by L2 learners to solve oral communication problems”.
- Williams (2006, p. 2) defines CSs as “strategies that learners employ when their communicative competence in the language being learned

(L2) is insufficient. This includes making themselves understood in the L2 and having others help them understand”.

A review of CS definitions reveals that CS researchers have not yet reached a consensus on a definition of CSs. It can be said from the above samples that CSs are defined differently. Notwithstanding the differences, CS definitions seem to share three common features: (1) problemat�icity, (2) consciousness, and (3) intentionality (Bialystok, 1990) as follows.

1. **Problemat�icity:** This feature appears to be the most basic in the definitions of CSs. The definitions generally agree on the fact that CSs are only employed when problems that may interrupt communication arise.

According to Dörnyei and Scott (1997, p. 186), “researchers generally agree that the main purpose of CS use is to manage oral communication problems”. In the reviewed definitions, we can see that ‘problems’ is termed differently by different researchers. Examples are: “appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed”, “where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared”, “limited linguistic system”, “breakdowns”, “insufficient”, “difficulties”, “cannot say”, and “cannot understand”. This may be true, but CSs can also occur in situations where there are no difficulties in communication (Canale, 1983; Tarone and Yule, 1989; Bialystok, 1990; and Bygate, 2000). In these cases, the purpose of CS use is to enhance the effectiveness of communication.

2. **Consciousness:** This is the second major characteristic of CSs (Færch and Kasper, 1980; and Dörnyei and Scott, 1997). In other words, the learners are aware that a strategy is being adopted for a particular purpose or intended effect. However, ‘consciousness’ is implicit in most of the proposed

definitions because it is not yet self-evident that speakers are indeed aware that their utterances constitute strategic use of language (Bialystok, 1990).

3. Intentionality: This refers to “the learner’s control over a repertoire of strategies so that particular ones may be selected from the range of options and deliberately applied to achieve certain effects” (Bialystok, 1990, pp. 3-5).

The last characteristic ‘intentionality’ was questioned by Bialystok (1990). As the expert puts it, CSs being intentional means that there is systematic relation between the use of specific CSs and relevant factors, such as learners’ level of language proficiency. Nevertheless, this feature of ‘intentionality’ has been evident in many subsequent studies such as Wannaruk (2003), Kazuo and Arika (2004), or Nakatani (2006).

In addition to the common features mentioned above, it should be noticed that only Canale (1983) mentions the purpose of enhancing communication effectiveness of CS use. From this view, we can infer that experts tend to consider CSs as tools to help with communication problems rather than to promote communication. This seems to conform to what has been found in the discussion about strategic competence definition. Furthermore, CSs can also be seen as either productive strategies (Corder, 1983), or both productive and receptive strategies (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1976). Besides, the role of the interlocutor was also found in the definitions proposed by Tarone (1980) and Williams (2006). These definitions refer to this role as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors”, or “having others help them understand”. It reflects the inter-individual/interactional approach which is one of the approaches in CS research discussed in the next section.

To sum up, different experts define CSs differently depending on the perceptions and beliefs they have held as well as the context of their studies. Nonetheless, generally speaking, CS use involves the decision of the speakers in an effort to communicate to achieve their communicative goal. Having studied the ideas of different experts, the researcher has proposed to define CSs in order to suit the context and population of the present investigation. As a result, for the present study, the term ‘communication strategies’ was referred to as “attempts made by students in order to deal with oral communication problems in getting the intended message across to the interlocutor and understanding the message sent from the interlocutor both inside and outside the classroom settings”.

#### **2.4.2 Framework of CSs**

So far, the two approaches that have been known to be the most influential in research studies on CSs are: (1) the inter-individual view (also called the interactional view) by Tarone (1977, 1980) (used by many researchers such as Canale, 1983; Long, 1983; Gass and Varonis, 1985, 1994; Pica, 2002; and Nakatani, 2005, 2006, 2010); and (2) the intra-individual (also called the psycholinguistic view) by Færch and Kasper (1980, 1983b) and Bialystok (1983, 1990) (used by researchers such as Kellerman, 1991; and Littlemore, 2001,2003).

- **Inter-individual/Interactional Approach**

As mentioned in 2.4.1, Tarone (1980, p. 420) suggests that the term ‘CSs’ relates to “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared”. In her view, meaning structures would include both linguistic and sociolinguistic rule structures, and CSs are seen as the tools both interlocutors use in a joint negotiation of such structures in

attempts to reach a communicative goal. In other words, the negotiation of meaning as a joint effort between the interlocutors is central to the concept of CSs. When two interlocutors have problems in understanding each other, they may rely on CS use which involves repair behavior whose function is to “clarify intended meaning rather than simply correct linguistic form” (Tarone, 1980, p. 424).

According to Tarone (1983, p. 65), the criteria characterizing CSs are:

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

These three criteria proposed by Tarone (1983) are crucial to a CS. This means that a strategy will not be regarded as a CS if it lacks one of these criteria. She also maintains that meaning negotiation is the most important criterion of CSs.

The inter-individual view of Tarone, however, has been criticized by Færch and Kasper (1984). These two authors base their arguments on: (1) “a weak interactional claim” (p. 52) which suggests that the speaker’s application of a strategy will elicit some reaction from the interlocutor; and (2) “a strong interactional claim” (p. 52) which emphasizes the truly cooperative nature of CS. They point out that both claims fail to distinguish between the operation of a strategy at the (psycholinguistic)

process level of language use and its linguistic result at the production level of a speaker's performance.

Færch and Kasper (1984) also assert that the interactive characteristic of CSs does not allow for their application to other types of discourse (e.g., lectures, or mass media) where feedback is delayed or not provided. Furthermore, in real-life communication between language learners and native speakers, learners do not always have support from native interlocutors when problems arise, or they do not want to rely on their interlocutor in such situations. Consequently, learners have to find solutions by themselves. This relates to the aspect of “non-cooperative problem solving” in CSs (Færch and Kasper, 1984, p. 60). Besides, as advanced learners can often predict a communicative problem and try to solve it beforehand, a problem seems to be a part of the normal planning process and results in a lengthening of the regular planning pause.

- **Intra-individual/Psycholinguistic Approach**

The intra-individual view locates communication strategies in models of speech production (Færch and Kasper, 1983b), or cognitive organization and processing models (Bialystok, 1990).

Færch and Kasper (1983b) proposed the intra-individual approach (also called psycholinguistic approach) of CSs as a reaction to the inter-individual/interactional approach. In their definition of CSs (Færch and Kasper, 1983b, p. 36) as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal”, CSs are mental plans implemented by the L2 learner to respond to problems in communication, rather than the support from the interlocutor for solution. The main point is that CSs only relate to the learner or, more

precisely, to the problems experienced by the learner in the planning and execution phase within the speech production framework (Færch and Kasper, 1983b). This means that the learner may make use of a CS without signaling the interlocutor to indicate that he or she is experiencing a communication problem, or requesting assistance from the interlocutor.

Viewed within the underlying cognitive structures and considered as a subclass of verbal plans, this approach of CSs has two criteria that can be distinguished from other plans of the same type. They are: (1) problem-oriented, and (2) potential consciousness (Færch and Kasper, 1983b).

With regard to the notion 'consciousness', Færch and Kasper (1983b) insist that it should be specified as 'potential consciousness' because they are in line with Tarone (1983) that the term relates to 'a matter of degree' rather than an 'on and off matter'. They hold that consciousness rarely refers to a complete plan. Only certain parts of the plan are consciously selected. For example, lexical items in most cases are more consciously selected than syntactic items. Besides, different individuals may be more or less able to become aware of their own internal mental operations, and automatization of plans that is consciously employed at a certain stage may occur.

The two criteria characterizing CSs suggested by Færch and Kasper (1983b), nonetheless, was challenged by Bialystok (1990), who points out that they face the problem of ambiguities. First, in terms of problematicity, not all the cases where CSs take place involve communicative problems. For example, even though no problems arise, native speakers may still make use of explanation as a CS to enhance the understanding of their message when speaking with non-native speakers. Second, as far as consciousness is concerned, there has not been enough evidence that speakers



are indeed aware that their utterances constitute strategic uses of language because “the choice ... may be made entirely without the conscious consideration of the speaker” (Bialystok, 1990, p. 4). Besides, due to the criterion ‘potentially conscious plans’ of CSs, it is impossible to distinguish plans that lead to strategic speech from those which do not by virtue of consciousness.

Each of the characteristics in the definitions of CSs is obscured by some questions. From the problems mentioned above, Bialystok (1990, p. 5) makes an argument for her point of view that “communication strategies are continuous with ‘ordinary’ language processing and cannot be served from its virtue of distinctive features”. She, then, provided an alternative conceptual issue, the psychological approach. Bialystok (1990) is in line with Færch and Kasper (1983b, 1984) in the sense that CSs involve inherently mental procedure. However, while the framework proposed by Færch and Kasper (19983b, 1984) takes the linguistic aspect under the production-oriented view as a focal point, the one by Bialystok (1990) is based on the language processing perspective with the emphasis on two components underlying the use of language, in either first or second language contexts. These components are: (1) the analysis of linguistic knowledge, and (2) the control of linguistic processing.

As Bialystok (1990, p. 118 and p. 125) puts it, the first component of her framework is “the process of structuring mental representations of language which are organized at the level of meanings (knowledge of the world) into explicit representations of structures organized at the level of symbols (forms)” while the second component is “the ability to control attention to relevant and appropriate information and to integrate those forms in real time”. Consistent with Bialystok (1990) are those who support the psychological processes which are presumed to

underlie strategy use. The Nijmegen group, i.e., Bogaerts, Kellerman and Poulishse, for example, divided CSs (compensatory strategies as in their words) into conceptual and linguistic strategies with the former being manipulated by the speaker in order to be able to express the intended meaning through the available linguistic (or mimetic) resources (Kasper and Kellerman, 1997).

In spite of its divergence in product and process orientation, the intra-individual/psycholinguistic approach introduced by Færch and Kaper (1983b, 1984) and Bialystok (1990) considers CSs as a process occurring in individual mind to deal with problems in communication without the engagement of the interlocutor. This is the weak point of the individual/psycholinguistic approach. As it is pointed out by Yule and Tarone (1997), while strategy use is influenced by the presence of the interlocutor, the focus of studies under intra-individual/psycholinguistic approach has resulted in the ignorance of the role of interlocutor's effects in recent analytical frameworks. The authors, then, suggest that research on CSs should "incorporate both a concern with the psychological processing of the individual speaker performing in isolation, and an awareness of the social-cultural impact on that processing when the speaker has to make decisions concerning the knowledge, status and needs of the addressee involved in order to choose the best referential strategy" (p. 26).

In short, there are two main approaches in CS research: the inter-individual/interactional approach and the intra-individual/psycholinguistic approach. The essential distinction between these approaches is that the former focuses on external and interactive strategies works from performance data in order to consider underlying competence while the latter starts with characterizing underlying competence in order to account for performance. In other words, the inter-

individual/interactional approach describes the surface linguistic realization from L2 output and then makes inferences about the psychological process; on the other hand, the intra-individual/psycholinguistic approach focuses on the psychological process and makes inferences about the linguistic forms. Since each of the approach seems to give an important direction for research on CSs, they have been taken into consideration by the researcher in defining the term ‘CSs’ and selecting the CSs for the CS inventory for the present investigation.

The following subsection will present different topologies of CSs. These topologies reflect the approach advocated by the experts who proposed them.

#### **2.4.3 Classifications of CSs**

So far, various taxonomies have been developed. Similar to the definitions, the taxonomies of CSs differ in a number of ways. As can be seen in this section, different researchers have different ways of classifying CSs. Their classification may be generated from their own CS investigation (e.g., Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1976; Færch and Kasper, 1983b; Paribakht, 1985; Poulisse, 1987, 1993; Bialystok, 1990; Nakatani, 2006; Mariani, 2010; and Somsai and Intaraprasert, 2011), or from reviewing and modifying other research works (e.g., Bialystok, 1983; Willems, 1987; Dörnyei, 1995; and Dörnyei and Scott, 1995).

Presented in the following are the taxonomies introduced by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976); Tarone (1977); Bialystok (1983,1990); Corder (1983); Færch and Kasper (1983b); Paribakht (1985); Poulisse (1987 and 1993); Willems (1987); Dörnyei (1995); Dörnyei and Scott (1995); Nakatani (2006); Mariani (2010); and Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011).

### 2.4.3.1 Communication strategies classification by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976)

Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) classified the strategies for dealing with communication difficulties as:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1. Transfer from native language</b> | Producing utterances that are not just inappropriate but actually incorrect by native standards due to negative transfer from the native language (e.g., <i>'the book of Jack'</i> for <i>'Jack's book'</i> )   |
| <b>2. Overgeneralization</b>            | Applying a rule of the target language to inappropriate target language forms or contexts (e.g., <i>'He is pretty.'</i> or <i>'I don't know what is it.'</i> )  |
| <b>3. Prefabricated pattern</b>         | Employing a regular patterned segment of speech without knowledge of its underlying structure (e.g., <i>'What do you do?'</i> for <i>'What are you doing?'</i> )  |
| <b>4. Overelaboration</b>               | Producing utterances which seem stilted and inordinately formal in an attempt to produce careful target language (e.g., <i>'Buddy, that's my foot which you are standing on.'</i> )   |
| <b>5. Epenthesis</b>                    | Inserting vowels in attempts to produce unfamiliar consonant clusters in the target language (e.g., /sətəre/ for /streɪ/ (stray))   |
| <b>6. Avoidance</b>                     |   |
| a) Topic avoidance                      |   |
| - Change topic                          | Attempting to totally evade communication about the topics which require the use of target language rules or forms which the learner does not yet know very well (e.g., avoiding using certain sounds, like /l/ or /r/ in <i>'pollution problems'</i> ; or avoiding talking about one's work due to lack of technical vocabulary)                               |
| - No verbal response                    |   |
| b) Semantic avoidance                   | Evading the communication of content for which the appropriate target language rules and forms are not available (e.g., <i>'It's hard to breathe.'</i> for <i>'air pollution'</i> ; or <i>'I like to swim.'</i> in response for <i>'What happened yesterday?'</i> )   |
| c) Appeal to authority                  | Asking someone else to supply a form or lexical item, asking if a form or item is correct, or looking it up in a dictionary (e.g., <i>'How do you say "staple" in French?'</i> )  |
| - Asking for form                       |   |
| - Asking if correct                     |   |
| - Looking it up                         |   |
| d) Paraphrase                           | Rewording the message in an alternate, acceptable, target language construction in order to avoid a more difficult form or construction (e.g., <i>'tool'</i> for <i>'wrench'</i> ; <i>'labour'</i> for <i>'work'</i> ; <i>'airball'</i> for <i>'balloon'</i> (word coinage); or <i>'a thing you can dry your hands on'</i> for <i>'towel'</i> (circumlocution)) |
| d) Message abandonment                  | Cutting short communication on an initiated topic because the learner runs into difficulty with a target language form or rule (e.g., <i>'If only I had a ...'</i> )  |

**6. Avoidance (cont.)**

## f) Language switch

Transporting a native word or expression, untranslated, into the interlanguage utterance (e.g., *'I want a couteau.'*)

In Tarone, Cohen and Dumas' (1976) classification, strategies were divided into six types which are: transfer from native language, overgeneralization, prefabricated pattern, overelaboration, epenthesis, and avoidance. The fact that these types of CSs are related to errors made by learners while they make their efforts in getting their intended message across shows that the authors examined the strategies in the view of error analysis. That is to say, to Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, all the strategies lend themselves to errors; which is not the case as can be seen in the subsequent classifications suggested by other researchers.

**2.4.3.2 Communication strategies classification by Tarone (1977)**

Tarone (1977) introduced her taxonomy of communication strategies

which includes:

**1. Paraphrase**

## Approximation

Using a single target language vocabulary item or structure, which the speaker knows is not correct, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker (e.g., *'pipe'* for 'water pipe')

## Word coinage

Making up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept (e.g., *'airball'* for 'balloon')

## Circumlocution

Describing the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate TL in terms of structure (e.g., *'She is, uh, smoking something. I don't know what's its name. That's, uh, Persian, and we use in Turkey, a lot of.'*)

**2. Borrowing**

## Literal translation

Translating word for word from the native language (e.g., *'He invites him to drink.'* for 'They toast one another.')

## Language switch

Using the native language term without bothering to translate (e.g., *'balon'* for 'balloon', or *'tirtil'* for 'caterpillar')

**3. Appeal for assistance**

Asking for the correct term (e.g., *'What is it?'*, *'What is it called?'*)

**4. Mime**

Using non-verbal strategies in place of a lexical item or action (e.g., clapping one's hands to illustrate applause)

## 5. Avoidance

Topic avoidance	Trying not to talk about concepts for which the target language item or structure is not known
Message avoidance	Stopping in mid-utterance after failing in an attempt to talk about the concept

The five main categories under Tarone's (1977/1983) classification entail: paraphrase, borrowing, appeal for assistance, mime, and avoidance. However, the strategies can also be seen as achievement strategies and avoidance strategies which are the terms suggested by Dörnyei (1995). According to Dörnyei (1995), achievement strategies are those learners use when they try to convey the intended message by extending or manipulating the available language system despite the linguistic deficiencies, while avoidance strategies includes those used when learners adapt their message to their resources by changing, or reducing. Tarone's (1977/1983) first four categories fit the definition of achievement strategies; therefore, her topology can be regrouped into: (a) achievement strategies with paraphrase, borrowing, appeal for assistance and mime; and (b) avoidance strategies.

### 2.4.3.3 Communication strategies classifications by Bialystok (1983, 1990)

Bialystok proposed two taxonomies: Bialystok (1983) and Bialystok (1990). The former classification of CSs based on Tarone's (1977) classification includes three main types as follows.

#### 1. L1-based strategies

Language switch	The insertion of a word or phrase in a language other than the target language, usually the learner's native language (e.g., <i>'Il y a deux candles sur la cheminée.'</i> )
Foreignizing	The creation of non-existent or contextually inappropriate lexical items (e.g., <i>'Il y a cloche sur la cheminée.'</i> )
Transliteration	The use of L2 lexicon and structure to create a (usually non-consistent) literal translation of an L1 term or phrase (e.g., <i>'place de fue'</i> for English 'fireplace', or <i>'pièce de temps'</i> for 'timepiece')

## 2. L2-based strategies

Semantic contiguity

The use of a single lexical item which share certain semantic features with the target item (e.g., *'tabouret'* frequently replaced by *'chaise'* (chair) or *'table'* (table), and *'horloge'* (clock) by *'montre'* (watch))

Description

The description of the physical properties, the specific features, and the interactional/functional characteristics of an object or action using the appropriate TL structure (e.g., *'tabouret'* should be described as *'une petite chaise de bois, pour reposer les jambes quand on est fatigüe, elle n'a pas de dos'*)

Word coinage

The creation of a non-existent or contextually inappropriate meaning L2 lexical item by selecting a conceptual feature of the target item and incorporating it into L2 morphological system (e.g., *'heurot'* (clock) was created by attaching the noun suffix *'-ot'* to *'heur'* (time))

## 3. Non-linguistic strategies

The use of non-verbal strategies

CSs under Bialystok's (1983) taxonomy belong to three main categories. They are: L1-based strategies, L2-based strategies, and non-linguistic strategies. The first two categories rely on the use of either the learner's native language or target language, whereas the third refers to the use of non-verbal language.

However, the other classification by Bialystok (1990) was developed under the psychologically plausible system of CSs, viewing that "communication strategies are part of the process of ordinary language use. They reflect the way in which the processing system extends and adapts itself to the demands of communication" (Bialystok, 1990, p. 131). The two categories in Bialystok's (1990) taxonomy, as a result, are:

### 1. Analysis-based strategies

Attempting to convey the structure of the intended concept by making explicit the relational defining features

### 2. Control-based strategies

Choosing a representational system that is possible to convey and that makes explicit information relevant to the identity of the intended concept

According to Bialystok (1990, p. 131), when learners make an attempt to “examine and manipulate the intended concept”, they use analysis-based strategies. Examples are: “circumlocution, paraphrase, transliteration, and word coinage (where the attempt is to incorporate distinctive features into the expression), and mime (where the attempt is to convey important properties)” (p. 133). On the other hand, when learners try to “examine and manipulate the chosen form or means of expression” (p. 132), they employ control-based strategies. This can be done by noticing different information sources, namely, using L1, other objects, symbols, or gestures as well as appeal for assistance, or consulting dictionaries to convey the intended concept.

#### **2.4.3.4 Communication strategies classification by Corder (1983)**

Corder (1983) classified communication strategies under two main categories as:

##### **1. Message adjustment /Risk avoidance strategies**

Topic avoidance	A refusal to enter into or continue a discourse within some field or topic because of a feeling of total linguistic inadequacy
Message abandonment	Trying but giving up in mid-utterance due to the high inadequacy
Semantic avoidance	Saying something slightly different from what you intended but still broadly relevant to the topic of discourse
Message reduction	Saying less, or less precisely, what you intended to say; often seen as rather vague general talk

##### **2. Resource expansion/Risk-running strategies**

Borrowing	Using linguistic resources other than the target language. (Switching to another language is the extreme form of borrowing.)
Paraphrase /Circumlocution	Getting round your problem with the knowledge you have
Paralinguistic devices	Using nonverbal strategies in place of a meaning structure, typically gesture
Appeal for help	Asking for help from the interlocutor



The two categories provided by Corder (1983) are: message adjustment or risk avoidance strategies, and resource expansion or risk-running strategies. Though the two categories can be utilized when learners try to deal with difficulties in communication, they produce different results. To put it simply, while the resource expansion strategies help to convey the intended message, the message adjustment strategies do not. Therefore, in respect of teaching, Corder (1983) recommends that language teachers should encourage their students to use resource expansion strategies because, through trying to get the message across, students learn the language.

#### **2.4.3.5 Communication strategies classification by Færch and Kasper (1983b)**

As suggested by Færch and Kasper (1983b), the taxonomy consists of:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Formal reduction strategies</b>     | Learner communicates by means of a 'reduced' system, focusing on stable rules or items which have reasonably well automatized, in order to avoid producing non-fluent or incorrect utterances by realizing insufficiently automatized or hypothetical rules/items. |
| Phonological level                        | Adopting another way of realizing the difficult phoneme (e.g., by overgeneralizing or by borrowing an L1 phone as in the case of /d/ for /ð/)  |
| Morphological level                       | Substituting syntactic or lexical items for the avoided morphological item (e.g., using an infinitival verbal complement to avoid subordinate clauses containing the subjunctive)  |
| Syntactic level                           | Avoiding using the rule in question (e.g., using active sentence structure to avoid passive sentence structure)  |
| Lexical level                             | Avoiding using words which are difficult to pronounce, irregular, impose restrictions on the context difficult to observe or have no direct translation-equivalent in L1   |
| <b>2. Functional reduction strategies</b> | Learner reduces his communicative goal in order to avoid the problem.  |
| Actional reduction                        | Reducing interlanguage performance when experiencing problems in performing specific speech acts   |
| Modal reduction                           | Reducing interlanguage performance when experiencing problems in specific speech acts and /or in making utterances appropriately for politeness/social distance  |

### 1. Continuous interaction strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor (cont.)

#### Reduction of propositional content

- Topic avoidance      Avoiding formulating goals which include topics that are perceived as problematic from the linguistic point of view
- Message abandonment      Communication on a topic is initiated but then cut short because the learner runs into difficulty with a target language form or rule. The learner stops in mid-sentence, with no appeal to the authority to help to finish the utterance.
- Message replacement      Learner, when confronting by a planning or retrieval problem, operates within the intended propositional content and preserves the 'topic' but refers to it by means of a more general expression.

### 3. Achievement strategies

#### Compensatory strategies

- Code switching      Learner attempts to solve problems in communication by expanding his communicative resources.  
Learner switches from L2 to L1 or L3. This may involve stretches of discourse from single words up to complete turns. It is sometimes referred to as 'borrowing'.
- Interlingual transfer      Using 'Foreignizing' (adjusting L1/L3 words to L2 phonology and/or morphology) and/or 'literal translation' (translating compounds or idiomatic expressions from L1 verbatim into L2)
- Inter/intralingual transfer      Generalizing of an L2 rule, but influenced by the properties of the corresponding L1 structure (e.g., Danish : *svømme* – *svømmede* (past tense), English: *swim* – *swimmed*)
- Interlanguage-based strategies
  - + Generalization      Using an alternative - and less appropriate - item without changing the communicative goal (e.g., the use of lexical substitution, approximation, or superordinate terms)
  - + Paraphrase      Using description, circumlocution (focusing on characteristic properties and functions), or exemplification (using hyponymic term) (e.g., '*knallert*' Danish for 'moped')
  - + Word coinage      Creating a new L2 word (e.g., 'We are sitting in the '*surrounding*' of the stadium.')
  - + Restructuring      Learner develops an alternative local plan which enables him to communicate his intended message without reduction (e.g., '*... my parents has I have er four elder sisters ...*' for the word 'daughter').
- Cooperative strategies      Learner signals to his interlocutor that he is experiencing a communicative problem and that he needs assistance (appealing). This can be direct or indirect.
- Non-linguistic strategies      Using non-linguistic strategies, such as mime, gesture, and sound-imitation to solve a communicative problem or to support other - verbal - strategies
- Retrieval strategies      Learner knows that the term is there and he would like to retrieve it in some way, such as waiting for the term to appear, appealing to formal similarity, retrieval via semantic fields, searching via other language, etc.

In Færch and Kasper's (1983b) classification, the three categories are: formal reduction strategies, functional reduction strategies, and achievement strategies. Despite the new way each of the strategies was labeled, Færch and Kasper's (1983b) categorization conforms to the categorizations offered by other researchers such as Tarone's (1977/1983), Corder (1983), and Dörnyei (1995) in the way that it reveals the two tendencies of CS use when learners face a communication problem: avoiding it or coping with it. The avoidance strategies, which are referred to by Færch and Kasper (1983b) as formal reduction strategies and functional reduction strategies, are employed by learners when they try to avoid the problem; and the achievement strategies are those being called into action when learners attempt to solve the problem.

#### 2.4.3.6 Communication strategies classification by Paribakht (1985)

Another taxonomy was introduced by Paribakht (1985). It has four categories as follows.

##### 1. Linguistic approach

	This approach exploits the semantic features of the target item and reflects the speaker's formal analysis of meaning.
Semantic contiguity	All CS in this category exploit items semantically related to the target item.
- Superordinate	(e.g., 'This is a fruit.' for 'pomegranate'; or 'This is a quality.' for 'honesty')
- Comparison	This is the strategy of exploiting similarities between the two items.
+ Positive comparison	
Analogy	(e.g., 'Is the same like lamp.' for 'lantern'; or 'It is like the victory.' for 'success')
Synonymy	(e.g., 'caravan' for 'palanquin'; or 'synonym for wait' for 'patience')
+ Negative comparison	
Contrast and opposition	(e.g., 'It's not a same as computer.' for 'abacus'; or 'When you don't have it, you're scared.' for 'courage')
Antonymy	(e.g., 'This is the opposite of failure.' for 'success'; or 'Opposite it's exactly hurry' for 'patience')
Circumlocution	An attempt to describe the characteristics of the concept

## Circumlocution (cont.)

- Physical description	(e.g., <i>'It would fit into your hand.'</i> for 'pomegranate')
+ Size	(e.g., <i>'This fruit have a shape like earth.'</i> for 'pomegranate')
+ Shape	(e.g., <i>'Its colour is red.'</i> for 'pomegranate')
+ Color	(e.g., <i>'It's made of metal.'</i> for 'thimble')
+ Material	In concrete nouns, constituent features refer to different parts of the object; and in abstract nouns they are the underlying semantic elements of the concept.
- Constituent features	(e.g., <i>'There is a handle on it.'</i> For 'lantern'; or <i>'Someone who dies for a cause.'</i> for 'martyrdom')
+ Features	The details of a single feature of the item are given
+ Elaborated features	(e.g., <i>'has always little juicy seeds inside and they are red, and they're really tart.'</i> for 'pomegranate'; or <i>'being killed in, usually in - for a good cause'</i> for 'martyrdom').
- Locational property	(e.g., <i>'It was used maybe in Arab countries.'</i> for 'palanquin'; or <i>'Tie with two, two trees, we tie to two trees.'</i> for 'hammock')
- Historical property	(e.g., <i>'It belongs to many years ago.'</i> for 'abacus'; or <i>'Ancient people used this.'</i> for 'palanquin')
- Other features	Other features refer to those features which are not necessarily factual, but rather are indirectly associated with the target items. While some of these associations may be shared by speakers of different linguistic backgrounds (see the first example below), many of these specific associations appear to be context- and/or culture-bound (see the second example below) (e.g., <i>'It's workmate to a broom.'</i> for 'dust-pan'; <i>'It's the passion fruit.'</i> for 'pomegranate'; or <i>'It's honourable.'</i> for 'martyrdom').
- Functional description	(e.g., <i>'When you finish sweep—ah—you use—you used for collect garbage.'</i> for 'dust-pan')
Metalinguistic clues	The speaker gives metalinguistic information on the target item (e.g., <i>'It's actually a noun with a suffix.'</i> for 'martyrdom').

**2. Contextual approach**

Linguistic context	This approach exploits the contextual knowledge of the speaker. That is, it provides contextual information about the target item rather than its semantic features. This is the strategy of providing a linguistic context for the target item, leaving the target item blank (e.g., <i>'When you sweep the floor, you gather up the dust with.'</i> for 'dust-pan'; or <i>'If the wife fools around with somebody else, she is not "this" to the husband.'</i> for 'faithfulness').
Use of L2 idioms and proverbs	This strategy exploits one's knowledge of target idioms or proverbs to refer the interlocutor to a specific and popular context where the target item is used (e.g., <i>'It comes before a fall.'</i> for 'pride'; <i>'It gets you nowhere.'</i> for 'flattery').

## 2. Contextual approach (cont.)

Transliteration of L1 idioms and proverbs

The speaker attempts to translate an L1 idiom or proverb into the target language (e.g., *'Some say, it's written on your forehead.'* for 'fate'; *'When somebody is so good—the heart is so clean.'* for 'honesty'). (In Farsi, a 'clean-hearted' person refers to an honest person.)

Idiomatic transfer

This strategy involves reference to some semantic or syntactic feature of an LI idiom, as opposed to its actual translation, assuming that it will work the same way in the target language (e.g., *'I take an examination and I fail, O.K.? and one of my adjectives has been "broken".'* for 'to break one's pride'; *'You say, O.K. "good luck". What's another word for "good luck"?' for 'success'*). (The subject has considered Persian 'be successful' as a synonym for its corresponding expression in English, 'good luck'.)

## 3. Conceptual approach

Demonstration

The *conceptual approach* exploits the speaker's knowledge of the world and of particular situations. This knowledge may be biased or influenced by the speaker's social and/or cultural background.

This is the strategy of creating a concrete context that reflects the target concept (e.g., *'Suggest that you are a teacher and I am a student; and I didn't take the — for— pass and I fail; and I come and say something, for example, you teach very well, you are a good man and—what's the name of my action?'* for 'flattery').

Exemplification

This is the strategy of reference to examples, such as certain people, occasions, or real events, that correspond to the target concept (e.g., *'You may use it in camping.'* for 'lantern'; *'A soldier in a war definitely needs it.'* for 'courage'; or *'The servants especially do, for example, to their masters.'* for 'flattery').

Metonymy

The concept is represented through a prototype member of that concept which may or may not be shared by different cultures and speech communities (e.g., *'It's symbolized by a dog.'* for 'faithfulness'; or *'peacock'* for 'pride').

## 4. Mime

Replacing verbal output

This non-verbal strategy refers to the use of meaningful gestures in communicating the target item.

This non-linguistic strategy is used by the speaker to substitute for a linguistic output (e.g., *'It's this size.'* for 'pomegranate'; *'You always think are higher than me and you look me like this.'* (mime for a snobbish look) for 'pride').

Accompanying verbal output

In adopting this para-linguistic strategy, the speaker uses a meaningful gesture to accompany his or her verbal output (e.g., *'It goes up and down.'* (mime for the movement) for 'seesaw'; or *'This fruit have a shape like earth.'* (mime for a round shape) for 'pomegranate').

These four categories: linguistic approach, contextual approach, conceptual approach, and mime were classified based on the concept-identification task used in the author's study. Therefore, the categories can also be called communicative approaches. Under Paribakht's (1985) communicative approaches, linguistic approach includes strategies used when learners deal with semantic features of the target language; contextual approach entails strategies used by learners based on their contextual knowledge; conceptual approach comprises strategies employed by learners regarding their knowledge of the world; and mime consists of strategies utilized by learners with respect to their knowledge of meaningful gestures.

#### **2.4.3.7 Communication strategies (compensatory strategies) classifications by Poulisse (1987, 1993)**

Poulisse (1987, 1993) proposed two classifications of CSs. Her taxonomy suggested in 1987 when she was working under the Nijmegen group comprises:

##### **1. Conceptual strategies**

Analytic

Decomposing the concept into its criterial features and referring to it by means of these features, either by listing (some of) them or by using the word for a related concept which shares some of the criterial features (e.g., *'It's green, you eat it with potatoes, and Popeye eats it.'* for 'spinach')

Holistic

Referring to a related concept (e.g., *'vegetables'* for 'peas'; *'hammer'* for 'tool'; or *'table'* for 'desk')

##### **2. Linguistic/code strategies**

Morphological creativity

Using L2 rules of morphological derivation to create (what the learner assumes to be) comprehensible L2 lexis (e.g., *'appliances'* for 'letter of application'; *'representator'* for 'representative'; or *'shameful'* for 'shameful')

Transfer

Transferring words or phrases from L1 to L2 when the two languages are closely related (e.g., *'middle'* for 'waist' (in Dutch: middle); or *'go by tennis club'* for 'join the tennis club' (in Dutch: bij tennis gaan))

According to Poulisse's (1987) categorization, there are two main groups of strategies: (1) conceptual strategies, and (2) linguistic/code strategies. Conceptual strategies entail two subcategories: analytic strategies and holistic strategies. Analytic strategies are employed when learners refer to the intended concept by talking about its criterial properties. Holistic strategies are those learners use when they refer to the intended concept by the concept-related words which share some characteristics with it. Linguistic/code strategies are subdivided into morphological creativity strategies and transfer strategies. Morphological creativity strategies are related to learners' creating non-existing L2 words based on L2 grammatical rule, while transfer strategies consist of literal translation, code-switching, and foreignizing.

It is important to notice that all the strategies in Poulisse's (1987) classification belong to achievement or compensatory strategies because they help learners to tackle the problem in communication. Therefore, it can be inferred that, in Poulisse's (1987) point of view, when learners employ CSs, either conceptual strategies or linguistic/code strategies, they try to tell their interlocutors what they want to say, rather than giving up the intended message.

Later, Poulisse proposed another taxonomy as a result of her modification of the former one. Poulisse's (1993) topology is as follows.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Substitution strategies</b>      | Replacing the intended lexical item with another one (e.g., ' <i>animal</i> ' for 'rabbit'; or ' <i>voorwoord</i> ' (in Dutch) for 'preface')  |
| <b>2. Substitution plus strategies</b> | Using L1 and/or L2 morphological encoding procedures in combination with the substitution strategy (foreignizing and morphological creativity) |

### 3. Reconceptualization strategies

Changing the preverbal message into more than a single chunk, such as encoding the conceptual features of the intended lexical item one by one (e.g., *'It's green, you eat it with potatoes, and. Popeye eats it.'* for 'spinach'), or selecting two lexical items from the lexicon which can be combined into one new word (e.g., *'cooking apparatus'* for 'cooker'). Further background information may also be added to the message

As a result of the modification, Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy of compensatory strategies entails three main types of CSs: (1) substitution strategies - omitting or replacing one or more features of a lexical chunk when searching for a new lexical item; (2) substitution plus strategies - substitution strategies combined with L1 or L2 morphological encoding procedures; and (3) reconceptualization strategies – using more than one chunk to express a preverbal message.

#### 2.4.3.8 Communication strategies classification by Willems (1987)

Willems (1987) proposed a taxonomy which he deliberately culled from Tarone et al. (1976), Færch and Kasper (1983b), and Paribakht (1985). His taxonomy with two categories entails:

##### 1. Reduction strategies

Formal reduction

- Phonological

Avoidance of words containing 'difficult' segments or clusters of segments

- Morphological

Avoidance of talking about yesterday to avoid past tense forms

- Syntactic

Avoidance of speaking about what might happen for fear of using conditions

- Lexical

Avoidance of certain topics because the necessary vocabulary is lacking

Functional reduction

- Message abandonment

(e.g., *'Oh, I can't say this, let's talk about something else.'*)

- Meaning replacement

Saying almost what you want to say; saying something less politely than you would in your L1 ('Modality reduction')

- Topic avoidance

Saying nothing at all

##### 2. Achievement strategies

Paralinguistic strategies

The use of mimetic gestures, facial expression etc. to replace speech



## 2. Achievement strategies (cont.)

### Interlingual strategies

- Borrowing/ code switching  
A native language word or phrase is used with a native language pronunciation (e.g., *'Please Sir, have you a "krijtje" (Dutch)?'* for 'piece of chalk').
- Literal translation  
A literal translation from L1 to L2 of lexical items, idioms or compound words (e.g., *'nighhtable'* for German *'nachtisch'*= 'bedside table'; *'greens'* for 'vegetables' from Dutch *'groente'*; *'Je suis pardon.'* for 'I am sorry.'; or *'cool-box'* for 'refrigerator' from Dutch *'koelkast'*)
- Foreignizing  
Using a word or phrase from the L1 with L2 pronunciation (e.g., /knælə/ from Danish *'knallert'* for 'moped')
- Approximation (generalization)  
The use of an L2 word which shares essential semantic features with the target word (e.g., *'bird'* for 'duck'; *'flower'* for 'rose'; or *'lorry'* for 'van')
- Word coinage  
An L2 word is made up on basis of supposed rule (e.g., *'intonate'* for 'intonation'; *'inoded'* for 'blooded').
- Paraphrase
  - + Description
  - + Circumlocution
  1. Physical properties: color, size, spatial dimensions
  2. Specific features (e.g., *'It has a motor...'*)
  3. Functional features (e.g., *'It is used in...'*)
  4. Locational features (e.g., *'You find it in a factory.'*)
  5. Temporal features (e.g., *'It's between summer and autumn.'*)
- + Exemplification  
Subordinate terms used instead of unavailable superordinate terms (e.g., trade name *'puch'* for 'moped')
- Smurfing  
The use of empty or meaningless words to fill gaps in vocabulary command (e.g., *'thing'*, *'whatsit'*; or *'what-do-you-call it'*)
- Self-repair (restructuring)  
Setting up a new speech-plan when the original one fails
- Appeal for assistance
  - + Explicit  
(e.g., *'What'd you call?'*; *'Speak more slowly.'*; *'I am a foreign.'*; or *'Do you understand?'*)
  - + Implicit  
Pause, intonation, drawl, repetition, or *'I don't know what to call this.'*, and the like
  - + Checking questions  
To make sure something is correctly understood by questions (e.g., *'Do I hear you say...?'*; or *'Are you saying that ...?'*)
- Initiating repair  
(e.g., *'I am sorry, there must be some misunderstanding; Does ... mean...?; I took it to mean...; I hope you don't mind my asking ...'*)

Willems (1987) includes strategies from classifications of other researchers such as Tarone et al. (1976), Færch and Kasper (1983), and Paribakht (1985) in his taxonomy. Therefore, overlaps can be found in strategies and categories between this new taxonomy and the others.

Similar to those in some previous taxonomies, Willems's (1987) CSs were categorized into: (1) reduction strategies, and (2) achievement strategies. Reduction strategies were subdivided into formal reduction and functional reduction, while achievement strategies were subcategorized into paralinguistic strategies, interlingual strategies, and intralingual strategies. Though reduction strategies and achievement strategies are found to help learners to maintain conversations, reduction strategies hinder the development of language learning (Willems, 1987).

#### 2.4.3.9 Communication strategies classification by Dörnyei (1995)

Dörnyei (1995), similar to Willems (1987), has developed his topology based on the existing works. He gathered all the common and important strategies from the taxonomies proposed by Váradi (1973), Tarone (1977), Færch and Kasper (1983), Poulisse (1993), and Bialystok (1990); and came up with the following classification.

##### 1. Avoidance or reduction strategies

Message abandonment	Leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties
Topic avoidance	Avoiding topic areas or concepts which pose language difficulties

##### 2. Achievement or compensatory strategies

Circumlocution	Describing or exemplifying the target object or action (e.g., <i>'the thing you open bottles with'</i> for 'corkscrew')
Approximation	Using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible (e.g., <i>'ship'</i> for 'sail boat')
Use of all-purpose words	Extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., the overuse of <i>'thing'</i> , <i>'stuff'</i> , <i>'make'</i> , <i>'do'</i> , as well as using words like <i>'thingie'</i> , or <i>'what-do-you-call-it'</i> )
Word-coinage	Creating a non-existing L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g., <i>'vegetarianist'</i> for 'vegetarian')
Use of non linguistic means	Mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation.
Literal translation	Translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1 to L2
Foreignizing	Using a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphologically (e.g., adding to it a L2 suffix)

**2. Achievement or compensatory strategies** (cont.)

Code switching	Using a L1 word with L1 pronunciation or a L3 word with L3 pronunciation in L2
Appeal for help	Turning to the conversation partner for help either directly (e.g., <i>'What do you call . . . ?'</i> ), or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression)

**3. Stalling or time-gaining strategies**

Use of fillers/hesitation devices	Using filling words or gambits to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., <i>'well'</i> , <i>'now let me see'</i> , or <i>'as a matter of fact'</i> )
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In Dörnyei's (1995) categorization, CSs were classified into three main groups: (1) avoidance strategies, (2) achievement strategies, and (3) stalling or time-gaining strategies. Message abandonment and topic avoidance are the two subcategories under avoidance strategies. Meanwhile, strategies that help the learner to reach the original goal are called achievement strategies. In addition to avoidance strategies and achievement strategies, Dörnyei (1995) classified the use of fillers/hesitation devices as one type of CSs. They are stalling or time-gaining strategies, which help the learner to gain time and keep the communication channel open at times of difficulty in oral communication.

#### **2.4.3.10 Communication strategies classification by Dörnyei and Scott (1995)**

Dörnyei and Scott (1995) adopted the topologies which were previously suggested by Tarone (1977), Færch and Kasper (1983b), Bialystok (1983, 1990), Paribakht (1985), Willems (1987), Poullisse (1987, 1993), and Dörnyei (1995). They introduced their classification with three main categories: (1) direct strategies, (2) interactional strategies, and (3) indirect strategies as follows.

## 1. Direct strategies

### Resource deficit-related strategies

- Message abandonment
 

Leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty (e.g., *'It is a person er... who is responsible for a house, for the block of house... I don't know... [laughter].'*)
- Message reduction (topic avoidance)
 

Reducing the message by avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic language wise or by leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources (e.g., [Retrospective comment by the speaker:] I was looking for *'satisfied with a good job, pleasantly tired,'* and so on but instead I accepted less.)
- Message replacement
 

Substituting the original message with a new one because of not feeling capable of executing it (e.g., [Retrospective comment after saying that the pipe was broken *'in the middle'* instead of *'the screw thread was broken.'*:] *I didn't know 'screw thread', and well, I had to say something.*)
- Circumlocution (paraphrase)
 

Exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action (e.g. *'It becomes water.'* instead of *'melt'*)
- Approximation
 

Using a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate or a related term, which shares semantic features with the target word or structure (e.g., *'plate'* instead of *'bowl'*)
- Use of all-purpose words
 

Extending a general, "empty" lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., the overuse of *'thing', 'stuff', 'make', 'do'*, as well as words like *'thingie', 'what-do-you-call- it';* or *'I can't work until you repair my ... thing...'*)
- Word coinage
 

Creating a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word (e.g., [Retrospective comment after using *'dejunktion'* and *'unjunktion'* for *'street clearing':*] *I think I approached it in a very scientific way: from 'junk' I formed a noun and I tried to add the negative prefix 'de-'; to 'unjunk' is to 'clear the junk' and 'unjunktion' is 'street clearing'.')*
- Restructuring
 

Abandoning the execution of a verbal plan because of language difficulties, leaving the utterance unfinished, and communicating the intended message according to an alternative plan (e.g., *'On Mickey's face we can see the... so he's wondering.'*)
- Literal translation (transfer)
 

Translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1/L3 to L2 (e.g., *'I'd made a big fault [translated from French]'*)
- Foreignizing
 

Using a L1/L3 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphology (e.g., *'reparate'* for *'repair'* [adjusting the German word *'reparieren'*])
- Code switching (language switch)
 

Including L1/L3 words with L1/L3 pronunciation in L2 speech; this may involve stretches of discourse ranging from single words to whole chunks and even complete turns (e.g., using the Latin *'ferrum'* for *'iron'*)

## Resource deficit-related strategies (cont.)

- Using similar-sounding words	Compensating for a lexical item whose form the speaker is unsure of with a word (either existing or non-existing) which sounds more or less like the target item (e.g., [Retrospective comment explaining why the speaker used 'cap' instead of 'pan':] <i>Because it was similar to the word which I wanted to say: 'pan'.</i> )
- Mumbling	Swallowing or muttering inaudibly a word (or part of a word) whose correct form the speaker is uncertain about (e.g., <i>'uh well Mickey Mouse looks surprise or sort of XXX'</i> [the 'sort of' marker indicates that the unintelligible part is not just a mere recording failure but a strategy])
- Omission	Leaving a gap when not knowing a word and carrying on as if it had been said (e.g., <i>'Then... er... the sun is is... hm sun is... and the Mickey Mouse....'</i> [Retrospective comment: <i>I didn't know what 'shine' was.</i> ])
- Retrieval	In an attempt to retrieve a lexical item saying a series of incomplete or wrong forms or structures before reaching the optimal form
- Mime (nonlinguistic/ paralinguistic strategies)	Describing whole concepts nonverbally, or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration (e.g., [Retrospective comment:] <i>I was miming here, to put it out in front of the house, because I couldn't remember the word.</i> )
Own-performance problem-related strategies	
- Self-rephrasing	Repeating a term, but not quite as it is, but by adding something or using paraphrase (e.g., <i>'I don't know the material... what it's made of...'</i> )
- Self-repair	Making self-initiated corrections in one's own speech (e.g., <i>'then the sun shines and the weather get be... gets better'</i> )
Other-performance problem-related strategies	
- Other-repair	Correcting something in the interlocutor's speech (e.g., Speaker: <i>... because our tip went wrong... [...]</i> Interlocutor: <i>Oh, you mean the tap.</i> Speaker: <i>Tap, tap...</i> )

**2. Interactional strategies**

## Resource deficit-related strategies

- Appeal for help	
+ Direct appeal for help	Turning to the interlocutor for assistance by asking an explicit question concerning a gap in one's L2 knowledge (e.g., <i>'It's a kind of old clock so when it strikes er... I don't know, one, two, or three 'clock then a bird is coming out. What's the name?'</i> )
+ Indirect appeal for help	Trying to elicit help from the interlocutor indirectly by expressing lack of a needed L2 item either verbally or nonverbally (e.g., <i>'I don't know the name...'</i> [rising intonation, pause, eye contact])

## Own-performance problem-related strategies

- Comprehension check	Asking questions to check that the interlocutor can follow you (e.g., <i>'And what is the diameter of the pipe? The diameter. Do you know what the diameter is?'</i> )
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## Own-performance problem-related strategies (cont.)

- Own-accuracy check      Checking that what you said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question intonation (e.g., *'I can see a huge snow... snowman? ... snowman in the garden'*).

## Other-performance problem-related strategies

- Asking for repetition      Requesting repetition when not hearing or understanding something properly (e.g., *Pardon? What?*)
- Asking for clarification      Requesting explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure (e.g., *'What do you mean?, You saw what?'*); also 'question repeats,' that is, echoing a word or a structure with a question intonation
- Asking for confirmation      Requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly; repeating the trigger in a 'question repeat' or asking a full question
- Guessing      Guessing is similar to a confirmation request but the latter implies a greater degree of certainty regarding the key word, whereas guessing involves real indecision.
- Expressing non-understanding      Expressing that one did not understand something properly either verbally or nonverbally (e.g.,  
Interlocutor: *What is the diameter of the pipe?*  
Speaker: *The diameter?*  
I: *The diameter.*  
S: *I don't know this thing.*  
I: *How wide is the pipe?* Also, puzzled facial expressions, frowns and various types of mime and gestures.)
- Interpretive summary      Extended paraphrase of the interlocutor's message to check that the speaker has understood correctly (e.g., *'So the pipe is broken, basically, and you don't know what to do with it, right?'*)
- Responses
  - + Response: repeat      Repeating the original trigger or the suggested corrected form (after an other-repair)
  - + Response: repair      Providing other-initiated self-repair (e.g.,  
Speaker: *The water was not able to get up and I...*  
Interlocutor: *Get up? Where?*  
Speaker: *Get down.*)
  - + Response: rephrase      Rephrasing the trigger (e.g.,  
Interlocutor: *And do you happen to know if you have the rubber washer?*  
Speaker: *Pardon?*  
I: *The rubber washer... it's the thing which is in the pipe.*)
  - + Response: expand      Putting the problem word/issue into a larger context (e.g.,  
Interlocutor: *Do you know maybe er what the diameter of the pipe is?*  
Speaker: *Pardon?*  
I: *Diameter, this is er maybe you learnt mathematics and you sign er with this part of things.*)

- Responses (cont.)	
+ Response: confirm	Confirming what the interlocutor has said or suggested (e.g.,
	Interlocutor: <i>Uh, you mean under the sink, the pipe?</i>
	<i>For the...</i>
	Speaker: <i>Yes. Yes.</i> )
+ Response: reject	Rejecting what the interlocutor has said or suggested without offering an alternative solution
Processing time-related strategies	
- Use of fillers	Using gambits to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty (e.g., 'well'; 'you know'; 'actually'; 'okay'; 'This is rather difficult to explain'; 'Well, actually, it's a good question.')
+ Self-repetition	Repeating a word or a string of words immediately after they were said (e.g., [Retrospective comment:] <i>I wanted to say that it was made of concrete but I didn't know 'concrete' and this is why "which was made, which was made" was said twice.</i> )
+ Other-repetition	Repeating something the interlocutor said to gain time (e.g.,
	Interlocutor: <i>And could you tell me the diameter of the pipe? The diameter.</i>
	Speaker: <i>The diameter? It's about er... Maybe er... five centimeters.</i> )
Own-performance problem-related strategies	
- Verbal strategy markers	Using verbal marking phrases before or after a strategy to signal that the word or structure does not carry the intended meaning perfectly in the L2 code
	(e.g., (a) marking a circumlocution: ' <i>On the next picture... I don't really know what's it called in English... it's uh this kind of bird that... that can be found in a clock that strikes out or [laughs] comes out when the clock strikes.</i> '; (b) marking approximations: ' <i>It's some er... it's some kind of er... paper.</i> '; (c) marking foreignizing: ' <i>... a panel [with an English accent], I don't know whether there's a name in English or not [laughter] just it's a panel flat.</i> '; (d) marking literal translation: ' <i>It's er... a smaller medium flat and in, we call them blockhouse, but it's not it's not made of blocks.</i> '; (e) marking code switching: ' <i>the bird from the clocks come out and say 'kakukk'.</i> ')
Other-performance problem-related strategies	
- Feigning understanding	Making an attempt to carry on the conversation in spite of not understanding something by pretending to understand
	(e.g.,
	Interlocutor: <i>Do you have the rubber washer?</i>
	Speaker: <i>The rubber washer? ... No I don't.</i>
	[Retrospective comment: <i>I didn't know the meaning of the word, and finally I managed to say I had no such thing.</i> ])

Dörnyei and Scott's (1995) classification comprises not only strategies learners use when dealing with getting the intended message across but also strategies they use to understand the message they receive from interlocutors as well. The taxonomy includes all the potential strategies related to manner of communication problem management. Direct strategies involve all alternative, manageable, and self-contained means to convey the meaning. On the other hand, the second type of CSs comprises interactional strategies, in which there is the cooperation of the speaker and the interlocutor in trouble-shooting exchange. Examples of interactional strategies are appealing for help, or requesting for and providing for clarification. The third type of CSs in Dörnyei and Scott's (1995) taxonomy consist of indirect strategies which facilitate the conveyance of the meaning. They involve the use of devices such as fillers, feigning understanding, markers, or hedgers for the purpose of preventing communication breakdown and keeping the communication channel open.

#### **2.4.3.11 Communication strategies classification by Nakatani**

**(2006)**

Nakatani (2006) developed his own Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) as a result of research on CSs used by Japanese learners of English. The inventory, which was derived from student completion in an open-ended questionnaire, includes to main CS categories: (1) strategies for coping with speaking problems, and (2) strategies coping with listening problems. The inventory which is in the form of I-do items comprises:

##### **Strategies for coping with speaking problems**

- 1 Thinking first of what one wants to say in one's native language and then constructing the English sentence
- 2 Thinking first of a sentence one already knows in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation
- 3 Using familiar words



**Strategies for coping with speaking problems (cont.)**

- 4 Reducing the message and using simple expressions
- 5 Replacing the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing one's original intent
- 6 Abandoning the execution of a verbal plan and just saying some words when one doesn't know what to say
- 7 Paying attention to grammar and word order during conversation
- 8 Trying to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence
- 9 Changing the way of saying things according to the context
- 10 Taking time to express what one wants to say
- 11 Paying attention to one's pronunciation
- 12 Trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard
- 13 Paying attention to one's rhythm and intonation
- 14 Paying attention to the conversation flow
- 15 Trying to make eye-contact when talking
- 16 Using gestures and facial expressions if one can't communicate how to express oneself
- 17 Correcting oneself when noticing that one has made a mistake
- 18 Noticing oneself using an expression which fits a rule that has been learned
- 19 While speaking, paying attention to the listener's reaction to one speech
- 20 Giving examples if the listener doesn't understand what one is saying
- 21 Repeating what one wants to say until the listener understands
- 22 Making comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what one wants to say
- 23 Trying to use fillers when one cannot think of what to say
- 24 Leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty
- 25 Trying to give a good impression to the listener
- 26 Not minding taking risks even though one might make mistakes
- 27 Trying to enjoy the conversation
- 28 Trying to relax when one feels anxious
- 29 Actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say
- 30 Trying to talk like a native speaker
- 31 Asking other people to help when one can't communicate well
- 32 Giving up when one can't make oneself understood

The first category of CSs in Nakatani's (2006) classification consists of strategies used to deal with speaking problems. Besides helping speakers to communicate smoothly, maintaining the conversation, and avoiding communication breakdowns, this type of strategies can be employed when the speakers decide to give up attempts to communicate, or leave the message unfinished. On the other hand, the second type of strategies in Nakatani's (2006) classification involves those learners employ when listening problems occur in interaction. Paying attention to the speaker's eye contact, facial expression and gestures; making clarification requests; or sending continuation signal to show understanding to avoid communication gaps are

some examples of strategies for coping with listening difficulties in the course of conversation.

#### 2.4.3.12 Communication strategies classification by Mariani (2010)

After Nakatani (2006), Mariani (2010) introduced her taxonomy with five main categories which consist of: (1) meaning expression strategies, (2) meaning negotiation strategies, (3) conversation management strategies, (4) par- and extra-linguistic strategies, and (5) (intercultural) interaction-monitoring strategies.

##### A. Meaning expression strategies

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Using an all-purpose word   | (e.g., <i>thing, stuff, object, machine...</i> ; or <i>person, human being, animal...</i> ; or <i>do, make...</i> )  |
| 2. | Using a more general word (hyperonym/superordinate) instead of the specific one (hyponym)                         | (e.g., ' <i>flower</i> ' instead of 'geranium'; or ' <i>animal</i> ' instead of 'pet')   |
| 3. | Using a synonym or an antonym (opposite of a word)  | (e.g., ' <i>very small</i> ' instead of 'tidy'; ' <i>not deep</i> ' instead of 'shallow'; or ' <i>worried</i> ' ' <i>anxious</i> ' instead of 'concern')   |
| 4. | Using examples instead of the category  | (e.g., ' <i>shirts, jeans, skirt, jackets ....</i> ' instead of 'clothing')  |
| 5. | Using definitions or description  |  |
| -  | general words + relative clause   | (e.g., ' <i>It's the person who cuts your hair.</i> ' instead of 'hairstylist'; ' <i>It's a thing which ...</i> '; ' <i>It's a machine that ...</i> '; or ' <i>It's when .../It's where...</i> ' ) |
| 5. | Using definitions or description (cont.)  |  |
| -  | phrases instead of specific adjectives describing qualities, e.g. shape, size, color, texture, material           | (e.g., ' <i>in the shape of ...</i> '; ' <i>the size of ...</i> '; ' <i>the color of...</i> '; or ' <i>made of ...</i> ')  |
| -  | structure   | (e.g., ' <i>It has ...</i> '; or ' <i>It consists of ...</i> ' )   |
| -  | purpose or function   | (e.g., ' <i>used for...</i> ', ' <i>used to ...</i> '; ' <i>it opens a door</i> '; or ' <i>you can ... with it</i> ' )   |
| -  | Context or situation  | (e.g., ' <i>You use it if ...</i> '; ' <i>in a place where ...</i> '; ' <i>at the time when ...</i> ' )  |
| 6. | Using approximations  | (e.g., ' <i>It's like/ similar to a very tall building.</i> ' instead of 'skyscraper'; or ' <i>a kind of ...</i> '; ' <i>a sort of ...</i> '.)   |
| 7. | Paraphrasing  | (e.g., ' <i>I didn't expect her call. I was so surprised...</i> ' instead of 'She called out of the blue.')  |
| 8. | Self-correcting, rephrasing, repairing incorrect and inappropriate utterances or when spotting a misunderstanding | (e.g., ' <i>It's at the front ... no, at the back of the room. Sorry I'll try to say that again.</i> ' )   |

## B. Meaning negotiation strategies

9. Asking for help
- Telling one's interlocutor that one cannot say or understand something
    - o Directly (e.g.,  
Interlocutor: *Put it in the oven.*  
Speaker: *Put it in the ...?/ Put it where?/ Sorry, I don't understand that/ sorry I can't follow you.*)
    - o Indirectly Using a raising intonation, using eye contact or facial expression, pausing ...
  - Asking one's interlocutor to
    - o Repeat (e.g., *'Can you say that again please?; or 'Pardon?'*)
    - o Slow down, spell or write something (e.g., *'Can you speak slowly/ spell that/ write that down for me, please?'*)
    - o Explain, clarify, give an example (e.g., *'What exactly do you mean by ...?'*)
    - o Say something in the L2 (e.g., *'What's the word for...?'; 'I don't know the English word.'; 'In (German) we say ...'; 'How do you pronounce...?'; 'You do call it when ...'*)
    - o Confirm that one has used the correct or appropriate language (e.g., *'Is it correct?'; 'I want to replicate the experiment ...replicate, yes?'*)
    - o Confirm that one has been understood (e.g., *'Did you get that?'*)
  - Repeating, summarizing, paraphrasing what one has heard and asking one's interlocutor to confirm (e.g., *'Did you say ...?'; 'So you're saying that ...is that right?'*)
  - Guessing meaning and asking for confirmation (e.g., *'Is it a dishwasher? Yes?'*)
10. Giving help, by doing what the 'helping' interlocutor does in 9., e.g. trying to 'adjust' to one's partner's language level by speaking slowly, repeating, giving examples, asking if he/she has understood

## C. Conversation Management Strategies

11. Opening and closing a conversation (e.g., *'Lovely day isn't it?'; 'Just look at the time! I must be off now!'*)
12. Trying to keep the conversation open by showing interest and encouraging one's interlocutor to talk by, e.g.
- Asking questions: Yes/No type; 'open' questions; 'question tags' (e.g., *'Oh, dear. Were you scared?'; 'So what did you do then?'; 'Did you?'*)
  - 'Reversing' a question (e.g., *'But what about you?'; 'What do you think of ...?'*)
  - Adding comments and exclamations (e.g., *'That's interesting ...'; 'Really?'; 'Gosh, yes!'; 'You must be joking'; 'That's really good news!'*)
  - Sympathizing (e.g., *'Oh, what a pity!'; 'That's too bad!'; 'How awful!'; 'I'm ever so sorry'; 'What a nuisance!'*)
  - Repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said (e.g.,  
Interlocutor: *So I came back immediately.*  
Speaker: *Immediately? You mean you didn't wait for Charlie?*)

12. Trying to keep the conversation open by showing interest and encouraging one's interlocutor to talk by, e.g. (cont.)
- 'Feigning' to understand (e.g.,  
Interlocutor: *So I pulled up at the kerb.*  
Speaker: *Mmm ... yes ...*  
Interlocutor: *and pulled out the ignition key ...*)
13. Managing turn-taking
- Spotting the appropriate moment for signaling one wants to speak (e.g., *'Er ... if I just can add something there ...'*)
  - Getting attention, interrupting (e.g., *'Sorry (to interrupt), but ...'*; *'Just a minute ...'*; *'Excuse me could you explain ...'*; *'Can/May I ask you something?'*)
  - Holding one's turn, e.g. by talking to oneself, repeating key words in one's interlocutor's utterance (see also 15.) (e.g.,  
Interlocutor: *What is your hobby?*  
Speaker: *What's my hobby? Well, ... let's see ...*)
14. Avoiding or changing a topic, going back to the original topic (e.g., *'By the way, ...'*; *'Incidentally, before I forget ...'*; *'That reminds me of ...'*; *'Going back to ...'*; *'As I was saying before ...'*; *'Yes, well, anyway ...'*)
15. Using tactics to 'gain time' and keep the conversation channel open
- Using pauses, remaining silent
  - 'Um-ing', 'err-ing', mumbling (e.g., *'Mmm ...'*; *'Err ...'*; *'Aha ...'*)
  - Using 'fillers' 'chunks', hesitations devices, conversational gambits (e.g., *'Well ... I see ... If you know what I mean ... and things like that ... that sort of things ... as a matter of fact ... well, actually, that's a very interesting question'*)
  - 'Waffling' (using more words than what should be considered normal in the context)
  - Repeating oneself (e.g., *'So I stopped at the gate ... stopped at the gate and ...'*)
  - Repeating one's interlocutor's words (e.g.,  
Interlocutor: *Have you got a fitted carpet at home?*  
Speaker: *Fitted carpet ... Fitted carpet ...*)

#### D. Para- and Extra-Linguistic Strategies

16. Using intonation patterns, as in 9; using sounds, as in 15.
17. Using non-verbal language
- Mime, gestures, body movements, such as pointing at things (e.g., *'One like that'; 'I'd like this, please.'*)
  - Facial expressing, eye contact
  - Smiling, laughing
  - Use of objects, drawing, etc.

#### E. (Intercultural) interaction-monitoring strategies

18. Asking one's interlocutor to correct one if necessary or to comment on what one has said (e.g., *'Would you say that in this case?'*; *'Did I use the right word?'*)
19. Noticing the words that the others use and remembering to use them
20. Checking the reaction of other people when deciding to use new words and expression

**E. (Intercultural) interaction-monitoring strategies (cont.)**

21. Checking if one's interpretation is correct (e.g., *'Does that mean that ...?'*; *'So it means that ... Am I right?'*; *'I understand ... Is it so?'*)
22. Apologizing if one has said or done something inappropriate and trying to correct (cultural) misunderstandings (e.g., *'I'm sorry I didn't know ...'*; *'I hope you don't mind if I have ...'*; *'I'm sorry if I asked you a personal question.'*; *'I think there's been a misunderstanding. Can you tell me ...?'*; *'I think I upset you, but I'm not sure why.'*)
23. Dealing with uncertainty as to the acceptable behavior, e.g. by
- Asking one's interlocutor to clarify or explain her/his culture (e.g., *'How is it done in your country?'*; *'Is that what you usually do?'*; *'I'd like to ask you a question, but I'm not sure if it too personal'*; *'What does it mean when ...?'*)
  - Referring to what is customary in one's own country (e.g., *'In my country we ...'*)
  - Asking one's interlocutor what one should say/do or should have said/done (e.g., *'Is it all right if I ...?'*; *'How should I do this?'*; *'At what time should I be there?'*; *'What would you say in this situation?'*; *'What should I have done?'*)

The first category includes meaning expression strategies, such as using synonym or antonym, using examples, paraphrasing or self-correcting. These strategies involve the speaker's attempts to express the intended meaning in verbal language when he has difficulties in conveying the meaning. Under the next category - meaning negotiation strategies, on the other hand, are those related to the speaker's utilization of verbal language to request for assistance or for confirmation when facing difficulties in understanding the intended message. These strategies are used to offer help to the interlocutor, too. Conversation management strategies, which comprise another category in Mariani's (2010) taxonomy, refer to those which help to keep the conversation channel open or to signal the end of the conversation. Examples of this type are: opening and closing a conversation, trying to keep conversation by showing interest and encouraging one's interlocutor to talk, spotting the appropriate moment for signaling one wants to speak, or holding one's turn by talking to oneself.

One more category involves para- and extra-linguistic strategies. They are non-verbal strategies, such as using intonation patterns, gestures, or objects to maintain the conversation. The last type of CSs in Mariani's (2010) classification, (intercultural) interaction-monitoring strategies are those the speaker employs to manipulate his language for the purpose of improving the understanding, accuracy, and appropriateness of the message. Asking the interlocutor to correct one's speech if necessary, checking if one's interpretation is correct, or asking the interlocutor what one should say/do or should have said/done are some examples of these strategies.

#### **2.4.3.13 Communication strategies classification by Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011)**

Recently, Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011) have generated a list of CSs employed by Thai students for coping with communication problems. The topology which was derived from the result of data collected through semi-structured interviews is as follows.

##### **A. Strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor**

###### **1. Continuous interaction strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor**

- Switching some unknown words or phrases into Thai
- Correcting one's own pronunciation, grammar and lexical mistakes
- Using familiar words, phrases, or sentences
- Using circumlocution
- Using non-verbal expressions, such as mime, gestures, and facial expressions
- Referring to objects or materials
- Drawing a picture
- Repeating words, phrases, or sentences a few times
- Spelling or writing out the intended words, phrases, or sentences

###### **1. Continuous interaction strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor (cont.)**

- Using fillers
- Appealing for assistance from the interlocutor

###### **2. Discontinuous interaction strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor**

- Keeping quiet while thinking about how to get a message across to the interlocutor
- Speaking more slowly to gain time to think
- Talking about something else to gain time to think
- Appealing for assistance from other people around
- Making a phone call to another person for assistance

## **2. Discontinuous interaction strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor (cont.)**

- Consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document
- Thinking in Thai before speaking

### **B. Strategies for understanding the message**

- Trying to catch the interlocutor's main point
- Noticing the interlocutor's gestures and facial expression
- Asking the interlocutor for a repetition
- Asking the interlocutor to slow down
- Appealing for assistance from other people around to clarify the interlocutor's message
- Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language

Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011) classified CSs into two main categories: (1) strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor, and (2) strategies for understanding the message. Strategies for conveying a message are divided into two subcategories: continuous interaction strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor, and discontinuous interaction strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutor.

When learners face difficulty in conveying the message to the interlocutor, they can employ, without pausing the conversation, such CSs as switching some unknown words or phrases into Thai; using circumlocution; using non-verbal expressions, for example, mime, gestures, and facial expressions; referring to objects or materials; or appealing for assistance from the interlocutor. Besides, learners can also discontinue the interaction with the interlocutor for a while in order to seek a way to get the intended message across to the interlocutor through the use of CSs such as speaking more slowly to gain time to think; appealing for assistance from the people around; or consulting a dictionary. Meanwhile, under the second main category, strategies for understanding involve attempts to understand the intended message received from the interlocutor. Examples of strategies of this type are: trying to catch the interlocutor's main point; asking the interlocutor for a repetition; or

appealing for assistance from other people around to clarify the interlocutor's message.

In conclusion, there have been a variety of classifications of CSs due to the principles of terminology and categorization of different researchers. Despite their different names, some categories happen to share some strategies. All in all, being a result of either self-generation or reviews and modification of other researchers' works, the core groups of CSs seem to include three types: (1) avoidance or reduction strategies, (2) achievement strategies, and (3) stalling or time-gaining strategies. Additionally, in terms of purpose of strategy use, CSs have been categorized as strategies for dealing with speaking difficulties and strategies for dealing with listening difficulties.

The review of CS classifications has provided a guideline for the present study. For the present investigation purpose, the researcher has made use of the proposed CSs from the most recently established topologies suggested by Dörnyei and Scott (1995), Nakatani (2006), Mariani (2010), and Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011). The reason for this will be explained in Chapter 3. However, it is worth mentioning that the researcher has taken the research context and operational definition of CSs of the present study into consideration when choosing the most appropriate strategies for the CS inventory as shown in Table 3.1 (Chapter 3).

So far, scholars in the field of CSs have not only defined and classified CSs. They have moved further and investigated the use of CSs on different groups of students as well. The next section is the review of related research works on CSs, which gave important information for the rationale and research design of the present study.



## 2.5 Research Works on Communication Strategies

For the past three decades, the history of research on CSs has witnessed a number of works on the strategy nature, which includes the definitions, identifications, and classifications. Meanwhile, variations in CS use and CS instruction have also been the concerns of researchers in the field. This section is intended to give a summary of research works on CSs related to the present investigation. This is for the purpose of understanding how different groups of language learners employ CSs to overcome communication problems. More importantly, it shows how researchers devise methods and instruments for data collection and data analysis. For that reason, the summary will cover important information about each research - focus of the study, participants, methods of data collection, investigated variables, methods of data analysis, findings, and pedagogical implications.

It should be noticed that the present study aimed to investigate students' use of CSs in large scale with reference to variables that belong to students' characteristics. It would not involve the teaching of these strategies; therefore, it makes sense that in this review of related past research works, studies on the teaching of CSs, such as Dörnyei (1995); Brett (2001); Nakatani (2005); Lam (2006, 2010); Prinyajarn (2007); and Kongsom (2009) were excluded. Following (Table 2.1) are the available related research works on CSs conducted in countries other than Vietnam.

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>1. Bialystok, E. (1983). Some Factors in the Selections and Implementation of Communication Strategies.</b>				
-L1-based and L2-based strategies	- 16 grade 12 students and 14 adult students learning French as FL	- Cloze test for language proficiency - Communicative task: picture reconstruction	- Language proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - Correlation coefficient - ANOVA
<b>Findings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The grade 12 advanced students used significantly fewer L1-based strategies than did the grade 12 regular group and the adult group.</li> <li>- For the adults, there was a significant negative relationship between the cloze test performance and the proportion of L1-based strategies used.</li> <li>- For the students, there was a negative relationship between the cloze test performance and the proportion of L1-based strategies used, but it is not significant.</li> <li>- When two groups of students were separated, the advanced students displayed a positive non-significant relationship between the cloze test performance and the proportion of L1-based strategies used. This made interpretation difficult.</li> </ul>				
<b>Pedagogical implications: NA</b>				
<b>2. Hastrup, K. and Phillipson, R. (1983). Achievement Strategies in Learner/Native Speaker Interaction.</b>				
- Achievement strategies	- 8 secondary Danish learners of ESL	- Conversation and video recording of the learners' performance.	- Types of school - Academic goal	- Coding - Descriptive statistics
<b>Findings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The distribution of CSs varied considerably; appeals were widely used; non-linguistic strategies were common; and the learners in the less academic school context were over-dependent on their mother tongue.</li> <li>- L1- based strategies nearly always lead to partial or non comprehension while IL-based strategies often lead to full comprehension.</li> </ul>				
<b>Pedagogical implications: NA</b>				
<b>3. Váradi, T. (1983). Strategies of Target Language Learner Communication: Message Adjustment.</b>				
- Message adjustment	- 19 Hungarian adult learners of ESL	- Communicative task (in written form): description of picture and translation of the description	- L1 and L2	- Coding - Descriptive statistics
<b>Findings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learners wrote longer descriptions in L1 than in L2.</li> <li>- The characteristic of L2 versions by contrast with L1 versions is extreme stylistic economy and simplicity. Reference to circumstances attending the actions defined in the picture is apparently sacrificed early in the process of meaning adjustment called intensional reduction and extensional reduction.</li> </ul>				
<b>Pedagogical implications: NA</b>				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>4. Corrales, O. and Call, M. S. (1985). At a Loss for Words: The Use of Communication Strategies to Convey Lexical Meaning.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- Spanish-speaking adult students learning ESL in USA	-Two types of communicative tasks: the structured questions and the simulated communication situation - Recording of students' task performance	- Language proficiency level - Types of task - Time1 and Time2	- Coding: - Descriptive statistics - ANOVA; post hoc test
<b>Findings:</b> - The unstructured task (the simulated communication situation) elicited significantly more transfer strategies from both groups of students. - The advanced group used a greater proportion of task-influenced strategies than the intermediate group at Time1, while the intermediate group used a greater mean proportion of this type of strategy at Time2. - A post hoc analysis shows that students of a language may go through a period of maximum exploitation of task-influenced strategies which peaks and then drop off as they become more proficient in the language.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				
<b>5. Paribakht, T. (1985). Strategic Competence and Language Proficiency.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- Two groups of ESL Persian students at university level and one group of native speakers of English (20 students/each group)	- Communication task: concept identification	- Language proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics
<b>Findings:</b> - All three groups used the same four communication approaches, namely, linguistic approach, conceptual approach, contextual approach, and mime. The groups were differed only in the use of a few of their constituent strategies. - The linguistic approach was used relatively more often by the native speakers and the advanced students than the low-proficiency students; the conceptual approach was used relatively more often by the low-proficiency students than by the other two groups; the contextual approach did not produce any significant inter-group differences; and the mime was adopted more frequently by the student groups than by the native speakers.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>6. Huang, X. and Van Naerssen, M. (1987). Learning Strategies for Oral Communication.</b>				
- The use of functional practice strategies (CSs)	- 60 Chinese fourth-year English majors at university level in China	- Oral test - Questionnaire - In-depth interview	- Oral proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - T-test
<b>Findings:</b> - The students who were more successful in oral communication reported employing functional practice strategies more frequently than did the less successful ones. - No statistically significant difference was found among the three groups when formal practice was examined. - Several students in the successful group commented in the interviews that one of the basic tricks for improving their oral abilities was to talk a lot and not to be afraid of losing face when making mistakes. None of the students in the other two groups made such comments.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				
<b>7. Poulisse, N. and Schils, E. (1989). The Influence of Task- and Proficiency-Related Factors on the Use of Compensatory Strategies: A Quantitative Analysis.</b>				
- The use of compensatory strategies	3 groups of Dutch students learning EFL. They includes: - 15 university students. - 15 fifth-year VWO pupils - 15 third-year VWO pupils	- Communicative tasks: picture naming/ description, story telling, and interview - Video recording of students' performance	- Language proficiency level - Types of task	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - ANOVA
<b>Findings:</b> (Note: VWO: a type of Dutch secondary school which prepares pupils for university.) - The most advanced students used fewer compensatory strategies than did the least proficiency ones. - The type of compensatory strategies chosen by the students was not to any large extent related to their proficiency level. - The students used analytic strategies in the picture naming/description. They used holistic strategies and transfer strategies in the story retell task and the oral interview.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>8. Si-Qing, C. (1990). A Study of Communication Strategies in Interlanguage Production by Chinese EFL Learners.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 12 Chinese university students learning EFL	- Communicative task: concept-identification - Audio recording of students' performance	- Language proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - T-test
<b>Findings:</b> - The low-proficiency group employed significantly more CSs than did the high-proficiency group. - While linguistic-based CSs are more often employed by the high-proficiency group, the knowledge-based CSs and repetition CSs were used more frequently by the low-proficiency group. - Paralinguistic and avoidance CSs produced no significant difference between two groups. - Learners of high proficiency level are more efficient in their use of CSs.				
<b>Pedagogical implications: NA</b>				
<b>9. Liskin-Gasparro, J. E. (1996). Circumlocution, Communication Strategies and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines: An Analysis of Student Discourse.</b>				
- The use of CSs, particularly circumlocution	30 NNS speakers of Spanish	- Tape recording of students' performance during interview	- Language proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics
<b>Findings:</b> - Advanced speakers, more than Intermediate High speakers, relied on a range of L2-based strategies that included, but was not limited to, circumlocution.				
<b>Pedagogical implications: NA</b>				
<b>10. Flyman, A. (1997). Communication Strategies in French as a Foreign Language.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 10 Swedish students learning French as FL	- Communicative tasks: translation, picture/story-telling, and discussion - Recording of students' performance - Retrospection comments	- Types of task	- Coding - Descriptive statistics
<b>Findings:</b> - In the translation task and the picture task, a lot of the analytic strategies were employed. - Most of the holistic strategies were found in the translation task. - A transfer strategy was especially frequent in the discussion task. - Appeal for assistance strategies were most frequently found in the picture task and the discussion task. - In the translation task, lexical avoidance most frequently involved a single word. - Abandonment strategies were most frequently used in the picture task. - A lexical avoidance and a morphological avoidance were most frequently used in the picture task. - A syntactic avoidance was not very common and was only employed in the translation task.				
<b>Pedagogical implications: NA</b>				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>11. Dobao, A. M. F. (2001). Communication Strategies in the Interlanguage of Galician students of English: the Influence of Learner- and Task-Related Factors.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 15 students of English as EFL. 7 of them were Galician speakers and 8 were Spanish.	- Oral tasks: picture story narration, photograph description, and conversation - Recording of students' performance - Interview for the speakers' retrospection based on the transcript of the recording	- Language proficiency level - Speaker's native language - Types of task	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - Chi-square test
<p><b>Findings:</b> - Though elementary students employed more CSs than the other two groups, there was no significant difference in CS use in the intermediate and advanced learners. Besides, when compared with intermediate and advanced students, elementary students used more avoidance and transfer strategies. Also, between the intermediate and advanced students, there was a higher use of transfer among the advanced students.</p> <p>- The difference in native languages does not have a clear influence on their strategic behaviour. The Galician group used more CSs than the Spanish group in spite of the similarities of their native languages. However, there was no difference in CS choice between the two groups.</p> <p>- There was more use of L1-based strategy in conversation.</p> <p>- More avoidance strategies were used in the narration task than in the description task.</p>				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				
<b>12. Margolis, D. P. (2001). Compensation Strategies by Korean Students.</b>				
- Overall CS use	-72 Korean college students learning ESL	- Observation - Oral exam interview	- Oral Test score - Gender - Age	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - Correlation coefficient
<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <p>- Students most often employed the strategy of seeking help - asking for confirmation or more information. Making guesses was the second most often used strategy. A range of other strategies such as using gestures and mime, synonyms and antonyms, coining words, circumlocutions, etc., as a combined category were the least frequently used strategy.</p> <p>- A significant negative relationship between test score and use of reduction strategies</p> <p>- Female students had a tendency to guess incorrectly more than males.</p> <p>- The correlation between age and guessing shows that the older a person is, the more likely they are to employ the guessing strategy (again, incorrectly).</p>				
<p><b>Pedagogical implications:</b></p> <p>- Communication breakdowns can help teachers identify areas that require more instruction and practice. They can direct students to focus on the language areas most relevant to what they want to communicate.</p> <p>- Due to the fact that reduction strategies are likely to negatively impact students' oral examination scores and conversational experiences, understanding the causes for students' resorting to these strategies can help teachers build their students' skills for alternative strategy utilization.</p> <p>- Guiding students to use alternative strategies is an important task for teachers.</p>				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>13. Granena, G. (2003). Appeals for Assistance and Incorporation of Feedback in Foreign Language Interaction: the Role of Age and Proficiency Level.</b>				
The use of appeals for assistance	- Three groups of EFL Spanish students (30 students/each)	- Communicative task: picture story narration	- Age - Language proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - ANOVA; post hoc test
<b>Findings:</b> - The more proficient group employed the fewer appeals for assistance. - The older and more proficient group used more direct appeals for assistance.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				
<b>14. Wannaruk, A. (2003). Communication Strategies Employed by EST Students.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 75 Thai university EFL students	- Oral interview. - Video recording of students' performance	- Oral proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - ANOVA; post hoc test
<b>Findings:</b> - Modification devices were the most frequently used CSs. The other strategies used in order of frequency were nonlinguistic strategies, L1-based strategies, target language-based strategies, and avoidance strategies. - Except for L2-based strategy, the CSs employed by the students with a low level of oral proficiency greatly outnumbered the CSs employed by the students with middle and high levels of oral proficiency. - Avoidance CSs were more often used by those with a low level of oral proficiency.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> - Strategic competence should be included in the goals of a foreign language syllabus. - Syllabus should be designed to create conditions to promote the development of learners' strategic competence, the ability to use CSs to deal with different communication problems they might encounter. - Arranging interviews or meeting between native speakers and learners as a regular part of a course is a good way to encourage learners in genuine communication. - Every type of CSs should be introduced to the learners because each of them might be helpful in different situations.				
<b>15. Weerarak, L. (2003). Oral Communication Strategies Employed by English Major Taking Listening and Speaking 1 at Rajabhat Institute Nakhon Ratchasima.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 16 Thai university students majoring in English	- Oral test scores - Communicative task: oral interview, conversation, picture description, word meaning explanation - Observation	- Oral proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - Chi-square test
<b>Findings:</b> - Students used all five types of CSs: modification devices, target language-based strategy, nonlinguistic strategy, L1-based strategy, and avoidance strategy. - The less able group employed CSs more than did the more able one, except for the TL-based strategy. - The significant difference was found between the frequency of more able and less able speaking ability students' use of each type of CSs.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>16. Kazuo, W. and Akira, G. (2004). Types of Communication Strategies Used by Japanese Learners of English.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 30 Japanese EFL learners	- Communicative tasks: picture description and story telling (in Japanese and English with a week interval) - (Retrospective) interview	- L1 and L2 - English Language proficiency level	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - ANOVA
<p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learners tried to overcome their difficulties by using different types of CS in L2 from those used in L1 regardless of their English proficiency.</li> <li>- Subjects, particularly the ME and LE groups, relied more on HOCOs in English.</li> <li>- The LE group used far fewer ANCOs in English than in Japanese</li> <li>- There was no relationship between the subjects' English proficiency and types of CS use in Japanese</li> </ul> <p>The relationship between their English proficiency and CS use within the English versions revealed no significant differences, either. (Note: HE: high level; ME: middle level; LE: low level; HOCOs: conceptual holistic strategies; ANCOs: conceptual analytical strategies)</p>				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				
<b>17. Nakatani, Y. (2006). Developing an Oral Communication Strategy Inventory.</b>				
- Oral communication strategy inventory (OCSI) - Overall CS use	- Phase 1: 400 EFL Japanese university students - Phase 2: 62 EFL Japanese university students	- Open-ended questionnaire - OCSI - Simulated conversation test	- Oral proficiency level	- Coding - Factor analysis - Correlation coefficient - MANOVA
<p><b>Findings:</b> * <i>Phase 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The OCSI with 32 items of strategies for coping with speaking problems and 26 items for coping with listening problems during communication tasks.</li> </ul> <p>* <i>Phase 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regarding the speaking part, the high oral proficiency group reported more use of three categories - the social effective strategies, the fluency-oriented strategies and negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies – than did the low oral proficiency group.</li> <li>- Regarding the listening part, high oral proficiency group reported more use of fluency-maintaining strategies than did the low proficiency group.</li> </ul>				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> NA				



**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>18. Rabab'ah, G. and Bulut, D. (2007). Compensatory Strategies in Arabic as a Second Language.</b>				
- The use of compensatory strategies (CpSs)	- 24 male learning Arabic as second language. They were high school graduates from 8 different countries.	- Communicative tasks: interview and role-play - Audio-recording of students' performance	- Types of task - Speaker' native language	- Coding - Descriptive statistics
<b>Findings:</b> - Three major categories: reduction strategies, achievement strategies and other-performance problem-related strategies (interactive) were found. - There were differences in the two tasks in the frequency of use of each type of CpSs - In the interview task, the students' most widely used strategies included paraphrase, restructuring, retrieval, and repetition. - The role play task recorded the lowest number of strategy use. - The frequency of CpSs varied according to the individual learners' nationality and native language.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> - CpSs should be taught so that communication does not break down. - Language teachers and syllabus designers should develop an effective strategy training program that equips Arabic foreign language students with CpSs that enhance language acquisition.				
<b>19. Paramasivam, S. (2009). Language Transfer as a Communication Strategy and a Language Learning Strategy in a Malaysian ESL Classroom.</b>				
- Transfer strategies use	- Four Malaysian students of English of first year in university	- Tasks involving (A) static , (B) dynamic and (C) abstract relationships - Recording of students' performance - Comparison between L1 and L2 performance - Interview (retrospection)	-Task types	- Coding
<b>Findings:</b> - The transfer strategies of language switch and literal translation were used in all the three task-types. However, there were differences in the communicative intent conveyed. In Task A, the strategies were used to refer to objects used in the task and to express the non-verbal aspects of the task. In Task B, the strategies were employed to refer to and describe the objects and characters in the story. In Task C, they were used to convey words in relation to the opinions of the functions of the items specified for the survival situation and their necessity. - The linguistic configurations of language switch and literal translation were similar across the task-types. Language switch involved the use of an L1 word to convey the target concept. In literal translation, problematic words and phrases were translated word for word from the L1. There were similarities and differences in the communicative functions of these strategies across the task-types.				
<b>Pedagogical implications: NA</b>				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>20. Dong, Y. and Fang-peng G. (2010). Chinese Learners' Communication Strategies Research: A Case Study in Shandong Jiaotong University.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 89 Chinese students majoring in English	- Questionnaire for attitude towards CSs and for frequency of use of CSs in actual communication - An in-depth interview	- Students' attitude towards CSs. - Level of language proficiency	- Factor analysis - Descriptive statistics - ANOVA
<b>Findings:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most students had positive attitude towards achievement strategies and negative attitude towards reduction strategies.</li> <li>- Both groups of students with higher and lower levels of language proficiency reported holding negative attitudes towards reduction strategies.</li> <li>- The students who could fully recognize achievement strategies' communicative potential had a positive attitude towards strategies, while the students with negative attitude either never realized the role achievement strategies play or they had already formed the wrong concept.</li> <li>- Students with low language proficiency used reduction strategies more often.</li> </ul>				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raising the awareness of the nature and communicative potential of CSs by making students conscious of the CSs existing in their repertoire, and sensitizing them to the appropriate situations is necessary.</li> <li>- Not all CSs should be encouraged.</li> <li>- It is advisable to provide L2 models of the use of certain CSs.</li> </ul>				
<b>21. Huang, C. (2010). Exploring Factors Affecting the Use of Oral CSs.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 98 Taiwanese EFL sophomores (22 males and 76 females).	- Questionnaire (OSCI)	- Gender - English language proficiency - Self-perceived oral proficiency - Motivation in speaking English - Frequency of speaking English	- Descriptive statistics - ANOVA - The Pearson correlation and multiple regression
<b>Findings:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Message reduction and alternation strategies were employed most often; message abandonment strategies were employed least often.</li> <li>- Students' self-perceived oral proficiency, the frequency of and motivation in speaking English were significantly correlated with CS use.</li> <li>- Gender and English proficiency did not have any effect on CS use.</li> <li>- Frequency of speaking English outside the classroom and motivation in speaking English were the powerful predictors of CS use. (Note: OCSI: Oral Communication Strategy Inventory).</li> </ul>				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EFL teachers should create situations for students to produce oral language.</li> <li>- Teachers should introduce CSs to students and encourage their use.</li> <li>- Out of class learning for communication should be advocated</li> <li>- Emphasis should be given to developing intrinsic motivation in English learning.</li> </ul>				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>22. Lai, H. (2010). Gender Effect on the Use of CSs.</b>				
- Overall CS use	- 36 senior English major studying at a Chinese university.	- Communicative task: concept identification - Observation - Audio recording of students' performance - Retrospection	- Gender	- Coding - Descriptive statistic - Chi-square test
<b>Findings:</b> - There was no significant difference between females and males in their frequency of strategy use. - The strategies which male students adopted most often were much the same as those used most often by female students. - Female students are more efficient than male students in their use of CSs.				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b> - Foreign language teachers should attend to the difference in the effectiveness of CS use between female and male. - They should know the causes of that difference in order to help male students to improve their oral ability. - Teachers should be sensitive to students' individual differences.				
<b>23. Mei, A. and Nathalang (2010). Use Communication Strategies by Chinese EFL Learners.</b>				
- CS use with and without interactions with interlocutors	- 117 EFL Chinese university students majoring in Arts and Science	- Tests - Recording of students' task performance - Frequency form of CSs checking - Questionnaire	- Types of task - Language proficiency level - Academic major	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - Chi-square test
<b>Findings:</b> - Student's use of CSs was influenced by task type, level of English proficiency and academic major.				
<b>Pedagogical implications: NA</b>				

**Table 2.1: Research Works on CSs Conducted in Countries Other Than Vietnam**

(Cont.)

Focus of Study	Participants	Methods of Data Collection	Investigated variables	Methods of Data Analysis
<b>24. Somsai, S. (2011). Use of Communication Strategies by English majors at Rajamangala University of Technology.</b>				
Overall CS use	Thai EFL university English majors. Interview: 48; Questionnaire: 811	- Interview - Questionnaire	- Gender - Exposure to oral communication in English - Level of study - Location of institution	- Coding - Descriptive statistics - ANOVA; Chi-square test
<b>Findings:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was medium frequency of students' use of all CSs.</li> <li>- 'Using familiar words, phrases, or sentences to convey the message to the interlocutor continuously' was employed with highest frequency while the least frequently used strategy was 'making a phone call to another person for assistance to convey the message to the interlocutor'.</li> <li>- There was a relationship between the students' overall CS use and gender of students. Female students reported using more overall CSs than did male students.</li> <li>- There was a relationship between the students' overall CS use and exposure to oral communication in English. Students with non-limited exposure to classroom instructions reported using CSs more frequently than did those with limited exposure to classroom instructions.</li> </ul>				
<b>Pedagogical implications:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different forms of multi media should be taken into consideration when teaching oral communication.</li> <li>- Students, especially beginners, should be encouraged to take risk and use CSs while speaking.</li> <li>- Activities for target language practice and CSs use should be promoted.</li> <li>- Raising students' awareness of the value and of a wide range of CSs is necessary.</li> </ul>				

Table 2.1 shows that not all the related past research works give pedagogical implications for CSs in the published articles. However, the implications we have found generally agree that CS instruction should be included in language teaching. While emphasizing the importance of raising students' awareness of CSs and promoting students' use of these strategies for coping with communication breakdowns, they suggest language teachers should be cautious. This is because there are certain types of CSs, such as topic avoidance, that should not be promoted. Besides, different groups of students may need different methods of CS instruction depending upon their individual characteristics.

The review of related previous research has revealed the common investigated variables in association with CS use. They include: language proficiency level (e.g., Bialystok, 1983; Poulisse and Schils, 1989; Liskin-Gasparro, 1996; Dobao, 2001; Kazuo and Arika, 2004; Dong and Fang-peng, 2010; and Huang, 2010), task type (e.g., Corrales and Call, 1985; Flyman, 1997; Rabab'ah and Bulut, 2007; Paramasivam, 2009; and Mei and Nathalang, 2010), and oral proficiency level (e.g., Huang and Van Naerssen, 1987; Wannaruk, 2003; Nakatani, 2006; and Huang, 2010).

Besides, other factors which have been under exploration of some CS studies are: age (e.g., Granena, 2003), L1 and L2 (e.g., Váradi, 1983), gender (e.g., Lai, 2010; Huang, 2010; and Somsai, 2011), native language (e.g., Rabab'ah and Bulut, 2007), types of school (e.g., Haastrup and Phillipson, 1983), Time1 and Time2 (e.g., Corrales and Call, 1985), attitude towards CS use (e.g., Dong and Fang-peng, 2010), exposure to oral communication in English (e.g., Somsai, 2011), level of study (e.g., Somsai, 2011), location of institution (e.g., Somsai, 2011), motivation in speaking English (Huang, 2010), and frequency of speaking English (Huang, 2010); however, these variables appeared in very few research works.

In terms of the framework for data collection, the participants of the available previous research works were learners from various levels ranging from secondary to tertiary. In a few studies, adult learners and native speakers were chosen as the target group for the purpose of investigation. Furthermore, regarding the methods and instruments of data collection, the most commonly found have been communicative tasks, retrospective interview on student's performance, and observation. They were mainly used to obtain information such as CS types and frequency of CS use. Test scores have also been found to be used together with those above-mentioned

instruments in many studies. It helped to collect data concerning levels of general language proficiency or oral language proficiency. Hence, it is obvious that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has been the common method for data gathering in CS research; accordingly, the mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approaches has been popular in terms of data analysis, as can be seen in most studies on the types and use of CSs. Most of the times, coding techniques were called into action together with one or more quantitative methods, namely descriptive statistics, Correlation coefficient, Chi-square test and ANOVA/MANOVA, when it comes to analyzing data.

Additionally, arising out of the review, it is noticed that most related previous works have utilized communicative tasks as a means to elicit strategies from learners. As a result, the classifications of CSs were developed through observation or retrospective interview. However, rather than investigating strategy use in relation to certain tasks, some researchers in CSs have attempted to go further to examine the strategy students use in general, using questionnaire and/or interview.

Huang and Van Naerssen (1987) conducted a study on oral communication used by EFL students in the People's Republic of China. Sixty Chinese university students who were graduating English majors participated in the study. An oral test was given to the participants to locate their oral proficiency level. A questionnaire on the students' use of CSs was administered. It consisted of three parts (Part 1: open-ended questions; Part 2: closed question, scaling for frequency; and Part 3 closed questions, multiple alternatives). After the questionnaire administration, ten highest and nine lowest achievers on the oral test were interviewed for in-depth information. The results supported the critical role of functional practice strategies (or CSs) in

language learning. The students who were more successful in oral communication reported employing functional practice strategies more frequently than did the less successful ones.

Nakatani's (2006) study focused on how valid information about learners' perception of strategy use during communicative tasks could be gathered systematically from EFL learners. First, a questionnaire for statistical analysis, namely the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI), was developed. With the participation of Japanese university students, the research project consisted of 3 stages: an open-ended questionnaire written in Japanese to identify learners' general perceptions of strategies for oral interaction ( $N = 80$ ); a pilot factor analysis for selecting test items ( $N = 400$ ); and a final factor analysis to obtain a stable self-reported instrument ( $N = 400$ ).

In addition to the OCSI, the students were also required to complete the Japanese version of Oxford's SILL (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning). The results of reports on the SILL and the OCSI were compared in order to validate the OCSI. Cronbach's alpha was used for reliability checking. Factor analysis resulted in the OCSI which included eight categories of strategies for coping with speaking problems and seven categories for coping with listening problems during communication. Then, a simulated communicative test for EFL students ( $N = 62$ ) was administered to check the applicability of the survey instrument. When the oral test scores were examined, it was found that students with high oral proficiency tended to use specific strategies, such as social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, and negotiation of meaning. The results also indicated that a significant difference was found in students' awareness of strategy use according to their oral proficiency level.

Recently, Dong and Fang-peng (2010) have conducted a study with 89 Chinese learners at Shandong Jiaotong University. The study was on CSs and the roles it plays in second language acquisition. It also investigated the relationship between language proficiency and learners' choice of CSs. In order to assess the learners' attitude towards CSs and the frequency at which the learners used different CSs for communication, a questionnaire was developed based on Oxford's SILL (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning) and the description by Faerch and Kasper on CSs.

Besides the questionnaire, interview was also employed to gather data. Ten students were chosen as interviewees. They differed in their linguistic levels, in their attitudes towards the use of CSs, and in their frequency of use of CSs. The subjects' attitudes towards the use of CSs and their frequency of use of CSs were summarized and analyzed. Factor analysis and one-way ANOVA were employed to analyze the data.

The results showed that most learners had positive attitude towards achievement strategies, and negative attitude towards reduction strategies. Meanwhile, both the learners with higher level of language proficiency and those with lower level of language proficiency tended to hold negative attitude towards reduction strategies. Besides, the learners who could fully recognize achievement strategies' communicative potential had positive attitude towards these strategies, while the students with negative attitude either never realized the role achievement strategies play, or they had already formed the wrong concept about it. Students with low language proficiency used reduction strategies more often.

More recently, Somsai (2011) carried out a research on CS use by Thai EFL university students and its relations with four factors: gender, exposure to oral



communication in English, level of study, and location of institution. Different from Huang and Van Naerssen (1987), Nakatani (2006), and Dong and Fang-peng (2010); Somsai (2011) generated her classification of CSs from the data obtained through semi-structured interviews ( $N = 48$ ). The resulting classification had 24 categories. For the purpose of investigating the relationship between students' CS use and the four above-mentioned factors, a questionnaire was designed based on the generated CS categories and subsequently administered to 811 students. The Chi-square tests and ANOVAs were used for data analysis.

The results showed that the students' reported employing all CSs at the medium frequency level. It was found that 'using familiar words, phrases, or sentences to convey the message to the interlocutor continuously' was employed with highest frequency while the least frequently used strategy was 'making a phone call to another person for assistance to convey the message to the interlocutor'. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the students' overall CS use and gender of students as well as their exposure to oral communication in English. Female students reported using more overall CSs than did male students. Students with non-limited exposure to classroom instructions reported using CSs more frequently than did those with limited exposure.

In general, the studies by Huang and Van Naerssen (1987), Nakatani (2006), Dong and Fang-peng (2010), and Somsai (2011), with the employment of questionnaire, have allowed learners to report the use of CSs beyond the task and time boundaries. However, the factors related to CSs that those studies investigated are language proficiency, oral proficiency, attitude towards CSs, gender, exposure to

oral communication in English, level of study, and location of institution. That has left a big gap for future research to explore.

Additionally, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has been only one available study in the field of CSs conducted in Vietnam. Carried out by Lê (2006), the study was on the teaching of these strategies, with the participation of eight first-year students at Hue University of Education in the central part of Vietnam. Oral test, video and audio recordings of students' performance and interview were adopted for data collection. Positive findings about CS instruction were reported from the study; however, being a case study, it is difficult to generalize those findings to other contexts.

In conclusion, the available previous research varied in terms of CS titles due to the different framework employed by the researchers. Besides, CS research works examining 'learners' gender', 'attitude towards speaking English', 'high school background', 'exposure to oral communication in English', and 'types of English major concentration' as independent variables appear very scarce. Furthermore, no experimental research has been reported conducting on the use of CSs of EFL students in the Vietnamese context, especially with English major students at the university level in the South of Vietnam who are the subjects of the present study.

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter has provided the related literature with regard to CS employment. The review began with the theoretical background in CSs. This part included definitions and the characteristics of oral communication and of communicative competence. CSs

with their definitions, framework, and classifications were addressed. Finally, the chapter ended with a discussion on the related research on CS use. The next chapter is intended to explain the research design and development of the present study.



# **CHAPTER 3**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Chapter**

This chapter aims to discuss mainly the research methodology for the present study. This includes the conceptual framework of the research, some general principles of research design, and research communication strategy instrumentations for the present investigation. This is followed by the theoretical framework for the present study, sampling, and rationales for the choice of participants. Finally, how the data were collected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported is presented.

According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989, p. 87), “research must be guided from the very beginning by a plan of some kind. Without a coherent plan, it is not possible to give concrete expression to hypotheses which have been developed from general questions nor is it possible to pursue answers to general questions”. To put it simply, before starting a research project, it is important that all issues related to how the research will be conducted should be considered. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) hold it, the planning process of research involves: (1) indentifying the purpose of the research, (2) identifying and giving priority to the constraints under which the research will take place, (3) planning the possibility for the research within these constraints, and (4) deciding research design. Being the result of the other three steps, research design is important, and it deserves consideration (Intaraprasert, 2000).

Punch (2005, pp. 62-63) indicates that “[at] the most general level, [research design] means all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project. By contrast, at its most specific level, the design of a research study refers to the way a researcher guards against, and tries to rule out, alternative interpretation of results”. Therefore, it can be said that research design is crucial to the success of research projects. And, Cohen and Manion (1994) hold that it is basically influenced by the purpose of the research.

Research works can be classified in terms of purposes. Robson (1993) proposes three types of research purposes which are: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. Accordingly, there are three types of research (Robson, 1993; Neuman, 2006; and Fraenkel and Wallen, 2007) which can be explained as follows.

1. Exploratory research: This type of research aims to investigate what is happening, particularly little-understood events, situations or circumstances; to seek new insights; to ask questions; or to assess phenomena in a new light; or to generate hypotheses for future research. Exploratory research is usually, but not necessarily, qualitative. It may be the first stage in a sequence of studies. A researcher may need to conduct an exploratory study in order to know enough to design and execute a second, more systematic and extensive study.
2. Descriptive research: This type of research aims to portray an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations. Extensive previous knowledge of the situation to be researched or described is required, so that a researcher knows appropriate aspects on which to gather information. Descriptive research may be qualitative and/or quantitative. It makes use of most data-gathering

techniques, i.e. surveys, field research, content analysis, and historical-comparative research.

3. Explanatory research: This type of research aims to seek an explanation of a situation or problem, usually in the form of causal relationships. Explanatory research may be qualitative and/or quantitative. It builds on exploratory and descriptive research, and goes on to identify the reason something occurs.

From the above research classification based on the research purposes, it seems that one study has only one purpose. However, this is not true. A particular study may have more than one purpose, possibly all three types, but it is often that one will dominate (Robson, 1993; and Neuman, 2006), and there may be changes in purpose as the study proceeds (Robson, 1993).

Besides research purpose, research works can also be classified in terms of strategy (Robson, 1993). According to Robson (1993), there are three traditional strategies. They are: experiment, survey, and case study. Therefore, there are three types of research accordingly.

In research language teaching, experiment research, survey research, and case study research are referred by Brown (1988, 2001) to as sub-categories of primary research. According to Brown (2001), research is divided into two basic categories – primary research and secondary research, which can be identified by the sources of the information or data obtained. In the primary research, data are collected from the primary sources such as from observation of real language classroom or from students' test score. In the secondary research, data are derived from literature reviewing and synthesizing works of other researchers. Primary research can be

subdivided into case-study studies and statistical studies, while statistical studies are further subgrouped into survey studies and experimental studies.

The traditional research strategies or research types based on research strategies proposed by Robson (1993) and Neuman (2006) are:

1. Experimental research: This type of research usually involves hypothesis testing. Experimental research is appropriate for ‘how’ and ‘why’ research questions. It measures the effects of manipulating one variable on another variable and focuses on current event.
2. Survey research: This type of research aims at collecting information in standardized form from large groups of people. Appropriate for ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘how many’ and ‘how much’ types of research question, survey research usually employs questionnaire or structured interview. It focuses on current event with no control on events.
3. Case study research: This type of research is used for developing details, intensive knowledge about a single ‘case’, or of a small number of related cases. It is appropriate for ‘how’ and ‘why’ types of research question. While case study research does not require control on events, its focus on current event is usual but not necessary.

It is necessary that decision on the type of research should be made for the present study. The purposes of the present study are: (1) to explore communication strategy employment by university English majors in the South of Vietnam in terms of frequency of their communication strategy use, as well as the relationship between communication strategy use and students’ gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of

English major concentration; and (2) to investigate the reasons they reported employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently. Based on the types of research mentioned above, the present study has been classified as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. It is both qualitative and quantitative. Furthermore, as Intaraprasert (2000, p. 52) puts it, “when constructing an investigation, the researcher must consider which of the primary research is most appropriate given the purpose of the work, i.e. explanatory, descriptive or exploratory”. Having considered the characteristics of research strategies suggested by Robson (1993) and Neuman (2006), the researcher has found that survey research was the most appropriate for the present investigation.

### **3.2 Methods and Instrumentations in CS Research**

According to Neuman (2006, p. 2), “methods are sets of specific techniques for selecting cases, measuring and observing aspects of social life, gathering and refining data, analyzing the data, and reporting on results”. They are also referred by Punch (2005, p. 28) to as ‘design, data collection and data analysis’.

As far as how to make decision on methods for a research is concerned, Denscombe (2003, p. 131) states, “when it comes to selecting a method for the collection of data, certain research strategies will tend to be associated with the use of certain research methods”. This is in line with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and Robson (1993), who point out that the decision on which method to use in a research is often in proportionate with the kind of research it is or research purpose it has. Moreover, the choice of methods should be made based on the matter of appropriateness with regard to the kind of data that the researcher wishes to obtain



and the practical considerations related to time, resources and access to the sources of data (Denscombe, 2003; and Robson, 1993). In addition, as each method has its weak and strong points, in many cases, it is observed that more than one method are used for data collection or data analysis (Robson, 1993).

In this section, the main research methods and instruments which have been used for data collection on CSs will be reviewed and discussed. They include: (1) Written Questionnaires; (2) Interview: introspective and retrospective; (3) Observation; and (4) Communicative Task Recording: Audio and Video.

### **3.2.1 Written Questionnaire**

Questionnaire is one of the methods used in survey research. As defined by Brown (2001, p. 6), questionnaires are "... any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". There are two types of questionnaire: closed-ended form (structured questionnaire) and open-ended form (unstructured questionnaire) (Nunan, 1992; and Denscombe, 2003).

Structured questionnaire is the one that has closed-ended question items. For this type, each question has provided options for answer from which respondents are to choose (Dörnyei, 2003). As respondents do not have to write their own answers, there will be no room for "rater subjectivity" (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 35). It is also "quick to complete, [and] straight forward to code (e.g. for computer analysis)" (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007, p. 321), and rather simple for scoring and data compilation (Byalystok, 1981). This is because the answers researchers obtain will be of uniform length; which makes it easy for quantification and comparison (Denscombe, 2003). Hence, structured questionnaire is suited for quantitative, statistical analysis.

However, as pointed by Oppenheim, (1992), structured questionnaire does not allow respondents to add any remarks, qualifications, or explanations to the answer choices; therefore, there is a risk that the options might not be exhaustive, and that there might be bias in them.

Opposite to structured questionnaire is unstructured questionnaire with open-ended items for which the respondents answer by filling in the blank with their own answers (Denscombe, 2003; and Dörnyei, 2003). It can help to obtain rich data and is suitable in cases where researchers cannot provide pre-prepared options for the answers. Nevertheless, it takes time and is difficult to code in a reliable manner (Dörnyei, 2003). Also, as pointed out by Cohen, Manion, Morrison (2007), it may lead to irrelevant information.

Each type of questionnaire has its advantages and disadvantages. However, generally speaking, “questionnaire is one of the most popular research instruments applied in the social sciences” (Dörnyei 2003, p. 3). Questionnaire is popular because: (1) it is “easy to construct [and] extremely versatile” (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 3); (2) it is considered an efficient tool for collecting data for large-scale survey (Dörnyei, 2003; and Brown, 2001); and (3) it is mostly used to collect data on phenomena that cannot be observed easily such as facts, opinions, attitudes, preferences, views, beliefs, and behaviors (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990; Denscombe, 2003; and Dörnyei, 2003).

Questionnaire is most widely applied in research on the process concerning in language use (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990), and is the most efficient method for research on learner’s strategy use (Oxford, 1996). In fact, questionnaire has been adopted in past research works on CSs for the exploration of strategy employment of language learners (e.g., Lam, 2006; and Nakatani, 2006). Through questionnaire,

students were able to report their strategic behaviors displayed not only at present but also in the past (Dörnyei, 2003). It has also been used to obtain information such as the students' exposure to oral communication (e.g., Somsai, 2011), and their attitudes towards communication strategies (Dong and Fang-peng, 2010).

### **3.2.2 Interview**

As defined by Brown (2001, p. 5), interview is “[a procedure] used for gathering oral data in particular categories (if the interview is well planned and structured in advance), but also for gathering data that were not anticipated at the outset”. Moreover, it can be carried out with individuals, in groups, in face-to-face, or by telephone. Besides, interview can be classified with reference to “the degree of formality”, and can range from “unstructured through semi-structured to structured” (Nunan, 1992, p. 149).

Structured interview consists of planned interview questions with the responses which are precoded categories. This type of interview is used when the researchers do not want to go in-depth in collecting data (Punch, 2005). On the other hand, in unstructured interview, the questions are not preplanned. Instead, an interview of this type starts with general questions related to the intended topic and the following questions will emerge later as the interview continues (Robson, 2002). In between structured and unstructured interviews is semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interview does not make use of a list of predetermined questions. First, the interviewer has a general area of interest and concern, and then the interview will be developed within the context of the interview (Robson, 2002).

Interview has the advantage of flexibility. It involves verbal and non-verbal information (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007). Additionally, it can also be classified

in terms of introspection or retrospection. Introspection or introspective interview requires learners to describe his or her thought while working on tasks. However, introspective interview is not used in data collection in CS studies due to the mismatch between their nature of speaking in response to questions and the communicative data (Wigglesworth, 2005). Meanwhile, retrospective interview is based on learners' recall and description of what they did during the task some time after it took place. (Chamot, 2005; and Wigglesworth, 2005).

Normally, retrospective interview is adopted to explore learners' use of strategies (Chamot, 2005). Furthermore, retrospection is done through different steps. First, learners' performance during the task is recorded. After that, the recording is played back by the interviewer who pauses at important parts to ask the learners what they thought at that specific moment of performance. According to Nunan (1992), retrospection may be affected by the fact that learners know they will be requested to do introspection later. Therefore, to ensure the reliability of the collected data, subjects should not be informed that they will be required to do this until after the task has been completed.

In studies on CSs, retrospective interview has been used as one of the main methods for strategy identification (e.g., Si-Qing, 1990; Kazuo and Akira, 2004; Nakatani, 2005; and Lam, 2006). It has proved to be an effective tool in data collection in research on CSs because it helps to explain why students choose certain strategic language use (Nakatani, 2005). Such type of information cannot be obtained through observation (Chamot, 2005).

### 3.2.3 Observation

According to Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 175), “observations are useful in that they provide the researcher with the opportunity to collect large amounts of rich data on the participants’ behaviors and actions within a particular context”. It helps the researcher to obtain information on what the participants really do and really say during performance, rather than listening to them or other people later report on that (Robson, 1993). That is to say, from observation, researchers can gather not only verbal but also nonverbal data related to the participants’ performance in the occurring interaction.

This technique for data collection has a long tradition in social research, such as in the field of psychology or education (Punch, 2005). Similar to interview, there are structured and unstructured approaches to observation. While the former is mainly for quantitative research, the latter is for qualitative research (Punch, 2005). In real world, observation is commonly used for exploratory phase where it acts as “a precursor to subsequent testing out of the insights obtained” (Robson, 2002, p. 311). Besides, as Robson (2002) holds it, observation can be adopted as a supportive method to collect data for validation or corroboration of the data obtained through other means. It can also be done through field observation or even through observation of audio and audiovisual recordings of the naturally occurring interaction (Punch, 2005). This, according to Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 175), “allows the researcher to analyze language use in greater depth later and to involve outside researchers in the consideration of data”.

Nevertheless, observation has its weakness. Since it does not often work in cases where information about the participants’ motivation for their behaviors and

actions is under investigation, it should be combined with other methods of data collection (Mackey and Gass, 2005). For example, what a researcher saw during observation cannot help to explain why the subjects behaved in certain way. To investigate the reason, interviews with the subjects should be conducted.

In the past research works on CSs where observation was employed to identify students' CS use (e.g., Weerarak, 2003; and Lam, 2006), observation was used together with other instrument(s) rather than alone by itself. This can be explained by Rubin's (1981) assertion that this type of instrument does not provide data related to mental operations of learners' strategic language use. In line with this, Lam (2006, p. 146) points out that 'surface evidence from observations does not yield insight into covert strategic thinking'.

### **3.2.4 Communicative Task Recording**

Task recording (audio or video) is a data collection tool which provides the source for later transcription and/or analysis process. An example of the use of audio recording is stimulated recall - a type of observation, which is used by many researchers in an effort to explore a learner's thought processes or strategies. According to Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 78), "[task recording] can prompt the learners to recall and report thought that she or he had while performing a task or participating in an event". Furthermore, as suggested by DuFon (2002, p. 44), given that video can be repeated many times, researchers using video recording can have more time to "contemplate, deliberate, and ponder the data before drawing conclusions, and hence serves toward off premature interpretation of the data". This is also true for audio recording.

Task recording is commonly employed in past research works in CS field, such as Hastrup and Phillipson (1983); Corrales and Call (1985); Si-Qing (1990); Flyman (1997); Smith (2003); and Nakatani (2005). It can be said that by capturing the performance of participants while they are doing communicative tasks, task recording has proved itself to be a useful tool in giving researchers a source for analysis of CS use.

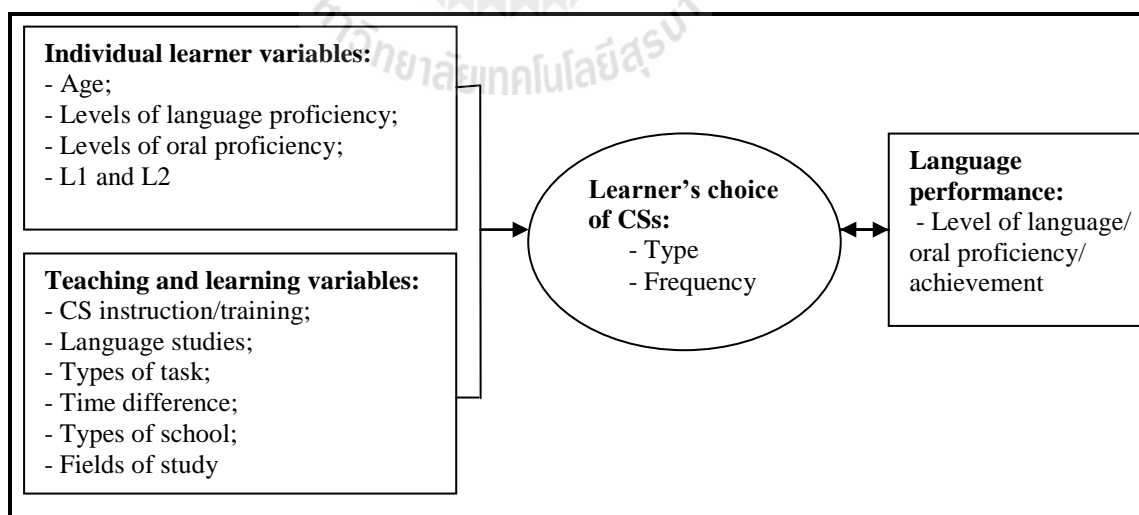
Generally speaking, as stated by Gibson and Brown (2009), audio data fit analyses where verbal conversation is involved while video is a more appropriate tool when non-verbal features of interaction are important. Meanwhile, as DuFon (2002) puts it, video recording can be necessary for gestures, facial expressions, and other visual interaction cues which contribute to a later in-depth analysis and accurate interpretation. That is to say, compared with audio data, video data are more powerful regarding the relevance of non-verbal features of interaction in CSs. However, video recording lends itself to problems in data analysis. When transcribing video recordings, researchers have to face time-consuming and multi-layered issues (Hubbard and Power, 1993 cited in Somsai, 2011).

Having considered the weak and strong points as well as the purposes of each of the commonly used methods for data gathering in CS research, the researcher made decisions on instruments for the present investigation. Since the present investigation was conducted to explore learners' CS use in the past, present and future in relation to five factors: gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration; observation and communicative task recording with their nature of context and time boundaries would not be used. The most appropriate for the present study, therefore,

have been questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The questionnaire, which is suitable for large scale survey research, helped to provide information on frequency of CS use and on the five factors under consideration. Meanwhile, the interview gave in-depth information on the reasons for frequent or infrequent use of certain CSs.

### 3.3. Theoretical Framework and Rationale for Selection of Variables for the Present Study

According to Intaraprasert (2000), the review of related research literature in the involved field of research is necessary for developing the theoretical framework, locating the present study in the context of past research works and other researchers' ideas, and creating the rationale for the selecting and rejecting variables for the present investigation. Therefore, before discussing the theoretical framework for the present study, the theoretical framework of the empirical past research works in the area of CSs as illustrated in Figure 3.1 should be examined.



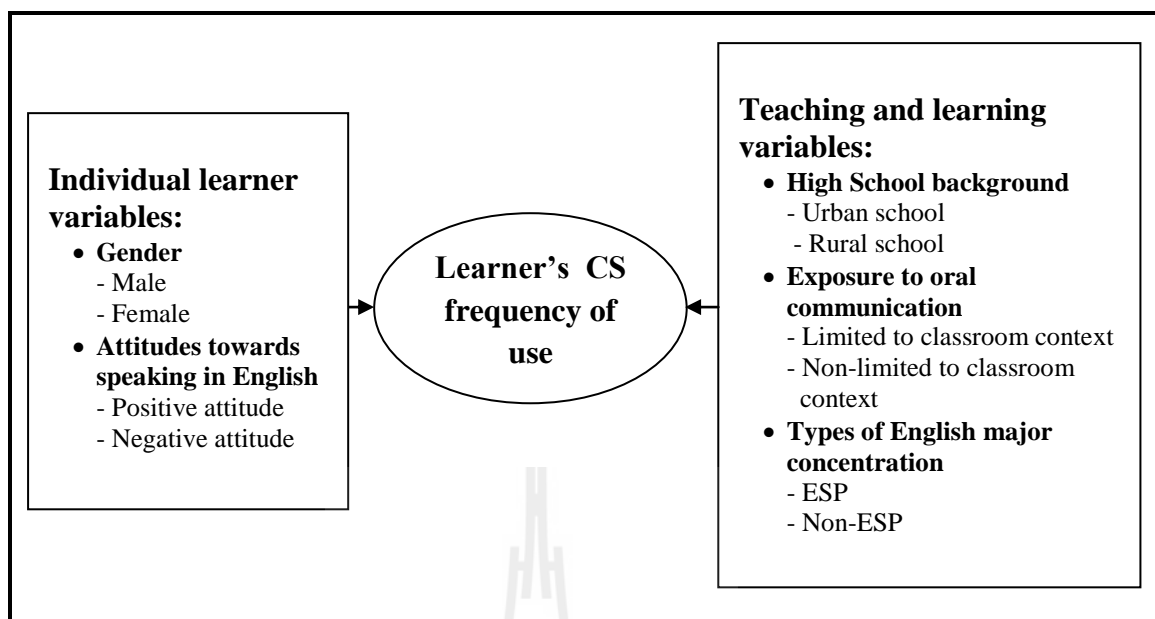
(Source: Adapted from Ellis, 1994, p. 530)

**Figure 3.1: Factors Related to CSs and Language Performance in Past Research Works**



The theoretical framework of the past research works indicates that types of CSs and learners' frequency of CS use have been hypothesized to be influenced by two major categories of variables: (1) the individual learner variables; and (2) the teaching and learning variables. This influence is single-directional relationship. Meanwhile, the types of CSs and learners' frequency of CS use have also been hypothesized to be affected in a bi-directional relationship by learners' oral/language proficiency. This means that learners' CS use could have an impact on learners' oral/language proficiency and learners' oral/language proficiency could result in learners' CS use.

In terms of purpose, the present study aims to investigate CS use frequency and their variations in relation to five factors: gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration. Consequently, the theoretical framework for the present investigation was proposed (see Figure 3.2). This framework was originally suggested by Ellis (1994) for factors related to language learning. However, it was modified for the present investigation because no other frameworks have been found directly involved with CSs. More importantly, the adapted framework served the purposes of the present study.



(Source: Adapted from Ellis, 1994, p. 530)

**Figure 3.2: Theoretical Framework for the Present Study**

As we can see in Figure 3.2, the theoretical framework for the present investigation involves relationships between frequency of CS use in one-directional relationships with five indifferent variables: (1) gender (male or female), (2) attitudes towards speaking English (positive or negative), (3) high school background (urban or rural schools), (4) exposure to oral communication in English (limited to classroom context or non-limited to such context), and (5) types of English major concentration (ESP or non-ESP). That is to say, the present investigation consisted of both individual learner variables (gender and attitudes towards speaking in English) and teaching and learning variables (high school background, exposure to communication in English, and types of English major concentration).

It is revealed from the literature review that two of the variables of the present investigation – gender (male or female) and exposure to oral communication in English (limited to classroom context or non-limited to classroom context) have been explored. Gender has been investigated in the research works by Margolis (2001),

Huang (2010), Lai (2010), and Somsai (2011), whose subjects are university students either in Korea, Taiwan, China or Thailand. The results from these few studies are contradictory. Meanwhile, the other variable - exposure to oral communication in English has been studied by Somsai (2011). However, as Intaraprasert (2000) states, the relationship of variables may vary depending on the context of research. Therefore, it may be of some research value to examine the relation of these two variables to the choice of CSs of English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam.

Furthermore, while the other three variables, namely, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, and types of English major concentration, may relate to frequency of CS use of learners, very few past research works on CSs have taken them into consideration.

Following is a discussion of basic assumption about the relationship between learners' CS use and the five variables based on the literature review, other researchers' opinion, and the researcher's justification.

### **3.3.1 Learners' Gender and Use of CSs**

Gender have been hypothesized by many researchers to have an effect on language learners' strategy use (e.g., Politzer, 1983; Ehrman and Oxford, 1989; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989; Green and Oxford, 1995; Wright, 1999; Gu, 2002; Williams, Burden and Lanvers, 2002; and OK, 2003). Significant relationships between language learning strategies and gender have been reported in research findings. For example, Polizer (1983) found that female students reported using a significantly higher frequency of 'social learning strategies' than did male students. Similar findings were found with 'conversational input elicitation strategies' in

Oxford and Nyikos's (1989) research and with all six strategy categories, including 'compensation' and 'social' category in OK (2003).

However, as mentioned earlier, gender has been examined under the relationship with learners' CS use by some researchers, namely, Margolis (2001), Huang (2010), Lai (2010), and Somsai (2011). However, the results were not consistent. Margolis (2001) reported that females tended to make guesses more incorrectly than males; Lai (2010) and Huang (2010) found no significant relationship between gender and the frequency of CS use while Somsai (2011) concluded from her study that females used CSs significantly more frequently than did males.

Therefore, there should be investigation in gender differences in the use of CSs of learners, especially of a different group of learners – the English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam to see whether there has been a relationship between this variable and CS use or not.

### **3.3.2 Learners' Attitudes towards Speaking English and Use of CSs**

Bohner (2001) defines attitude as "a summary of evaluation of some object". It includes two main elements: the mental process of evaluation and the presence of an attitude object with attitude objective referred to as "anything a person discriminates or holds in mind" (Bohner, 2001, p. 241). It is stimulated by cognitive, affective and behavioral processes which lead to cognitive, affective or behavioral responses. This is partly consistent with Brown (2000), who affirms that attitude is cognitive and affective; they are related to thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Attitude is one of the factors that influence foreign language learning because how much effort students put into language learning depends partly on attitude (Gardner, Lanlonde and Moorcroft, 1985). It is hypothesized to have an effect on

learners' strategy use (Oxford, 1990). According to Oxford (1990), positive attitude has positive effects on learners' strategy use. Meanwhile, negative attitude causes poor strategy use or lack of orchestration of strategies. In addition, as pointed out by Sadighi and Zarafshan (2006), learners who hold positive attitude towards language learning tend to employ strategies more frequently than do learners with negative attitude. Moreover, Elyidirim and Ashton (2006) indicate that negative attitude towards the foreign language can impede the learning. When students with positive attitude experience success, the attitude is reinforced; meanwhile, students with negative attitude may fail to progress and become even more negative in their language learning attitudes.

It can be inferred that learners with positive attitude towards speaking English will be more involved in speaking activities and may try to make use of more strategies that help them to deal with their difficulties in the course of conversation. Meanwhile, learners with negative attitude will be less willing to participate in speaking activities. Consequently, the use of CSs of the two groups may be different.

Despite the fact that 'attitudes towards speaking English' has not been explored as a factor that may have a relationship with language learners' choice of CSs, there has been evidence that they relate to learners' strategy use and language learning. For that reason, they were investigated in the present study

### **3.3.3 Learners' High School Background and Use of CSs**

As far as the context of language learning is concerned, 'high school background' can be divided into two groups: urban schools and rural schools. Learners who attend urban schools often enjoy the advantages of more qualified language teachers, better language learning conditions and more exposure to language use.

Though no past research on CSs has investigated high school background in relation to the type and use frequency of CSs, the relationship has been found in reach on some language learning strategy studies such as Prakongchati (2007) and Khamkhien (2010). Therefore, ‘high school background’ has been chosen to be an independent variable in the present study.

#### **3.3.4 Learners’ Exposure to Oral Communication in English and Use of CSs**

Learners’ ‘exposure to oral communication in English’ is hypothesized to have a relationship with their choice of CSs. Recently, such a relationship has been found in Somsai’s (2011) study on Thai university students’ CS employment. However, as it is the first study to use ‘exposure to oral communication in English’ as an independent variable, it is necessary that this variable should be conducted in other contexts.

Moreover, as Johnson (1995) holds it, using English for communication provides language learners with opportunities to perform a variety of language functions. This will lead to language learning. Besides, while using language to communicate, learners may try to use CSs to make themselves understood. Given that learners are different in their exposure to oral communication, use frequency of CSs may vary among individual learners.

In order to see if the relationship between ‘exposure to oral communication in English’ and the choice of CSs of English majors of the universities in the South of Vietnam exists, learner’s exposure to oral communication in English has been selected to be one of the independent variables of the present study.

### 3.3.5 Types of English Major Concentration and Use of CSs

'Types of English major concentration' has been classified into two main groups in the present study: ESP and non-ESP. At present, in Vietnam, there are many universities offering English major programs. However, these programs vary according to the concentration which students choose to study starting from the third year. With respect to the course content, some concentrations deal with English for Language Studies or for Teacher Training. This type of concentration (hereafter non-ESP), therefore, does not provide students with any special language for specific fields.

On the other hand, there are also programs, namely English for specific purposes (hereafter ESP). This group includes English for Tourism, English for Translation and Interpretation, English for Business and Commerce, English for Office Management, and English for Science and Technology. Different from the first type, ESP concentration is characterized by features such as the vocabulary used in specific areas and language structures common for specialized context use. Consequently, 'types of English major concentration' may be hypothesized to relate to learners' strategy use. In addition, through the review of related past research on CSs, very few studies have investigated the relationship between CS use and types of English major concentration. Therefore, in the present study, 'types of English major concentration' have been chosen for exploration.

In summary, based on the present research objectives, theoretical framework for the present study, and extensive literature review, the present study has investigated five independent variables: (1) gender (male or female); (2) attitudes towards speaking English (positive or negative); (3) high school background (urban or

rural schools); (4) exposure to oral communication in English (limited to classroom context or non-limited to classroom context); and (5) types of English major concentration (ESP or non-ESP).

### **3.4 Research Questions**

The present study attempts to describe the strategies employed by English majors at the universities in the South of Vietnam when they deal with communication breakdowns. The research questions were generated based on the research objectives, the review of the related past research works, and the proposed relationship between students' use of CSs with the five selected variables mentioned earlier. Following are the questions for the present investigation.

1. How frequently are the strategies to cope with communication breakdowns reported being employed by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam?
2. Do students' choices of strategies to cope with communication breakdowns vary significantly according to the five investigated variables: gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?
3. Why do students report employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently?



### **3.5 Framework of Data Collection Methods for the Present**

#### **Investigation**

After the purposes, the objectives, and the questions of the present study were specified, the researcher moved on to the research design and data collection. According to Punch (2005, p. 247), “when the questions, design and methods fit together, the argument is strong and the research has validity. When they do not fit together, the argument is weakened and the research lacks validity”. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the appropriateness among the research questions, design, and methods.

Through an extensive review of the research method used in the field of CSs, it has been found that the most commonly used in the previous studies are classroom observation, communicative task recording, interview, and CS questionnaire. Since each of the methods has its own strengths and weaknesses, a researcher has to consider aspects of methods of data collection in order to select the most appropriate which suits his/her study purpose (Creswell, 2003).

Based on the research objective and the research questions (see Chapter 1), the researcher decided to employ a mixed data collection method for the present investigation. This method has been adopted for two purposes. First, it would help to reduce the inappropriate certainty (Robson, 2002). In other words, it would help to validate research findings. Second, it would help to address different but complementary questions within a study (Robson, 2002). Specifically speaking, the CS questionnaire and the English speaking attitude questionnaire (quantitative method), and semi-structured interview (qualitative method) were used as data

collection instruments to elicit information about strategy use of the subjects to answer the research questions.

### 3.5.1 CS Questionnaire

The CS questionnaire (hereafter CSQ) has been used in the present study as the main instrument for data collection. It suits the purpose of the study which is to explore the learners' frequency of strategy use to deal with communication breakdowns.

#### 3.5.1.1 Modifying the CSQ

The questionnaire designed for the present investigation was a 4-point rating scale. The scale was valued as 1, 2, 3, and 4.

- |  |
|--|
| 1 = never or almost never<br>2 = sometimes<br>3 = often<br>4 = always or almost always |
|--|

To construct the CSQ, the researcher has put all the strategies suggested by Dörnyei and Scott (1995), Nakatani (2006), Mariani (2010), and Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011) together. These topologies have been taken into consideration because, as we can see in CS classifications (Section 2.4.3), Dörnyei and Scott (1995) is a synthesis of its previously developed classifications, whereas Nakatani (2006), Mariani (2010), and Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011), which were suggested right after Dörnyei and Scott (1995), are the most recent ones. They were supposed to include all the strategies used by Vietnamese English majors – the subjects of the present investigation.

A careful review of all these CSs under those scholars' taxonomies has revealed that some strategies appeared in more than one topology. Moreover, some

CSs were not suitable for the present investigation in terms of operational definition, context and population. These inappropriate and overlapping strategies have been excluded from the list. Besides, some CSs have been modified to make them more comprehensible to the students. Consequently, the resulting CS inventory which was used for the CSQ for the present study is as follows (see Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: CS Inventory for the CSQ**

1.	Paraphrasing (e.g., using an all-purpose word; “like” or “similar to”, or superordinate or related items, using a synonym or an antonym, using examples instead of the category, using definition or description)
2.	Using familiar words, phrases, or sentences
3.	Creating a non-existing L2 word by applying supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word
4.	Code switching
5.	Avoiding or changing a topic, going back to the original topic
6.	Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty
7.	Reducing the message, using simple expressions
8.	Using nonverbal language such as mime, gestures, body movements, pointing at things, facial expressing, eye contact, smiling, laughing
9.	Spelling or writing out the intended words, phrases, or sentences
10.	Referring to objects or materials
11.	Using tactics to gain time and keep the conversation channel open, such as using pauses, remaining silent; “umming”, “erring”, mumbling; or using fillers, chunks, hesitation devices, and conversational gambits, repeating oneself or talking about something else
12.	Repeating what the interlocutor has just said to gain time and to keep the conversation channel open
13.	Self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances or when spotting a misunderstanding
14.	Thinking first of what one wants to say in his/her native language and then construct the English sentence
15.	Thinking first of a sentence one already knows in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation
16.	Asking the interlocutor to confirm that one has been understood

**Table 3.1: CS Inventory for the CSQ (Cont.)**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 17. | Appealing help from the interlocutor either verbally or non-verbally when having difficulties in expressing                                       |
| 18. | Appealing for help from the interlocutor either verbally or non-verbally when having difficulties in understanding what the interlocutor has said |
| 19. | Appealing for assistance from other people around   |
| 20. | Making a phone call to another person for assistance  |
| 21. | Consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document  |
| 22. | Actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say   |
| 23. | Paying attention to grammar and word order during conversation  |
| 24. | Trying to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence  |
| 25. | Paying attention to one's pronunciation   |
| 26. | Trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation  |
| 27. | Trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard  |
| 28. | While speaking, paying attention to the listener's reaction to one speech   |
| 29. | Giving up when one can't make oneself understood  |
| 30. | Using circumlocution to react the speaker's utterance when one doesn't understand his/her intention well  |
| 31. | Appealing for assistance from other people around to clarify the interlocutor's message   |
| 32. | Trying to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said   |
| 33. | Sending continuation signals to show one's understanding in order to avoid communication gaps   |
| 34. | Trying to catch the interlocutor's main point   |
| 35. | Guessing the interlocutor's intention based on what he/she has said so far  |
| 36. | Trying to catch every word that the speaker uses  |
| 37. | Noticing the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes   |
| 38. | Paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation  |
| 39. | Paying attention to the subject and verb of the sentence when one listens   |
| 40. | Paying attention to the speaker's eye contact, facial expressions and gestures  |
| 41. | Pretending to understand to carry on the conversation   |

The CS inventory for CSQ items entailed 41 strategies. As can be seen in Table 3.1, ‘paraphrasing (e.g., using an all-purpose word; “like” or “similar to”, or superordinate or related items, using a synonym or an antonym, using examples instead of the category, using definition or description)’; ‘using familiar words, phrases, or sentences’; ‘creating a non-existing L2 word by applying supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word’; ‘code switching’; ‘avoiding or changing a topic, going back to the original topic’; ‘leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty’; and ‘reducing the message, using simple expressions’ have been modified from Dörnyei and Scott (1995). Other strategies from the same source include: ‘using nonverbal language such as mime, gestures, body movements, pointing at things, facial expressing, eye contact, smiling, laughing’; ‘using tactics to gain time and keep the conversation channel open, such as using pauses, remaining silent; “umming”, “erring”, mumbling; or using fillers, chunks, hesitation devices, and conversational gambits, repeating oneself or talking about something else’; and ‘repeating what the interlocutor has just said to gain time and to keep the conversation channel open’.

Furthermore, Dörnyei and Scott (1995) are also acknowledged for: ‘self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances or when spotting a misunderstanding’; ‘thinking first of what one wants to say in his/her native language and then construct the English sentence’; ‘asking the interlocutor to confirm that one has been understood’; ‘appealing help from the interlocutor either verbally or non-verbally when having difficulties in expressing’; ‘appealing for help from the interlocutor either verbally or non-verbally when having difficulties in understanding what the interlocutor has said’; ‘trying to catch the interlocutor’s main point’; ‘paying

attention to the speaker's eye contact, facial expressions and gestures'; and 'pretending to understand to carry on the conversation'.

In addition, it can be noticed that all the strategies on the list, except for: 'paraphrasing (e.g., using an all-purpose word; "like" or "similar to", or superordinate or related items, using a synonym or an antonym, using examples instead of the category, using definition or description)'; 'creating a non-existing L2 word by applying supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word'; 'repeating what the interlocutor has just said to gain time and to keep the conversation channel open'; 'asking the interlocutor to confirm that one has been understood'; 'appealing for assistance from other people around'; 'making a phone call to another person for assistance'; 'consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document'; and 'pretending to understand to carry on the conversation', have been taken from Nakatani (2006).

Besides Dörnyei and Scott (1995) and Nakatani (2006), Mariani (2010) can be recognized among the others in the new inventory. Some of them are: 'paraphrasing (e.g., using an all-purpose word; "like" or "similar to", or superordinate or related items, using a synonym or an antonym, using examples instead of the category, using definition or description)'; 'avoiding or changing a topic, going back to the original topic'; 'using nonverbal language such as mime, gestures, body movements, pointing at things, facial expressing, eye contact, smiling, laughing'; 'using tactics to gain time and keep the conversation channel open, such as using pauses, remaining silent; "umming", "erring", mumbling; or using fillers, chunks, hesitation devices, and conversational gambits, repeating oneself or talking about

something else’; and ‘repeating what the interlocutor has just said to gain time and to keep the conversation channel open’.

Other strategies from Mariani (2010) are: ‘self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances or when spotting a misunderstanding’; ‘asking the interlocutor to confirm that one has been understood’; ‘appealing help from the interlocutor either verbally or non-verbally when having difficulties in expressing’; ‘appealing for help from the interlocutor either verbally or non-verbally when having difficulties in understanding what the interlocutor has said’; ‘trying to catch the interlocutor’s main point’; and ‘pretending to understand to carry on the conversation’.

Somsai and Intaraprasert’s (2011) strategies, which were modified for this new inventory, consist of: ‘paraphrasing (e.g., using an all-purpose word; “like” or “similar to”, or superordinate or related items, using a synonym or an antonym, using examples instead of the category, using definition or description)’ ; ‘using familiar words, phrases, or sentences’; ‘code switching’; ‘using nonverbal language such as mime, gestures, body movements, pointing at things, facial expressing, eye contact, smiling, laughing’; ‘spelling or writing out the intended words, phrases, or sentences’; ‘referring to objects or materials’; ‘using tactics to gain time and keep the conversation channel open, such as using pauses, remaining silent; “umming”, “erring”, mumbling; or using fillers, chunks, hesitation devices, and conversational gambits, repeating oneself or talking about something else’; and ‘self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances or when spotting a misunderstanding’.

These two authors also contribute to the list many other strategies, namely ‘thinking first of what one wants to say in his/her native language and then

construct the English sentence'; 'appealing help from the interlocutor either verbally or non-verbally when having difficulties in expressing'; 'appealing for help from the interlocutor either verbally or non-verbally when having difficulties in understanding what the interlocutor has said'; 'appealing for assistance from other people around'; 'making a phone call to another person for assistance'; 'consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document'; 'appealing for assistance from other people around to clarify the interlocutor's message'; 'sending continuation signals to show one's understanding in order to avoid communication gaps'; and 'paying attention to the speaker's eye contact, facial expressions and gestures'.

The main part of the CSQ with questions items related to CS frequency of use comprised the strategies from the CS inventory in Table 3.1. At this stage, all together, there were 55 items which came up as a result of validation with the help of the researcher's supervisor, who is an expert in the field of language learning strategies, and a group of students who are doing Ph.D in English Language Studies. Besides, as suggested by experts, 10 items which were randomly chosen among these 55 items were paraphrased and added to the list. This is to help to check the reliability of students' answers.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the validation, the researcher was aware of the possibility that the modified CS inventory might miss some strategies employed by Vietnamese students, the population of the present investigation. Therefore, a space was provided so that student could add any strategies they have used but not have been included in the questionnaire. Figure 3.3 shows a sample of the questionnaire used as the main instrument for the first phase of data collection for the present study.



Have you faced any difficulties when you communicate orally in English?  
 Yes  No

If 'No' you can move to Part 3. If 'Yes', how often do you solve the problems by doing the following ?

Communication Strategy	Frequency of Communication Strategy Use			
	Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Never or almost never
1. Using all purpose words instead of the exact intended ones				

**Figure 3.3: A Sample of the CSQ**

With regard to additional information, as stated by Dornyei (2003), the general instruction (or 'opening greeting') should cover: the purpose and importance of the study and the organization responsible for conducting the study. It should also state there is no right or wrong answer, request honest answers, promise confidentiality, and express appreciation. In addition, it is important that the researcher ensure the respondents know the purpose of investigation when answering the questionnaire, and they answer it with honesty and less fear (Intaraprasert, 2000). These suggestions were taken into account when the researcher wrote the instruction of the CSQ.

The CSQ for the present study mainly aims to elicit the frequency use of CSs of the target subjects. Besides the question items concerning the CS use, it involved the demographic information of the respondents. This information is important because it provided information related to the four out of five main variables under investigation: students' gender, exposure to oral communication in

English, high school background, and types of English major concentration. The demographic information was presented in the first part of the CSQ.

As far as the closing of the questionnaire is concerned, Dörnyei (2003) points out that questionnaire may contain, usually at the end, a short additional section in which a number of issues can be addressed. For example, researchers can ask for contact name with a telephone number, a nice gesture, or an invitation for a follow-up interview and a final ‘thank you’. With respect to the present study, the follow-up interview was set up on students’ availability. Students who volunteered to have the interview directly contacted the researcher at the end of the questionnaire administration. Therefore, the questionnaire only included a ‘thank you’ note and the researcher’s contact information at the end.

### **3.5.1.2 Piloting the CS Questionnaire**

The pilot study was carried out to ensure the quality of the designed CSQ. This is very important because, as stated by Fraenkel and Wallen (2007, p. 150), normally “the conclusions researchers draw are based on the information they obtain using [their research] instruments”. According to the authors, the quality of an instrument refers to its validity and reliability.

Pilot study helps researchers to increase the reliability, validity as well as practicality of the questionnaire (Oppenheim, 1992). It allows researchers to gain feedback on how the questionnaire will work and whether it can perform the job it is designed for (Dörnyei, 2003). As Seliger and Shohamy (1990) put it, piloting questionnaire can highlight ambiguities and anomalies in the questioning, and reveal irrelevances. Also, it not only can help with wording of questions but also with

procedural matters, for example, the ordering of question sequences and the reduction of non-response rates (Intaraprasert, 2000).

After the CSQ was modified from the CS inventory, the items were checked for the content validity by the researcher's supervisor. The CSQ was written in English and then translated into Vietnamese by the researcher who is a native Vietnamese. This is to prevent misunderstanding or unanswered questions from the part of the respondents due to language problem (Mackey and Gass, 2005). Additionally, this would help to maximize the ease of administration and ensure greater accuracy of results. After having been cross-checked through back translation by three Vietnamese experts who are the researcher's colleague for the accuracy and wording of the translation, the Vietnamese version of the questionnaire was used for piloting.

Thirty students participated in the piloting. They were taken from the research population but would not participate in the actual questionnaire survey. The purposes of this piloting was (1) to see whether the questionnaire items were clear to the respondents or any of them needs revising, and (2) to explore if the majority of the students were familiar with all the communication strategies or not.

After the piloting, comments on the CSQ were examined and discussed with the researcher's supervisor for implications. It was found from the piloting of CSQ that all the 55 strategy items were qualified regarding their clarity and familiarity to the students. Moreover, the students reported using one strategy, namely 'paying full attention to the interlocutor when he/she is talking'. This item has been added to the list. As a result of the item finalization, the questionnaire consisted of 56 items related to strategies employed by the students in the Vietnamese context, which is the setting of the present study.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the pilot study and careful design have helped to ensure the quality the final version of the CSQ in the actual administration. Besides guarding the validity and making the strategies appropriate, the preparation yielded the reliability as revealed from Alpha Coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) or Cronbach Alpha which was used to check the internal consistency of the CSQ. The reliability estimates according to the responses of 995 Vietnamese English majors is demonstrated in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2: Reliability Estimate of the CSQ as a Whole and the Two Categories**

CS category	CSQ as a whole (56 items)	Category 1 (38 items)	Category 2 (18 items)
Reliability Estimate (Alpha Coefficient: $\alpha$ )	.90	.85	.80

It can be said that the reliability estimates of .90; .85; .80 of the present study are acceptable. It is because of the acceptable reliability coefficient of .70 as a rule of thumb for research purposes (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2007). Besides, the reliability estimate seems fine when compared with the reliability coefficients of different SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) versions as a whole which range from .85 to .95 (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995).

With regard to the CSQ reliability related the consistency in students' responses, Paired Samples T-tests have been adopted. As mentioned earlier, in the CSQ, there were ten pairs of items; each of them included: (1) the strategy itself, and (2) its paraphrase. Paired Sample T-tests were performed to compare the means of reported use of items in each pair. Table 3.3 below demonstrates the variations in the reported frequency of use of items in each of the ten pairs.

**Table 3.3: Variation in Reported Frequency of Use of Items within Each CS Pair**

	Items	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Sig. Level (2-tailed)
Pair 1	SGM6 Using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words	2.85	.78	.26
	Using words which have the same or opposite meaning with the expected words	2.87	.79	
Pair 2	SGM10 Making up non-existing English words	1.32	.58	.77
	Inventing new words in English	1.31	.61	
Pair 3	SGM13 Using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning	3.02	.83	.34
	Using body language to express the expected words	3.01	.80	
Pair 4	SGM14 Keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message	2.38	.81	.00
	Saying nothing at all to think about how to express the intended idea	2.18	.90	
Pair 5	SGM16 Speaking more slowly to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	2.74	.82	.00
	Slowing down to think about how to express the intended idea	2.68	.81	
Pair 6	SGM23 Avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic	1.81	.78	.74
	Trying not to change the topics of the conversation	1.82	.81	
Pair 7	SGM34 Paying attention to one's pronunciation	3.35	.74	.00
	Trying to speak with good pronunciation	3.41	.71	

**Table 3.3: Variation in Reported Frequency of Use of Items within Each CS Pair**

(Cont.)

	Items	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Sig. Level (2-tailed)
Pair 8	SGM38 Giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood	1.95	.75	.00
	Stopping trying when one can't make himself/herself understood	1.88	.76	
Pair 9	SUM1 Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language	2.29	.84	.17
	Asking the interlocutor to use easy language	2.27	.83	
Pair 10	SUM4 Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese	1.53	.67	.21
	Asking the interlocutor to express his idea in one's mother tongue	1.54	.69	

The results of Paired Samples T-test reveal that no significant variations in reported frequency of use were found within Pair 1, Pair 2, Pair 3, Pair 6, Pair 9, Pair 10. Examples are: Pair 1 for *'using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM6) with the mean scores of 2.85 and 2.87, or Pair 6 for *'avoiding new topic by sticking to the old topic'* (SGM23) with the mean scores of 1.81 and 1.82. This means that the means of frequency scores in the items of these six pairs are not significantly different.

In addition, the results of Paired Samples T-test show significant variations in the reported frequency of use within four pairs of items. They are: Pair 4 for *'keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message'* (SGM14), Pair 5 for *'speaking more slowly to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor'* (SGM16), Pair 7 for *'paying attention*

*to one's pronunciation*' (SGM34), and Pair 8 for *'giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood'* (SGM38). However, as we can see from Table 3.3, the difference in the mean scores of the items within each of those of pairs is only in decimal numbers. In other words, notwithstanding the significant variations, the mean scores of the two components of each pair still fall into the same level of frequency of use. Therefore, it can be said that the variations are too small to have an impact on the research results, at least to the answer of Research Question 1, which is 'How frequently are the strategies to cope with communication breakdowns reported being employed by English major studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam?'

### **3.5.2 English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire**

With respect to the relationship between students' CS use and the variable 'attitude towards speaking', questionnaire was utilized as the instrument for data collection. It is efficient in terms of researcher time, researcher effort and financial resources (Dörnyei, 2003). Moreover, as Dörnyei, (2003) puts it, it is the best instrument for investigating language attitudes, L2 learning strategy, and L2 learner's belief.

#### **3.5.2.1 Modifying the English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire**

The English speaking attitude questionnaire (ESAQ) was constructed on the basis of the Language Learning Attitudes Questionnaire (LLAQ) (2004) and the language learning attitude questionnaire by Ockert (2010). This is because no questionnaires for learners' attitudes towards English speaking were found available. In addition, "to qualify as a research questionnaire, it should be designed to collect information which can be used subsequently as data for analysis; consist of a list of

questions; and gather information by asking people directly about the points concerned with the research” (Descombe, 2003, p. 144). Providing that these two questionnaires are for attitude towards language learning, their items which were chosen for the ESAQ were modified.

### Category 1: Slightly Changed Items

To get only one main idea of an item, some slight changes have been made by adding or deleting some words in the original items for clearer meaning.

- Before changed I like to mimic other accents, and people say I do it well  
After changed I like mimicking other people’s accents.  
I can mimic other people’s accents well
- Before changed I think I’m a pretty good language learner.  
After changed I think I speak English well
- Before changed English is important to me because I want to read books in English.  
English is important to me because I like English movies or songs.  
After changed I like speaking English because I want to communicate with foreigners.
- Before changed Language learning often makes me happy.  
After changed Being able to speak English often makes me happy.
- Before changed Language learning often gives me a feeling of success.  
After changed Being able to speak English gives me a feeling of success.
- Before changed I study English because it will make my teacher proud of me/ praise me.  
I study English because it will make my parents proud of me/ praise me.  
After changed I speak English because it will make my parents or my teacher proud of me.
- Before changed I study English because I want to do well on the TOEIC test.  
I study English because I want to do well on the TOEFL test.  
After changed I speak English often because I want to do well on tests.
- Before changed Learning a language may be important to my goals, but I don’t expect it to be much fun.  
After changed Speaking English is fun.



### Category 1: Slightly Changed Items (Cont.)

- Before changed I think that I could learn pretty much any language I really put my mind to, given the right circumstances.  
After changed I think if I put much effort in practicing, I can speak English well.
- Before changed In school, if I didn't know an answer for sure, I'd sometimes answer out loud in class anyway.  
I feel a resistance from within when I try to speak in a foreign language, even if I've practiced.  
I often think out loud, trying out my ideas on other people.  
After changed In school, if I didn't know how give an answer in English for sure, I'd still answer out loud in class anyway.
- Before changed I enjoy studying English.  
After changed I enjoy speaking English
- Before changed English is important to me because I want to make friends with foreigners.  
After changed Speaking English is important to me because I want to make friends with foreigners.
- Before changed English is important to me because I want to study overseas.  
After changed Speaking English is important to me because I may study overseas.
- Before changed I study English because being able to use English is important to me.  
After changed I speak English because being able to do it is important to me.
- Before changed English is important to me because I might need it later for my job.  
After changed Speaking English is important to me because I might need it later for my job.
- Before changed I study English because all educated people can use English.  
After changed I speak English because all educated people can do that.
- Before changed I study English because I must study English  
After changed I speak English because I have to do it.
- Before changed I'm afraid that people will laugh at me if I don't say things right.  
I end up trembling and practically in a cold sweat when I have to talk in front of people.  
After changed I'm not afraid that people will laugh at me when I make mistakes in speaking

### Category 1: Slightly Changed Items (Cont.)

- Before changed I worry a lot about making mistakes.  
After changed I am not worried a lot about making mistakes when I speak English.

### Category 2: Deleted Items

The following items have been omitted since they are not realistic or suitable to the present study, regarding the research context, the research subjects and the focal points of the study.

- I don't have any idea about how to go about learning a language.
- I won't really be able to get to know people well if I don't speak their language.
- I find it hard to make conversation even with people who speak my own language.
- It is a mark of respect to people to learn their language if you're living in their country.
- Speaking the language of the community where I'll be living will let me help people more than I could otherwise.
- I don't like the idea of relying on speaking English (or my mother tongue) in another country.
- I think the people of the country where I'll be living would like for me to learn their language.
- I like getting to know people from other countries, in general.
- There is a right and a wrong way to do almost everything, and I think it's my duty to figure out which is which and do it right.
- It annoys me when people don't give me a clear-cut answer, but just beat around the bush.
- You should say "yes" if you mean yes and "no" if you mean no. Not to do so is dishonest.

### Category 2: Deleted Items (Cont.)

- You have to understand people’s culture and value system before you can be sure whether some things are right or wrong.
- I can do impersonations of famous people.
- I find it easy to “put myself in other people’s shoes” and imagine how they feel.
- I want to have everything worked out in my own head before I answer.
- I’d call myself a risk-taker

The ESAQ adapted for the present investigation was a 5-point rating scale. The scale was valued as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = undecided
4 = agree
5 = strongly agree

The sums of scores were taken to identify students’ attitudes towards speaking English. As the possible maximum score is 100 and the possible minimum score is 20, the respondents who got 60 scores or more were considered to hold positive attitude, and those who got fewer scores were considered to hold negative attitude.

With the 5-point rating scale, a sample of ESAQ is as follows (in Figure 3.4).

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. You enjoy speaking English					

**Figure 3.4: A Sample of the English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire**

### **3.5.2.2 Piloting English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire**

The piloting of the ESAQ was conducted at the same time with the piloting of the CSQ and for the similar reason. The questionnaire items were translated into Vietnamese, and validated by the researcher's supervisor and two experts. This was done before the piloting was carried out with students. The students, who participated in the ESAQ, were also those who participated in the CSQ piloting. Regarding its purpose, the piloting aims to help to provide information to improve the questions so that they would not cause misunderstanding or confusion in the actual administration. As revealed from the respondents' comments, all the questions were acceptable considering meaning and wording. The researcher, therefore, made no further changes in this part.

### **3.5.3 Semi-structured Interview**

A semi-structured interview was conducted right after the questionnaire has been administered and information about the frequency of CS use has been obtained at each university. First, the interview was adopted as the second research instrument for the present study for triangulation of the data collected in Phase 1. It helped to elicit information that is rich, in-depth and detailed, which is difficult to obtain through questionnaire (Nunan, 1992). Additionally, according to Punch (2005, p. 242), "Qualitative research may facilitate the interpretation of relationships between variables". He adds that though "quantitative research allows a researcher to establish relationships among variables, it is often weak when it comes to exploring the reasons for those relationships. A qualitative study can be used to help to explain the factors underlying the broad relationships that are established" (p. 242).

As Punch (2005) indicates, due to the fact that different types of interview have different strengths and weaknesses as well as different purposes in research, the type of interview selected should be in accordance with the research purposes and research questions. Furthermore, semi-structured interview can require language learners to report on the strategies they use in general (Ellis, 1994). With respect to the research purposes and research questions of the present study, one-on-one semi-structured interview was adopted as an appropriate instrument for data collection for the present study.

As mentioned in Section 3.2.2., the advantage of semi-structured interview as a data collection method is that it gives the interviewer flexibility. Furthermore, it gives the interviewee some power and control over the course of interview. Due to the nature of this data collection method, the role of the interviewee is cooperative (Nunan, 1992). This will make the interview more productive.

Flexibility and cooperativeness are the reasons why semi-structured interview has been favored by many researchers. However, in order to ensure the effectiveness of this method, it is suggested by Nunan (1992) that the interviewer explain the nature of the research and its purposes to the interviewee at the beginning of the interview, and be willing to answer any questions raised by the interviewee. Besides, the physical position should be set in the way that it creates the atmosphere for cooperation between the interviewer and the interviewee, not for confrontation from the side of the interviewer. Additionally, instead of note-taking, recording of the interview can be employed so that data are gathered objectively and are available for re-analysis after the event. For the present study, the researcher recorded all the

interviews she had with students. She also kept the suggested ideas in mind when conducting the semi-structured interview for the present investigation.

### **3.5.3.1 Constructing the Semi-structured Interview Questions**

The purpose of the semi-structured interview in the second phase of data collection for the present study is to elicit in-depth information on the subjects' CS use. Besides, it was used to triangulate the data gathered through questionnaire on the subjects' CS use. Specifically, it helped to answer Research Question 3, which is "Why do students report employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently?"

The questions of the semi-structured interviews were generated from the information about CS use frequency in Phase 1. They were also designed based on the research purposes and questions. The questions were checked by the researcher's supervisor and experts to ensure its validity and reliability.

The interview began with questions about the interviewees' background information. This is important because it helps to build good relationships between the interviewer and the interviewees, and reduce the interviewees' embarrassment in the interview environment (Meason, 1985, cited in Intaraprasert, 2000). For example, the researcher started the interview by asking the interviewee, "What is your name?", "How long have you been learning English?" etc. Then, the researcher continued with questions which focused on the CS use of the interviewees, such as "Why do you ..... frequently when facing problems in oral communication in English?"

### 3.5.3.2 Piloting the Semi-structured Interview

After the interview questions were formulated, they were piloting before the actual interview administration. As Intaraprasert (2000) puts it, the interview piloting is to see if the questions work properly; and to see if there is anything wrong with the question items, question sequences, way of interview including factors, such as timing, recording, or other technical problems that may occur in the data collection scheme.

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the interview questions, they were prepared and elaborated under the guidance of the researcher's supervisor. In addition, similar to the CSQ, the interview piloting was carried out in Vietnamese. Eight students from the respondents of the questionnaire piloting participated in this process. These students would not participate in the actual investigation. Each interview was recorded. Aware that there is no specific limit of time for each interview but it should not be too long, the researcher spent about 15 minutes with each of the students, but sometimes some interviews came to an end earlier or later, depending on when the desired information revealed.

After piloting, the interview recordings were transcribed. The transcriptions were examined to see whether there was anything that needed improving in terms of information elicitation. The students' comments on the pilot interview obtained from the piloting were also considered. After a discussion between the researcher and her supervisor, necessary modifications of the questions have been carried out.

## 3.6 Participants for the Present Investigation

### 3.6.1 Sampling and Rationales for the Choice of Participants

All research, whether qualitative or quantitative or both, involve sampling because it is impossible for any study to include everything (Punch, 2005). This is true in the sense that, as Miles and Huberman (1994, cited in Luo, 2010, p. 89) put it, “you cannot study everyone, everywhere doing everything”. Furthermore, regarding the necessity of taking the whole population into consideration, Dörnyei (2003, p. 71) posits that “it is a waste of resources”. He further suggests that “by adopting appropriate *sampling* procedures to select a number of people to be questioned we can save a considerable amount of time, cost, and effort and can still come up with accurate results” (p.71)

According to Punch (2005, p. 102), “sampling plan is not independent of the other elements in a research projects, particularly its research purposes and questions”. It means that a sample is a subset of the population selected in accordance with the needs and purpose of the study to which the researcher intends to generalize the results (Robson, 2002; and Dörnyei, 2003). To do this, it is important that the sample must be carefully selected to be representative of the population and should include a sufficient number as well (Denscombe, 2003).

With regard to the sampling size, Bell (1999) states that the number of subjects in an investigation necessarily depends on the amount of time the researcher has. In fact, according to Robson (2002) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), there is no straightforward answer to the sample size as it depends on many factors such as the research purpose, research objective, time constraint, the nature of the population and the style of the research. Additionally, as Cohen et al. (2007) hold it, it



is impossible for a researcher to study the whole population. Therefore, when selecting the sample, it is common that researchers use an adequate sample size to serve the objective, hoping that the sample size can be applied to the whole population. The sample should not be too big to manage or too small to be appropriate (Denscombe, 2003; and Dörnyei, 2003). Furthermore, Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 89) posit that “the correct sample size depends upon the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny”. Also, it is necessary that sampling has to cover the key aspects of the variables under investigation (Intaraprasert, 2000).

The present investigation was exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory, there should be a sufficient sample size to serve its purposes.

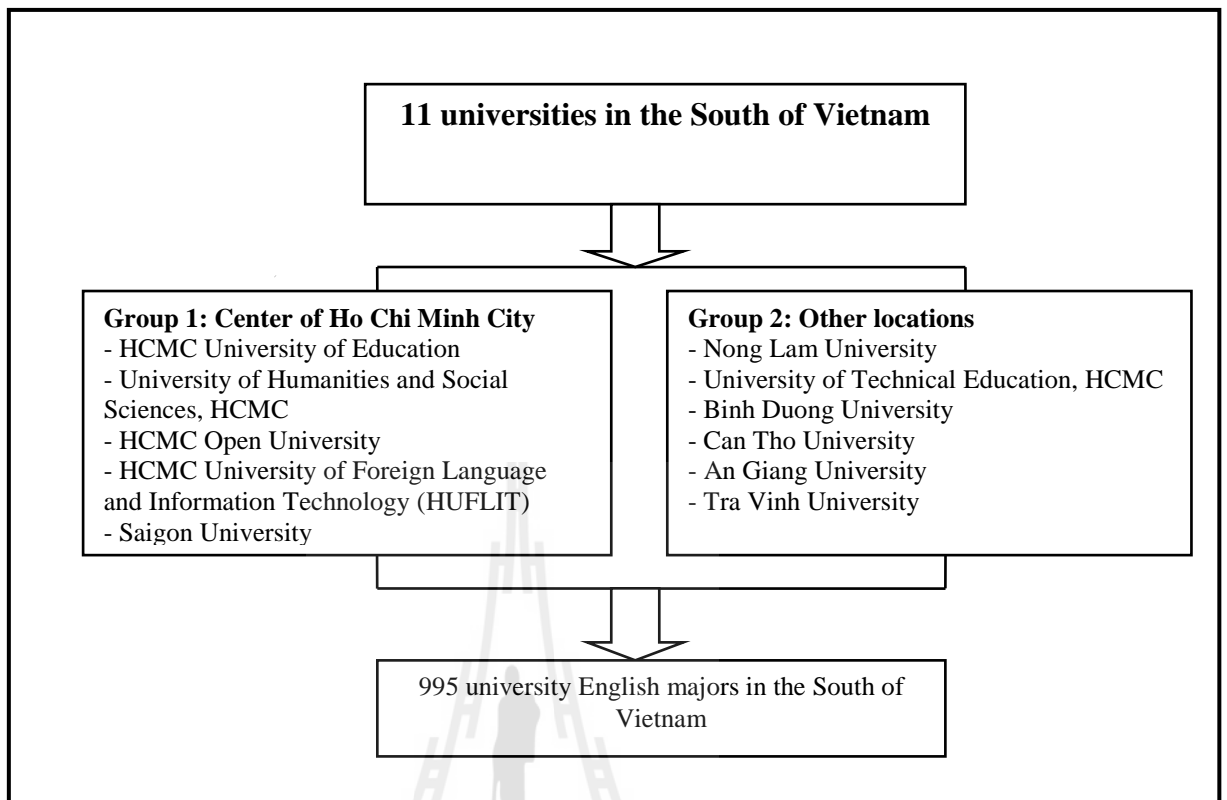
“... if the research questions require representativeness, some form of representative sampling should be used. On the other hand, if the research questions highlight relationships between variables, or comparison between groups, some sort of deliberate or purposive sampling may well be more appropriate, since it makes sense to select the sample in such a way that there is maximum chance for any relationship to be observed” (Punch, 2005, p. 102).

Given that the sample size for the present study should not only be controllable but also involve the participants who have the characteristics in accordance with the five independent variables of the present study, the stratified sampling method was adopted in Phase 1 for the questionnaires. In addition, purposive sampling method was employed in Phase 2 for the interview. These two sampling methods have provided the present study with samples which were manageable, and adequate in numbers to be the good representative for English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam as well. (See Appendix E for the number of participants in the present investigation both in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of data collection.)

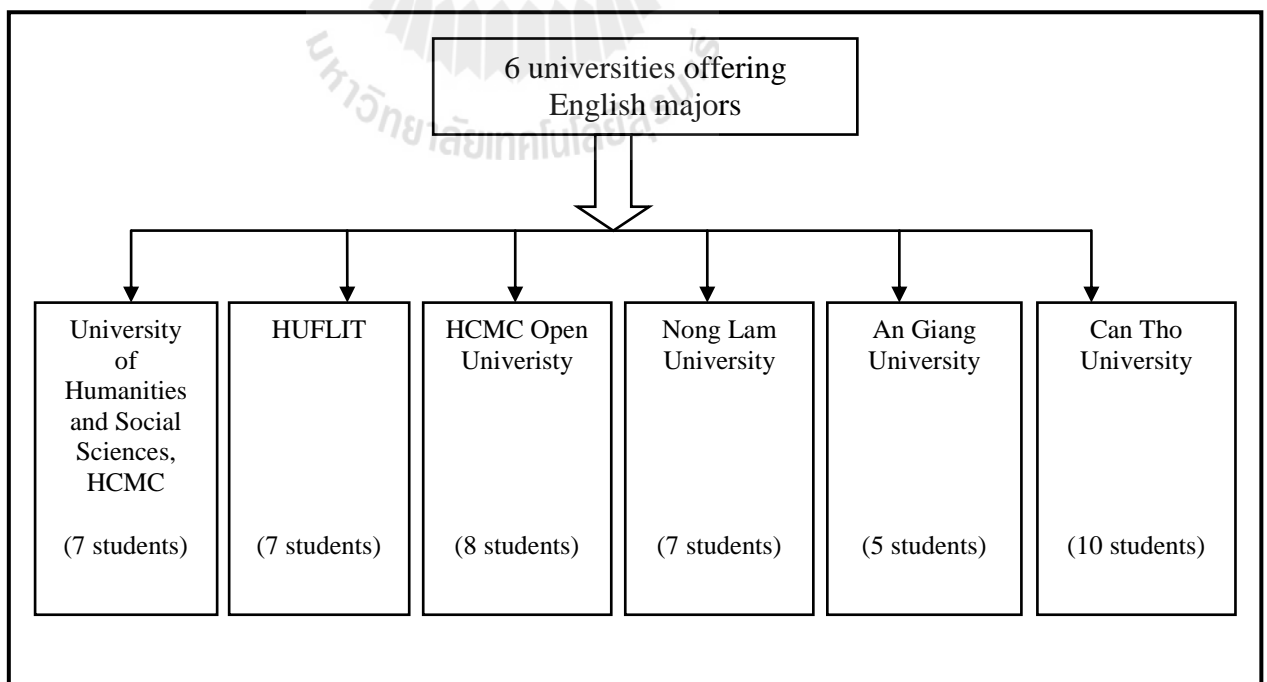
There have been 20 universities in the South of Vietnam where English is taught as a major (MOET 2011). With regard to Phase 1: the questionnaires, the samples were taken from 11 universities: 5 were from the central of Hochiminh City (hereafter HCMC) - the most developed city in the South, and 6 in other regions. At this stage, it is worth mentioning that some universities have been excluded from the sampling process. This is because of their low number of third- and fourth-year students who could give information about one of the investigated variables – students' types of English major concentration. Moreover, another criterion for choosing the universities as samples was also their length of operation and history of development. Some universities were not included for sampling because they are newly founded or their English major program is too young.

In Phase 2: semi-structured interview, the purposive sampling method was adopted with the hope that representatives of all the five independent variables were included. However, for practical issues, in this phase, the participants were chosen on the basis of their convenience and availability. In other words, the interviewees were volunteers among the questionnaire respondents. Therefore, only the number of students related to the variable 'students' types of English major concentration' could be controlled.

Summarized in Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6 are the sampling methods for the two phases in the present investigation.



**Figure 3.5: Phase 1 - Stratified Sampling**



**Figure 3.6: Phase 2 - Purposive Sampling**

### 3.6.2 Characteristics of the Research Participants

This section aims to examine the characteristic of the research participants. Tables 3.4 -3.7 present the breakdown of the number of the participating students related to each investigated variable in the data collection in order to give a context for the results obtained through the data analysis for the present study. This breakdown has been crosstabulated, and the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests were employed to determine the subject distribution among the variables.

Table 3.4 shows the number of participants in each group of the four independent variables when related to 'gender of the students'. Of the four variables presented in the 'white' areas, the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) results in Table 3.4 reveal that the distribution of the male and female students varied significantly within 'high school back ground'. That is to say, there is a higher proportion of both male and female who went to high schools in urban areas than those who went to high schools in rural areas.

In addition, female students within both groups in 'high school background' outnumber their male counterparts. The largest number falls into female students who attended high schools in urban areas, and the smallest number is male students who did that in rural areas. Meanwhile, the distribution of male and female students is not significantly different with respect to 'exposure to oral communication in English', 'types of English major concentration', or 'attitudes towards speaking English'. That means the proportion of the male and female students in each group of these three variables is similar to one another.

**Table 3.4: Number of Participants by Gender in Terms of Attitudes towards Speaking English, High School Background, Exposure to Oral Communication in English, and Types of English Major Concentration**

Gender	Attitudes towards Speaking English		High School Background		Exposure to Oral Communication in English		Types of English Major Concentration	
	Positive	Negative	Urban	Rural	Limited to classroom settings	Non-limited to classroom settings	ESP	Non-ESP
Male (N = 181)	168	13	109	72	54	127	94	87
Female (N = 814)	761	53	410	404	274	540	403	411
Total (N = 995)	929	66	519	476	328	667	497	498
$\chi^2$ Value	N.S		$\chi^2 = 5.76$ $p < .05$		N.S		N.S	

The results of the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests presented in table 3.5 demonstrate that the distribution of participants with positive and negative attitude towards speaking English varied significantly with ‘exposure to oral communication in English’ and ‘types of English major concentration’. In other words, a higher proportion of students in both types of attitude towards speaking English have non-limited exposure to oral communication in English to classroom settings than limited exposure to such context. Besides, there are more students who take non-ESP concentration than those who study ESP concentration.

**Table 3.5: Number of Participants by Attitudes towards Speaking English in Terms of High School Background, Exposure to Oral Communication in English, and Types of English Major Concentration**

Attitudes towards Speaking English	High School Background		Exposure to Oral Communication in English		Types of English Major Concentration	
	Urban	Rural	Limited to classroom settings	Non-limited to classroom settings	ESP	Non-ESP
<b>Positive (N = 929 )</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>457</b>
<b>Negative (N = 66 )</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Total (N = 995)</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>498</b>
$\chi^2$ Value	N.S		$\chi^2 = 11.01$ p<.01		$\chi^2 = 4.12$ p<.05	

It is also noticeable that regarding exposure to oral communication, the highest proportion of students are those who have positive attitude towards speaking English and non-limited exposure to classroom settings while the lowest proportion involves those who have negative attitude and limited exposure to classroom settings. Additionally, the students who study ESP concentration and hold positive attitude towards speaking English, and those who study ESP concentration and hold negative attitude fall into the greatest group and smallest group respectively.

**Table 3.6: Number of Participants by High School Background in Terms of Exposure to Oral Communication in English, and Types of English Major Concentration**

High School Background	Exposure to Oral Communication in English		Types of English Major Concentration	
	Limited to classroom settings	Non-limited to classroom settings	ESP	Non-ESP
Urban (N = 519 )	151	368	265	254
Rural (N = 476 )	177	299	232	244
Total N = 995	326	667	497	498
$\chi^2$ Value	$\chi^2 = 7.35$ $p < .05$		N.S	

Presented in Table 3.6 are the results of the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests which show that the distribution of participants from high schools in rural and urban areas is significantly different in 'exposure to oral communication in English'. A higher proportion of students in both circumstances of 'high school background' have non-limited exposure to oral communication to classroom settings. Besides, the greatest number of students falls into the group with urban high school background and non-limited exposure to oral communication in English to classroom settings while the smallest number includes those who went to high school in urban areas and have limited exposure to classroom settings. However, no significant difference has been found in the distribution of students by 'high school background' in related to 'types of English major concentration'.

**Table 3.7: Number of Participants by Exposure to Oral Communication in English in Terms of Types of English Major Concentration**

Exposure to Oral Communication in English	Types of English Major Concentration	
	ESP	Non-ESP
Limited to classroom settings (N = 328 )	166	162
Non-limited to classroom settings (N = 667 )	331	336
Total N = 995	497	498
$\chi^2$ Value	N.S	

Table 3.7 demonstrates the number of participants by ‘exposure to oral communication in English’ in terms of ‘types of English major concentration’. The results of the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests reveal that the distribution of the students in ‘exposure to oral communication’ is not significantly different in respect of their ‘types of English major concentration’.

Table 3.8 summarizes the characteristics of the research participants when the distribution of the number of students among the five independent variables is considered. The information demonstrates whether or not the distribution of the research participants varies significantly when related to different variables. This characterization will help the researcher to interpret some cases of the research findings in Chapter 7.



**Table 3.8: Summary of the Variation of the Research Subjects' Characteristics**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Attitudes towards Speaking English</b>	<b>High School Background</b>	<b>Exposure to Oral Communication in English</b>	<b>Types of English Major Concentration</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Attitudes towards Speaking English</b>		<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>High School Background</b>			<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Exposure to Oral Communication in English</b>				<b>NO</b>

**Note:** 'Yes' means the distribution of participants varied significantly; and 'NO' means it does not.

The characteristics of the research participants can be summarized as follows.

- The total number of participants reveals that there are more female students than their male counterparts; more students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English than those who hold the negative one; more students who went to high schools in urban areas than those who did that in rural areas; more students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English to classroom settings than those with limited exposure to classroom settings only; and more students of non-ESP concentration than those of ESP concentration.
- The proportion of female students who attended high school in urban areas is greater than male students who attended high school in the same areas.
- The proportion of female students who attended high school in rural areas is greater than male students who attended high school in the same areas.

- The proportion of students of ESP concentration having positive attitudes towards speaking English is higher than those with negative attitude.
- The proportion of students with positive attitude towards speaking English studying ESP concentration having is greater than those of non-ESP concentration.
- The proportion of students who have non-limited exposure to oral communication in English holding positive attitude towards speaking English is higher than those with negative attitude.
- The proportion of students with negative attitude towards speaking English having limited exposure to oral communication in English is higher than those with non-limited exposure.
- The proportion of students who attended high school urban areas having non-limited exposure to oral communication in English is greater than those with limited exposure.
- The proportion of students attended high school urban areas with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English is greater than those with limited exposure.

The characteristics of the research population demonstrated in Tables 3.4-3.7 are general satisfactory though the distribution of the students is not well-balanced or proportioned as planned. This can be explained briefly as follows.

### **1. Proportion of Female and Male Students**

The proportion of male and female students is not definitely well-balanced. As Tables 3.4-3.7 show, there are a lot more female students participating in the study than their male counterparts. This is because the population of the present

investigation are majoring in English which is female-oriented. Therefore, the number of the participating female students is relatively higher than the participating male students. However, these male students have provided the researcher with very useful information for the present study.

## **2. Proportion of Students' Attitudes towards Speaking English**

As shown in Tables 3.4-3.7, the proportion of participants related to attitudes towards speaking English is not ideally well-balanced. This is because the population was English majors who tend to have positive attitude towards speaking English. Those who have negative attitudes would have chosen other majors other than English. As a result, the number of participating students who hold negative attitude towards English is a lot lower than those who hold positive attitude. Nonetheless, the information given by these students has been necessary for the present study.

## **3. Proportion of Students' High School Background**

The proportion of students who went to high schools in urban areas and those who went to high schools in rural areas is in a little difference with the former slightly higher than the latter. It was unpredictable whether the students with certain gender, exposure to oral communication in English, types of English major concentration, and attitudes towards speaking English would come from high schools in urban or rural areas. Fortunately, however, as we can see in Tables 3.4-3.7., the difference between the two groups of students is not much.

## **4. Proportion of Students' Exposure to Oral Communication in English**

Tables 3.4-3.7 show that the number of students who have limited exposure to oral communication to classroom settings is lower than those who have non-limited exposure to classroom settings. Similar to the case of students' high school

background, it was impossible to predict whether the students with certain gender, high school background, types of English major concentration, and attitudes toward speaking English would limit or not limit their exposure to oral communication in English to classroom settings.

### **5. Proportion of Students' Types of English Major Concentration**

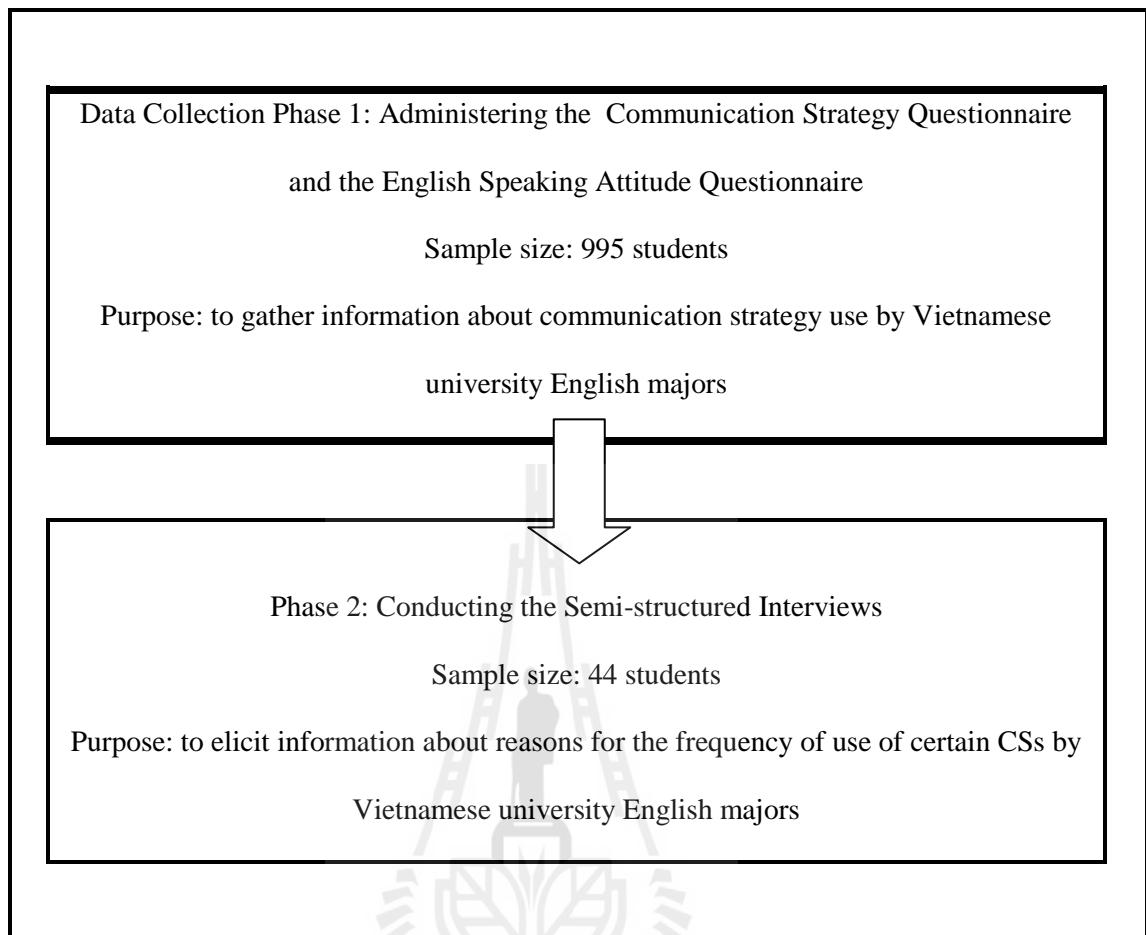
The proportion of students from different types of English major concentration is not well-balanced. However, as demonstrated in Tables 3.4-3.7, the difference is very small. This is because the researcher has planned the sampling stage systematically considering the investigated variables for the present study.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

As mentioned earlier, the data collection in the present study included two main phases: Phase 1- carrying out the questionnaires and Phase 2 – conducting the semi-structured interviews.

In each phase, upon administration, the researcher explained the aim and the nature of the survey. The students were informed that the responses would not affect them personally so they should answer the questions honestly (Dörnyei, 2003).

The framework for data collection process is summarized in Figure 3.7 as follows.



**Figure 3.7: The Framework for Data Collection Process**

### **3.8 Analyzing, Interpreting and Reporting Data**

The data gathered from the CS questionnaire and the English speaking attitude questionnaire were quantitatively analyzed, and the data obtained from semi-structured interviews were qualitatively analyzed.

#### **3.8.1 Quantitative Data Analysis: CS Questionnaire and English Speaking Attitude Questionnaire**

The data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed with the assistance of the SPSS program. The obtained results helped to answer Research Questions 1 and 2

which involve the relationship between the students' CS use and the five independent variables: gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration. The statistics was used as follows.

- **Descriptive Statistics**

The descriptive statistics have been used to describe the frequency distributions of students' CS use. This helped to identify the strategies reported being employed frequently and infrequently by the students. There are three levels of strategy use: (1) 'high use (3.0-3.99)'; (2) 'moderate use (2.0-2.99)'; and (3) 'low use (1.0-1.99)' (Oxford, 1990; and Intaraprasert, 2000).

- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the significant differences among the means of two or more groups of variables (Nunan, 1989). In the present study, this statistical method has been adopted to examine the relationship between the use of CSs and each of the selected independent variables: gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration.

- **Chi-square Test**

The Chi-square tests are often adopted to analyze data which are in form of frequencies (Nunan, 1992; and Howitt and Cramer, 2000). For the present study, they have been employed to determine the significant variation patterns in the students' reported CS use at the individual item level in association with the five investigated variables. This method compared the actual frequencies with which the students have given different responses on the 4-point rating scale, a method of analysis closer to

the raw data than comparisons based on average responses for each item. For the Chi-square tests, responses of 1 and 2 ('never or almost never' and 'sometimes') were consolidated into a single 'low strategy use' category, while responses 3 and 4 ('often' and 'always or almost always') were combined into a single 'high strategy use' category. The purpose of consolidating the four response levels into two categories of strategy use is to obtain cell sizes with expected values high enough to ensure a valid analysis (Green and Oxford, 1995).

- **Factor Analysis**

Factor analysis is a way of determining the nature of underlying patterns among a large number of variables (Cohen and Manion, 1994). It provides an empirical basis for reducing a large number of variables to a small number of factors, with each factor representing a set of variables that are moderately or highly correlated with each other (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2007). Factor analysis has been adopted for the present study to analyze data obtained through questionnaire in Phase 1 in order to categorize the items in the CSQ.

### **3.8.2 Qualitative Data Analysis: Semi-structured Interview**

The transcribed interview data have been analyzed qualitatively with the use of content analysis. As proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), Punch (2005), and Neuman (2006), content analysis involves coding. This is a process of developing categories and concepts and themes through (1) breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data; and (2) discovering, naming and categorizing phenomena, and developing categories with regard to their properties and dimensions (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

For the present investigation, the interview recording was transcribed two times in order to increase the validity and reliability of the obtained data. Back-translation was also conducted. It was done with the help of two of the researcher's colleagues who are Vietnamese university lecturers of English. Differences found in meaning were discussed before agreement was reached. After the transcriptions of the interviews were translated into English, coding was adopted to group the differences and similarities of reasons for students' reported frequent use and infrequent use of each category. The process of coding included different steps as mentioned above. And as Punch (2005) points out, these steps were overlapping and done concurrently. The results from analysis of data collected through the interviews helped to answer Research Question 3: "Why do students report employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently?"

### **3.9 Summary**

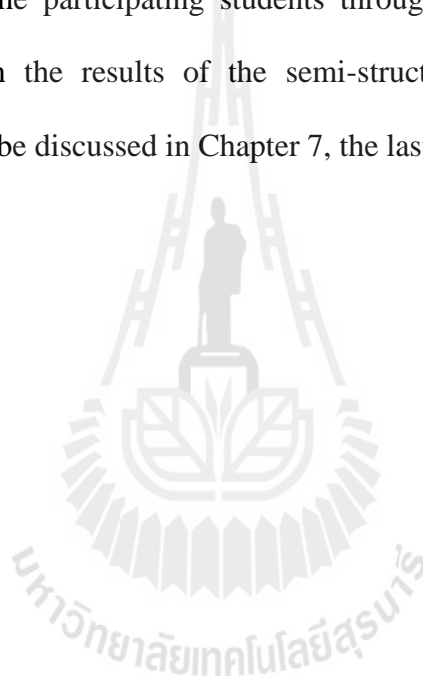
This chapter has covered three main parts. First, it provided a background of research methodology which includes related research methods used in CSs, namely interview, questionnaire, observation, and task recording. This was followed by a discussion of the methodology for the present investigation. It presented the theoretical framework and variables to be investigated, research questions, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, characteristics of participants, data collection framework, and methods of data analysis and data interpretation.

For the present study, there were two phases of data collection. Together with the attitude questionnaires, the CS questionnaires were employed for Phase 1 which involved 995 English major students studying at 11 universities in the South of



Vietnam. In Phase 2, based on the students' response about their CS employment, the one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with 44 students who participated in Phase 1, providing the reasons for the frequent and infrequent use of certain CSs.

The following chapters present the results of the analysis of the data gathered through the two phases. Chapters 4 and 5 involve the frequency and variations of use of CSs reported by the participating students through the CS questionnaires; and Chapter 6 deals with the results of the semi-structured interviews. Finally, the research findings will be discussed in Chapter 7, the last chapter of the thesis.



# **CHAPTER 4**

## **DATA ANALYSIS FOR COMMUNICATION**

### **STRATEGY USE (I)**

#### **4.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Chapter**

The main purpose of this chapter is to present and describe the research findings of the main study at different levels of data analysis, namely (1) overall use of CSs; (2) use of CSs in the two main categories: the strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor (SGM), and the strategies for understanding the message (SUM); and (3) use of individual CSs. For this purpose, the holistic mean scores of frequency of CS use reported by 995 English major students studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam obtained through the communication questionnaires are determined in this chapter.

As evidenced in the related literature review of previous research works on CSs in Chapter 2, many variables have been found to affect language learners' CS use. These variables, as classified by Ellis (1994), include two groups: (1) 'learner individual differences', and (2) 'teaching and learning conditions'. The former group consists of: age, gender, levels of language proficiency, levels of oral proficiency, learners' L1 and L2, and exposure to oral communication in English. The latter includes: CS instruction or training, levels of study, types of task, fields of study, time differences, types of school, and locations of institution. Examples of the research

works in CS use in relation to these variables are: Bialystok (1983), Paribakht (1985), Huang and Van Naerssen (1987), Si-Qing (1990), Flyman (1997), Granena (2003), Lam (2006), Nakatani (2006), and Dong and Fang-peng (2010). However, it is impossible for the researcher to examine all the above-mentioned variables. Moreover, of the five variables of the present study, 'gender' has been investigated but inconsistent results were reported. Besides, the other four variables have been paid little attention to. Therefore, the present study focused on the relationship between students' use of CSs and their gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration.

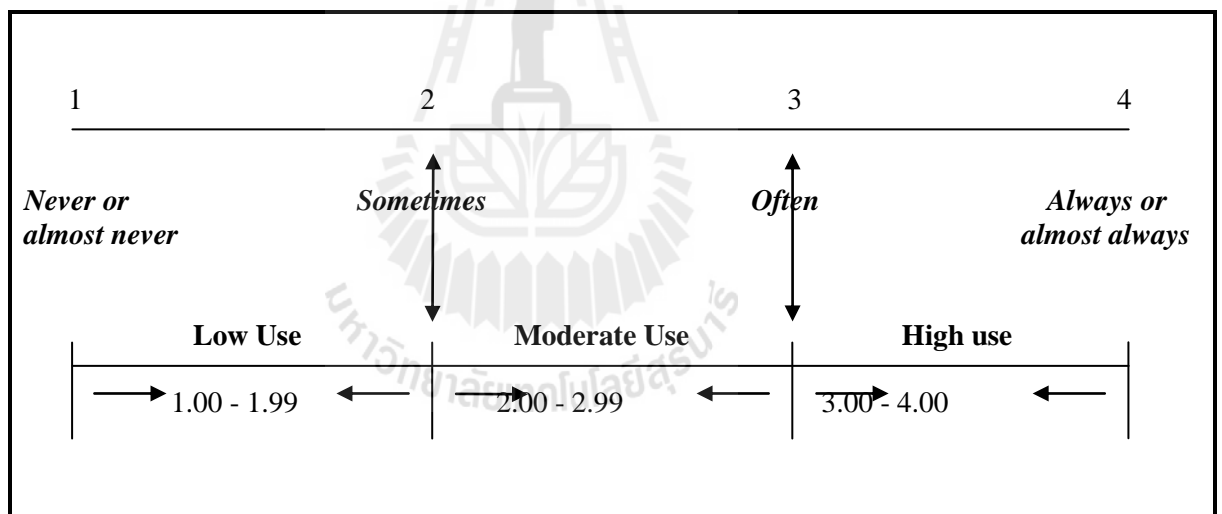
As mentioned earlier, different levels of CS use reported by 995 English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam have been taken into consideration in order to examine their CS use. In other words, the frequency of CS use will be examined by

- Overall;
- The two main categories: SGM and SUM; and
- 56 individual strategies.

## **4.2 CS Use Reported by 995 English Majors Studying at the Universities in the South of Vietnam**

In this section, descriptive statistics have been employed to analyze the data obtained from 995 English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam through the CS questionnaires. The mean frequency scores of students' reported CS

use in different layers are the focal point of description and discussion. As determined by students' responses to the CS questionnaires, the frequency of students' CS use has been categorized as 'high', 'moderate', and 'low' use. It is indicated on a four-point rating scale, ranging from 'never or almost never' valued as 1, 'sometimes' valued as 2; 'often' valued as 3; and 'always or almost always' valued as 4. As a result, the possible average values of frequency of CS use can be from 1.00 to 4.00. The midpoint of the minimum and the maximum values is 2.00. The mean frequency score of CS use of any item valued from 1.00 to 1.99 is determined as 'low use', from 2.00 to 2.99 as 'moderate use', and from 3.00 to 4.00 as 'high use'. Figure 4.1 below presents the applied measure.



(Source: Adapted from Intaraprasert, 2000, p.167)

**Figure 4.1: The Measure of High, Moderate, and Low Frequency of CS Use**

#### 4.2.1 Frequency of Students' Overall Strategy Use

The results of the holistic mean frequency across the CS questionnaires responded to by 995 English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Frequency of Students' Reported Overall CS Use (n=995)**

Strategy use	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Frequency Category
Overall	2.56	.31	Moderate Use

As shown in Table 4.1, the mean frequency score of students' reported overall CS use was 2.56. This indicates that as a whole, the participating students reported employing CSs at the moderate frequency level when coping with communication breakdowns.

#### 4.2.2 Frequency of Strategy Use in the SGM and SUM Categories

As mentioned earlier, CSs under the present study have been classified into two main categories according to the purpose of strategy use. They are: (1) strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor (SGM), and (2) strategies for understanding the message (SUM). Table 4.2 shows the mean frequency score of reported CS use in each of the two categories together with the standard deviation and frequency category.

**Table 4.2: Frequency of Students' Reported CS Use in the SGM and SUM**

**Categories (n=995)**

Strategy use	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Frequency Category
Category 1 (SGM)	2.52	.31	Moderate Use
Category 2 (SUM)	2.63	.37	Moderate Use

Table 4.2 above demonstrates that the participating students reported employing CSs at the moderate frequency level in both of the SGM and SUM categories with the mean scores of 2.52 and 2.63 respectively. As far as the mean

scores of the SGM and SUM categories are concerned, it is found that the students reported employing the strategies under the SUM significantly more frequently than those under the SGM. In other words, the students reported employing CSs for the purpose of understanding the message more frequently than those for the purpose of getting the message across to the interlocutor.

So far, Section 4.2.1 has illustrated the frequency of students' reported overall CS use, and Section 4.2.2 has presented an overall picture of students' strategy use within the SGM and SUM categories in succession. The next section (Section 4.2.3) explores further information on students' reported CS use in a more detailed manner, which is based on the frequency of individual strategy use under each category. This will tell us which individual CSs have been reported being employed more frequently than the others.

### **4.2.3 Frequency of Individual CS Use**

The frequency of individual CS use, in respect of the mean score, standard deviation and the frequency category, is demonstrated in Tables 4.3 and 4.4. Specifically speaking, Table 4.3 shows the frequency of use of 38 individual CSs under the SGM category, in which the strategies are referred to as SGM1- SGM38. This is followed by Table 4.4, which presents the frequency of use of 18 individual CSs under the SUM category, in which the strategies are referred to as SUM1- SUM18.

So as to make it easier to see the whole picture of students' reported frequency of each individual CS, the strategies are presented in order of their mean frequency scores, ranging from the highest to the lowest. This may give us a clearer picture of the strategies which have been reported being used the most and least frequently. The

higher mean frequency score of a strategy use indicates that the students claimed to employ that strategy more frequently and vice versa.

#### 4.2.3.1 Frequency of Individual Strategy Use for Getting the Message across to the Interlocutor

Table 4.3 demonstrated the frequency of individual CS use in the SGM category which entails 38 individual strategy items reported being employed by the research participants for getting the message across to the interlocutor.

**Table 4.3: Frequency of Individual Strategy Use for Getting the Message across to the Interlocutor (n=995)**

Strategies Used for Getting the message across to the Interlocutor	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Frequency Category
SGM37 Paying attention to the interlocutor's reaction to one's speech	3.42	.66	High Use
SGM34 Paying attention to one's pronunciation	3.35	.74	High Use
SGM36 Trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard	3.27	.74	High Use
SGM2 Using familiar words instead of the exact intended ones	3.22	.73	High Use
SGM35 Trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation	3.17	.85	High Use
SGM20 Self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances for correct understanding	3.13	.75	High Use
SGM31 Actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say	3.10	.81	High Use
SGM32 Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking	3.09	.80	High Use
SGM1 Using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones	3.08	.76	High Use
SGM13 Using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning	3.02	.83	High Use

**Table 4.3: Frequency of Individual Strategy Use for Getting the Message across to the Interlocutor (n=995) (Cont.)**

Strategies Used for Getting the Message across to the Interlocutor	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Frequency Category
SGM7 Using examples instead of the exact intended words	2.98	.81	Moderate Use
SGM6 Using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words	2.85	.78	Moderate Use
SGM30 Consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document for how to express the intended meaning	2.83	.95	Moderate Use
SGM4 Using categories instead of the exact intended words	2.82	.84	Moderate Use
SGM25 Reducing the message by using simple expressions	2.82	.74	Moderate Use
SGM26 Asking the interlocutor to confirm that one has been understood	2.75	.84	Moderate Use
SGM16 Speaking more slowly to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	2.74	.82	Moderate Use
SGM33 Trying to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence	2.62	.87	Moderate Use
SGM21 Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence	2.59	.94	Moderate Use
SGM8 Referring to objects or materials to express the intended words	2.47	.86	Moderate Use
SGM12 Spelling or writing out the intended words	2.43	.90	Moderate Use
SGM5 Using similes instead of the exact intended words	2.43	.84	Moderate Use
SGM3 Using definitions instead of the exact intended words	2.41	.91	Moderate Use
SGM14 Keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message	2.38	.81	Moderate Use
SGM27 Appealing for help from the interlocutor for how to express the intended meaning	2.37	.86	Moderate Use
SGM9 Describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words	2.34	.88	Moderate Use



**Table 4.3: Frequency of Individual Strategy Use for Getting the Message across to the Interlocutor (n=995) (Cont.)**

Strategies Used for Getting the Message across to the Interlocutor	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Frequency Category
SGM22 Thinking first of a sentence one already knows in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation	2.32	.88	Moderate Use
SGM28 Appealing for assistance from someone else around for how to express the intended meaning	2.27	.85	Moderate Use
SGM18 Repeating oneself to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	2.20	.88	Moderate Use
SGM19 Repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	2.18	.86	Moderate Use
SGM15 Saying “well,” “let me see”... to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	2.06	.80	Moderate Use
SGM38 Giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood	1.95	.75	Low use
SGM23 Avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic	1.81	.78	Low use
SGM24 Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty	1.72	.78	Low use
SGM17 Talking about something else to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	1.55	.72	Low use
SGM11 Using Vietnamese instead of the exact intended words in English	1.54	.71	Low use
SGM29 Making a phone call to another person for assistance to express intended meaning	1.33	.62	Low use
SGM10 Making up non-existing English words	1.32	.58	Low use

Table 4.3 reveals that, as a whole, 10 strategies were reported being used at the high frequency level, 21 strategies at the moderate frequency level, and 7 strategies at the low frequency level.

With regard to the reported CS use of at the high frequency level, it is found that *'paying attention to the interlocutor's reaction to one's speech'* (SGM37) was reported being employed the most frequently, with the mean score of 3.42; whereas *'using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning'* (SGM13) was reported being employed the least frequently, with the mean score of 3.02. Other CSs which the students reported employing at high frequency of use include: *'paying attention to one's pronunciation'* (SGM34); *'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard'* (SGM36); *'using familiar words instead of the exact intended ones'* (SGM2); *'trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation'* (SGM35); *'self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances for correct understanding'* (SGM20); *'actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say'* (SGM31); *'paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'* (SGM32); and *'using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones'* (SGM1). The high level of frequency of employment of these strategies reveal that the students tend to put efforts into expressing their ideas notwithstanding the breakdowns; they tend to focus on making their message clear, correct, and native-like in terms of pronunciation; they pay attention to meaning accuracy; and they prefer simple ways to express the intended words.

The group of CSs reported at moderate frequency of use consists of 21 items. The most frequently employed CS - *'using examples instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM7) had the mean score of 2.98; the least frequently employed

CS is *'saying "well," "let me see"... to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor'* (SGM15), with the mean score of 2.06. In general, most of the CSs employed at moderate frequency are related to different ways of dealing with problems in expressing the intended words. They involve the use of definitions; categories; similes; synonyms or antonyms; examples; objects or materials; and descriptions. Besides, the strategies in this group also entail those employed for the purpose of gaining time to think, i.e., *'keeping silent...'* (SGM14); *'saying "well," "let me see"...'* (SGM15); *'speaking more slowly ...'* (SGM16); *'repeating oneself...'* (SGM18); and *'repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said ...'* (SGM19). Other CSs reported being used with moderate frequency are those related to the students' reliance on: (1) document or other people to express the intended meaning; (2) message processing through translation or through adapting the model patterns to the situation; (3) subject and verb emphasis; and (4) the interlocutor's confirmation on his understanding.

The CSs reported being employed at the low level of frequency comprise 7 items, among which 3 are categorized as avoidance or reduction strategies by different researchers, e.g. Tarone (1977), Færch and Kasper (1983b), Willems (1987), and Dörnyei (1995). These reduction strategies, which were reported being the most frequently used of this group, are: *'giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood'* (SGM38) with the mean score of 1.95; *'avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic'* (SGM23) with the mean score of 1.81; and *'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'* (SGM24) with the mean score of 1.72. Besides, this group of low frequency of use also includes: *'talking about something else to gain time to think about how to get the intended message*

*across to the interlocutor*' (SGM17); *'making a phone call to another person for assistance to express intended meaning'* (SGM29); and those related to the unemployment of one's English vocabulary, i.e. *'using Vietnamese instead of the exact intended words in English'* (SGM11) and *'making up non-existing English words'* (SGM10) with the lowest mean frequency scores, which were 1.33 and 1.32 respectively.

#### 4.2.3.2 Frequency of Individual Strategy Use for Understanding the Message

Table 4.4 shows the frequency of individual CS use in the SUM category which consists of 18 individual strategy items reported being employed by the research participants for understanding the message.

**Table 4.4: Frequency of Individual Strategy Use for Understanding the Message (n=995)**

Strategies Used for Understanding the Message	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Frequency Category
SUM18 Paying full attention to the interlocutor when he/she is talking	3.42	.64	High Use
SUM9 Trying to catch the interlocutor's main point	3.36	.65	High Use
SUM14 Paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation	3.31	.70	High Use
SUM10 Guessing the interlocutor's intention based on what he/she has said so far	3.28	.71	High Use
SUM13 Noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes	3.26	.73	High Use
SUM16 Paying attention to the interlocutor's nonverbal language	3.25	.74	High Use
SUM15 Paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence	2.82	.87	Moderate Use

**Table 4.4: Frequency of Individual Strategy Use for Understanding the Message  
(n=995) (Cont.)**

Strategies Used for understanding the Message (Cont.)	Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Frequency Category
SUM8 Asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct	2.77	.77	Moderate Use
SUM2 Asking the interlocutor to explain what he /she has just said	2.62	.75	Moderate Use
SUM3 Asking the interlocutor to slow down	2.61	.78	Moderate Use
SUM6 Asking the interlocutor to repeat what he/she has just said	2.54	.87	Moderate Use
SUM5 Asking the interlocutor to spell or write out his/her intended words	2.30	.79	Moderate Use
SUM1 Asking the interlocutor to simplify his/her language	2.29	.84	Moderate Use
SUM11 Trying to catch every word that the interlocutor says	2.17	.88	Moderate Use
SUM12 Trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said	2.13	.94	Moderate Use
SUM7 Appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message	2.05	.81	Moderate Use
SUM17 Pretending to understand the interlocutor's message	1.78	.69	Low Use
SUM4 Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese	1.53	.67	Low Use

The frequency of use of CSs in the SUM category, as presented in Table 4.4, demonstrates that 6 strategies were reported being used at the high frequency level, 10 strategies were reported at the moderate frequency level, and only 2 strategies were reported at the low frequency level.

The 6 CSs which were reported being employed at the high frequency level encompass: *'paying full attention to the interlocutor when he/she is talking'* (SUM18); *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9); *'paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation'* (SUM14); *'guessing the interlocutor's intention based on what he/she has said so far'* (SUM10); *'noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes'* (SUM13); and *'paying attention to the interlocutor's nonverbal language'* (SUM16).

The CSs reported being employed at the moderate level stand together to form the largest group which entails various types of strategies. Examples of this group are: *'asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'* (SUM1); *'asking the interlocutor to slow down'* (SUM3); *'trying to catch every word that the interlocutor says'* (SUM11); and *'paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence'* (SUM15).

In respect of CSs with the lowest frequency of use, the students reported *'pretending to understand the interlocutor's message'* (SUM17) with the mean score of 1.78, and *'asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese'* (SUM4) with the mean score of 1.53. In other words, for comprehending the message, SUM4, which is a help-seeking strategy, is the least frequently used strategy, while the second least frequently used strategy is SUM17, which can be classified as a reduction or avoidance strategy.

### 4.3 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the frequency of CS use reported by 995 English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam at three different layers. The frequency of CS use, regarding the mean frequency scores, was described at three levels: (1) CS use in overall, (2) CS use in the two categories: SGM and SUM, and (3) CS use in 56 individual strategy items. The results can be summarized as follows.

- With regard to the overall CS use, 995 subjects reported employing CSs at the moderate frequency level.
- The students reported employing CSs with moderate frequency regarding the two purposes: getting the message across to the interlocutor (the SGM category) and understanding the message (the SUM category).
- The strategy reported with the highest frequency of use of 56 individual CSs in both SGM and SUM categories is SUM18 - *'paying full attention to the interlocutor when he/she is talking'* while the one reported with the lowest frequency of use is SGM10 - *'making up non-existing English words'*.
- Through the frequency of individual CS use, it is found that when using strategies for coping with oral communication breakdowns, the students tend to consider making good pronunciation, self-supporting, paying attention to certain parts of the sentence, and paying attention to nonverbal language important. The frequency of CS use at the individual level has also indicated that the students tend to make efforts to express the intended message and to understand the interlocutor's intended message.

This chapter has described and discussed the CS use frequency that the 995 subjects reported employing. It has demonstrated the frequency level of CS overall use, the frequency level of CS use under the two categories: SGM and SUM, and the frequency level of CS use by individual items in the two categories. The next chapter presents the variations of CS use in relation to the five independent variables: students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration.





# **CHAPTER 5**

## **DATA ANALYSIS FOR COMMUNICATION**

### **STRATEGY USE (II)**

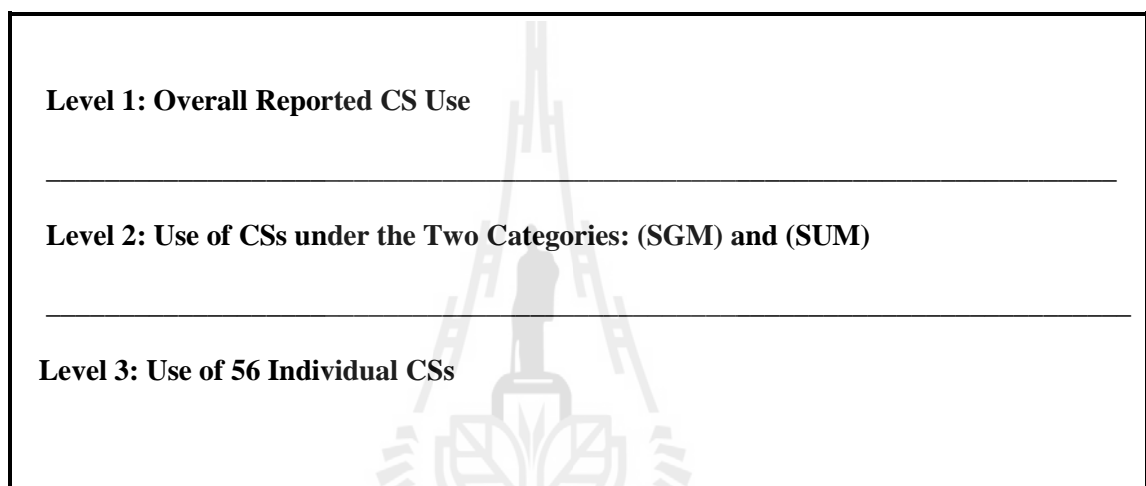
#### **5.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Chapter**

As can be seen in Chapter 4, the students' reported use of CSs has been divided into three different levels: overall CS use, use of CSs under the two categories (SGM and SUM), and use of the 56 individual strategies. This chapter examines significant variations and variation patterns in frequency of CS use of 995 English major students studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam in relation to the five independent variables:

1. Gender (male or female);
2. Attitudes towards speaking English (positive or negative);
3. High school background (urban or rural);
4. Exposure to oral communication in English (limited to classroom settings only or non-limited to classroom settings); and
5. Types of English major concentration (ESP or non-ESP).

Variations in frequency in students' overall reported CS use in association with the five variables will be explored first. Then, the variations in frequency in students' reported CS use in relation to the five variables will be presented under the two categories: (1) strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor (SGM),

and (2) strategies for understanding the message (SUM). This is followed by the variations in use of individual CSs under the two categories in relation to the five independent variables. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Chi-square tests were employed for the data analysis in this chapter. Besides, as mentioned, the data were considered at three levels. The three levels of CS use to be examined are shown in Figure 5.1 below.



**Figure 5.1: Different Levels of CS Use**

Following the results of ANOVA and Chi-square analysis in the three levels, the categorization of individual items which have shown significant variation patterns under the five investigated variables in level 3 will be reported based on the factor analysis results. Finally, the variables with strong relationship with each category (factor) will be singled out.

## 5.2 Variation in Frequency of Students' Overall Reported CS Use

This section examines the variations in frequency of the participants' reported CS use as a whole based on the results of an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This statistical method illustrates significant variations with regard to the five variables: students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration. Table 5.1 summarizes the results of the first level analysis. The mean frequency score of strategy use, standard deviation (S.D.), level of significance, and pattern of variation in frequency of students' strategy use, if a significant variation exists, are presented according to each of the independent variables.

As indicated in Table 5.1, the results of ANOVA reveal that the frequency of students' overall strategy use varied significantly according to their attitudes towards speaking English ( $p < .01$ ). The mean frequency scores of the students with positive attitude towards speaking English and those with negative attitude towards speaking English were 2.57 and 2.44 respectively. That is, in the overall use of CSs, the students with positive attitude towards speaking English reported employing CSs significantly more frequently than did those with negative attitude.

Table 5.1 also demonstrates that the frequency of students' overall CS use did not vary significantly according to their gender, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, or types of English major concentration. The next section illustrates the results of ANOVA for students' reported CS use under the two categories: SGM and SUM.

**Table 5.1: Summary of Variation in Frequency of Students' Overall Reported****CS Use**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male (n = 181)</b>		<b>Female (n = 814)</b>		<b>Comments</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Sig. Level</b>	<b>Variation Pattern</b>
<b>Overall Strategy Use</b>	2.55	.32	2.56	.30	N.S.	-
<b>Attitudes towards Speaking English</b>	<b>Positive (n = 929)</b>		<b>Negative (n = 66)</b>		<b>Comments</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Sig. Level</b>	<b>Variation Pattern</b>
<b>Overall Strategy Use</b>	2.57	.30	2.44	.32	p < .01	Positive > Negative
<b>High School Background</b>	<b>Urban (n = 519)</b>		<b>Rural (n = 476)</b>		<b>Comments</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Sig. Level</b>	<b>Variation Pattern</b>
<b>Overall Strategy Use</b>	2.54	.29	2.58	.32	N.S.	-
<b>Exposure to Oral Communication in English</b>	<b>Limited to classroom settings (n = 328)</b>		<b>Non-limited to classroom settings (n = 667)</b>		<b>Comments</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Sig. Level</b>	<b>Variation Pattern</b>
<b>Overall Strategy Use</b>	2.56	.31	2.56	.30	N.S.	-
<b>Types of English Major Concentration</b>	<b>ESP (n = 497)</b>		<b>Non-ESP (n = 498)</b>		<b>Comments</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Sig. Level</b>	<b>Variation Pattern</b>
<b>Overall Strategy Use</b>	2.57	.30	2.55	.31	N.S.	-

**5.3 Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two****Categories: SGM and SUM**

As mentioned earlier, for the present study, CSs have been classified into two categories: (1) strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor (SGM), and (2) strategies for understanding the message (SUM). The results of ANOVA

demonstrate the significant variations in frequency of students' reported CS use under the two categories in relation to their attitudes towards speaking English, and under the SUM category related to high school background and types of English major concentration. However, no significant variations were found in the frequency of CS use within the two categories with reference to students' gender or exposure to oral communication in English.

### **5.3.1 Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Gender**

The ANOVA results presented in Table 5.2 below show the variations in frequency of students' reported CS use under the two main categories according to their gender.

**Table 5.2: Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Gender**

Category	Male (n = 181)		Female (n = 814)		Comments	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Pattern of Variation
Category 1 (SGM)	2.52	.32	2.52	.31	N.S.	-
Category 2 (SUM)	2.61	.39	2.64	.36	N.S.	-

It can be seen from the results of ANOVA that no significant differences were found in the use of CSs either for getting the message across to the interlocutor or for understanding the message according to gender of the students. The mean frequency scores of the SGM category were 2.52 for male and 2.52 for female, while of the

SUM category, these were 2.61 for male and 2.64 for female. They are all considered 'moderate' frequency of use.

### 5.3.2 Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Attitudes towards Speaking English

Table 5.3 below shows the variations in frequency of students' reported CS use under the two categories according to attitudes towards speaking English based on the ANOVA results.

**Table 5.3: Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Attitudes towards Speaking English**

Category	Positive (n = 929)		Negative (n = 66)		Comments	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Pattern of Variation
Category 1 (SGM)	2.53	.31	2.39	.32	p < .001	Positive > Negative
Category 2 (SUM)	2.64	.37	2.55	.36	p < .05	Positive > Negative

The results of ANOVA demonstrate that significant variations were found in the frequency of students' use of CSs both for getting the message across to the interlocutor and understanding the message.

As can be seen from Table 5.3, the mean frequency scores of the strategies under the SGM category were 2.53 for the students holding positive attitude towards speaking English and 2.39 for those holding negative attitude. Meanwhile, the frequency mean scores of the strategies under the SUM category were 2.64 and 2.55 respectively. It is evident that the students with positive attitude towards speaking English reported employing CSs for both purposes: getting the message across to the

interlocutor and understanding the message significantly more frequently than did those with negative attitude.

### 5.3.3 Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their High School Background

Based on the ANOVA results, Table 5.4 presents the variations in frequency of students' reported CS use under the two categories according to their high school background.

**Table 5.4: Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their High School Background**

Category	Urban (n = 519)		Rural (n = 476)		Comments	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Pattern of Variation
Category 1 (SGM)	2.51	.30	2.53	.33	N.S.	-
Category 2 (SUM)	2.60	.36	2.67	.38	p < .01	Rural > Urban

The results of ANOVA in Table 5.4 reveal that there were no significant variations in the use of CSs under the SGM category between the students who attended rural high schools and those who attended urban high schools. The mean scores were 2.53 and 2.51 respectively. However, the significant differences were found regarding the use of strategies under the SUM category in association with this variable, with the students who attended rural schools reporting employing CSs for understanding the message significantly more frequently than did those who attended urban schools. The frequency mean scores were 2.67 and 2.60 respectively.

### 5.3.4 Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Exposure to Oral Communication in English

Table 5.5 illustrates the variations in frequency of students' reported CS use under the two categories according to their exposure to oral communication in English based on the results of ANOVA.

**Table 5.5: Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Exposure to Oral Communication in English**

Category	Limited to classroom settings (n = 328)		Non-limited to classroom settings (n = 667)		Comments	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Pattern of Variation
Category 1 (SGM)	2.51	.32	2.52	.31	N.S.	-
Category 2 (SUM)	2.66	.37	2.63	.37	N.S.	-

The ANOVA results in Table 5.5 reveal that no significant variations were found in the frequency of CS use in either of the categories in association with this variable. That means the students whose exposure to oral communication in English was limited to classroom settings and those who have non-limited exposure did not report employing CSs under the two categories significantly differently. Besides, the mean frequency scores of students' use of CSs in the two categories fall into 'moderate' frequency of CS use.



### 5.3.5 Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Types of English Major Concentration

Table 5.6 demonstrates the variations in frequency of student's reported CS use under the two categories with regard to their types of English major concentration.

**Table 5.6: Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Types of English Major Concentration**

Category	ESP (n = 497)		Non-ESP (n = 498)		Comments	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Pattern of Variation
Category 1 (SGM)	2.53	.30	2.52	.32	N.S.	-
Category 2 (SUM)	2.66	.36	2.61	.37	p < .05	ESP > Non-ESP

As can be seen in Table 5.6, based on the ANOVA results, significant variations were found in the frequency of students' reported use of CSs for understanding the message, with the students whose concentration is ESP reporting employing these CSs significantly more frequently than their counterparts. The mean scores of frequency of use of the two groups were 2.66 for the students of ESP concentration and 2.61 for the students of non-ESP concentration. However, no significant variations were found in students' reported use of CSs for getting the message across to the interlocutor. The mean frequency scores of this category are considered 'moderate' frequency of CS use.

In short, the variations in frequency of students' use of CSs under the two categories: SGM and SUM according to the five investigated variables based on the ANOVA results are summarized in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7: Summary of Significant Variations in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories: SGM and SUM according to the Five Independent Variables**

Category	Gender	Attitudes towards Speaking English	High School Background	Exposure to Oral Communication in English	Types of English Major Concentration
Category 1 (SGM)	N.S.	YES	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Category 2 (SUM)	N.S.	YES	YES	N.S.	YES

**Note:** 'Yes' means a significant variation exists while 'N.S' means not significant

The frequency of students' reported CS use under the SGM category varied significantly according to students' attitudes towards speaking English. Meanwhile, significant variations were found in frequency of students' CS use under the SUM category related to their high school background, types of English major concentration, and attitudes towards speaking English. However, no significant differences in frequency of students' CS use under either of the two categories were found in association with the students' gender or exposure to oral communication in English.

#### **5.4 Variation in Individual CS Use**

In Sections 5.2 and 5.3, the significant variations in frequency of students' use of CSs have been discussed based on the results of ANOVA under two levels: overall use of strategies and use of strategies in the SGM and SUM categories in relation to the five independent variables. This section presents the results of the Chi-square

tests, which demonstrate the patterns of significant variations in students' reported CS use at the individual strategy item level. The results of the Chi-square tests were adopted to check all the individual CS items for significant variations with regard to the five independent variables. The percentage of students who reported high use of CSs (3 and 4 in the CS questionnaire) and the observed Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value were identified in order to indicate the strength of variation in use of each individual strategy. The individual strategies are presented in order of the percentage of students who reported high use of CSs (3 and 4 in the CS questionnaire), ranking from the highest to the lowest. This makes it easier to achieve an overall picture of the CSs which are reported being frequently used, analyzed in terms of each of the five variables.

In the following subsections are the patterns of significant variations in frequency of students' reported use of individual CS items according to the five variables, and a brief discussion for each variable.

#### **5.4.1 Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Gender**

As presented in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, there were no significant variations in frequency of students' overall CS use, or use of CSs in either SGM or SUM category according to students' gender. However, at the individual strategy level, the results from the Chi-square tests show significant variations in the use of 10 out of 56 CSs in this variable. Three strategies were reported with high use by a significantly greater percentage of male students than their female counterparts. Meanwhile, 7 strategies were reported with high use by a significantly greater percentage of female students

than their male counterparts. Table 5.8 presents the variations in students' reported use of individual CSs in terms of gender.

**Table 5.8: Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Gender**

Individual CS	% of High Use (3 and 4)		Observed $\chi^2$ p < .05	Pattern of Variation
	Male	Female		
<b>Used more by male students: 3 strategies</b>				
SGM35 Trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation	84.0	76.7	$\chi^2 = 4.62$ p < .05	Male > Female
SGM15 Saying 'well', 'let me see' ... to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	34.3	25.8	$\chi^2 = 5.33$ p < .05	Male > Female
SGM23 Avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic	21.5	15.0	$\chi^2 = 4.69$ p < .05	Male > Female
<b>Used more by female students: 7 strategies</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>p &lt; .05</b>	
SGM2 Using familiar words instead of the exact intended ones	85.3	77.3	$\chi^2 = 6.83$ p < .01	Female > Male
SGM31 Actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say	80.0	69.1	$\chi^2 = 10.27$ p < .01	Female > Male
SGM1 Using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones	78.6	69.6	$\chi^2 = 6.50$ p < .05	Female > Male
SGM7 Using examples instead of the exact intended words	73.0	65.2	$\chi^2 = 4.40$ p = .04	Female > Male
SUM3 Asking the interlocutor to slow down	54.2	45.9	$\chi^2 = 4.11$ p < .05	Female > Male
SUM2 Asking the interlocutor to explain what he/she has just said	53.6	45.3	$\chi^2 = 4.04$ p < .05	Female > Male
SGM21 Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence	50.0	40.9	$\chi^2 = 6.04$ p < .01	Female > Male

Table 5.8 shows that a significantly greater percentage of male students than female students reported high use of 3 CSs. These CSs, which are employed for getting the message across to the interlocutor, include: *trying to imitate native*

*speakers' pronunciation'* (SGM35); *'saying "well", "let me see"... to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor'* (SGM15); and *'avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic'* (SGM23). They are mostly risk-avoidance strategies.

The results of the Chi-square tests also indicate that a significantly greater percentage of female students than male students reported high use of 7 CSs: 5 strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor and 2 strategies for understanding the message. Regarding the CSs for getting the message across to the interlocutor, they are: *'using familiar words instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM2); *'actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say'* (SGM31); *'using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones'* (SGM1); *'using examples instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM7), and *'thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence'* (SGM21). Meanwhile, the strategies for understanding the message are: *'asking the interlocutor to slow down'* (SUM3); and *'asking the interlocutor to explain what he/she has just said'* (SUM2).

#### **5.4.2 Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Attitudes towards Speaking English**

The results of ANOVA in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 demonstrated the significant variations between students' overall reported strategy use and the strategies under the SGM and SUM categories regarding their attitudes towards speaking. In this section, the results from the Chi-square tests shown in Table 5.9 reveal significant variations in use of 12 out of 56 individual CSs related to this variable.

**Table 5.9: Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Attitudes towards Speaking English**

Individual CS	% of High Use (3 and 4)		Observed $\chi^2$	Pattern of Variation
	Positive	Negative		
<b>Used more by the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking: 11 strategies</b>			<b>p &lt; .05</b>	
SUM9 Trying to catch the interlocutor's main point	91.7	83.3	$\chi^2 = 5.36$ p < .05	Positive > Negative
SUM14 Paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation	88.2	75.8	$\chi^2 = 8.57$ p < .01	Positive > Negative
SGM36 Trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard	86.2	71.2	$\chi^2 = 11.02$ p < .01	Positive > Negative
SGM31 Actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say	79.1	61.2	$\chi^2 = 10.37$ p < .01	Positive > Negative
SGM6 Using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words	67.9	53.0	$\chi^2 = 6.17$ p < .05	Positive > Negative
SGM4 Using categories instead of the exact intended words	66.7	45.5	$\chi^2 = 12.32$ p < .001	Positive > Negative
SUM15 Paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence	64.7	50.0	$\chi^2 = 5.75$ p < .05	Positive > Negative
SUM8 Asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct	64.2	50.0	$\chi^2 = 5.31$ p < .05	Positive > Negative
SGM30 Consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document for how to express the intended meaning	63.5	48.5	$\chi^2 = 5.93$ p < .05	Positive > Negative
SGM3 Using definitions instead of the exact intended words	44.1	25.8	$\chi^2 = 8.49$ p < .01	Positive > Negative
SGM9 Describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words	42.8	30.3	$\chi^2 = 3.97$ p < .05	Positive > Negative
<b>Used more by the students who hold negative attitude towards speaking: 1 strategies</b>			<b>p &lt; .05</b>	
SUM7 Appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message	36.4	24.0	$\chi^2 = 5.04$ p < .05	Negative > Positive

The Chi-square results in Table 5.9 present the significant variations in students' use of individual CSs according to their attitudes towards speaking English.

A significantly higher percentage of students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English than those who hold negative attitude reported high use of 11 strategies for coping with communication breakdowns. Only 1 strategy was reported with high use by a significantly greater percentage of students with negative attitude than those with positive attitude.

A significantly higher percentage of students holding positive attitude towards speaking English than those holding negative attitude reported high use level of 7 strategies, which are mostly self-reliant achievement strategies, for getting the message across to the interlocutor. Examples are: *'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard'* (SGM36); *'actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say'* (SGM31); *'using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM6); and *'consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document for how to express the intended meaning'* (SGM30). In addition, a significantly higher percentage of students holding positive attitude towards speaking English than those holding negative attitude also reported high use of 4 strategies, which are also self-reliant achievement strategies, for understanding the message. These strategies include: *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9); *'paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation'* (SUM14); *'paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence'* (SUM15); and *'asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct'* (SUM8).

However, a significantly greater percentage of students who hold negative attitude towards speaking English than those who hold positive attitude reported employing high use of only one CS, i.e. *'appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message'* (SUM7). This implies that more students

with negative attitude towards speaking are likely to rely on other people to deal with difficulties in understanding the interlocutor's message.

#### 5.4.3 Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual Communication Strategies according to their High School Background

As can be seen in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, based on the results of ANOVA, there were significant differences in students' reported use of strategies under the SUM category between the students who attended urban high schools and who those attended rural high schools while no significant differences were found in their overall CS use or in the SGM category. However, the results from the Chi-square in Table 5.10 reveal that 4 individual SGM strategies and 7 individual SUM strategies varied significantly according to this variable.

**Table 5.10: Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their High School Background**

Individual CS	% of High Use (3 and 4)		Observed $\chi^2$ $p < .05$	Pattern of Variation
	Urban	Rural		
Used more by the students attending urban high schools: 4 strategies			$p < .05$	
SUM9 Trying to catch the interlocutor's main point	92.9	89.3	$\chi^2 = 3.95$ $p < .05$	Urban > Rural
SUM13 Noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes	87.5	82.6	$\chi^2 = 4.73$ $p < .05$	Urban > Rural
SGM35 Trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation	80.9	74.8	$\chi^2 = 5.44$ $p < .05$	Urban > Rural
SGM4 Using categories instead of the exact intended words	68.6	61.8	$\chi^2 = 5.11$ $p < .05$	Urban > Rural



**Table 5.10: Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their High School Background (Cont.)**

Individual CS	% of High Use (3 and 4)		Observed $\chi^2$ p < .05	Pattern of Variation
	Rural	Urban		
Used more by the students attending rural high schools : 7 strategies				
SUM3 Asking the interlocutor to slow down	58.2	47.6	$\chi^2 = 11.19$ p < .01	Rural > Urban
SUM2 Asking the interlocutor to explain what he just said	56.5	48.0	$\chi^2 = 7.24$ p < .01	Rural > Urban
SGM21 Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence	54.0	44.7	$\chi^2 = 8.57$ p < .01	Rural > Urban
SUM6 Asking the interlocutor to repeat what he/she has just said	51.1	41.0	$\chi^2 = 10.02$ p < .01	Rural > Urban
SUM1 Asking the interlocutor to simplify his/her language	42.9	32.9	$\chi^2 = 10.38$ p < .01	Rural > Urban
SUM5 Asking the interlocutor to spell or write out his/her intended words	36.1	29.7	$\chi^2 = 4.70$ p < .05	Rural > Urban
SUM12 Trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said	34.2	26.8	$\chi^2 = 6.53$ p < .05	Rural > Urban

Table 5.10 demonstrates that a significantly greater percentage of students who went to urban high schools than those who went to rural high schools reported high use of 4 CSs, namely *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9); *'noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes'* (SUM13); *'trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation'* (SGM35); and *'using categories instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM4). Of these 4 strategies, 2 are under the SGM category and the other 2 belong to the SUM category. Nevertheless, they are all self-reliant achievement strategies.

Meanwhile, a significantly greater percentage of students who went to rural high schools than those who went to urban high schools reported high use level of 7 strategies: 6 strategies under the SUM category, and 1 strategy under the SGM category. Examples are: *'asking the interlocutor to slow down'* (SUM3); *'thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence'* (SGM21); *'asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'* (SUM1); and *'asking the interlocutor to spell or write out his/her intended word'* (SUM5). A closer look at these CSs which were reported being employed with high frequency of use by a significantly higher percentage of students attending rural high schools reveals that these students tend to go for L1-based and help-seeking strategies in order to cope with oral communication breakdowns.

#### **5.4.4 Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Exposure to Oral Communication in English**

According to the results of ANOVA, no significant differences were found in students' reported CS use in overall or under either the SGM or SUM category between students who have limited-to-classroom exposure to oral communication and those who have non-limited-to-classroom exposure. However, the results from the Chi-square demonstrate that patterns of variation did exist in students' reported individual use of strategies at the high frequency level in both categories in respect of this variable. Table 5.11 presents the variations in students' reported use of individual CSs according to their exposure to oral communication in English.

**Table 5.11: Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Exposure to Oral Communication in English**

Individual CS	% of High Use (3 and 4)		Observed $\chi^2$	Pattern of Variation
	Limited	Non-limited	p < .05	
<b>Used more by the students with limited to classroom settings exposure to oral communication: 12 strategies</b>				
SGM1 Using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones	81.1	74.8	$\chi^2 = 4.88$ p < .05	Limited > Non-limited
SGM21 Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence	61.9	42.9	$\chi^2 = 31.79$ p < .001	Limited > Non-limited
SUM3 Asking the interlocutor to slow down	57.3	50.4	$\chi^2 = 4.25$ P < .05	Limited > Non-limited
SGM14 Keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message	48.8	34.3	$\chi^2 = 19.27$ p < .001	Limited > Non-limited
SGM27 Appealing for help from the interlocutor for how to express the intended meaning	46.0	38.5	$\chi^2 = 5.12$ p < .05	Limited > Non-limited
SUM1 Asking the interlocutor to simplify his/her language	45.1	34.0	$\chi^2 = 11.51$ p < .01	Limited > Non-limited
SUM12 Trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said	40.9	25.2	$\chi^2 = 25.52$ p < .001	Limited > Non-Limited
SGM28 Appealing for assistance from someone else around for how to express the intended meaning	39.9	33.6	$\chi^2 = 3.87$ p < .05	Limited > Non-Limited
SUM7 Appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message	29.6	22.5	$\chi^2 = 5.91$ p < .05	Limited > Non-Limited
SGM38 Giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood	26.8	15.1	$\chi^2 = 19.51$ p < .001	Limited > Non-Limited
SGM24 Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty	19.5	10.6	$\chi^2 = 14.74$ p < .001	Limited > Non-Limited
SUM4 Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese	10.1	6.0	$\chi^2 = 5.34$ p < .05	Limited > Non-Limited

**Table 5.11: Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Exposure to Oral Communication in English (Cont.)**

Individual CS	% of High Use (3 and 4)		Observed $\chi^2$	Pattern of Variation
	Non-limited	Limited	p < .05	
<b>Used more by the students with non-limited to classroom settings exposure to oral communication: 14 strategies</b>				
SUM9 Trying to catch the interlocutor's main point	92.8	87.8	$\chi^2 = 6.81$ p < .01	Non- limited > Limited
SUM14 Paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation	89.4	83.2	$\chi^2 = 7.45$ p < .01	Non- limited > Limited
SGM34 Paying attention to one's own pronunciation	89.2	81.4	$\chi^2 = 11.56$ p < .01	Non- limited > Limited
SGM36 Trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard	87.6	80.5	$\chi^2 = 8.72$ p < .01	Non- limited > Limited
SGM35 Trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation	81.7	70.4	$\chi^2 = 16.30$ P < .001	Non- limited > Limited
SGM6 Using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words	69.4	61.9	$\chi^2 = 5.62$ p < .05	Non- limited > Limited
SUM8 Asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct	66.8	50.0	$\chi^2 = 8.09$ p < .01	Non- limited > Limited
SGM33 Trying to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence	57.0	44.5	$\chi^2 = 13.69$ p < .001	Non- limited > Limited
SGM19 Repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	50.0	40.9	$\chi^2 = 6.04$ p < .05	Non- limited > Limited
SGM12 Spelling or writing out the intended words	48.7	41.5	$\chi^2 = 4.66$ p < .05	Non- limited > Limited
SGM8 Using definitions instead of the exact intended words	46.2	36.3	$\chi^2 = 8.79$ p < .01	Non- limited > Limited
SGM9 Describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words	45.0	36.0	$\chi^2 = 7.31$ p < .01	Non- limited > Limited
SGM22 Thinking first of a sentence one already knows in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation	41.8	34.5	$\chi^2 = 5.01$ p < .05	Non- limited > Limited
SGM20 Self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances to correct understanding	34.5	28.0	$\chi^2 = 4.15$ p < .05	Non- limited > Limited

The Chi-square test results in Table 5.11 indicate the significant variations in students' use of individual CSs in relation to their exposure to oral communication in English, with a significantly greater percentage of students who have limited-to-classroom exposure to oral communication than those who have non-limited-to-classroom exposure reporting high use of 12 CSs in order to cope with communication breakdowns. Additionally, a significantly greater percentage of students with non-limited-to-classroom exposure to oral communication than those with limited-to-classroom exposure reported high use of 14 CSs for the same purpose.

Regarding the use of CSs in order to get the message across to the interlocutor, a significantly greater percentage of students who have limited-to-classroom exposure to oral communication than those who have non-limited-to-classroom exposure reported high use of 7 individual strategies. Examples of these strategies are: *'using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones'* (SGM1); *'appealing for help from the interlocutor for how to express the intended meaning'* (SGM27); and *'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'* (SGM24). Five CSs were reported being employed at high use level for understanding the message by a significantly greater percentage of students with limited exposure to oral communication than those with non-limited exposure. This group of CSs consists of: *'asking the interlocutor to slow down'* (SUM3); *'asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'* (SUM1); *'trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said'* (SUM12); *'appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message'* (SUM7); and *'asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese'* (SUM4). The use of these CSs at the high frequency level indicates that more students with limited-to-classroom exposure to oral

communication in English than those with non-limited exposure tend to rely on help-seeking, L1-based and avoidance strategies to deal with oral communication difficulties.

Meanwhile, a significantly greater percentage of students who have non-limited exposure to oral communication than those who have limited exposure reported high use of 11 individual strategies in order to get the message across to the interlocutor and 3 individual strategies in order to understand the message. Examples of these strategies, which are mostly the self-reliant achievement strategies, are: *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9); *'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard'* (SGM36); *'asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct'* (SUM8); and *'self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances for correct understanding'* (SGM20).

#### **5.4.5 Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Types of English Major Concentration**

Despite the fact that the ANOVA results showed students' reported CS use varied significantly according to their types of English major concentration only in the SUM category, the variation patterns related to this variable were found in students' reported high use of individual CSs in both SGM and SUM categories from the results of the Chi-square tests presented in Table 5.12.

**Table 5.12: Variation in Frequency of Students' Reported Use of Individual CSs according to their Types of English Major Concentration**

Individual CS	% of High Use (3 and 4)		Observed $\chi^2$ p < .05	Pattern of Variation
	ESP	Non-ESP		
<b>Used more by the students of ESP concentration: 3 strategies</b>				
SGM32 Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking	80.7	74.3	$\chi^2 = 5.81$ p < .05	ESP > Non-ESP
SUM3 Asking the interlocutor to slow down	56.1	49.2	$\chi^2 = 4.80$ P < .05	ESP > Non-ESP
SUM12 Trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said	35.0	25.7	$\chi^2 = 10.19$ p < .01	ESP > Non-ESP
<b>Used more by the students of non-ESP concentration: 1 strategy</b>				
SGM7 Using examples instead of the exact intended words	76.9	66.2	$\chi^2 = 14.02$ p < .001	Non-ESP > ESP

Table 5.12 reveals a significantly greater percentage of students of ESP concentration than their counterparts of non-ESP concentration reported employing high use of CSs to deal with difficulties in communication. These strategies are: *'paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'* (SGM32); *'asking the interlocutor to slow down'* (SUM3); and *'trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said'* (SUM12). Furthermore, the other variation pattern in students' individual CS use at the high frequency level also demonstrates that a significantly greater percentage of students whose concentration is non-ESP than their peers of ESP concentration reported employing one individual CS with a high use. This strategy is *'using examples instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM7), which seems to be much less complicated in comparison with the other strategies though it shows the user's effort to express the intended idea.

## 5.5 Factor analysis

According to Cohen and Manion (1994) factor analysis is particularly appropriate in exploratory research. It helps the researcher to impose an orderly simplification upon a number of interrelated measures. Besides, as Seliger and Shohamy (1990), Robson (2002), and Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) put it, this is an empirical basis which allows the researcher to make sense of a large number of correlations between variables, or a complex set of variables, by reducing them to a smaller group of factors representing a set of variables that are moderately or highly correlated with each other. However, it should be noted that factor analysis is more subjective and judgmental than most statistical techniques (Howitt and Cramer, 2011). This is due to the subjectivity of interpreting the factors and the many possible variants of factor analysis. In other words, different researchers may come up with different factor analysis results.

For the present investigation, factor analysis has been used to categorize CSs through the underlying structure of the whole set of strategy items in the strategy inventory. As the researcher did not have a clear idea or pre-assumption about what the factor structure might be before carrying out this process, rather than confirmatory, the factor analysis for the present investigation was intended to be exploratory.

First, a principal component factor analysis using the varimax rotation was conducted on the correlation of thirty nine CSs which were found significantly different in relation to the five independent variables. Initially, ten factors were extracted with the eigenvalues equal to or greater than 1.00. Table 5.13 shows the eigenvalues or the sums of squared loadings of the extracted ten factors.



**Table 5.13: The Sum of Squared Factor Loadings of the Initial Ten Factors**

Factors	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings (Eigenvalues)		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.36	16.31	16.31
2	3.97	10.18	26.49
3	1.95	4.99	31.48
4	1.61	4.13	35.61
5	1.40	3.59	39.20
6	1.26	3.24	42.45
7	1.24	3.18	45.63
8	1.08	2.78	48.40
9	1.05	2.70	51.10
10	1.01	2.60	53.70

It can be seen from Table 5.13 that the ten factors accounted for 53.70 % of the variability among 39 CSs which significantly varied in relation to the five variables as mentioned above. In fact, there could be as many factors as variables which a researcher started off with and this could make it difficult to interpret. Therefore, the researcher decided to explore further reducing the number of factors to four, five and seven instead of using the initial ten factors. The results of the varimax rotation showed slightly different groupings of strategies by these different numbers of factors. They slightly varied with regard to internal relationship among the strategies under the same factors. More importantly, when initial five and six factors were examined, the last factors contained only two or three strategy items which, according to Foster, Barcus, and Yavorsky (2006), were too few for the factor to reveal the correlations. Having also taken the factor interpretation into consideration, the researcher found that it would be the most straightforward to interpret the extracted four factors rather than the initial ten, five or six extracted ones. The

percentage of variance in Table 5.13 reveals that the first four principal components can explain almost 36 percent of the total variation between the frequencies of use of CSs. That means about 64 percent of the variability was not explained by the four factors, so other influences may cause a difference in strategy use.

Then, the individual strategies were sorted according to their loading on the first factor. The factor loadings of the strategies in each factor indicate the level of correlation between the factors and the different variables used in the analysis (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990). As Foster et al. (2006) put it, factor analysis is a statistical method which works on the correlations between items, and if the items do not correlate then it is not sensible to do it. Besides, factor loadings follow all of the rules for correlation coefficients. They vary from -1.00 through 0.00 to +1.00 (Howitt and Cramer, 2011). Moreover, the variable should be included as one of the measures of the factor and used in naming the factor when a factor loading is 0.3 or higher (Foster et al., 2006; and Howitt and Cramer, 2011).

The CSs which have the highest loadings with the first factor were used to define the factor. For example, the CSs which are highly loaded were grouped together for their loading on the first factor. According to Howitt and Cramer (1997), in order to help interpretation, the strategy items should be sorted according to their loading on the first factor from those with the highest loadings to those with the lowest loadings. This is because the high loading strategy items are the ones which primarily help a researcher to decide what the factor might be. Furthermore, differences in interpretation may occur with factor analysis. In other words, different researchers may describe the emerging factors differently. For the present study, the

strategies as identified in the CS inventory and the four factors as the result of the factor analysis were expected to be mutually supportive rather than to be identical.

For the present study, each factor has been described in respect of the content or the relationship of the majority of the CS items which appear to share common characteristics under the same factor. Presented in Table 5.14 are the four extracted factors, the factor loadings on each strategy item, and the percentage of variance accounted for by each factor.

**Table 5.14: List of the Four Extracted Factors**

<b>Factor 1: Strategies to facilitate oral communication (12 items)</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>% of variance</b>
SGM34 Paying attention to one's pronunciation	.68	16.31
SGM35 Trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation	.65	
SUM14 Paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation	.65	
SGM36 Trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard	.61	
SGM33 Trying to emphasize the subject and verb of one's sentence	.60	
SUM15 Paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence	.59	
SUM13 Noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes	.57	
SGM32 Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking	.55	
SUM9 Trying to catch the interlocutor's main point	.53	
SGM31 Actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say	.52	
SGM20 Self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances for correct understanding	.39	
SGM12 Spelling or writing out the intended words	.34	
<b>Factor 2: Non-self-reliant strategies for oral communication (13 items)</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>% of variance</b>
SUM3 Asking the interlocutor to slow down	.73	10.18
SUM2 Asking the interlocutor to explain what he /she has just said	.67	
SUM5 Asking the interlocutor to spell or write out his/her intended word	.64	
SUM1 Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language	.59	
SGM28 Appealing for assistance from someone else around for how to express the intended meaning	.59	
SUM7 Appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message	.58	

**Table 5.14: List of the Four Extracted Factors (Cont.)**

<b>Factor 2: Non-self-reliant strategies for oral communication (13 items) (cont.)</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>% of variance</b>
SGM27 Appealing for help from the interlocutor for how to express the intended meaning	.50	
SUM6 Asking the interlocutor to repeat what he/she has just said	.46	
SUM4 Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese	.45	
SGM21 Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence	.41	
SUM8 Asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct	.39	
SGM30 Consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document for how to express the intended meaning	.39	
SGM1 Using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones	.29	
<b>Factor 3: Passive strategies to cope with communication breakdowns (8 items)</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>% of variance</b>
SGM24 Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty	.73	
SGM23 Avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic	.67	
SUM12 Trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said	.64	
SGM14 Keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message	.59	
SGM38 Giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood	.59	4.99
SGM19 Repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	.58	
SGM22 Thinking first of a sentence one already knows in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation	.50	
SGM15 Saying "well," "let me see"... to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	.46	
<b>Factor 4: Circumlocution strategies for meaning expressions (6 items)</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>% of variance</b>
SGM9 Describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words	.67	
SGM7 Using examples instead of the exact intended words	.63	
SGM3 Using definitions instead of the exact intended words	.56	4.13
SGM6 Using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words	.53	
SGM4 Using categories instead of the exact intended words	.34	
SGM2 Using familiar words instead of the exact intended ones	.32	

Table 5.14 shows the details of the four extracted factors as the results of the factor analysis. It can be seen that:

- **Factor 1, ‘strategies to facilitate oral communication’** accounted for 16.31 percent of the variance among the CSs in the strategy questionnaire for the present investigation. It comprises eight strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor and four strategies for understanding the message. Examples of the first group are: *‘paying attention to one’s pronunciation’* (SGM34); *‘trying to imitate native speakers’ pronunciation’* (SGM35); *‘trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard’* (SGM36); and *‘trying to emphasize the subject and verb of one’s sentence’* (SGM33). The four strategies of the second group entail: *‘paying attention to the interlocutor’s pronunciation’* (SUM14), *‘paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor’s sentence’* (SUM15), *‘noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes’* (SUM13), and *‘trying to catch the interlocutor’s main point’* (SUM9).

- **Factor 2, ‘Non-self reliant strategies for oral communication’** accounted for 10.18 percent of the whole strategy variance. It consists of thirteen strategies for either getting the message across to the interlocutor understanding the message. These strategies involve students’ reliance on the interlocutor, another person, or other sources. Examples are: *‘appealing for help from the interlocutor for how to express the intended meaning’* (SGM27); *‘appealing for assistance from someone else around for how to express the intended meaning’* (SGM28); *‘consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document for how to express the intended meaning’* (SGM30);

and *'thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence'* (SGM21).

• **Factor 3, 'Passive strategies to cope with communication breakdowns'** accounted for 4.99 percent of the variance of the strategy items. This factor includes seven strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor and one strategy for understanding the message. These strategies include: (1) avoidance strategies, which include *'avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic'* (SGM23), *'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'* (SGM24), and *'giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood'* (SGM38); (2) time-gaining strategies, namely *'keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message'* (SGM14), *'repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor'* (SGM19), *'saying "well," "let me see"... to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor'* (SGM15); and (3) strategies related to detail processing which are likely to be time-consuming. This third group consists of *'trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said'* (SUM12) and *'thinking first of a sentence one already knows in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation'* (SGM22).

• **Factor 4, 'Circumlocution strategies for meaning expressions'** accounted for 4.13 percent of the variance of the strategy items. All six of the strategies under this factor are related to students' self-reliance to get the message across to the interlocutor. Examples are: *'using definitions instead of the exact*

*intended words*' (SGM3); *'using examples instead of the exact intended words*' (SGM7); and *'describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words*' (SGM9).

Above are the results of the factor analysis through which the underlying factors of the CSs, the factor loading for each strategy item, and the percentage of variance of each factor have been identified. These allowed the researcher to determine which of these factors are strongly related to each of the five investigated variables.

In examining such a relationship, the researcher put great emphasis on factors which are strongly related to a particular variable. For the purpose of the discussions of the factor analysis results in the following section, the criteria for strong relation between the factors and each of the variables suggested by Seliger and Shohamy (1990) have been adopted. That is, a factor can be accepted to be strongly related to a variable when half or more of the strategies in that particular factor have a loading of .50 or more, showing a significant variation in relation to that variable.

In the present study, the results of the varimax rotation show that two extracted factors appeared to have strong relationship with 'exposure to oral communication in English', and one factor was strongly related to 'attitudes towards speaking English'. None of the factors were found having strong relationship with students' gender, high school background, or types of English major concentration. Following are the full details of factors which were found strongly related to each of the variables.

### 5.5.1 Factors Strongly Related to ‘Exposure to Oral Communication in English’

Table 5.15 below demonstrates three factors which were strongly related to ‘exposure to oral communication in English’. As reported in the previous sections, although the results of ANOVA did not reveal significant variations in students’ reported use of strategies in overall or under either the SGM or SUM category in relation to their ‘exposure to oral communication in English’, the results of Chi-square showed significant variations in students’ reported use of some individual strategies. Meanwhile, from the results of the factor analysis, three factors, namely Factors 1, 2, and 3, were found having strong relationship with this variable. They involve the students’ employment of strategies for getting the message across to the interlocutor rather than strategies for understanding the message.

**Table 5.15: Factors Strongly Related to ‘Exposure to Oral Communication in English’**

<b>Factor 1: Strategies to facilitate oral communication</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>Comment</b>
SGM34 Paying attention to one's pronunciation	.68	Non-limited>Limited
SGM35 Trying to imitate native speakers’ pronunciation	.65	Non-limited>Limited
SUM14 Paying attention to the interlocutor’s pronunciation	.65	Non-limited>Limited
SGM36 Trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard	.61	Non-limited>Limited
SGM33 Trying to emphasize the subject and verb of one's sentence	.60	Non-limited>Limited
SUM15 Paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence	.59	N.S
SUM13 Noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes	.57	N.S
SGM32 Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking	.55	N.S
SUM9 Trying to catch the interlocutor’s main point	.53	Non-limited>Limited
SGM31 Actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say	.52	N.S



**Table 5.15: Factors Strongly Related to ‘Exposure to Oral Communication in English’ (Cont.)**

<b>Factor 1: Strategies to facilitate oral communication (cont.)</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>Comment</b>
SGM20 Self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances for correct understanding	.39	Non-limited>Limited
SGM12 Spelling or writing out the intended words	.34	Non-limited>Limited
<b>Factor 2: Non-self-reliant strategies for oral communication</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>Comment</b>
SUM3 Asking the interlocutor to slow down	.73	Limited>Non-limited
SUM2 Asking the interlocutor to explain what he /she has just said	.67	N.S
SUM5 Asking the interlocutor to spell or write out his/her intended word	.64	N.S
SUM1 Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language	.59	Limited>Non-limited
SGM28 Appealing for assistance from someone else around for how to express the intended meaning	.59	Limited>Non-limited
SUM7 Appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor’s message	.58	Limited>Non-limited
SGM27 Appealing for help from the interlocutor for how to express the intended meaning	.50	Limited>Non-limited
SUM6 Asking the interlocutor to repeat what he/she has just said	.46	N.S
SUM4 Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese	.45	Limited>Non-limited
SGM21 Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence	.41	Limited>Non-limited
SUM8 Asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct	.39	Non-limited>Limited
SGM30 Consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document for how to express the intended meaning	.39	N.S
SGM1 Using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones	.29	Limited>Non-limited
<b>Factor 3: Passive strategies to cope with communication breakdowns</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>Comment</b>
SGM24 Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty	.73	Limited>Non-limited
SGM23 Avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic	.67	N.S
SUM12 Trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said	.64	Limited>Non-limited

**Table 5.15: Factors Strongly Related to ‘Exposure to Oral Communication in English’ (Cont.)**

<b>Factor 3: Passive strategies to cope with communication breakdowns (cont.)</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>Comment</b>
SGM14 Keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message	.59	Limited>Non-limited
SGM38 Giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood	.59	Limited>Non-limited
SGM19 Repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	.58	N.S
SGM22 Thinking first of a sentence one already knows in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation	.50	Non-limited>Limited
SGM15 Saying “well,” “let me see”... to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor	.46	Non-limited>Limited

### **5.5.2 Factors Strongly Related to ‘Attitudes towards Speaking English’**

The results of ANOVA showed the significant variations in frequency of strategy use in the SGM and SUM categories according to the students' attitudes towards speaking English, with the students who hold positive attitude towards reported employing the strategies significantly more frequently than did those who hold negative attitude. This was confirmed by the results of the factor analysis in respect of variations in students' reported use of strategies under the SGM category. Table 5.17 shows Factor 4, which was found strongly related to this independent variable.

**Table 5.16: Factor Strongly Related to ‘Attitudes towards Speaking English’**

<b>Factor 4: Circumlocution strategies for meaning expressions</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>% of variance</b>
SGM9 Describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words	.67	Positive>Negative
SGM7 Using examples instead of the exact intended words	.63	N.S
SGM3 Using definitions instead of the exact intended words	.56	Positive>Negative
SGM6 Using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words	.53	Positive>Negative
SGM4 Using categories instead of the exact intended words	.34	Positive>Negative
SGM2 Using familiar words instead of the exact intended ones	.32	N.S

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter has focused on the analysis of data obtained through the 56-item CS questionnaire for CS use with regard to the significant variations. The variations in frequency of students’ overall reported CS use; strategy use under the two categories: SGM and SUM; and individual CS use related to the five investigated variables: student’s gender, their attitudes towards speaking English, their high school background, their exposure to oral communication in English, and their types of English major concentration have been systematically examined. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests were adopted as the main statistical methods of data analysis for the present study.

The research findings presented in this chapter can be summarized as follows.

1. Based on the ANOVA results, significant variations in frequency of students’ reported overall CS use were found related to only one out of the five variables, namely students’ attitudes towards speaking English. Regarding this variable, the students who hold positive attitude towards

speaking English reported overall CS use significantly more frequently than did those who hold negative attitude. No significant differences in frequency of students' reported overall CS use were found in relation to the other four investigated variables: student's gender, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration.

2. According to the results from ANOVA, the significant variations in frequency of students' reported CS use under the SGM and SUM categories are:

- 2.1 The frequency of students' reported CS use in the SGM category varied significantly related to their attitudes towards speaking English. The students with positive attitude towards speaking English reported CS use significantly more frequently in order to get the message across to the interlocutor than did those with negative attitude.

- 2.2 The frequency of students' reported CS use in the SUM category varied significantly in terms of attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, and types of major concentration. In respect of students' attitudes towards speaking English, the students with positive attitude towards speaking English reported significantly more frequent use of CSs than did those with negative attitude. With regard to student's high school background, the students who attended rural high schools reported employing CSs significantly more frequently than did their counterparts who

attended urban high schools. In terms of students' types of English major concentration, the students of ESP concentration reported more frequent employment of CSs for understanding the message than did those of non-ESP concentration.

2.3 No significant variations were found in frequency of students' reported CS use in either of the two categories according to their gender or exposure to oral communication in English.

3. Based on the results of the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests, significant variations in students' reported high use of CSs were found related to all the five variables.

3.1 A significantly higher percentage of male students than did their female counterparts reported employing high use of three individual CSs. Meanwhile, a significantly higher percentage of female students than did their male counterparts reported high use of seven other individual CSs.

3.2 While a significantly higher percentage of students with positive attitude towards speaking English than those with negative attitude reported employing high use of eleven individual CSs; only one individual CS was reported with high frequency of use by a significantly higher percentage of students with negative attitude towards speaking English than those with positive attitude.

3.3 A significantly greater percentage of students who attended urban high schools than those who went to rural high schools reported employing high use of four individual CSs. A significantly greater

percentage of students who attended rural high schools than those who went to urban high schools reported high use of seven other individual CSs.

3.4 With regard to exposure to oral communication in English, a significant higher percentage of students who have limited exposure and non-limited exposure reported making significantly higher use of twelve and fourteen individual CSs respectively when compared with one another.

3.5 A significantly higher percentage of students of non-ESP concentration than their peers of ESP concentration reported employing high use of only one individual CS. However, four other individual strategies were reported with high use by a significantly greater percentage of students of ESP concentration than their counterparts.

4. Four factors (Factor 1 – Factor 4) were extracted as the results of factor analysis. Though the results of the factor analysis do not provide completely parallel evidence to the findings obtained through the different levels of an Analysis of Variance, they demonstrate that attitudes towards speaking English show greater relationship to students' use of CSs than do gender, high school background and English major concentration.
5. Factor 4 'Circumlocution strategies for meaning expressions' was found to be strongly related to students' attitudes towards speaking English.
6. Factor 1 'Strategies to facilitate oral communication', Factor 2 'Non-self-reliant strategies for oral communication', and Factor 3 'Passive strategies

to cope with communication breakdowns' were found to be strongly related to students' exposure to oral communication in English

To sum up, the results of the quantitative data analysis have provided us with useful information with regard to CS use of the research population, which is the EFL English major students studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam, adding more research information into the field of communication strategies. Chapter 6 reports the research results from another aspect: the qualitative analysis of data obtained through the semi-structured interviews.



# **CHAPTER 6**

## **REASONS FOR STUDENTS' REPORTED USE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

### **6.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Chapter**

The purposes of this chapter are: 1) to report the results of the qualitative data obtained through the semi-structured interviews which were conducted with 44 English major students studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam; and 2) to explore why the students reported employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently.

As mentioned earlier, the quantitative data were collected and analyzed to investigate the frequency of students' CS use and the variations in the frequency of students' use of CSs according to the five variables: students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and English major concentration.

The one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted in Phase 2 of the data collection shortly after the CS questionnaires were administered to the students at each of the participating universities. It took the researcher two months from February to April, 2012 for data collection. For practical issues, the semi-structured interviews with each group of students were carried out almost simultaneously with the questionnaire administration and on the basis of students' convenience and



availability. To do so, the researcher had to strictly follow the plan regarding the location and number of interviewees.

For the present study, the interviews were carried out in Vietnamese to ensure greater accuracy of research results. The interviews were recorded with students' permission and then transcribed. After that, the transcriptions were translated into English. At this point, the validation through back translation was done by two of the researcher's colleagues whose English and Vietnamese are comparatively good. When the English version of the interview transcriptions was ready, the researcher started the process of data analysis, using the coding technique suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), Punch (2005), and Neuman (2006). The following section presents in detail the process and the results of the analysis of the data obtained through the semi-structured interviews.

## **6.2 Reasons for Students' Reported Frequent and Infrequent Use of Certain Strategies**

When the students were asked why they used certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently to cope with communication breakdowns, they provided a variety of reasons. All the students' answers to the questions were examined carefully in order to seek the common patterns of reasons within the same strategy. At this stage, it was revealed that the reasons dispersed in different ways. That made it difficult to report the analysis results. Having consulted with the supervisor, the researcher decided to take into account only the top five strategies where the students explained why they reported using frequently, and the bottom five strategies where reasons for infrequent use were given.

Reasons for use of the top five and the bottom five out of the total 56 strategies in the CSQ were used in the qualitative analysis. The top five CSs are: *'using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning'* (SGM13); *'paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'* (SGM32); *'paying attention to one's pronunciation'* (SGM34); *'guessing the interlocutor's intention based on what he/she has said so far'* (SUM10); and *'paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence'* (SUM15). Meanwhile, the bottom five CSs include: *'referring to objects or materials to express the intended words'* (SUM8); *'thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence'* (SGM21); *'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'* (SGM24); *'asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'* (SUM1); and *'asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese'* (SUM4). The qualitative data analysis of the reasons for frequent and infrequent use of these ten strategies would provide a clear and focused picture, adding more information to the research findings about the use of CSs of this group of students.

With fewer strategies at hand, the researcher went back to the reasons and categorized them into small groups. From reasons of use of each strategy, the subgroups were identified and labeled. They were validated by the researcher's supervisor and four Ph.D. students in English Language Studies. After that, the subgroups were pulled together so that new categories were made up from reasons which appeared to be similar under frequent strategy use. In the same way, other new categories were established under infrequent strategy use. Finally, the new categories under both frequently and infrequently use were examined again. This process revealed five factors which are the common reasons why the students reported

employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently when coping with oral communication breakdowns. These results with five factors, which were also validated by the same group of five experts mentioned above, are presented in the following. The factors include: (1) personal beliefs; (2) effectiveness of the strategy; (3) personal preference; (4) psychological factor; and (5) improvement of language ability.

### **6.2.1 Personal Beliefs**

When asked about the reasons they used certain CSs frequently and certain CSs infrequently, the students reported it was because of what they thought or believed about the nature of language, the nature of speaking and listening, the use of mother tongue, the nature of language learning, and the role of certain elements, such as grammar or pronunciation, in expressing or understanding meaning of a message. Personal beliefs have been the reason of frequent use of five CSs and of infrequent use of four CSs.

- **For frequent use of certain strategies:**

Examples where personal beliefs are the reason for students' frequent use of certain CSs are:

#### **SGM13 'Using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning'**

S12:

*I think we can use nonverbal language [when we have difficulties in expressing words], too. It belongs to the nature of speaking.*

S16:

*All languages can be expressed through nonverbal expressions.*

S30:

*...[Nonverbal language] is a part of speaking.*

#### **SGM32 'Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'**

S10:

*Because grammar and word order influence the meaning of the sentence.*

S27:

*I think this is not only the matter of getting the message across to the interlocutor. At my level now, I am sure I can speak English well enough for communication. For presentation or for talking to the superiors [which are the types of oral communication I often do.], I think both Vietnamese and native speakers consider grammar important...*

S25:

*Because I am an English major, I need to speak with correct grammar... I think speaking with correct grammar is a requirement of academic English. This is true at least for making presentation in front of a crowd.*

### **SGM34 ‘Paying attention to one’s pronunciation’**

S11:

*[Speaking with wrong pronunciation] is awful...It will cause problems in understanding.*

S14:

*Don’t you think pronunciation is important in speaking, just like spelling when you write?*

S32:

*I think in speaking, correct pronunciation makes people understand us better. Wrong pronunciation prevents people from understanding our ideas, or makes them misunderstand our ideas.*

### **SUM10 ‘Guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far’**

S5:

*I think guessing is a part of listening. The thing is we cannot catch every word that the interlocutor says, so we have to guess.*

S8:

*I think most students at my level know that this strategy is a must in listening.*

### **SUM15 ‘Paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor’s sentence’**

S10:

*...[I pay attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor’s sentence] [t]o understand what he/she is talking about...They tell us ‘who’ ‘does what’. They carry the main information.*

S29:

*I think the subject and verb are important in speaking. In listening, they are, too.*

S31:

*We only need to catch [the subject and verb of the interlocutor’s sentence] in order to know what he/she wants to say...I believe they are important parts of the message...*

- **For infrequent use of certain strategies**

Besides being the reason for students' frequent use of certain strategies, personal beliefs also made the students use certain strategies infrequently. Below are instances of students' report related to this case.

**SGM21 'Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence'**

S28:

*...[I]n speaking we don't have to say the whole sentence to make the interlocutor understand our message. Just a few words is enough... And it's hard to have time to do translation. Besides, as language learners, we should limit thinking in Vietnamese and then translating.*

S43:

*...[Thinking first of what to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence] prevents me from using English naturally and from improving my speaking skills.... Speaking English should start from English, even in thinking. The language sounds strange if I translate everything from Vietnamese into English.*

S44:

*Because if we think directly in the language we are learning, the language we produce will be more natural. Translation is a bad habit for language learning, especially speaking.*

**SGM24 'Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'**

S28:

*I think I have to reach my goal which is to make the interlocutor understand me. It is important in communication.*

S37:

*It's not a good idea to leave the message unfinished. We learn the language, so we have to try to use it.*

S42:

*I think it is not good for me [to leave the message unfinished]... As a language learner, I think I need to make efforts to express what I mean.*

**SUM1 'Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'**

S1:

*Actually, I don't think it is necessary [to ask the interlocutor to simplify the language]. We don't need to understand one hundred percent of what the interlocutor says because we can guess the meaning or we can ask him/her to explain things we think important... [This strategy] is not natural. Anyway, how much can the interlocutor simplify his/her message? Besides, as I say, we just need to focus on important parts to understand the message.*

S18

*I think language learners have to practice dealing with the interlocutor's language no matter how complicated it is... We should practice skills such as understanding and guessing the main point; and listening to and speaking using complicated language.*

S20:

*...[Real language produced by other people] is the type of language learners should be involved in when learning listening.*

#### **SUM4 'Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese'**

S9:

*As an English major, I think I should be involved in real English as much as possible.*

S26:

*I am learning English, so I think it is good if I can understand the interlocutor's speech in English. Therefore, I try to avoid [asking him/her to use Vietnamese].*

S28:

*Using mother tongue is a bad habit. It prevents learners from using the language they learn.*

#### **6.2.2 Effectiveness of the Strategy**

The strategy's effectiveness has been the second reason found from students' responses which explained their use of CSs related to frequency. It refers to what students could achieve in terms of communication. There were five strategies the students reported using frequently because of their effectiveness, and one strategy that the students reported using infrequently due to its ineffectiveness for communicative purpose. Following are some examples of students' reason.

- **For frequent use of certain strategies**

The students reported they frequently used certain CSs because of their effectiveness. Examples are:

#### **SGM13 'Using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning'**

S1:

*... [N]onverbal language makes it easier for the interlocutor to understand my message... It is easy to use, too.*

S15:

*Body language is important. It shows our flexibility in communication... It helps communication to succeed easily. If we make no movement during the conversation, the interlocutor may misunderstand that we are forced to talk to him/her or do not like to talk to him/her... It helps me to express my intended meaning in a natural way. It is also easy to use.*

S32:

*I think [using nonverbal language] is even better than using verbal language. Instead of talking around, you just mimic, and you can express the word... For example, when I want to say 'run', I just run. It is fast and gives the accurate meaning.*

### **SGM32 'Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'**

S6:

*I can see that my sentences are clearer, and the interlocutor often understand my ideas more easily.*

S26:

*I often use this strategy because I feel when I use wrong grammar and wrong word order, the interlocutor doesn't understand my message.*

S29:

*Paying attention to grammar makes my sentences more beautiful...The interlocutor will understand my message more easily. Anyway, he/she will not be confused.*

### **SGM34 'Paying attention to one's pronunciation'**

S13:

*You know, at this level, I don't have much trouble with grammar, but pronunciation is something I need to focus on when I speak. It helps the interlocutor to understand my idea easily. If I use a correct word with wrong pronunciation, I am not sure the interlocutor can understand me. He/she can even get it wrong; and, who knows, in some cases, what kind of trouble I may get into.*

S14:

*...[Correct pronunciation] often makes my message clearer and easier to understand. If I pronounce badly, people don't understand me. It is very evident in speaking tests where people who pronounce poorly cannot get good marks.*

S38:

*I see that correct pronunciation helps the interlocutor to understand me more accurately.*

**SUM10 ‘Guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far’**

S6:

*[Guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far] helps me to understand what he/she says even though I can’t catch every word... I often do this when I talk with my friends whose language is sometimes ‘broken’ or clumsy. This helps a lot.*

S8:

*...I find that when I have a conversation with someone in English [guessing his/her intention based on what he/she has said so far] helps me to understand him/her even though there are words that I don’t know.*

S34:

*I often [guess the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far]...[b]ecause of my limited vocabulary. [When I cannot understand the interlocutor’s idea thoroughly] I base on the parts that I understand and guess the meaning of the rest... Naturally, when I don’t understand a word, I turn to rely on the parts that go before or after it to guess its meaning. This way helps me to continue the conversation. If I can’t understand the word, I can’t continue the conversation; therefore, I have to make a guess.*

**SUM15 ‘Paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor’s sentence’**

S28:

*Just like when I speak, I pay attention to [subject and verb of the interlocutor’s sentence] to get the main idea.*

S29:

*I use this strategy of [paying attention to subject and verb] to catch the main point when the speaker speaks too fast without emphasis on certain parts.*

S30:

*This strategy [of paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor’s sentence] helps me to understand the interlocutor when he or she speaks fast... It helps me to catch about 50% of the intended meaning.*

- **For infrequent use of certain strategies**

Additionally, the students also addressed the effectiveness of certain CSs as the reason why they reported using them infrequently. Examples are:

**SGM21 ‘Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence’**

S25:

*Because I think [thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence] is not very effective. It is time-consuming and prevents me from taking up the habit of thinking directly in English, which my teachers often encourage me to do.*



S40:

*...[B]ecause when [thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence], [language learners] have to go through two stages: thinking in Vietnamese and translating. It takes double the time when compared with thinking directly in English. I think it's very time-consuming, and I am not sure it works.*

S44:

*...You know, there are cases that we cannot understand by translating word by word. And do you think we have time to [think first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then construct the English sentence]?*

### 6.2.3 Personal Preference

In response to the question ‘Why do you use this strategy frequently (or infrequently)?’, some students just said it was because they preferred or not preferred the strategy as the way to deal with oral communication breakdowns. Two strategies were employed frequently and three were used infrequently for this reason.

- **For frequent use of certain strategies**

Personal preference is an explanation for students’ frequent use of certain strategies, as can be seen in the following instances.

#### **SGM13 ‘Using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning’**

S11:

*...I often use gestures when I speak, so when I get stuck with words, gestures naturally become my solution. I use them without thinking... I often do that when speaking Vietnamese.*

S14:

*Vietnamese frequently use this strategy when speaking our language.*

S30:

*...I have the habit of using gesture together with verbal language when I speak.*

S31:

*...[I]t is my habit [to use nonverbal language].*

#### **SUM10 ‘Guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far’**

S5:

*It has become a habit that I try to guess first before I ask for help from the interlocutor.*

S7:

*I also want to improve my ability to guess through [guessing the interlocutor's intention based on what he/she has said so far] whenever I speak.*

S32:

*I want to try my best first [before asking the interlocutor to explain].*

S37:

*Because [guessing the interlocutor's intention based on what he/she has said so far] gives me a chance to try to understand the interlocutor's idea before asking him/her for help... I prefer doing things by myself.*

S38:

*I often use this strategy... I want to try on my own to understand the interlocutor before asking for assistance.*

- **For infrequent use of strategies**

The students also reported they did not employ certain strategies because they prefer other ways for coping communication breakdowns. Examples of their explanation include:

**SGM21 'Thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence'**

S27:

*I often think directly in English... I think...it is because I have taken up the habit of thinking directly in English.*

S28:

*I try to think directly in English.*

S42:

*Because when I speak, I follow the long flow... Yeah, [I have got rid of the habit of thinking in Vietnamese and then translating into English].*

**SUM1 'Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'**

S2:

*...I also want to challenge myself by guessing the meaning from what I hear. [It may be wrong but] I can check with the interlocutor through different ways.*

S20:

*I only sometimes [ask the interlocutor to simplify the language]. I often want to see how good I am.*

**SUM4 'Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese'**

S6:

*...I will try my best to understand. I will ask [the interlocutor] to explain something without using Vietnamese as far as I can deal with it... I want to challenge myself.*

S29:

*I don't want to use Vietnamese, so I use all English.*

#### 6.2.4 Psychological Factor

A psychological factor was addressed by the students as one of the reasons that made them use certain strategy frequently or infrequently. Specifically, they reported choosing a strategy or avoiding using it because they did not want to be embarrassed or considered as an impolite person. They also wanted to respect the interlocutor's feelings and wanted their language sound more beautiful in order to give a good impression to other people. Of ten strategies under consideration, three were reported employed frequently and two infrequently due to a psychological factor.

- **For frequent use of certain strategies**

Below are instances where the students reported using certain strategies frequently due to a psychological factor.

##### **SGM32 'Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'**

S10:

*...[A]s an English major, I am afraid people will look down on me if I make a lot of grammar mistakes in my sentences.*

S24:

*My friends say I often make a lot grammar mistakes. I am afraid I may make mistakes, so I often use this strategy... I am not confident in speaking because of my problems in grammar. So, I need to control my grammar.*

S30:

*...[P]eople will laugh at me because I am an English major but I speak with wrong grammar.*

##### **SGM34 'Paying attention to one's pronunciation'**

S11:

*At high school, I noticed some teachers did not have correct pronunciation. It was annoying. I told myself that as a teacher I have to pronounce correctly if I want my students to do that... I think people [speaking with poor pronunciation] are still at low level of English language.*

S14:

*I also like to pronounce well because it can help me to give good impressions to the interlocutor. I think if I can pronounce well I can be more confident when speaking to other people.*

S37:

*I also think that with beautiful pronunciation, I can give good impressions to other people... [Correct pronunciation] makes me feel more confident.*

S38:

*Correct pronunciation makes me feel confident when communicating orally in English.*

**SUM10 ‘Guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far’**

S36:

*...I feel uncomfortable if I ask too many questions. So, guessing is my choice.*

S37:

*Because [guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far] is fun.*

- **For infrequent use of certain strategies**

A psychological factor was also recognized as the reason for students’ infrequent use of certain strategies. Examples are:

**SGM24 ‘Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty’**

S32:

*[I don’t often leave the message unfinished because of some language difficulty] [b]ecause it means I don’t respect the interlocutor. Besides, I am afraid the interlocutor will look down on me. I don’t want to be embarrassed so I try to speak.*

S34:

*I rarely leave the topic unfinished because it shows impoliteness.*

S36:

*... I don’t want to confuse the interlocutor. Moreover, [leaving the message unfinished] may give the interlocutor the feeling that I am impolite.*

S42:

*I am an English major. It is a shame to give up that easily.*

**SUM1 ‘Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language’**

S1:

*...[I]t is a shame if I say “Please simplify what you say”. I don’t want the interlocutor to look down on me. At least I have to show the interlocutor that I know how to deal with the situation and I know what is important in his/her message.*

S2:

*I don’t [ask the interlocutor to simplify the language] because if I do so he/she will look down on [me].*

S20:

*... I find it boring if the conversation involves all simple language... I just think it is more interesting to deal with the language as it is, not the simplified one.*

S26:

*I respect the interlocutor's way of expressing ideas because I think it is his/her habit...I respect the interlocutor. I only ask him/her to use simple language when I have no other choice ...*

### **6.2.5 Improvement of Language Ability**

Language improvement has been discovered to be the fifth factor that had an impact on students' CS frequency of use. The students reported that they employed one CS frequently and three infrequently in order to improve their language ability.

- **For frequent use of strategies**

Below are instances where the students reported using certain strategies frequently because they wanted to improve their English language.

#### **SGM34 'Paying attention to one's pronunciation'**

S33:

*[Paying attention to pronunciation while speaking], I can also practice my pronunciation and can help my friends to correct their mistakes in pronunciation.*

S34:

*I always pay attention to my pronunciation when speaking because I am a language learner and I really want to study...I think regular practice of pronunciation when speaking will give me better pronunciation. It is necessary for learning English...because I will recognize my mistakes in pronunciation in order to correct them, and I can also help my friends to recognize theirs.*

S35:

*...I do this to correct my mistakes in pronunciation. If I feel the interlocutor does not understand my pronunciation, I have to make it right. Some interlocutors even help me to correct my mistakes... [I do this] in order to improve my pronunciation.*

- **For infrequent use of certain strategies**

Furthermore, as can be seen in the following examples, the students reported that because they wanted to improve their English language, they used certain strategies infrequently.

**SGM24 ‘Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty’**

S11:

*I almost never [leave the message unfinished because of some language difficulty]. I have to try hard because if I do so, I would not know how to solve the similar problem when I encounter it in the future*

S35:

*I try my best... I am a language learner. If I don't try my best, I will never make improvements.*

S37:

*...[T]rying to express my intended meaning to the interlocutor will help me to improve the way I express my idea... I expect to learn more vocabulary and ideas.*

S40:

*...[W]henver I speak English, I think it's a chance for me to practice speaking the language. Therefore, I think I have to make the most of it, trying to say what I mean...I only leave the message unfinished after all my efforts do not work. Besides my friends, I talk with my teachers and sometimes with foreigners. To those people, I may face difficult topics; but luckily, they often provide helps when they see me struggling. That is also good because I can learn new ways of expressing idea or new vocabulary.*

S42:

*...I can learn from trying to say my ideas, too.*

**SUM10 ‘Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language’**

S20:

*Because I want to improve my ability to deal with complicated language.*

S34:

*I want to improve my vocabulary and my way of expressing ideas... [B]ecause if the interlocutor uses all simple language, there is nothing for me to learn.*

**SUM4 ‘Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese’**

S9:

*If I [asked the interlocutor to use Vietnamese] often, I [would] not improve my ability to communicate in English.*

S24:

*[My friends and I] only use Vietnamese when we don't agree on some point of view that is important and the disagreement cannot be resolved by any other ways... [I give priority to English] [b]ecause I should practice English as much as possible. This will help English to deep root in my mind.*

S29:

*I want to improve my ability to understand other people's English.*

Besides the five common reasons, namely (1) personal beliefs, (2) effectiveness of the strategy, (3) personal preference, (4) psychological factor, and (5) improvement of language ability, the analysis of the reasons for students' reported use frequency of CSs also reveals two other factors which are worth mentioning although they were only the reasons for either frequent or infrequent use. These factors are: (1) imitation, and (2) irrelevance to the needs.

### **(1) Imitation**

Imitation is the reason of frequent use of three strategies. Imitation refers to the fact that students employed the strategy frequently because they were trained to do that or they noticed many people did that. Examples of students' explanations regarding this reason are:

#### **SGM13 'Using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning'**

S3:

*My teachers taught me [the use of nonverbal language] and I also notice foreigners do this when they speak.*

S18:

*Most of the time, I see people use this strategy when they face difficulties in vocabulary.*

S32:

*Because I see people often use [nonverbal language] together with their verbal language in conversations.*

#### **SGM32 'Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'**

S6:

*Normally in speaking, grammar and word order are not very important. However, I have been trained to pay attention to these elements and quite familiar with doing that.*

S7:

*It is said that grammar and word order are not important in speaking. However, because I have learned English with the focus on these elements, I often [pay attention to grammar and word order while speaking English] ...*

*Teachers often give some scores for accuracy in speaking tests, so I have to be careful.*

S10:

*To me, [grammar and word order] is important because my teachers often correct my mistakes in grammar and word order.*

**SUM10 ‘Guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far’**

S5:

*[Guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far] is one of the tactics we learn for listening... I was taught like that.*

S7:

*I learned from my teachers that guessing is very important when listening. I apply that in communication.*

S8:

*...[I]n class, my teachers often say this strategy [of guessing the interlocutor’s intention based on what he/she has said so far] is more effective than trying to listen to every word.*

**(2) Irrelevance to the needs**

Upon questioned about the reasons of their infrequent use of certain strategies, some students answered that they rarely or did not use the strategies because they did not need them. In other words, to the students, these strategies were for people with lower level proficiency. Besides, they reported that their conversations were always simple, so they did not need to make use of the strategies. Three strategies belong to this group. Examples where the students mentioned this reason are:

**SGM24 ‘Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty’**

S28:

*I rarely [leave the message unfinished because of some language difficulty]. I only use this when speaking with foreigners because I don’t have enough vocabulary and ideas to cope with difficult topics. To Vietnamese, I don’t do this because I have many other ways to express my message...[My interlocutors] are all my fellow friends. The topics we talk about are often simple.*

S40:

*At this level, I don’t think it is right to [leave the message unfinished because of some language difficulty]... But normally, the topics I often deal with when speaking with my friends are not too challenging.*



S41:

*I don't think it is necessary [to leave the message unfinished] ... I only speak English to my friends. We often use normal topics such as school, daily life, and future job. I don't have any difficulty that may force me to leave the message unfinished... We don't really have to [discuss in class in specialized subjects] in our program. Sometimes, the teacher asks us to do that but he gives us time to prepare at home. That helps to prevent me from difficulties with vocabulary, which is the most challenging part in specialized subjects.*

**SUM1 'Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'**

S2:

*...I don't [ask the interlocutor to simplify the language] because I think it is only suitable for learners at low level. It shows that the listener doesn't understand anything.*

S16:

*I rarely [ask the interlocutor to simplify the language]. I only use this when the interlocutor uses lengthy sentences. I want to make the language brief and easy to understand. [However], most of the time my interlocutors are my classmates. I think their language is O.K to understand, so I don't need this strategy.*

S36:

*It is up to who my interlocutor is. I mostly talk to my friends and the language we use is rather simple. There is no need to request for simplification.*

**SUM4 'Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese'**

S6:

*I only speak to my friends. Our language is not that challenging so I don't need [to ask the interlocutor to use Vietnamese] ... Oh, [specialized words] is my big problem, so I may use this strategy... Anyway, I rarely talk about 'specialized' topics.*

S9:

*There are many other ways I can choose. Using Vietnamese is my last choice to deal with difficulties*

S26:

*This strategy [of asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese] does not apply to foreign interlocutors.*

S27:

*Our interlocutors are not always Vietnamese.*

S29:

*...Anyway, I cannot ask a foreigner to use Vietnamese, right?*

### 6.3 Summary

As mentioned earlier, this chapter has reported the results of the qualitative analysis of the data obtained through students' semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted to collect data in order to answer Research Question 3: 'Why do students report employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently?' This research question aimed to elicit in-depth information and to triangulate the data obtained in Phase 1. It provided further insights into the CS employment of Vietnamese English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam.

From the qualitative analysis, five common reasons for students' reported frequent and infrequent employment of certain strategies emerged from the data. They are: (1) personal beliefs; (2) effectiveness of the strategy; (3) personal preference; (4) psychological factor; and (5) improvement of language ability. By revealing the reasons for the students' reported frequency of use of CSs, the qualitative data analysis in Phase 2 of the present study has provided the researcher with useful information for another perspective of research in the field; it has also helped to explain the results of the quantitative data analysis in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 7, which is the last chapter of the present study, summarizes the results in order of the proposed research questions. It also presents the discussions of the research findings, the implications, as well as the limitations of the present study and proposals for future research.

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **7.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Chapter**

The main purpose of this last chapter is to summarize the principal findings of the present investigation in response to the research questions proposed earlier in Chapter 3. This is followed by a discussion of the research findings, the implications arising from the research for the teaching and learning of English for English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam, and the contributions of the present investigation to the related areas. Finally, the limitations of the present investigation and proposals for future research are presented.

In Chapters 4 and 5, based on the analysis of the data obtained through the communication strategy questionnaire, the researcher has systematically examined the reported frequency of use of CSs by 995 English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam. Chapter 4 describes the data at three different levels of data analysis, namely overall use of CSs, use of CSs in the two main categories: SGM and SUM, and use of individual CSs. Chapter 5 determines the significant variations in strategy use, specifically the relationships between students' reported frequency of CS use and the five investigated variables, which are students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration. Chapter 6 mainly focuses on exploring the reasons why students reported employing certain CSs frequently and

certain CSs infrequently. In the discussion section (Section 7.3), the researcher will suggest possible reasons as an explanation for certain variation patterns in CS use as well as other apparent significant differences related to each investigated variable in order to give the reader a better understanding of those significant variations.

## **7.2 Summary of Research Results**

The results of data analysis on students' reported CS use in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 provide responses to the research questions. The results are summarized as follows.

### **7.2.1 Research Question 1: 'How frequently are the strategies to cope with communication breakdowns reported being employed by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam?'**

In response to Research Question 1, the mean frequency scores in the reported employment of CSs found from the data obtained through the communication strategy questionnaire responded to by 995 research subjects are focused in this section. The research results reveal that the students' reported overall CS use is of moderate frequency level. Based on the measure described in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2), the mean frequency score was 2.56. The frequency of CS use in the SGM and SUM categories are at the moderate frequency level with the mean frequency scores of 2.52 and 2.63 respectively.

According to the results at the individual strategy level, the largest group of individual CSs includes the ones reported with moderate frequency of use. Other individual strategies showed higher or lower frequency of use.

As far as the SGM category is concerned, the students reported moderate frequency of use of twenty-one individual strategies, whereas ten strategies were

reported at high use and seven other strategies at low use. The ten individual strategies reported being employed with high frequency include: *'paying attention to the interlocutor's reaction to one's speech'* (SGM37:  $\bar{x} = 3.42$ ); *'paying attention to one's pronunciation'* (SGM34:  $\bar{x} = 3.35$ ); *'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard'* (SGM36:  $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ); *'using familiar words instead of the exact intended ones'* (SGM2:  $\bar{x} = 3.22$ ); *'trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation'* (SGM35:  $\bar{x} = 3.17$ ); *'self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances for correct understanding'* (SGM20:  $\bar{x} = 3.13$ ); *'actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say'* (SGM31:  $\bar{x} = 3.10$ ); *'paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'* (SGM32:  $\bar{x} = 3.09$ ); *'using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones'* (SGM1:  $\bar{x} = 3.08$ ); and *'using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning'* (SGM13:  $\bar{x} = 3.02$ ).

The strategies reported at low frequency comprise: *'giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood'* (SGM38:  $\bar{x} = 1.95$ ); *'avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic'* (SGM23:  $\bar{x} = 1.81$ ); *'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'* (SGM24:  $\bar{x} = 1.72$ ); *'talking about something else to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor'* (SGM17:  $\bar{x} = 1.55$ ); *'using Vietnamese instead of the exact intended words in English'* (SGM11:  $\bar{x} = 1.54$ ); *'making a phone call to another person for assistance to express intended meaning'* (SGM29:  $\bar{x} = 1.33$ ); and *'making up a non-existing English word'* (SGM10:  $\bar{x} = 1.32$ ).

With regard to the results at the individual strategy level under the SUM category, the students reported high frequency of use of six individual strategies, and moderate frequency of use of ten individual strategies. However, only two individual

strategies were reported being used at the low frequency level. The CSs reported being employed at the high frequency level include: *'paying full attention to the interlocutor when he/she is talking'* (SUM18:  $\bar{x} = 3.42$ ); *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9:  $\bar{x} = 3.36$ ); *'paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation'* (SUM14:  $\bar{x} = 3.31$ ); *'guessing the interlocutor's intention based on what he/she has said so far'* (SUM10:  $\bar{x} = 3.28$ ); *'noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes'* (SUM13:  $\bar{x} = 3.26$ ); and *'paying attention to the interlocutor's nonverbal language'* (SUM16:  $\bar{x} = 3.25$ ). Meanwhile, reported being used at the low frequency level are: *'pretending to understand the interlocutor's message'* (SUM17:  $\bar{x} = 1.78$ ), and *'asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese'* (SUM4:  $\bar{x} = 1.53$ ).

**7.2.2 Research Question 2: 'Do students' choices of strategies to cope with communication breakdowns vary significantly according to the five investigated variables? If they do, what are the main significant variation patterns?'**

In response to Research Question 2, the significant variations as well as patterns of variation have been examined. Following is the summary of the results at the three different levels of data analysis in relation to students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration.

### 7.2.2.1 Variation patterns with regard to students' gender

The results at three different levels of data analysis according to students' gender are summarized below.

#### • Overall Strategy Use

Based on the ANOVA results (Table 5.1, Chapter 5), no significant variations in students' reported frequency of overall CS use were found in association with their gender. In other words, the students, whether they are male or female, did not report employing CSs, as a whole, differently.

#### • Use of Strategies in the SGM and SUM Categories

The results of ANOVA (Table 5.2, Chapter 5) show no significant variations in the students' reported frequency of CS use in either SGM or SUM category according to their gender.

#### • Use of Individual Communication Strategies

The results of the Chi-square tests (Table 5.8, Chapter 5) reveal that the use of 10 out of 56 individual CSs varied significantly according to students' gender, with two different patterns of variation: (1) Male>Female; and (2) Female>Male. The first variation pattern illustrates that a significantly higher percentage of male students than their female peers reported high employment of 3 CSs, i.e. *'trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation* (SGM35); *'saying 'well', 'let me see' ... to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor* (SGM15); and *'avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topics'* (SGM23).

The second variation pattern shows that a significantly greater percentage of female students than their male counterparts reported high employment

of 7 individual CSs. Examples are: *'using familiar words instead of the exact intended ones'* (SGM2); *'actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say'* (SGM31); *'asking the interlocutor to slow down'* (SUM3); *'asking the interlocutor to explain what he/she has just said'* (SUM2); and *'thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence'* (SUM21).

#### • Factor Analysis Results

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 5, the results of a factor analysis show that no extracted factors were found to be strongly related to this variable.

#### 7.2.2.2 Variation patterns with regard to students' attitudes towards speaking English

Following is the summary of the results at three different levels of data analysis according to students' attitudes towards speaking English.

#### • Overall Strategy Use

The results of ANOVA (Table 5.1, Chapter 5) reveal significant variations in students' reported frequency of overall CS use according to their attitudes towards speaking English. The significant variations show that the students holding positive attitude towards speaking English reported more frequent overall strategy use than did those holding negative attitude.

#### • Use of Strategies in the SGM and SUM Categories

The results of ANOVA (Table 5.3, Chapter 5) demonstrate that significant variations were found in the frequency of students' reported CS use in the SGM and SUM categories. In both of the two categories, the students with positive attitude towards speaking English reported more frequent use of CSs than did those with negative attitude.



### •Use of Individual Communication Strategies

The results of the Chi-square tests (Table 5.9, Chapter 5) reveal that the use of 12 out of 56 individual CSs varied significantly in relation to students' attitudes towards speaking English, with two different patterns of variation: (1) Positive> Negative; and (2) Negative>Positive. The former indicates that a significantly higher percentage of students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English than those who hold negative attitude reported high use of 11 CSs. Examples are: *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9); *'actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say'* (SGM31); *'using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM6); and *'paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence'* (SUM15). Meanwhile, the latter demonstrates that a significantly greater percentage of students who hold negative attitude towards speaking English than those who hold positive attitude reported high use of only 1 CS, i.e. *'appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message'* (SUM7).

### • Factor Analysis Results

The results of the factor analysis in Chapter 5 show that Factor 4 'Circumlocution strategies for meaning expressions' was found to be strongly related to students' attitudes towards speaking English. The main underlying relationship between students' reported strategy use and their attitudes towards speaking English is in the use of strategies under the SGM category.

### **7.2.2.3 Variation patterns with regard to students' high school background**

The summary of the research results at three different levels of data analysis with reference to students' high school background is as follows.

- **Overall Strategy Use**

The results of the ANOVA show no significant variations in students' reported frequency of overall CS use in relation to their high school background. That is to say, the students who attended high schools in urban areas did not report employing CSs, as a whole, differently from those who attended high schools in rural areas.

- **Use of Strategies in the SGM and SUM Categories**

The results of ANOVA (Table 5.4, Chapter 5) reveal no significant variations in students' reported frequency of strategy use in the SGM category according to their high school background. However, significant variations were discovered in the use frequency under the SUM category in association with this variable. For the purpose of understanding the message, the students with rural high school background reported more frequent use of CSs in the category than did those with urban high school background.

- **Use of Individual Communication Strategies**

The results of the Chi-square tests (Table 5.10, Chapter 5) demonstrate that the use of 11 out of 56 individual CSs varied significantly according to students' high school background, with two different patterns of variation: (1) Urban>Rural; and (2) Rural>Urban. The first variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of students who attended high schools in urban areas than those who

attended high schools in rural areas reported high employment of 4 CSs. These strategies are: *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9); *'noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes'* (SUM13); *'trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation'* (SGM35); and *'using categories instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM4).

In respect of the other variation pattern, it indicates that a significantly higher percentage of students with rural high school background than those with urban high school background reported high use of 7 CSs, such as *'asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'* (SUM1), *'asking the interlocutor to slow down'* (SUM3), *'thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence'* (SGM21), and *'asking the interlocutor to spell or write out his/her intended word'* (SUM5).

#### • Factor Analysis Results

The results of a factor analysis, as mentioned in Chapter 5, show that no extracted factors were found to be strongly related to this variable.

#### 7.2.2.3 Variation patterns with regard to students' exposure to oral communication in English

The results at three different levels of data analysis concerning the exposure to oral communication in English are briefly presented as follows.

#### • Overall Strategy Use

The results of the ANOVA reveal no significant variations in students' reported frequency of overall CS use with reference to students' exposure to oral communication in English. That is to say, either with limited or non-limited exposure

to oral communication to classroom settings, the students did not report employing CSs, as a whole, differently.

• **Use of Strategies in the SGM and SUM Categories**

The results of ANOVA (Table 5.5, Chapter 5) show that the students' reported CS use frequency varied significantly in neither SGM nor SUM category in association with their exposure to oral communication in English.

• **Use of Individual Communication Strategies**

The results of the Chi-square tests (Table 5.11, Chapter 5) demonstrate that the use of 26 out of 56 individual CSs varied significantly according to students' exposure to oral communication in English, with two different patterns of variation: (1) Limited > Non-limited; and (2) Non-limited > Limited. The former illustrates that a significantly higher percentage of students whose exposure to oral communication in English is limited to classroom settings than those with non-limited exposure reported high use of 12 individual strategies. Examples of these strategies are: *'asking the interlocutor to simplify the language'* (SUM1); *'trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said'* (SUM12); *'appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message'* (SUM7); *'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'* (SGM24); and *'asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese'* (SUM4).

The latter pattern of variation shows that a significantly higher percentage of students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English than those with limited exposure reported high employment of 14 strategies, such as *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9); *'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard'* (SGM36); *'asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's*

*understanding of his/her message is correct*' (SUM8); and *'self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances for correct understanding'* (SGM20).

#### • **Factor Analysis Results**

The results of the factor analysis show that three extracted factors were found to be strongly related to the students' exposure to oral communication in English. These factors are: Factor 1 'Strategies to facilitate oral communication'; Factor 2 'Non-self-reliant strategies for oral communication'; and Factor 3 'Passive strategies to cope with communication breakdowns'. The underlying relationship between students' reported strategy use and their exposure to oral communication in English is principally in the use of strategies under the SGM category.

#### **7.2.2.5 Variation patterns with regard to students' types of English major concentration**

The results at three different levels of data analysis in relation to students' types of English major concentration are summarized as follows.

#### • **Overall Strategy Use**

The results of ANOVA (Table 5.1, Chapter 5) reveal no significant differences in students' reported frequency of overall CS use according to their types of English major concentration. In other words, the students, either of non-ESP or ESP concentration, did not report employing CSs, as a whole, differently.

#### • **Use of Strategies in the SGM and SUM Categories**

The results of ANOVA (Table 5.6, Chapter 5) demonstrate that there was no significant variation in students' reported CS use frequency in the SGM category with regard to their types of English major concentration. However, one variation pattern found in the use of CSs in the SUM category is that the students who

took ESP concentration reported employing CSs more frequently than did their peers of non-ESP concentration.

• **Use of Individual Communication Strategies**

The results of the Chi-square tests (Table 5.12, Chapter 5) reveal that the use of 4 out of 56 individual CSs varied significantly in relation to students' types of English major concentration, with two different patterns of variation: (1) ESP>Non-ESP, and (2) Non-ESP>ESP. The first variation pattern indicates that a significantly higher percentage of students of ESP concentration than their peers who took non-ESP concentration reported high use of 3 strategies. These strategies entail: *'paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking'* (SGM32); *'asking the interlocutor to slow down'* (SUM3); and *'trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said'* (SUM12). Meanwhile, the other variation pattern demonstrates that a significantly greater percentage of students who studied non-ESP concentration than their counterparts of ESP concentration reported high employment of only 1 CS, i.e. *'using examples instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM7).

• **Factor analysis results**

The results of the factor analysis show that no extracted factors were found to be strongly related to this variable.

**7.2.3 Research Question 3: 'Why do students report employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently?'**

In response to Research Question 3, the researcher has explored the reasons why the students reported employing certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently. As emerged from the data obtained through the one-on-one

semi-structured interviews conducted with 44 participants, the factors/reasons in relation to the research question include: (1) personal beliefs; (2) effectiveness of the strategy; (3) personal preference; (3) psychological factor; and (5) improvement of language ability. These are the reasons found from the students' explanations for the top 5 and the bottom five frequently used strategies.

Factor 1 refers to what the students thought was right or wrong concerning such aspects as the nature of language and language learning, the nature of speaking and listening, and the role of certain elements of the message in communication; Factor 2 relates to the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the strategies in helping the students to reach their goal of communication; Factor 3 involves the students' likes and dislikes; Factor 4 includes such issues as embarrassment, or good or bad impression to other people that the students may have to experience upon using the strategies; and Factor 5 lends itself to the students' desire to improve their English.

### **7.3 Discussions of the Research Findings**

The previous section (Section 7.2) has focused on the responses to the three research questions. Based on the responses to Research Questions 1 and 2, the relationships of CS use at different levels and the five independent variables have been described. In this section, the research findings in association with the five investigated variables are discussed. The discussion presents the possible explanations for what have been discovered, although, as stated by Intaraprasert (2000), it may not be easy to compare strategy use by students in the very detailed manner of the present study with previous studies. The focal points for discussion concern possible reasons hypothesized by the researcher to where significant differences in certain strategy use

with reference to each variable become apparent. Below are further discussions of the research findings in relation to the five variables: students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration.

### **7.3.1 Use of CSs in association with Students' Gender**

The present study has been intended to explore the actual relationship between students' gender and their CS use. Notwithstanding the lack of significant variations of CS employment in overall use or in the SGM and SUM categories, the findings of the present investigation have shown a minor relationship between the gender of the students and their CS use at the individual item level, being consistent with the study by Somsai (2011) where male and female students showed significantly higher frequency of use of certain strategies. The findings in this respect suggest that male and female English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam reported employing certain individual CSs differently.

As Oxford and Nyikos (1989, p. 296) concluded from their study which was conducted with university students, gender differences had "a profound influence" on strategy employment. Differences in the use of 'social', or 'conversational input elicitation' strategies among male and female language learners have been found in the previous research works, namely Politzer (1983), Oxford and Nyikos (1989), Green and Oxford (1995), and Ok (2003), where females reported significantly higher frequency of use of strategies than did males. Given that these strategies involved interaction between the language learners and their interlocutors, they could be considered CSs. Thus, their results are applicable to CS area. Besides, according to Ghani (2003, p. 33), "males do better than females in the use of some strategies". This



is supported by the findings of the present study where male participants did report using certain strategies significantly more frequently than did their female counterparts.

As can be seen in Table 5.8 (Chapter 5), male students tend to use one time-gaining strategy, i.e., *'saying 'well', 'let me see' ... to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor'* (SGM15); and one risk-avoidance/topic-avoidance strategy, i.e., *'avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic'* (SGM23) more frequently than female students to cope with communication breakdowns. Meanwhile, more risk-taking strategies which include: *'using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones'* (SGM1); *'using familiar words instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM2); and *'actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say'* (SGM31) are preferred by their female peers. This could possibly be explained by certain factors which have been hypothesized by the researcher. They are: female students' social orientation, female students' motivation in language learning, and a psychological factor.

One possible explanation for such significant variations is women's greater social orientation which has been evidenced in Ehrman and Oxford (1989), and Oxford and Nyikos (1989). As Green and Oxford (1995) put it, it might be the causes of biology and socialization that have resulted in gender differences in strategy use. Besides, Ok (2003, p. 26) affirms that "females are superior to, or at least very different from, males in many social skills with females showing a greater social orientation". Further, Mori and Gobel (2006) reported from their studies on motivation of Japanese students that female students have a greater desire to make friends and to have direct contact with L2 speakers than do their male peers. In other

words, when compared with male students, their female counterparts are more willing to use English as a foreign language to communicate and expand their social relationship with other people. This may explain why, in the present investigation, female students are more risky than their male counterparts in expressing ideas when facing communication breakdowns.

In addition, the differences in gender use of CSs might be because of female students' motivation in relation to language learning. This is evidenced in the findings of studies carried out by Narayanan, Nair and Iyyapan (2008), and Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi and Alzwari (2012) with Indian and Libyan English language learners respectively. From these two studies, it was found that female students, when compared with their male counterparts, have greater motivation in language learning. Since using English verbally is one way to learn the language, it makes sense that the female students tend to put their efforts into expressing what they mean through the use of risk-taking achievement strategies.

In the present study, a psychological factor is among the hypothesized reasons for the students' frequency of use of CSs. The students reported in the semi-structured interviews that their frequent or infrequent employment of certain strategies was due to the desire to give good impressions to other people or the desire to avoid being looked down upon. Additionally, as suggested by Ehrman and Oxford (1989), and Oxford and Nyikos (1989), gender differences may have been associated with women's greater social orientation, stronger verbal skills, and greater conformity to norms, both linguistic and academic. This means that women are generally expected to succeed in language learning, and failure in speaking English for female may well be more face-threatening than for male students. And it is possible that due to this

reason female students have the tendency to strive more than male students to make themselves understood through high use of risk-taking achievement CSs in the target language as seen in the findings of the present study.

With regard to male students, the desire to avoid losing face is a possible reason for their choice of individual CSs. Male students are likely to rely on topic-avoidance strategies, which, according to Margolis (2001), are more appropriate for low level students when coping with oral communication breakdowns. However, a closer look at the perceived oral proficiency levels of the students demonstrates that a significantly higher proportion of male students than their female counterparts ranked themselves as fairly good or higher. Thus, male students' preference of topic-avoidance should be accounted for by reasons other than oral proficiency.

According to Maubach and Morgan (2001), males tend to be over-confident in their oral abilities. In the present investigation, male students reported employing topic-avoidance and time-gaining strategies significantly more frequently than did their female peers when having difficulties in the course of conversation. This could be because they think they only have breakdowns in too difficult cases which are beyond their ability to cope with. In those cases, they might feel insecure to go with a new topic where they know they are likely to get stuck. To avoid losing face, they might think of topic-avoidance as the best solution. It might be for the same reason that male students tend to be reluctant in expressing their ideas as can be seen from their high use of time-gaining strategies. As asserted by Alexander, Graham and Harris (1998), the shift in knowledge sometimes has an impact on strategic behavior of students. In other words, the tendency to rely more on topic-avoidance and time-

gaining strategies of male participants may not completely be the sign of language weaknesses, but it should be attributed to the desire to avoid losing face.

In sum, based on the findings, we found that female English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam are more risky than their male counterparts in using CSs to cope with communication breakdowns. The researcher has hypothesized that significant variations in individual strategy use related to students' gender in the present study may be accounted for by: (1) female students' social orientation, (2) female students' motivation in language learning, and (3) psychological factor. However, we cannot be definitely certain about what really caused these significant differences. Thus, research to investigate these aspects is still needed.

### **7.3.2 Use of CSs in association with Students' Attitudes towards**

#### **Speaking English**

Attitude has long been found associated with language learning strategies, in which, to many scholars, some CSs are included. Different empirical research works, such as Elyidirim and Ashton (2006), Sadighi and Zarafshan (2006), and Çetingöz and Özkal (2009) have concluded that students who have positive attitude towards language learning use more strategies than do those with negative attitude. Nonetheless, attitude has not been systematically investigated in the field of CSs. The researcher has hypothesized three possible explanations: motivation to speak English, levels of oral proficiency, and opportunities to speak English for the variations in students' CS use in respect of students' attitudes towards speaking English.

Given that significant relationship between students' use of CSs and their attitudes exists at all three levels of data analysis, namely overall use, the SGM and

SUM categories, and individual strategies; the findings of the present investigation demonstrate that students' 'attitudes' has been found to be the strongest factor related to their use of CSs, with the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English employing CSs significantly more frequently than did those who hold negative attitude. Moreover, as described in Table 5.9, when faced with communication breakdowns, at the individual level, the students with positive attitudes tend to go for self-reliant achievement strategies, while a help-seeking strategy is likely to be employed by those with negative attitude.

One factor that the researcher hypothesized to possibly cause the differences in students' individual CS use related to their attitudes towards speaking English is their motivation to speak English. Gardner (1985) regards attitudes as components of motivation in language learning. Furthermore, "motivation ... refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (Gardner, 1985, p.10). As far as Gardner's suggestion is concerned, the students with positive attitude towards speaking English are those who have high motivation in communicating orally in this language. With respect to students' use of strategies, highly motivated students reported employing CSs including functional practice strategies, such as 'extracurricular effort to communicate in the target language'; and conversational input elicitation strategies, such as 'asking for pronunciation correction', 'requesting slower speech', and 'guessing what the interlocutor will say', more often than did the less motivated students (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989).

Moreover, as found by Huang (2010) in his study on factors influencing the CSs of technological university students in Taiwan, motivation to speak English was

one of the powerful predictors of the use of oral CSs. Furthermore, Peng (2007) studied the willingness to communicate in English of Chinese college students, reporting that motivation is a strong predictor of students' willingness to communicate in English. Thus, it could be said that the students with positive attitude towards speaking English are more willing to speak the language than those with negative attitude; they tend to strive to solve communicative breakdowns. This might lead to the significantly more frequent use of individual CSs, especially the self-reliant achievement ones, by the students with positive attitude when compared with those with negative attitude.

A closer look at the types of CSs used significantly more frequently by each group of students has provided another possible explanation for the findings: students' levels of oral proficiency. In the present study, the characteristics of the research subjects in terms of students' perceived oral proficiency and their attitudes towards speaking English show that a significantly greater proportion of students who hold positive attitude than those who hold negative attitude is at fairly good or higher levels, while a significantly greater proportion of students with negative attitude than those with positive attitude falls into average or lower levels.

Thus far, oral proficiency has been evidenced to relate to learners' CS use in the empirical studies conducted by Huang and Van Naerssen (1987), Margolis (2001), Wannaruk (2003), Weerarak (2003), Nakatani (2006), and Lam (2010). This may be because the students who have good communicative competence are more willing to communicate (Chen, 2009; and Huang and Van Naerssen, 1987), and are not afraid of losing face (Huang and Van Naerssen, 1987). On top of that, they make use of more

linguistically demanding CSs with higher frequency and a wider range than do the students with the low level of oral proficiency.

Another reason - opportunities to speak English may be attributed to the variations of individual CS use in students with different attitudes towards speaking English. The characteristics of the research subjects in Table 3.5 indicate that a significantly greater proportion of students with positive attitude towards speaking English than those with negative attitude are those whose exposure to oral communication in English is not limited to classroom settings. That is, when compared with the students who hold negative attitude, the students with positive attitudes have more opportunities to communicate orally in English.

There is no doubt that the more opportunities to speak English students have, the more experiences in dealing with difficulties they could accumulate due to the variety of situations and interlocutors they encounter. Hence, the students with positive attitude who have more opportunities to speak English might be more capable of coping with communication breakdowns. This, in turn, has possibly led to the significantly higher use of self-reliance achievement strategies of the students who hold positive attitude than those with negative attitude as found in the present investigation.

In summary, the three hypothesized reasons: motivation to speak English, levels of oral proficiency, and opportunities to speak English are possibly attributed to the significant variations in students' individual CS use according to their attitudes towards speaking English. Nevertheless, there has been no definite evidence for what really caused these significant differences. Therefore, investigation of these aspects is still necessary.

### 7.3.3 Use of CSs in association with Students' High School Background

Through the related literature, no empirical research on CSs has previously taken learners' high school background into consideration. However, the present study found this variable significantly related to students' strategy use at the category and the individual strategy levels.

As seen in Table 5.10, significant variations in CS employment were found regarding students' high school background. The students from urban high school prefer self-reliant achievement strategies which involve their own effort to make their communication easier for themselves or for their interlocutors to understand, such as *'trying to catch the interlocutors' main point'* (SUM9); and *'trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation'* (SUM35). Meanwhile, their counterparts from high school in rural areas tend to rely on other people or translation (L1-based strategy) when coping with oral communication breakdowns. These variations have been hypothesized by the researcher to be associated with: levels of oral proficiency, experience in language learning, and the desire to learn the language.

One finding of the present study is that the students from rural high schools are likely to use translation (L1-based strategy) significantly more frequently than do those who attended urban high schools. This may be explained by the fact that a significantly greater proportion of students from rural high schools than those from urban high schools perceived their levels of oral proficiency as average or lower. This is in line with the research works by Wannaruk (2003) and Weerarak (2003) who investigated the relationship between oral proficiency and use of CSs of Thai university EFL learners. These two studies found that students with lower level of oral proficiency employed CSs, except the target language-based strategies, more often



than did those with higher level of oral proficiency. That probably explains why the students with rural high school background reported employing higher use of L1-based strategies than did those with urban background. For the present study's findings, when compared with the students who attended high schools in urban areas, besides translation, the students who attended rural high school also reported relying more on help-seeking strategies which did not seem much linguistically demanding. This may also be accounted for by their levels of oral proficiency.

Another possible explanation for the findings of the present study related to the relationship between use of individual CSs and high school background is the language learning experience. Language learning experience has been found affecting students' choice of strategies in the past research works carried out by Porte (1988); Wharton (2000); and Siriwan (2007). That is, the experience that students have had in language learning affects their use of strategies (Siriwan, 2007).

In the present study, the students from urban and rural high schools may have different language learning experience, especially in oral proficiency, due to the availability of language centers, technology, teachers and foreigners in the two different contexts. Consequently, when compared with those who went to rural high schools, the students who went to urban high schools might have more experiences in communicating orally in English; they may have encountered more communication breakdowns and may be able to deal with such difficulties through the use of more self-reliant achievement CSs.

The desire for language learning might also be the explanation for the variations in students' reported individual CS use associated with their high school background. According to Kouraogo (1993), learners' desire to learn a language is

related to what opportunities to practice are readily available to them. This means that the students from urban high schools are likely to have a desire to learn communicating orally in English due to their advantageous condition. They have got the tendency to speak English more frequently and put more effort into expressing their communicative intentions than do those from rural high schools. This may have enabled the students who attended high schools in urban areas to employ more complicated and linguistically demanding CSs than those who attended high schools in rural areas.

To conclude, the variations in students' employment of individual CSs with regard to high school background have been hypothesized to be attributed to levels of perceived oral proficiency, language learning experience, and the desire to learn the language. However, no definite evidence for the real reasons for these significant differences has been found. Therefore, research to investigate these aspects is still needed.

#### **7.3.4 Use of CSs in association with Students' Exposure to Oral Communication in English**

As presented in Chapter 2, past research works conducted on CSs have rarely investigated students' exposure to oral communication in English. Huang (2010) found that frequency of speaking English outside the classroom was strongly related to students' use of oral CSs. Additionally, Somsai (2011) explored this variable, concluding that the frequency and variety of strategy use were significantly greater for students who have had more exposure to oral communication in English. However, such a strong relationship does not exist in the present investigation. For the present

study, significant differences in CS use in association with exposure to oral communication have only been found at the individual strategy level.

When compared with the students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English to classroom settings, those with limited exposure tend to employ non-self-reliant strategies which comprise help-seeking and L1-based CSs more frequently. These students also prefer avoidance/reduction strategies, namely *'giving up when one can't make the interlocutor understand his message'* (SGM38); and *'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'* (SGM24). For the students with non-limited exposure, reported with high frequency of use are self-reliant achievement strategies, such as *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (SUM9); *'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard'* (SGM36); and *'describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words'* (SGM9). Some factors hypothesized by the researcher to explain such significant differences are: opportunities to deal with communication difficulties, levels of oral proficiency, and attitudes towards speaking English.

The first possible factor is opportunities to deal with communication problems. CSs are the ways and means speakers employ when they experience a problem in oral communication, either because they cannot say what they would like to say or because they cannot understand what is being said to them (Mariani, 2010). In this view, CSs are by all means crucial for communication in a foreign or second language. That is, the more opportunities the learners have to communicate in English, the more problems they have to cope with, and gradually, they become more skillful in using CSs to deal with the breakdowns.

The students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English, when compared with those who have limited exposure, have more opportunities to communicate in the language. This may explain why they reported using achievement strategies significantly more frequently than did the students with limited exposure. Consequently, opportunities to deal with communication problems can possibly be associated with the differences in high use of individual strategies of the two groups of students related to exposure to oral communication in English.

For the present investigation, a significantly higher proportion of students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English than those with limited exposure perceived their oral proficiency levels as fairly good or higher. As Norton and Toohey (2001) hold it, the success of good language learners, especially in communication, depends very much on the degree and quality of exposure to a variety of conversations in their communities. Besides conversing with teachers and peers in class, the students with non-limited exposure have chances to communicate with other interlocutors who may have higher levels of oral proficiency than them. This may have helped them to become more proficient in oral communication and less dependent on L1-based CSs than the students who have limited exposure. This is in line with the findings of Wannaruk (2003) and Weerarak (2003) that students with higher level of oral proficiency employ L1-based strategies less frequently than do those with lower level. Furthermore, as asserted by Margolis (2001), oral proficiency is negatively related to the use of reduction strategies. Thus, it makes sense to say that the differences in individual CS use by the two groups of students might be attributed to levels of perceived oral proficiency accordingly.

Another possible explanation for the preferences in individual CS use of the two groups is attitudes towards speaking. As observed through the characteristics of the participants in Table 3.8, a significantly higher proportion of students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English than those with limited exposure belongs to the group of positive attitude towards speaking English, whereas a significantly higher proportion of students with limited exposure than those with non-limited exposure reported holding the negative attitude.

It can be said that the students with non-limited exposure are more motivated to speak English than those with limited exposure. They may seek opportunities to speak the language and try to deal with problems by themselves. Therefore, the students with non-limited exposure and positive attitude are likely to rely on self-reliant achievement strategies. This may be because, as revealed from the semi-structured interview in Chapter 6, they want to be able to cope with communication breakdowns by themselves in the future, and they want to avoid being looked down upon by other people. Meanwhile, the students who have limited exposure are not as motivated; they prefer asking for help, using reduction strategies to cope with problems, and employing L1-based strategies in coping with communication breakdowns.

In sum, in terms of exposure to oral communication in English, opportunities to deal with communication breakdowns, levels of oral proficiency, and attitudes towards speaking English might be the factors related to the differences in use of individual CSs of the students. Nonetheless, we cannot be definitely sure about the real reason for these significant differences. Thus, it may be advisable that future research investigate these aspects.

### **7.3.5 Use of CSs in association with Students' Types of English Major Concentration**

As far as students' types of English major concentration are concerned, the present study divided students into two groups: the students of ESP concentration and those of non-ESP concentration. The findings suggest that there are minor differences in their use CSs as the significant variations were found only within the category and the individual strategy levels. Under the category level, it was found that the students of ESP concentration reported using strategies for understanding the interlocutor's message more frequently than did those of non-ESP concentration. At individual strategy level, while the students of non-ESP concentration reported employing '*using examples instead of the exact words*' (SGM7) significantly more frequently than did those of ESP concentration, their counterparts of ESP concentration reported high frequency of a mixed type of strategies, i.e., '*paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking*' (SGM32); '*asking the interlocutor to slow down*' (SUM3); and '*trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said*' (SUM12).

To date, the available literature of research on learning strategies, which involves CSs, has affirmed the relationship between students' use of strategies and academic majors. Examples are: Gu (2002); Peacock and Ho (2003); Chang, Chen and Lee (2007); McMullen (2009); and Fewell (2010). However, in the present investigation, it is the types of concentration which students take in the third and fourth years within the same major of English that were examined. Since this variable has not been taken into consideration by any previous research, it is difficult to find explanations for the findings. The researcher has suggested that the differences in the

students' CS use at the individual strategy level might be due to three factors: linguistic features, the communication environment, and the concern for accuracy of the students of ESP.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, students in English major include those with ESP concentration and with non-ESP concentration. In the non-ESP concentration, the students study English for Language Studies or English for Teaching, while in the ESP concentration the students take such courses as English for Business and Commerce, English for Translation and Interpretation, English for Science and Technology, or English for Tourism. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), language use varies in different contexts. The English the students of ESP concentration deal with is for specific purposes; it might be, at least to some extent, different from the one involved with by those of non-ESP concentration. Since each type of English lends itself to its features, students of the two groups may have different types of difficulties in conversations; they may cope with the breakdowns, using strategies differently. That may lead to the significant variations in high use of individual CSs with reference to this variable.

The environment of communication may be the second factor associated with the variations in CS use of the participants from the two different types of concentration. Nambiar (2009) reviewed research in periods from 1970s to 1990s on learning strategies, which some CSs have been included. He pointed out that learners' learning environment does affect the learning of the language and strategy use. To be well prepared for their future career, the subjects of the present investigation may have started working part time or doing their internship. The students of non-ESP concentration may teach at language centers, while those of ESP concentration may

work at companies. These environments shape the types of interlocutors and the content of their conversations. That is, while the students of ESP concentration might have chances to have conversations with interlocutors who are likely to be familiar with the English needed for their specialized fields, those of non-ESP concentration mostly communicate orally with Vietnamese learners who are at lower level of oral proficiency than them. The gaps of the oral ability between the students and their interlocutors during conversations may influence the students' CS employment; the students of non-ESP concentration tend to give examples maybe because they think this way is easy for their learners to understand.

Another explanation for the significant variations in individual CS use regarding types of English major concentration is that the students of ESP concentration may take accuracy as their concern. Dobao (2001) investigated CS use by Galician learners of English across proficiency levels when they performed three types of oral tasks. Her finding is that the reason for a higher use of transfer, which included both language switch and translation, among the advanced students is their desire to be highly accurate and detailed. Though, in the present study, there is no information about the students' general language proficiency, it is worth noticing that this finding coincides with the result of the semi-structured interviews where 'accuracy' has been found to be a reason for the students' reported frequency of CS use.

Accuracy, according to some interviewees, is important when speaking with the superiors. It is also believed to help the students to avoid being looked down upon. Moreover, paying attention to grammar and word order, asking for slowing down, and doing translation, which the students of ESP concentration reported making high use



of, can yield accuracy; this factor may have some relation to the preference of individual CSs of the students of ESP concentration.

In short, three factors: linguistic features, the communication environment, and the concern for accuracy of the students of ESP concentration, might possibly be the explanations for the differences found in use of CSs in relation to types of English major concentration. Again, we cannot be really certain about the real reasons. Therefore, it is necessary that future research examine these aspects.

All in all, the findings of the present study have revealed that only one independent variable of the present study: students' 'attitudes towards speaking English' has been strongly associated with their CS employment. Meanwhile, the students' CS use has been found to vary within the SGM and SUM categories and at the individual item level in relation to the other four variables, namely students' gender, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration. It has also been found that there are significant differences in CS use in the SUM category regarding high school background and types of English major concentration of the students. In other words, for understanding the message, the students who attended rural high schools are likely to have higher strategy employment than do those who attended urban high school; and the students of ESP concentration have the tendency to use strategies more frequently than do their counterparts of non-ESP.

In respect of attitudes towards speaking English, the findings of the present study are consistent with previous research in the way that the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English reported a significantly higher use of strategies than did those who hold negative attitude. With regard to gender, there is

only a minor relationship between students' use of individual strategies and this variable. A minor relationship has also been found between students' use of individual strategies and their exposure to oral communication in English. Because strong relationships between students' gender, exposure to oral communication in English, and their use of CSs do not exist, the findings of the present study are not completely in line with those of past research.

#### **7.4 Implications of the Research Findings for the Teaching and Learning of English for English Majors Studying at the Universities in the South of Vietnam**

As summarized in Sections 7.2, there is a relationship between students' attitudes towards speaking English and their use of strategies at all three levels: overall use of CSs, CS use in the SGM and SUM categories, and individual CS use. Besides, students' gender, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration have been found associated with use of strategies in the main categories and individual strategy items. Some implications for the teaching and learning of English for English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam can be drawn as follows.

1. In general, English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam reported a moderate level of use of CSs. Therefore, there is a need for raising their awareness of the variety of strategies and their use. Besides, many researchers, such as Dörnyei (1995), Brett (2001), Lê (2006), Prinyajarn (2007), and Kongsom (2009) have concluded that CSs can be explicitly

taught. Since CS instruction is especially beneficial to language learners, especially those are less successful (Chamot, 2005), it may be desirable to incorporate strategy-based instruction into the normal curriculum on a long-term basis (Lam, 2006). Therefore, curriculum for English major should include use CS instruction as an objective.

Mini-conferences for students should be held to give introduction of types of CSs. Students should have opportunities to observe and discuss what strategies should be utilized for certain circumstances because not all strategies work well in all situations (Wannaruk, 2003). Furthermore, teachers should know that not all strategies are good for students. For example, reduction strategies, according to Margolis (2011), are likely to have a negatively impact on students' oral scores and conversational experiences. Thus, seminars for teachers on teaching CSs are also necessary.

What is more, the results obtained through the semi-structured interviews reveal that imitation is a factor that makes students employ certain strategies frequently or infrequently. Teachers themselves should set good examples for using strategies. As CS use occurs in communicating in English, whenever they can, teachers should speak English regularly with students, colleagues and staffs, and encourage the students to do that, too. And most importantly, English speaking environment should be created. Schools should establish English speaking clubs and English speaking campaigns and consider this as a requirement for students' extra activities. This is because, as Dörnyei (1995) puts it, opportunities for practice using CSs are very necessary in helping students to reach an automatic stage of CS.

2. One finding of the present study is that the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English reported significantly higher employment of and more variety of CSs than did those who hold negative attitude. Therefore, teachers should pay more attention to the latter group. Introduction of different CSs and how to use them effectively is necessary.

Based on the students' report, the students who hold negative attitudes towards speaking English are likely to have average or low levels oral proficiency. They have negative attitude possibly because they lack confidence in their conversational ability. As Tarone (1980) suggests, CSs can help learners to expand their language. The learners' language output is imperfect grammatically and lexically in the course of communication, but they may be exposed to language input that may result in language learning. Thus, teachers should show the students that CSs can save them from problems, and that they can even improve their oral communication skills when they speak and use CSs more often. Games, songs, movies, problem-solving, and topic discussion which are related to the students' real needs and interests are helpful in this case. These activities not only give opportunities for the students to practice using CSs, but will hopefully improve their oral proficiency and positively change the students' attitude towards speaking English as well.

3. Another finding of the present study demonstrates that the students who attended rural high schools reported higher use of CSs than did those who attended urban high school; and the students from the former group prefer translation. According to Paramasivam (2009), translation works when

functioning as a CS. However, it seems not to be practical for oral communication considering the amount of time needed for this process. Thus, it is not a good idea that students rely on translation frequently and forget that there are other effective alternative strategies that they can make use of. This may shed some light on teaching oral communication skills.

To guide the students to use alternative strategies is an important task of teachers (Margolis, 2001). Teachers whose students are from rural high school background should be aware of the students' above-mentioned feature of CS use. They should make clear to the students that translation is not always the best choice. Small workshops on CSs which focus on how to cope with communication breakdowns are recommended. These workshops should provide the students with chances to observe and analyze the use of a variety of strategies so that they can see how people can successfully deal with communication breakdowns without translation.

4. Arising out of the findings, when compared with the students who do not have exposure to oral communication in English limited to classroom settings, the students who have limited exposure tend to rely more on reduction strategies, translation and Vietnamese. These strategies have their disadvantages. Reduction strategies have been considered useless (Færch and Kasper, 1980) or even harmful (Willems, 1987) for language learning. They are not preferred by successful learners (Margolis, 2001). Besides, translation is not really appropriate for oral communication, and Vietnamese does not work in conversations with foreigners. Therefore, teachers should take this into consideration. They need to encourage students, particularly those who have

limited exposure, to avoid using these strategies. Models and analysis on the use of different strategies should be provided to the students with limited exposure so that they can see rather than reduction strategies, translation or Vietnamese, alternative ways which are suitable for their ability and situation may be employed.

5. When compared with the students of ESP concentration, a significantly greater proportion of those of non-ESP concentration reported employing only one strategy, namely 'using examples', more frequently. As many of these students may become teachers of English, who in the future will have to be 'models' for their students in using CSs. Therefore, teachers who teach this group of students should encourage them to use a wider range of strategies upon oral communication. Mini conferences where different CS use are demonstrated and analyzed on their effectiveness are also necessary.

Additionally, as mentioned in the discussion part, one of the possible explanations for the frequent use of examples by students of non-ESP concentration is the lack of variety of interlocutors with higher levels oral proficiency than them. Therefore, it is advisable that teachers give assignments where the students are supposed to have conversations with different groups of people in and out of class. Students should be encouraged to join chat rooms on the internet where they can expand their oral communication beyond the limit of the classroom. Such chances to speak English with many people in real situations will give the students more opportunities to face breakdowns, and will hopefully build up the students' experiences in CS utilization.

## 7.5 Contributions of the Present Study

The present study has made some significant contributions to the field of communication strategies. These contributions based on the findings of the present study can be characterized as follows.

1. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there have been very few past empirical studies on CSs carried out in the Vietnamese context, especially with English majors. Moreover, the focal point of available past research on CSs with Vietnamese learners has generally been limited to examining the effectiveness of CS teaching. Therefore, by exploring strategies employed by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam for coping with communication breakdowns, the present study has partly filled the gaps.
2. While gender and exposure to oral communication in English have been scarcely explored in terms of CS use, the present study has taken them as two of the independent variables for investigation.
3. Most previous studies on CSs have examined the relationship among CS use, fields of study, and language proficiency/oral proficiency levels. Therefore, with a variety of investigated variables, namely attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, and types of English major concentration, it can be said the present study has expanded the focus of research in the field.
4. The researcher for the present study has systematically adapted the existing communication strategy inventories proposed by previous scholars to the Vietnamese context. The new inventory has been used as the instrument to obtain the CS use by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam. It may be useful for further research on CSs in the similar context.

5. The CSQ piloting resulted in a new strategy ‘paying full attention to the interlocutor when he/she is talking’. Given that this strategy was never mentioned by any previous scholar, the present study has added one more item to the list of CSs EFL language learners employ for coping with communication breakdowns.
6. In order to measure students’ attitudes towards speaking English, the researcher has also systematically modified two existing language learning attitude inventories, namely the LLAQ (2004) and Okert (2010). This may also be useful for researchers for the same purpose.
7. With regard to data collection, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been employed. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used. The data analysis involved quantitative and qualitative methods accordingly. The quantitative method involved statistical methods, i.e., descriptive statistics, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Chi-square tests ( $\chi^2$ ), and factor analysis. Coding, grouping, and categorizing were called into action for the qualitative data analysis. This data collection and analysis can be a guide for other researchers to apply in similar types of reported data.
8. English majors studying at the university level in all the regions in Vietnam share with the research population the characteristics related to the five investigated variables, namely gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration. Therefore, the research findings may be generalized to other groups of English majors studying at the universities in the whole country of Vietnam.



## 7.6 Limitations of the Present Study and Proposals for Future

### Research

The present study was valid and valuable in addressing the research questions, which were to describe the frequency of strategy use reported by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam; to explore the variation patterns and to examine the relationships between the frequency of students' reported use of CSs at different levels in association with each of the investigated variables: students' gender, attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, exposure to oral communication in English, and types of English major concentration. Furthermore, the present study also investigated reasons for students' reported frequency of employment of certain strategies. However, in conducting this study, certain limitations have been acknowledged. These limitations which future research should take into consideration are presented as follows.

1. The communication strategy questionnaire (CSQ) for the present study was employed to elicit reported strategy use by English major studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam. It has ten items rephrased in order to increase the validity and reliability of the obtained data. However, each investigation method has its own strong and weak points (Cohen and Scott, 1996). There are possibilities that the respondents cannot actually recall what they have done during real interactions and may not have exactly reported their CS use (Chamot, 2004). Therefore, it would be better if other assessment methods, such as classroom observation; performance recordings; or verbal reports were included in the present study in order to triangulate the results obtained from the CSQ.

2. In the present study, the reasons why the students reported employing certain CSs frequently and certain CSs infrequently have been explored in general. It would yield higher validation if these reasons were investigated in relation to the five investigated variables.
3. In respect of research participants, the groups under each investigated variables should have been more well-balanced. That is, the number of students from each group considering gender, attitude towards speaking English, high school background, and exposure to oral communication in English should have been approximately the same.
4. This study aims to study CSs specifically employed by English major students studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam. It would be more interesting if there were the involvement of students from universities in other parts of the country. This would provide a complete picture of CS use by students majoring in English at the universities in the whole country of Vietnam.
5. Though the present study did not explore the relationship between ‘levels of oral proficiency’ and use CSs, this factor has been hypothesized to be the explanation for the variations in strategy use in association with most of the investigated variables. Thus, it is necessary that future research on CS use by English majors in Vietnam examine this factor.
6. It was found from the semi-structured interview that ‘personal beliefs’ and ‘psychology factor’ are the reasons for students’ frequency of CS use. Investigation of CS use with regard to these aspects may yield interesting information.

7. The present study is limited to five variables. Meanwhile, the literature review in Chapter 2 has shown that other aspects, namely foreign language learning experience, personality types, types of interlocutor, teachers' nationality, and university types have rarely been explored. Therefore, they should be taken into consideration in future research.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

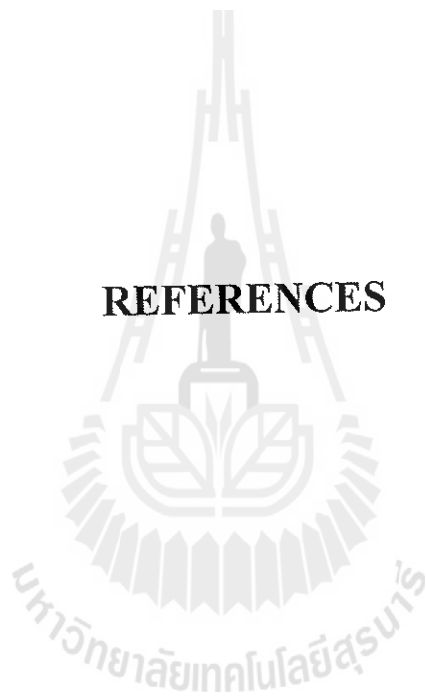
Conducted in a data-based, systematic, and non-judgmental descriptive manner, the present study has contributed to the field of CSs in terms of the modified communication strategy questionnaire - the CSQ for the research context, the measurement of students' attitudes towards speaking English - the ESAQ, the investigated variables with reference to CS employment, and the in-depth information of reasons for students' reported frequency of use of certain CSs. One of the major contributions of the present study is that it has proved that students' attitudes towards speaking English significantly affected students' CS employment. Of the variables investigated, two variables, namely students' gender and exposure to oral communication in English, have hardly been taken into consideration by any researchers previously in the field. Meanwhile, the relationship between students' attitudes towards speaking English, high school background, English major concentration, and their reported CS use have never been explored before. More importantly, none of these five variables have been found to be investigated in the context of Vietnam.

Lastly, based on the research findings, the researcher has proposed some pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of English conversational skills

to English majors, especially for those studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam. Additionally, the researcher has acknowledged limitations of the present study, giving suggestions for future research in the field of CSs. With a research design as presented in Chapter 5 and appropriate instruments, the researcher believes that future research can gain further insights into how strategies are employed to cope with breakdowns in oral communication by students in different contexts.



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**APPENDICES**





## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE

**Instructions:**

*This survey is conducted to investigate the communication strategy employment by English majors studying in universities in the South of Vietnam. It includes three parts: respondent's personal information, communication strategy use, and attitudes towards speaking English. We would like you to provide your information and answer the questions based on your own opinions. This is not a test, so there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Your responses will be used for this research only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. They will not affect any of your grades at university. We appreciate your cooperation.*

**Part 1: Personal information**

**Instructions:** Please provide your personal information by putting check (✓) in the given box or writing the response where necessary

6. Your gender:             Male                             Female

6. Name of your university: -

\_\_\_\_\_

6. You are in your             3<sup>rd</sup> year                             4<sup>th</sup> year

6. Your concentration under English major is:

- English for teaching
- English language studies
- English for business and commerce
- English for office work
- English for translation and interpretation
- English for tourism
- English for science and technology

6. You have been learning English for \_\_\_\_\_ years

6. How do rate your oral English language proficiency?

- Very good  
 Good  
 Fairly good  
 Average  
 Poor

Why do you rate your oral English language proficiency at that level?

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7. What is the name of your senior high school?

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You went to senior high school

- in the city       outside the city

Please provide the address of your senior high school

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8. When you study English, does your teacher teach you how to solve oral communication problems?

- Yes       No

If "Yes", what does your teacher teach you to do?

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Do you think what your teacher tells you to do works well with you?

Yes

No

If “No”, why not?

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9. Do you have an opportunity to communicate in English at all?

Yes

No

If “Yes”, where do you communicate in English? (You can choose more than one).

- In the classroom
- At home
- At tutoring center(s)
- In English speaking club(s)
- Other(s) (Please specify)

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## Part 2: Communication strategies

**Instructions:** Please provide your answer to the following questions by putting a check (✓) in the given box or writing the response where necessary

“Never or almost never” means that you *never or almost never* perform the activity which is described in the statement.

“Sometimes” means that you perform the activity which is described in the statement *less than half the time* of the total strategy use.

“Often” means that you perform the activity which is described in the statement *more than half the time* of the total strategy use.

“Always or almost always” means that you perform the activity which is described in the statement *more than three quarter the time* of the total strategy use

**Example:**

Communication Strategies	Frequency of Communication Strategy Use			
	Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Never or almost never
1) Using all purpose words	√			

**Question 1:**

Have you faced any difficulties when you communicate orally in English?

Yes

No

If “No”, you can move to Part 3. If “Yes”, how often do you solve the problems by doing the following?

Communication Strategies	Frequency of Communication Strategy Use			
	Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Never or almost never
1) Using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones				
2) Using familiar words instead of the exact intended ones				
3) Using definitions instead of the exact intended words				
4) Using categories instead of the exact intended words				
5) Using similes instead of the exact intended words				
6) Using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words				

Communication Strategies	Frequency of Communication Strategy Use			
	Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Never or almost never
7)Using examples instead of the exact intended words				
8) Referring to objects or materials to express the intended words				
9)Describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words				
10)Making up non-existing English words				
11) Using Vietnamese instead of the exact intended words in English				
12)Spelling or writing out the intended word				
13)Using nonverbal language to express the intended meaning				
14)Keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message				
15)“Saying “well,” “let me see”... to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor				
16)Speaking more slowly to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor				
17)Talking about something else to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor				
18)Repeating yourself to gain time to think about how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor				
19)Repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor				

Communication Strategies	Frequency of Communication Strategy Use			
	Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Never or almost never
20)Self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances for correct understanding				
21)Thinking first of what you want to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence				
22)Thinking first of a sentence you already know in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation				
23)Avoiding new topics by sticking to the old topic				
24)Leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty				
25)Reducing the message by using simple expressions				
26)Asking the interlocutor to confirm that you have been understood				
27)Appealing for help from the interlocutor for how to express the intended meaning				
28)Appealing for help from someone else around for how to express the intended meaning				
29)Making a phone call to another person for assistance to express intended meaning				
30)Consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document for how to express the intended meaning				
31)Actively encouraging yourself to express what you want to say				
32)Paying attention to grammar and word order while speaking				

Communication Strategies	Frequency of Communication Strategy Use			
	Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Never or almost never
33) Trying to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence				
34) Paying attention to your pronunciation				
35) Trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation				
36) Trying to speak clearly and loudly to make yourself heard				
37) Paying attention to the interlocutor's reaction to your speech				
38) Giving up when you can't make yourself understood				
39) Asking the interlocutor to simplify the language				
40) Asking the interlocutor to explain what he /she just said				
41) Asking the interlocutor to slow down				
42) Asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese				
43) Asking the interlocutor to spell or write out his/her intended word				
44) Asking the interlocutor to repeat what he/she has said				
45) Appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message				

Communication Strategies	Frequency of Communication Strategy Use			
	Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Never or almost never
46) Asking the interlocutor to confirm if your understanding of his/her message is correct				
47) Trying to catch the interlocutor's main point				
48) Guessing the interlocutor's intention based on what he/she has said so far				
49) Trying to catch every word that the interlocutor says				
50) Trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said				
51) Noticing the words which the interlocutor slows down or emphasizes				
52) Paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation				
53) Paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence				
54) Paying attention to the interlocutor's nonverbal language				
55) Pretending to understand the interlocutor's message				
56) Paying full attention to the interlocutor when he/she is talking				
57) Using words which have the same or opposite meaning with the expected words				
58) Inventing new words in English				



Communication Strategies	Frequency of Communication Strategy Use			
	Always or almost always	Often	Sometimes	Never or almost never
59) Using body language to express the expected words				
60) Saying nothing at all to think about how to express the intended idea				
61) Slowing down to think about how to express the intended idea				
62) Trying not to change the topic of the conversation				
63) Trying to speak with good pronunciation				
64) Stopping trying when you can't make yourself understood				
65) Asking the interlocutor to use easy language				
66) Asking the interlocutor to express his/her ideas in your mother tongue				

**Question 2:** Besides the above-mentioned strategies, are there any other ways which you do to deal with communication breakdowns?

Yes  No

If "No", please move on to Part 3.

If "Yes", please specify the strategies

67) _____
68) _____
69) _____

### Part 3: Attitudes towards speaking English

**Instructions:** Please provide you answer by putting a check (✓) in the most appropriate box.

**Example:**

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1) You enjoy speaking English		✓			

**Question 1:** Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements?

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1) You enjoy speaking English.					
2) Speaking English is fun.					
3) Being able to speak English often makes you happy.					
4) Being able to speak English gives you a feeling of success.					
5) Speaking English is important to you in general.					
6) You speak English because it will make your parents or your teacher proud of you.					
7) You speak English because you want to do well on oral tests.					
8) You speak English because you want to communicate with foreigners.					

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9)Speaking English is important to you because you want to make friends with foreigners.					
10)Speaking English is important to you because you might study overseas.					
11)Speaking English is important to you because you might need it later for your job.					
12)You speak English because all educated people can do that.					
13)You speak English because you have to do it.					
14)You think you speak English well.					
15)You like to mimic other people's accents.					
16)You can mimic other accents well					
17)You think if I put much effort in practising, you can speak English well.					
18)At school, if you didn't know how give an answer in English for sure, you'd still answer out loud in class anyway.					
19)You am not worried about making mistakes when you speak English.					
20)You am not afraid of being laughed at when you make mistakes in speaking.					

☺ Thank you very much ☺

Bui Thi Thuc Quyen

Lecturer, Nong Lam University

E-mail: .....

Tel. : .....

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE (Vietnamese Version)

#### *Phiếu khảo sát*

**Hướng dẫn:** Phiếu khảo sát này nhằm thu thập thông tin phục vụ cho đề tài nghiên cứu “*Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên chuyên ngữ tại các trường đại học ở miền Nam Việt Nam*”. Nội dung của phiếu gồm 3 phần chính: (1) Thông tin cá nhân, (2) Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh, và (3) Cảm nghĩ về việc nói tiếng Anh. Vui lòng cung cấp thông tin cá nhân và trả lời các câu hỏi theo ý kiến của riêng bạn. Đây không phải là một bài thi nên không có câu trả lời “**đúng**” hoặc “**sai**”. Thông tin do bạn điền trong phiếu sẽ được giữ bí mật và chỉ phục vụ cho mục đích của nghiên cứu của đề tài, không ảnh hưởng đến kết quả học tập của bạn. Cảm ơn sự hợp tác của bạn.

#### **Phần 1: Thông tin cá nhân**

**Hướng dẫn:** Xin vui lòng cung cấp các thông tin cá nhân bằng cách đánh dấu (✓) vào ô thích hợp hoặc điền câu trả lời vào chỗ trống.

1. Giới tính:  Nam  Nữ
2. Tên trường đại học bạn đang học:  

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3. Bạn là sinh viên  năm thứ 3  năm thứ 4
4. Phân ngành thuộc chuyên ngành tiếng Anh bạn đang học là:
  - Giảng dạy tiếng Anh
  - Ngôn ngữ Anh/ Nghiên cứu ngôn ngữ Anh
  - Tiếng Anh thương mại
  - Tiếng Anh văn phòng
  - Tiếng Anh dịch thuật
  - Tiếng Anh du lịch
  - Tiếng Anh khoa học/ kỹ thuật

5. Tính đến nay, bạn đã học tiếng Anh được \_\_\_\_\_ năm.
6. Theo bạn tự đánh giá, khả năng nói tiếng Anh của bạn hiện ở mức độ
- Rất tốt
  - Tốt
  - Khá
  - Trung bình
  - Yếu

Căn cứ vào đâu bạn lại tự đánh giá khả năng nói của mình ở mức độ như vậy?

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7. Trước đây, bạn học cấp 3 ở trường nào?

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Trường đó nằm ở  Nội thành/nội thị  Ngoại thành/vùng ven

Xin vui lòng cung cấp địa chỉ của trường cấp 3 mà bạn đã học

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8. Trong giờ học, giáo viên có hướng dẫn cho bạn các cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh không?

Có  Không

Nếu “**Có**”, giáo viên hướng dẫn bạn làm gì để giải quyết những khó khăn đó?

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Theo bạn, cách giải quyết khó khăn như giáo viên hướng dẫn có hiệu quả không?

Có

Không

Nếu “**Không**”, xin nêu rõ lý do.

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9. Bạn có cơ hội giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh không?

Có

Không

Nếu “**Có**”, bạn giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh ở môi trường nào? (Có thể chọn hơn một câu trả lời)

- Trong lớp học ở trường đại học
- Ở nhà
- Tại (các) trung tâm/lớp học thêm
- Tại (các) câu lạc bộ tiếng Anh
- Những nơi khác (Yêu cầu ghi rõ)

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## Phần 2: Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh

**Hướng dẫn:** Vui lòng cung cấp các thông tin cá nhân bằng cách đánh dấu (✓) vào ô thích hợp hoặc điền câu trả lời vào chỗ trống.

“Không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ” có nghĩa là bạn *không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ* thực hiện hoạt động/cách được mô tả khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.

“Thỉnh thoảng” có nghĩa là bạn thực hiện hoạt động/cách được mô tả *dưới nửa* số lần so với tổng số lần bạn cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.

“Thường thường” có nghĩa là bạn thực hiện hoạt động/cách được mô tả *hơn nửa* số lần so với tổng số lần bạn cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.

“Thường xuyên hoặc hầu như thường xuyên” có nghĩa là bạn thực hiện hoạt động/cách được mô tả *hơn ba phần tư* số lần so với tổng số lần bạn cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.

**Ví dụ:**

Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.	Tần suất thực hiện khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh			
	Thường xuyên hoặc hầu như thường xuyên	Thường thường	Thỉnh thoảng	Không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ
1) Sử dụng những từ chung chung thay vì từ chính xác	✓			

### **Câu hỏi 1:**

Bạn có bao giờ gặp khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh không?

Có

Không

Nếu “Không”, hãy chuyển sang trả lời **Phần 3**.

Nếu “Cố”, bạn sử dụng những cách dưới đây khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh với tần suất nào?

Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.	Tần suất thực hiện khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh			
	Thường xuyên hoặc hầu như thường xuyên	Thường thường	Thỉnh thoảng	Không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ
1) Dùng từ chung chung thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
2) Dùng từ quen thuộc thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
3) Dùng định nghĩa thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
4) Dùng từ chỉ thể loại/ thể loại thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
5) Dùng phương pháp so sánh thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
6) Dùng từ đồng nghĩa hoặc trái nghĩa thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
7) Dùng ví dụ thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
8) Liên hệ với đồ vật hoặc chất liệu thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
9) Mô tả tính chất hoặc thành phần thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
10) Tạo từ mới không có trong tiếng Anh				
11) Dùng tiếng Việt thay cho từ chính xác trong tiếng Anh như ý muốn diễn đạt				
12) Đánh vần hoặc viết ra từ muốn diễn đạt				



<b>Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.</b>	<b>Tần suất thực hiện khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh</b>			
	<b>Thường xuyên hoặc hầu như thường xuyên</b>	<b>Thường thường</b>	<b>Thỉnh thoảng</b>	<b>Không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ</b>
13) Dùng cử chỉ để diễn đạt ý muốn nói				
14) Im lặng để có thời giờ nghĩ cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói				
15) Dùng những nhóm chữ như “well,” “let me see”... để có thời giờ nghĩ cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói cho người đối thoại hiểu				
16) Nói chậm hơn bình thường để có thời giờ nghĩ cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói cho người đối thoại hiểu				
17) Nói sang chuyện khác để có thời giờ nghĩ cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói cho người đối thoại hiểu				
18) Lặp lại những gì mình nói để có thời giờ nghĩ cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói cho người đối thoại hiểu				
19) Lặp lại hoặc diễn đạt lại những gì người đối thoại vừa nói để có thời giờ nghĩ cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói cho họ hiểu				
20) Tự chỉnh sửa những điểm không phù hợp trong cách nói của mình nhằm giúp người đối thoại hiểu đúng ý mình				
21) Trước tiên nghĩ bằng tiếng Việt những gì mình muốn nói rồi sau đó đặt câu tương ứng bằng tiếng Anh				
22) Trước tiên nghĩ đến một câu đã biết bằng tiếng Anh rồi sau đó thay đổi cho phù hợp với hoàn cảnh				
23) Tránh chuyển sang đề tài mới bằng cách cố gắng duy trì đề tài cũ				
24) Bỏ lửng câu chuyện vì gặp khó khăn về				

ngôn ngữ				
<b>Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.</b>	<b>Tần suất thực hiện khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh</b>			
	<b>Thường xuyên hoặc hầu như thường xuyên</b>	<b>Thường thường</b>	<b>Thỉnh thoảng</b>	<b>Không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ</b>
25) Lược giản nội dung cần nói thông qua các cách diễn đạt đơn giản				
26) Yêu cầu người đối thoại xác nhận xem họ có hiểu đúng ý mình nói không				
27) Yêu cầu người đối thoại chỉ giúp cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói				
28) Nhờ người chung quanh chỉ giúp cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói				
29) Gọi điện cho người khác nhờ chỉ giúp cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói				
30) Tra cứu từ điển, sách, hoặc tài liệu gì đó để biết cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói				
31) Tích cực động viên chính mình cố gắng tìm cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói				
32) Chú ý đến ngữ pháp và trật tự từ khi nói				
33) Cố gắng nhấn mạnh chủ ngữ và động từ của câu khi nói				
34) Đề ý đến cách phát âm khi nói				
35) Cố gắng bắt chước cách phát âm của người bản xứ				

36) Cố gắng nói to và rõ để người đối thoại hiểu ý mình				
Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.	Tần suất thực hiện khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh			
	Thường xuyên hoặc hầu như thường xuyên	Thường thường	Thỉnh thoảng	Không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ
37) Lưu ý đến phản ứng của người đối thoại đối với những gì mình nói				
38) Từ bỏ việc diễn đạt ý muốn nói khi cảm thấy không thể nào làm cho người đối thoại hiểu ý mình				
39) Yêu cầu người đối thoại sử dụng ngôn ngữ đơn giản				
40) Yêu cầu người đối thoại giải thích những gì họ vừa nói				
41) Yêu cầu người đối thoại nói chậm lại				
42) Yêu cầu người đối thoại sử dụng tiếng Việt				
43) Yêu cầu người đối thoại đánh vần hoặc viết ra từ họ sử dụng				
44) Yêu cầu người đối thoại lặp lại những gì họ vừa nói				
45) Nhờ những người chung quanh làm rõ ý các câu nói của người đối thoại				
46) Yêu cầu người đối thoại xác nhận xem mình có hiểu đúng ý họ hay không				
47) Cố gắng nắm bắt ý chính câu nói của người đối thoại				

48) Đoán ý của người đối thoại dựa trên những gì họ vừa nói				
Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.	<b>Tần suất thực hiện khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh</b>			
	<b>Thường xuyên hoặc hầu như thường xuyên</b>	<b>Thường thường</b>	<b>Thỉnh thoảng</b>	<b>Không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ</b>
49) Cố gắng nắm bắt từng chữ những gì người đối thoại nói				
50) Cố gắng dịch nội dung người đối thoại nói ra tiếng Việt từng ít một để hiểu những gì họ vừa nói				
51) Lưu ý những từ được người đối thoại nói chậm hoặc nhấn mạnh				
52) Chú ý cách phát âm của người đối thoại				
53) Đề ý chủ ngữ và động từ trong câu nói của người đối thoại				
54) Đề ý cử chỉ của người đối thoại khi họ diễn đạt ý				
55) Giả vờ hiểu những gì người đối thoại nói				
56) Hết sức tập trung lắng nghe những gì người đối thoại nói				
57) Dùng từ có cùng nghĩa hoặc có nghĩa đối lập thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt				
58) Đặt ra từ mới				
59) Diễn đạt ý muốn nói bằng ngôn ngữ cử chỉ				

60) Không nói gì cả để có thời giờ nghỉ cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói				
Cách giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh.	Tần suất thực hiện khi cố gắng giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh			
	Thường xuyên hoặc hầu như thường xuyên	Thường thường	Thỉnh thoảng	Không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ
61) Nói chậm lại để có thời giờ nghỉ cách diễn đạt ý				
62) Bám chặt vào đề tài cũ để không phải nói sang đề tài mới				
63) Cố gắng phát âm thật tốt				
64) Không cố gắng diễn đạt ý muốn nói nữa khi cảm thấy người đối thoại không thể nào hiểu ý mình				
65) Yêu cầu người đối thoại lược giản cách nói của họ				
66) Yêu cầu người đối thoại diễn đạt ý của họ bằng tiếng Việt				

**Câu hỏi 2:** Ngoài các cách kể trên, bạn còn dùng cách nào khác để giải quyết những khó khăn trong việc chuyển tải và tiếp nhận thông tin khi nói tiếng Anh?

Có  Không

Nếu “**Không**”, hãy chuyển sang trả lời câu hỏi ở Phần 3.

Nếu “**Có**”, vui lòng ghi cụ thể cách nào.

67) _____
68) _____

69) _____
70) _____

### Phần 3: Cảm nghĩ về việc nói tiếng Anh

**Hướng dẫn:** Vui lòng cung cấp thông tin bằng cách đánh dấu (✓) vào ô thích hợp hoặc điền câu trả lời vào chỗ trống.

**Ví dụ:**

Nội dung	Hoàn toàn đồng ý	Đồng ý	Không có ý kiến	Không đồng ý	Hoàn toàn không đồng ý
1) Tôi thích nói tiếng Anh.		✓			

**Câu hỏi 1:** Bạn hoàn toàn đồng ý, đồng ý, không có ý kiến, không đồng ý, hay hoàn toàn không đồng ý với những câu sau đây?

Nội dung	Hoàn toàn đồng ý	Đồng ý	Không có ý kiến	Không đồng ý	Hoàn toàn không đồng ý
1) Bạn thích nói tiếng Anh.					
2) Nói tiếng Anh rất vui.					
3) Bạn vui vì nói được tiếng Anh.					
4) Nói được tiếng Anh đem lại cho bạn cảm giác thành công.					
5) Nói chung, việc nói được tiếng Anh là quan trọng với bạn.					
6) Bạn nói tiếng Anh để làm cho ba mẹ và thầy cô tự hào.					

7) Bạn nói tiếng Anh vì bạn muốn đạt kết quả cao trong các kỳ thi nói.					
<b>Nội dung</b>	<b>Hoàn toàn đồng ý</b>	<b>Đồng ý</b>	<b>Không có ý kiến</b>	<b>Không đồng ý</b>	<b>Hoàn toàn không đồng ý</b>
8) Bạn nói tiếng Anh vì bạn muốn giao tiếp với người nước ngoài.					
9) Nói tiếng Anh là quan trọng với bạn vì tôi muốn kết bạn với người nước ngoài.					
10) Nói tiếng Anh là quan trọng với bạn vì có thể bạn sẽ đi du học nước ngoài.					
11) Nói tiếng Anh là quan trọng với bạn vì có thể bạn sẽ cần kỹ năng này cho công việc trong tương lai.					
12) Bạn nói tiếng Anh vì những người có học vấn đều nói được tiếng Anh.					
13) Bạn nói tiếng Anh dù không bị bắt buộc làm việc đó.					
14) Bạn nghĩ bạn nói tiếng Anh tốt.					
15) Khi nói tiếng Anh, bạn thích bắt chước giọng của người khác.					
16) Khi nói tiếng Anh, bạn có thể bắt chước tốt giọng của người khác.					
17) Bạn nghĩ nếu bạn chịu khó luyện tập, bạn sẽ nói tốt tiếng Anh.					
18) Ở trường, cho dù không chắc cách trả lời bằng tiếng Anh của mình có tốt hay không, bạn vẫn trả lời to bằng tiếng Anh.					
19) Bạn không lo mắc lỗi khi nói tiếng Anh.					
20) Bạn không sợ bị chê cười khi mắc lỗi lúc nói tiếng Anh.					

☺ Xin cảm ơn ☺

**Người thực hiện khảo sát:**

Bùi Thị Thục Quyên

Nghiên cứu sinh chương trình tiến sĩ ngành ELS, ĐH Công nghệ Suranaree, Thái Lan

E-mail: .....

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## APPENDIX C

### A Sample Interview Script (Vietnamese Version)

Sinh viên: S37 - Trường Đại học Nông Lâm

Ngày: 10 tháng 3, 2012      Thời gian: 2:00 chiều

Researcher: Chào em. Rất cảm ơn em đã đến tham gia buổi phỏng vấn. Em tên gì?

Student: Dạ em tên .....

Researcher: Em hiện là sinh viên năm 3 phải không, ....?

Researcher: Em có cơ hội giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh không?

Student: Dạ em nói với bạn bè trong lớp hoặc khi học nhóm.

Researcher: Còn với thầy cô?

Student: Em ít có cơ hội nói chuyện tiếng Anh với thầy cô.

Researcher: Sao vậy?

Student: Dạ, lớp thì đông, mà thầy cô phải chia thời gian cho mỗi sinh viên.

Researcher: Còn với người nước ngoài?

Student: Dạ thỉnh thoảng thôi. Em tiếp xúc với người nước ngoài chủ yếu là ở trung tâm ngoại ngữ chỗ em làm thêm. Nhưng mà công việc văn phòng bận rộn quá nên em cũng chẳng có thì giờ nói chuyện nhiều với giáo viên nước ngoài nữa.

Researcher: Em có gặp khó khăn khi giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh không?

Student: Dạ có. Em thường không có đủ từ vựng để diễn đạt ý muốn nói và thỉnh thoảng khi nghe người ta nói, em không hiểu họ nói gì.

Researcher: Ok. Bây giờ cho cô hỏi lý do em chọn tần suất sử dụng các cách giải quyết khó khăn khi nói và nghe tiếng Anh như đã ghi phiếu khảo sát nhé. Để không mất thì giờ của em cô sẽ không đi hết từ đầu đến cuối mà cô chỉ tập trung vào một số trường hợp thôi.

Student: Dạ.

Researcher: Em thường ‘dùng từ quen thuộc thay cho từ chính xác’? Tại sao vậy?

Student: Khi em không biết hoặc không chắc từ chính xác để diễn đạt thì em thường dùng từ quen thuộc.

Researcher: Nhưng sao lại như thế? Còn nhiều cách khác nữa mà?

Student: Vì em thấy tự tin hơn, không sợ bị sai khi dùng các từ quen thuộc.

Researcher: Em có hay ‘để ý đến cách phát âm khi nói’ không?

Student: Em thường xuyên để ý đến cách phát âm khi nói. Phát âm hay giúp em tạo ấn tượng tốt với người khác.

Researcher: Ngoài ra nó còn thấy giúp ích em gì nữa không?

Student: Em cũng thấy mình tự tin hơn khi phát âm tốt.

Researcher: Sa em lại thường ‘đoán ý của người đối thoại dựa trên những gì họ vừa nói’?

Student: Em thường không nghe được từng chữ người ta nói nên hay phải đoán ý của họ dựa trên những gì mình nghe được.

Researcher: Vậy hiệu quả của cách này thế nào?

Student: Dạ hiệu quả không cao lắm vì nhiều khi cũng đoán sai.

Researcher: Vậy sao em lại thường xuyên làm vậy?

Student: Vì nó tạo sự thích thú khi nói và tạo cơ hội cho em đoán ý người nói trước khi nhờ người ta giúp.

Researcher: Em có thể nói rõ hơn không?

Student: Dạ, em thì hay thích thử sức mình hơn là nhờ người khác.

Researcher: À, ra vậy.

Researcher: Còn việc ‘lưu ý những từ được người đối thoại nói chậm hoặc nhấn mạnh’ thường xuyên?

Student: Khi không hiểu người đối thoại nói gì thì mình có thể đoán, dựa vào những chỗ họ nhấn nhá hoặc nói chậm lại.

Researcher: Sao vậy?

Student: Vì đó là những từ mấu chốt và quan trọng. Người ta nói chậm hoặc nhấn nhá là có ý muốn mình để ý những phần này.

Researcher: Em có thường ‘hết sức tập trung nghe những gì người đối thoại nói’?

Student: Khi nói chuyện với người nước ngoài, mình có thể không hiểu hết những gì họ nói nên tập trung luôn là cách giúp hiểu được họ tốt hơn.

Researcher: Còn khi nói với người Việt thì có cần thiết phải tập trung lắng nghe không?

Student: Dạ cũng quan trọng chứ. Với lại nó còn thể hiện sự tôn trọng người nói nữa.

Researcher: Tại sao thỉnh thoảng em mới ‘dùng từ chỉ thể loại thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt’?

Student: Dạ cách này em chỉ thỉnh thoảng dùng thôi.

Researcher: Lý do là sao vậy em?

Student: Em không có vốn từ nhiều nên không có từ chính xác.

- Researcher: Nhưng lý do nào em khiến em chỉ thỉnh thoảng dùng cách này?
- Student: Cách này không rõ và không hiệu quả. Mình nên sử dụng ít thôi vì với các cách khác mình sẽ học được thêm từ mới.
- Researcher: Vậy em hay dùng cách nào khi không biết từ?
- Student: Em sẽ dùng cách mô tả.
- Researcher: Còn về việc dùng ‘định nghĩa thay cho từ chính xác như ý muốn diễn đạt’? Em hiếm khi dùng cách này phải không?
- Student: Dạ. Vì em thấy định nghĩa rất khô cứng; những cách khác sinh động hơn.
- Researcher: Còn gì nữa?
- Student: Đã là định nghĩa thì phải thật chính xác mà việc đó thì em khó mà làm được.
- Researcher: Em có thường ‘bỏ lửng câu chuyện do khó khăn về mặt ngôn ngữ’ không?
- Student: Thỉnh thoảng, khi ‘bí’ quá, em cũng làm vậy.
- Researcher: Sao em không sử dụng cách này thường xuyên?
- Student: Dạ vì khi nói chuyện mà bỏ lửng thì không hay cho lắm. Mình học tiếng Anh thì phải cố gắng nói tiếng Anh chứ. Và lại việc cố gắng truyền đạt ý đến người đối thoại sẽ giúp mình học thêm cách nói.
- Researcher: Em nghĩ là em sẽ học thêm được gì nữa khi cố gắng diễn đạt ý mình muốn nói?
- Student: Em mong học thêm được nhiều từ vựng và cả ý tưởng nữa.

Researcher: Sao em ít khi ‘gọi điện cho người khác nhờ chỉ giúp cách diễn đạt ý muốn nói’

Student: Dạ, em không bao giờ làm chuyện này. Mình có thể hỏi trực tiếp ngay người đang nói chuyện với mình mà.

Researcher: Mà tại sao lại không gọi người khác nhờ giúp?

Student: Gọi điện hỏi người khác thì vừa tốn thời gian vừa không tôn trọng người đối thoại với mình.

Researcher: Còn ‘yêu cầu người đối thoại xác nhận xem mình có hiểu đúng ý họ hay không’?

Student: Dạ em hiếm khi dùng cách này lắm.

Researcher: Sao em lại ít dùng cách này?

Student: Dạ, như em đã nói là em nói tiếng Anh chủ yếu là với bạn cùng lớp. Nội dung bọn em nói cũng đơn giản nên cũng chẳng cần confirm lại.

Researcher: Vậy là xong. Rất cảm ơn em. Chúc em gặp nhiều may mắn và thành công trong học tập.

Student: Dạ. Em cảm ơn cô. Em cũng chúc cô hoàn thành tốt đề tài nghiên cứu.

## APPENDIX D

### A Sample Interview Script (The Translated Version)

Student: S37 - Nong Lam University

Date: March 10, 2012      Time: 2:00 p.m.

Researcher: Hello. Thank you for coming for this interview. What's your name?

Student: My name is .....

Researcher: ....., you are in your third year, right?

Student: Yes.

Researcher: Do you have any opportunity to communicate orally in English?

Student: I speak English with my friends during class time and in group study.

Researcher: How about with your teachers?

Student: I rarely speak English to my teachers.

Researcher: Why?

Student: There are many students in my class, and my teachers have to share the time to all of us.

Researcher: And with foreigners?

Student: Just sometimes. The only opportunity I have contact with foreigners is at my part time job at a language center. But my office work keeps me busy, so I don't have time to talk much with the foreign teachers there.

- Researcher: Do you have any difficulties in communicating orally in English?
- Student: Yes. I don't have enough words to say what I mean and I sometimes feel it difficult to understand the interlocutor.
- Researcher: OK, let's move on to the reasons why you reported using certain strategies frequently and certain strategies infrequently.
- Student: Yes.
- Researcher: Why do you frequently 'use familiar words instead of the exact Intended ones'?
- Student: When I don't know or don't remember the exact word for sure, I use a familiar word.
- Researcher: How come? But there are many other ways, too.
- Student: This makes me feel more confident. When I use familiar words, I feel safe from making mistakes.
- Researcher: How often do you 'pay attention to your pronunciation when speaking'?
- Student: I often do that. I think that with beautiful pronunciation, I can give good impressions to other people.
- Researcher: Anything else?
- Student: It makes me feel more confident.
- Researcher: What is the reason for your frequent use of 'guessing the interlocutor's idea based on what he has said so far'?
- Student: I usually cannot hear each word the interlocutor says, so I have to guess his/her idea based on whatever I catch from his speech.
- Researcher: What is the result of this strategy?

- Student: Not very much because sometimes I make wrong guess.
- Researcher: But why do you use this often?
- Student: Because it is fun and gives me a chance to try to understand the interlocutor's idea before asking the interlocutor for help.
- Researcher: Can you make it clearer?
- Student: I prefer doing things by myself.
- Researcher: I see.
- Researcher: How about 'paying attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes'?
- Student: When I cannot understand the interlocutor's idea, I can make my Guess based on the words which he slows down or emphasizes.
- Researcher: Why do you do so?
- Student: Because these words are key words. The interlocutor slows down or emphasizes because he/she wants me to notice them.
- Researcher: Do you often 'pay full attention to the interlocutor when he is talking'?
- Student: When speaking to a foreigner, I may not understand their whole message, so paying full attention to the interlocutor when he is talking is a way which helps to understand him better.
- Researcher: Is it necessary when the interlocutor is a Vietnamese?
- Student: Yes, it is important, too. Besides, it shows respect to the interlocutor.
- Researcher: Why do you infrequently use 'categories instead of the exact intended words'?
- Student: I sometimes use this strategy.
- Researcher: But why sometimes?



- Student: Because it is not clear and not effective. And we should not use categories often because other ways can help us to learn more vocabulary.
- Researcher: So what way do you often use to express your idea without knowing the exact word?
- Student: I often use description.
- Researcher: And using 'definitions instead of the exact intended words'? You rarely use this way, right?
- Student: Yes, because it is 'hard' and not lively.
- Researcher: What else?
- Student: The definitions should be accurate. It is very difficult for me to give such accurate definitions.
- Researcher: And do you often 'leave the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'?
- Student: I sometimes do this when I have no other choice.
- Researcher: Why not often?
- Student: It's not a good idea to leave the message unfinished. We learn the language, so we have to try to use it. Moreover, trying to express my intended message to the interlocutor will help me to improve the way I express my idea.
- Researcher: What else do you think you can improve through trying to express your idea?
- Student: I expect to learn more vocabulary and ideas.

Researcher: Why do you infrequently 'make telephone call to another person  
For assistance to express the intended meaning'?

Student: I never do this. We can the interlocutor.

Researcher: But why not calling to ask another person for help?

Student: It is not only a waste of time but shows no respect for the  
Interlocutor as well.

Researcher: Do you 'ask the interlocutor to confirm if your understanding of  
his message is correct'?

Student: I rarely do that.

Researcher: Why do you infrequently do that?

Student: Because my conversations which are mostly with my classmates are  
rather simple. I don't need confirmation.

Researcher: Well, that's it. Thank you very much for your cooperation. I wish you  
luck and success in your study.

Student: Thank you. I also wish you success in this study.

## APPENDIX E

### UNIVERSITIES AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

#### FOR THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

No.	University	Phase 1 (Questionnaire)			Phase 2 (Interview)		
		ESP	Non-ESP	Total	ESP	Non-ESP	Total
<b>Universities located in the center of Hochiminh City</b>							
1	HCMC University of Education	0	70	70	0	0	0
2	University of Humanities and Social Sciences, HCMC	60	70	130	3	4	7
3	HCMC Open University	80	40	120	3	4	7
4	HCMC University of Foreign Language and Information Technology (HUFLIT)	70	50	120	6	3	8
5	Sai Gon University	30	30	60	0	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>240</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Universities located in other regions</b>							
11	Nong Lam University	50	40	90	5	2	7
12	University of Technical Education, HCMC	50	0	50	0	0	0
13	Binh Duong University	50	0	50	0	0	0
14	An Giang University	0	100	100	0	5	5
15	Can Tho University	55	100	155	5	5	10
16	Tra Vinh University	50	0	50	0	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>255</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>495</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>44</b>

Note: HCMC: Hochiminh City

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Quyen Bui Thi Thuc was born in Hochiminh City, Vietnam. She received a Bachelor of Arts in English from Hochiminh City University of Education, Vietnam in 1993, and a Master of Science in TESOL from California State University, Fullerton, the U.S.A in 2000. She obtains a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Studies in academic year 2012 from Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

She is currently a lecturer at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Nong Lam University, Hochiminh City, Vietnam. Her academic areas of interest mainly lie in language learning strategies, communication strategies, teacher training, and second language acquisition.

