CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH   METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the procedures in the collection and analysis of the data.   It consists of two sections; the first outlines Taxonomy of CSs adopted for this study, research sample, data collection, and then it will describe the data collection and data analysis methods.

3.2 Research Approach

The framework for analysis in this study is developed from taxonomies suggested by previous researchers (Celce-Murcia, Dornyëi and Thurell, 1955; Dornyëi and Scott, 1997; Tarone, 1977; Paribakht, 1985) with some modifications (see 3.2.1). Description of the CS are adapted from Tarone(1977),   Dornyëi and Scott(1997) .

3.2.1 Taxonomy of CSs adopted for this study

Despite the numerous studies being conducted on CSs, researchers have not been successful in providing precise taxonomy of CSs. Although there is a general agreement of certain features of CSs, there are differences about the criteria on what constitutes a communication strategy. Based on the previous work on CSs (Tarone, 1980; Faerch&Kasper, 1983; Bialystok, 1990; Dornyei, 1995) a taxonomy of CSs has been developed.

Modification strategies which consist of the following (see 2.6.5):

a. Pauses

b. Confirmation Strategy

c. Clarification Strategy

d. Backchannels Strategy

e. Fillers Strategy

f. Self-repair Strategy

g. Comprehension   Strategy

Interactional Strategies which consist of the following (see 2.7.1):

a. Message Avoidance   Strategy

b. Paraphrases Strategy

   1) Approximation

   2) Circumlocution

c. Mime Strategy

d. Appeal for help Strategy

Achievement or Compensatory Strategies which consisted the following (see 2.7.4):

a. Use of all purpose words Strategy

b. Nonlinguistic signals Strategy

c. Stalling or time gaining Strategy

d. Approximation Strategy

e. Circumlocution Strategy

f. Guessing Strategy

3.3 Research Sample

The participants were enrolled with the Institute of Postgraduate Studies division of the University of Malaya. The participants (student) were from 6 different Middle-East countries, namely: Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Syria and Yemen. Out of 90 participants, 28(31%) participants were from Iran, 24(27%) participants were from Iraq, 15(17%) from were Saudi Arabia and 8 (9%) were from Oman, 8 (9%) were from Syria and 7(7%) from Yemen.(see Table 3.1)

Table 3.1: The Nationality of participants

Nationality	No. of Participants	Percentage

Iran	**28**	**31%**
Iraq	**24**	**27%**
Saudi Arabia	**15**	**17%**
Omen	**8**	**9%**
Syria	**8**	**9%**
Yemen	**7**	**7%**
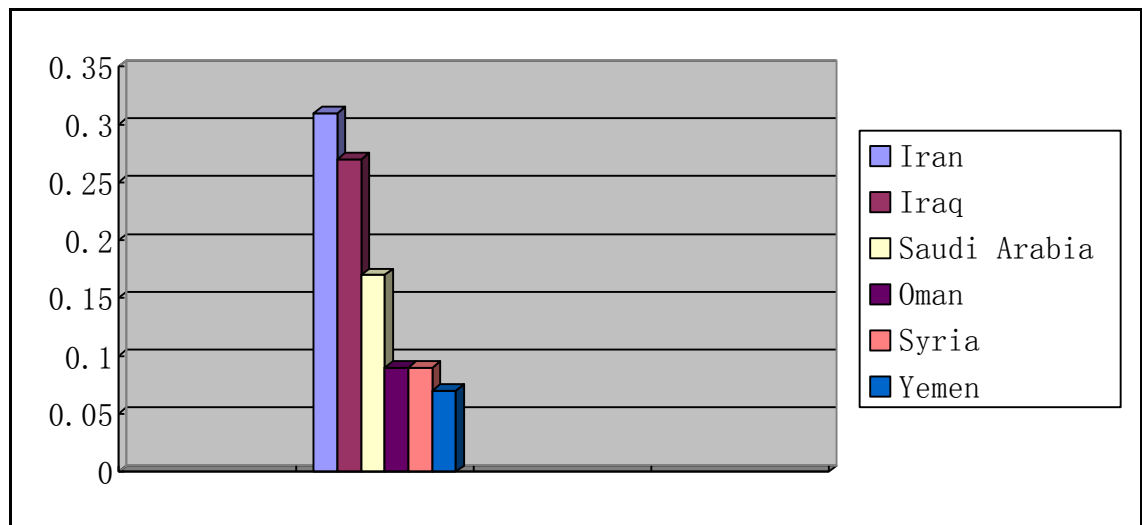
Out of all participants   7 were females while 83 were males. There were 7

counter staff also involved in this study. All agreed orally to participate in the research

voluntarily.

The study began in December 2007, with the students being chosen randomly to participate in

this research. These participants were doing their Masters degree or Doctoral degrees at the

University of Malaya.   All of them had to take an English placement Test set by the university.

The recordings for this study were done over a period of two weeks.

Permission was granted by both the counter staff and students to conduct video-recording at the service counters at IPS. The students were aware that their conversations were going to be recorded. This was made clear to them at the beginning of the sessions. They were also informed about the purpose of the recordings is to find out the communication strategies employed in the conversation when they asked information at the service counters in the Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS). In general most of students expressed their appreciation for being selected for the study and they hoped that the researcher could be helpful in finding solutions in improving the teaching and learning of the English language

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Instruments Used

A SONY Video camera has been used in this study because of its high quality and ability to record clear and good quality images and sound. Mini Video tapes were used to record the conversations. A Personal Computer with Power DVD program was also used. This made it easy for the writer to view the data that has been collected.

3.4.2 Data collection procedure

Data for this study was collected in two different ways. In order to obtain information about the language learners and their background, interviews were conducted with the participants to gather

information pertaining to their nationalities, the Universities where they did their first degree, the medium of instruction in their previous university/institute/college, their first language, the number of years they had been learning English and their own evaluation about their English proficiency.

In order to get a clear picture of verbal as well as non verbal communication strategies, the conversations between postgraduate students and counter staff at the IPS were video recorded.

Three steps were followed in order to collect data for this study. The following section describes the three steps.

Step one: the Interviews

A prepared questionnaire was used to obtain background information of the participants in an economical way. The interviews were conducted by the researcher at the IPS before video recording session began. This step was used so as to create good rapport with the participants.

Step two: Video-recording

There are a number of advantages to video recording, one advantage is the density of data that a visual recording provides (Grimshaw,1982a in Dufon,2002).

The video recordings on the conversations between students and counter staff were between two to eight minutes, making a total of three and half hours. The reason to choose video recording

insisted of audio recording is that the study includes not just the verbal strategies but also the non-verbal strategies. The use of video recordings provided the writer the opportunity to identify the paralinguistic cues (facial expression, head and eye movement, gesture, etc.) of the participants. Gestures, facial expressions, and other visual interactional cues also provided important information for the negotiation of meanings. L2 learners who have limited linguistic means may rely extensively on non-linguistic and paralinguistic means to convey their referential message and establish mutual knowledge. Video recordings would allow the researcher to playback the recordings repeatedly and allowed the researcher more time to analyse the data before drawing conclusions. Real time observations do not permit this observation. (Erickson, 1992 cited in Dufon, 2002: 44)

Step three: Transformation of the data from the video recordings to DVD

The tapes used to record the video sessions between the counter staff and the research samples were then transformed into DVDs for ease of analysis.

Step four: Data transcription

   The final step was to transcribe the data from the video recordings.   The data was transcribed as accurately as possible. The transcription was a time-consuming process. The recordings had to be listened and watched carefully to each line of utterance. The video recordings were viewed again and again for confirmation and to observe and note on present of the non verbal

communication strategies to be added into the transcripts. The original transcription was hand-written and then typed.

Transcription symbols (see APPENDIX A: Gail Jefferson in Atkinson& Heritage, J. (Eds.) (1984)) used in the transcripts were adopted with modifications and from other transcription symbols commonly used in previous studies on CS and pragmatics. The modifications were necessary for clarity of the transcripts; as the transcripts were taken preserve the subjects' actual utterance.

3.5. Analysis of Data

3.5.1 Method of Analysis

A qualitative analysis was carried out Simple frequency counts were made according to the types of communication strategies used. The finding was presented using tables. The frequency counts were converted into percentages for ranking. In addition relevant extracts from the transcriptions were used to help explain the findings.

The data were analysed as soon as they were collected. This was done in order to avoid lapse of time, which might affect remembering details from the interview conducted. The analysis is descriptive in nature.

3.5.2 Interview Analysis

Results from the unstructured interview questionnaire (see Appendix B) were categorized and a simple percentage was calculated. Results from the interview questionnaire served only as general information about the participants' learning experiences to support findings from the transcriptions.

The types of Communication Strategies used by the participant were categorized, tabulated and presented in a table form it needs, however, to be noted here that no attempts were made to examine the strategies used in correct pronunciation and grammar which were beyond the scope of the study. No systematic examination of paralinguistic strategies was conducted either.

In particular, the data collected were analysed based on communication strategies developed for this study. It was referred to modification strategies (see 2.6.5) comprise of pauses, confirmation check, clarification requests, backchannels, fillers, self-repairs, comprehension check. Interactional strategies comprise of message avoidance, paraphrases, mime, appeal for help.   Compensatory strategies comprise of use of all purpose words, nonlinguistic signals, time gaining, guessing, and non-verbal strategies comprise of Redundancy, substitution, complementation, contradiction and emphasis.

3.5.3 Tabulation

The tabulation of the data in figures and percentage was done in order to count the number of times the participants used a particular strategy. The tabulation is presented. Table also represents the

percentage of the frequency distribution of communication strategies employed by the participants.

Throughout the study, the types of strategies used by the participants to solve their communication problems were also observed. This study was concerned only with communication strategies used when participants lacked lexical items. It can be described as:

"The common factor to all communication strategies is that the inter language   learner has to deal with not knowing a word in the target language. It is vocabulary lack that is crucial. The strategies exit the plug gaps in the learners' vocabulary by allowing them to refer to a things or which they don know the target language."(Cook, 1991:69)

3.6 Problems encountered

Several problems were encountered by the researcher while undertaking this study. The following are the problems:

(1) The video recordings were very time consuming because the research sample consisted of students from several countries. It took nearly two weeks because it was important to do the recordings because the study looks at both verbal and non-verbal communication.

(2) Sometimes, it was difficult to grasp what was said due to the mispronunciation by the participants, transcriptions had to be done by replaying the player in small segments to ensure accuracy.

(3) Noisiness in IPS. At the time of recording, there were many students who were talking

loudly and this sometimes provided problems in getting audible recordings

(4) The researcher had insufficient technical experience and had to do quite a lot of learning

in this field in order to carry out the study successfully.

3.7 **Conclusion**

The participants were co-operative while the study was conducted so that makes the recordings

were facilitated. It facilitated the provision of very rich and useful data. Although there were some

inaudible segments during the recordings, the bulk of the recordings were quite clear. The video

recordings served well as the main source of data as it provide details that could not be captured on

audio recordings, such as the non-verbal features of the interactions.