

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature on Communication Strategies (henceforth CSs) is vast and varied. Therefore, this review has drawn upon the literature which has direct bearing on this study. It will present an overview communicative competence and its components followed by different definitions of CSs. This study focuses on CSs employed by Arab and Iranian students while communicating in a group out of the classroom, therefore the two major theoretical approaches to CSs i.e. ‘interactional approach’ and ‘psycholinguistic approach’ which have influenced the establishment of the different strategies and their related taxonomies will be presented in this section. Finally studies on CSs in Malaysia and their similarities and differences to the current study will be discussed.

2.2 Communicative Competence

Dell Hymes (1966) coined the term “Communicative Competence” as a reaction to Noam Chomsky’s (1965) notion of distinction between Competence and Performance. It is a term in linguistics which includes not only the grammatical knowledge of the language learner, but also their ability to use the knowledge of the target language for communication in classrooms as well as in social interaction in real life. According to Hymes (1972, p. 26) Communicative Competence is “what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community”. In other words one must know more than just the grammatical rules to be able to be understood when speaking in a target language.

Tarone and Yule (1989, p. 17) refer to a major shift in language teaching profession concerning what has to be taught. They note that “...there has been a change of

emphasis from presenting language as a set of *forms* (grammatical, phonological, lexical) ..., to presenting language as a *functional system* which is used to fulfill a range of communicative purposes.” (ibid)

Later on four components of communicative competence were suggested (Canale & Swain 1980; Canale 1983; Swain 1985). These are:-

- a. Grammatical competence
- b. Sociolinguistic competence
- c. Discourse competence
- d. Strategic competence

The terms suggested above have been defined as follows:-

2.2.1 Grammatical Competence

It includes knowledge of linguistic structures such as grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, word and sentence formation, etc.

2.2.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

It involves the knowledge of socio-cultural rules of the language and the ability to use such knowledge to produce and understand utterances appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts which are influenced by contextual factors such as status of participants, purposes of the interaction, degree of formality and norms or conventions of interaction. In other words, it is the appropriate application of vocabulary, register, politeness, and style in a given situation.

2.2.3 Discourse Competence

It is related to the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres. In other words, it is the

ability to combine language structures into different types of cohesive and coherent texts such as letters, scientific reports, poetry, academic essays, cooking recipes, etc.

2.2.4 Strategic Competence

It refers to the ability to employ verbal and nonverbal communication strategies in order to compensate for breakdowns in communication and enhance the effectiveness of communication. Tarone and Yule (1989) discuss the mastery of strategic skills in a language include the mastery of CSs which is used to deal with problems which may arise in the transmission of information to a listener. They explain “strategic competence, then, has to do with the ability to successfully get one’s meaning across to particular listeners” (Tarone & Yule 1989, p. 103)

Ability to use CSs which is the focus of this study results in strategic competence. Strategic competence has to do with analyzing communicative problems, how people manage problems, overcome difficulties and repair breakdowns when communicating.

The next section provides the various definitions of CSs and this is followed by theoretical approaches and taxonomies of communication strategies.

2.3 Communication Strategies and its Definitions

Selinker (1972) first used the term ‘Communication Strategies’ in his paper ‘Interlanguage’. Later on other researchers (Tarone 1980; Canale & Swain 1980; Faerch and Kasper 1983b; Bialystok 1984; Yarmohammdi & Seif 1992; Poulisse 1994; Dornyei & Scott 1995a, 1995b) conducted studies on the CSs used by language learners in order to overcome linguistic inadequacies and formulated their own definitions of CS. Increasing interest in CSs led to a growing number of studies focusing on identifying and classifying of CSs and their teachability (Bialystock 1984; Paribackht 1985; Bialystok and kellerman 1987; Tarone and Yule 1989; Dornyei and Thurell 1991;

David 1999). In addition studies on CSs used outside the classroom domain have also been studied (David 1993; Susila 1994; Omar 2003; Cha 2007).

All these studies show that there is a problem in conveying a message to a listener. Tarone (1980) explains that CSs are the mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning or a communicative goal in situations where the requisite meaning does not seem to be shared. Chong (2004, p.7) states clearly that “The mechanisms used to repair and clarify an intended meaning are called communication strategies.”

Furthermore Faerch and Kasper (1983b, p.2) defined CSs as devices employed by the L2 learners when they encounter problems in L2 communication because their communicative ends have outrun their communicative means. Target language learners need to use communication strategies and David explains that “Communication Strategies therefore serve to compensate for the inadequacies in the target language and consequently low proficiency learners, handicapped by their limited knowledge of the L2, need to resort to communicative strategies” (David 2007, p. 33)

Although different researchers have used different definitions for CSs basically communication strategies are strategies used to transmit messages and/or to ensure messages are understood even when one or one’s speech partner has limited proficiency in a language.

As described in strategic competence, researchers considered CSs as verbal and nonverbal ways to compensate for gaps in the speaker’s target language proficiency. To reflect this idea, Tarone (1977) who offered a taxonomy of CSs (see Table 2.1, modified version of Tarone 1977) which is still seen as one the most influential in the field, defined CSs as “Conscious ... strategies are used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual’s thought.” (Tarone 1977, p. 195).

Faerch and Kasper (1983b) who offered another significant taxonomy of CSs (see Table 2.2) provided another definition of CSs:-

CSs are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal. (Faerch & Kasper 1983b, p.36)

Both researchers emphasise the existence of problems and conscious plans to solve them, which refer to ‘problem-orientedness’ and ‘consciousness’, two defining criteria of CSs. The terms will be elaborated as follows:-

2.3.1 Problem-orientedness

Problem-orientedness or as suggested by Bialystok (1984, 1990) ‘problematicity’ is a primary defining criterion for CSs. CSs are used when there is a problem in transferring the intended meaning. Therefore problematicity refers to “the idea that strategies are used only when a speaker perceives that there is a problem which may interrupt communication” (Bialystock 1990, p.3). The focus on problems has been mentioned in most studies on CSs as a key feature resulting in strategic language behaviour. According to Dornyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b) the term problem-orientedness is not specific enough because the exact nature of the problem is still left undefined. As a result, several researchers extended the notion of problem-orientedness to include the following:

1. Own-performance problems: the ability of a speaker to realize that she/he has uttered something incorrectly or partly correct, resulting in various types of ‘self-repair’, ‘self-rephrasing’ and ‘self-editing’ mechanisms (Dornyei & Scott 1997).
2. Other-performance problems: the realization of problems in interlocutor’s speech, either because it is thought to be incorrect, or as a result of not being able to understand something completely and therefore associated with various strategies in order to assist

transfer of meaning such as ‘asking for repetition’, ‘asking for confirmation’ and ‘expressing non-understanding’ (Dornyei & Scott 1997).

3. Processing time pressure: the frequent need of the L2 speaker for more time to process and plan L2 speech than would be naturally available in fluent communication. This is associated with strategies such as the use of fillers, hesitation devices, and self-repetitions (Dornyei & Scott 1997).

4. Recourse deficits: L1 or L2-based gaps in speakers’ knowledge preventing them from verbalizing messages. This results in use of strategies such as code-switching and message reduction (Dornyei & Scott 1997).

2.3.2 Consciousness

CSs refer to a strategy as being a conscious technique used to achieve a goal. Dornyei and Scott (1997, p. 184) argue that “Consciousness has, in fact, so many different connotations that one would best avoid it altogether”. Three aspects of consciousness related CSs are elaborated by Dornyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b in Dornyei and Scott 1997):

1. Consciousness as awareness of the problem. In order to distinguish CSs from mistakes, it should include only those instances of problem-related language use which are related to language processing problems. For example, employing ‘word coinage’ as a CS when ‘typer’ is used as a conscious attempt to form a noun from ‘type’ (Dornyei and Scott 1997, p. 185).

2. Consciousness as intentionality. It refers to the intentionally used CSs to solve problems in contrast to the use of certain unintentional verbal behaviours such as using fillers and pauses (umming and erring) which the speaker is usually aware of the

existence of a problem but uses them most of the time without a conscious decision (Dornyei and Scott 1997, p. 185).

3. Consciousness as awareness of strategic language use. It refers to the awareness of the speaker when using a stopgap or doing a problem-related detour in order to achieve mutual understanding. One example is the conscious use of ‘literal translation’ as a solution to a recognized problem (Dornyei and Scott 1997, p. 185)

In the following section two major theoretical approaches i.e. Interactional Approach and Psycholinguistic Approach, which resulted in significant taxonomies of CSs mentioned earlier in 2.3 will be presented.

2.4 Approaches to Communication Strategies

There are significant differences in the list of strategies and taxonomies of CSs due to different studies conducted by different researchers (Tarone 1977; Faerch & Kasper 1983b; Paribakht 1985; Poulisse 1987; Bialystok 1990; Kellerman 1991; Dornyei & Scott 1997). Interactional and psycholinguistic approaches are two major theoretical approaches to CSs which have influenced the establishment of the different strategies and taxonomies.

2.4.1 Interactional Approach

Tarone’s (1977) interactional approach is one of the earliest typologies which provided a categorization of CSs. She studied the discourse of nine subjects in a picture-describing task. She suggests that “CSs are seen as tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communicative goal” (Tarone 1980, p. 420). She argues that in the interactional perspective, if repair mechanisms are used to clarify the intended meaning rather than correct linguistic forms then they can be considered CSs. Tarone’s (1977) study and her typology of CSs was a springboard for consequent studies such as Varadi (1980) and Paribakht (1985).

Scholars of the interactional approach (Varadi 1973; Tarone 1977, 1981; Corder 1978) viewed CSs as elements of discourse and focused on the linguistic realization of CSs. The following table (Table 2.1) presents Tarone's (1983) taxonomy of CSs.

Table 2.1 Tarone's Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGY
1. AVOIDANCE	
a. Topic Avoidance	Learner simply tries not to talk about concepts for which the target language item or structure is not known.
b. Message Abandonment	Learner begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue and stops in mid-utterance.
2. PARAPHRASE	
a. Approximation	Learner uses a single target language vocabulary item or structure, which the learner knows is not correct, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the correct item. (e.g. pipe for waterpipe)
b. Word Coinage	Learner makes up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept. (e.g. airball for balloon)
3. BORROWING	
a. Literal Translation	Learner translates word for word from the native language. (e.g. 'He invites him to drink, for they toast one another.')
b. Language Switch	Learner uses the native language term without bothering to translate. (e.g. balon for balloon)
c. Appeal for Assistance	Learner asks for correct term. (e.g. 'What is this? What called?')
d. Mime	Learner uses nonverbal strategies in place of a lexical item or action. (e.g. clapping one's hands to illustrate applause.)

(Source: Tarone 1983, p. 62)

However, the interactional approach has some limitations as pointed out by Faerch and Kasper (1984). They challenge Tarone's view of CSs as a joint effort between interlocutors to solve communicative problems. They suggest that communicative problems also occur in monologue (writing) where the interlocutor is not present. Furthermore, in Faerch and Kasper's (1983a, 1983b, 1984) typology of CSs even a pause is considered as indirect appeal for help while in Tarone's interactional definition, only performances marked by some form of appeal from the learner are considered as CSs.

2.4.2 Psycholinguistic Approach

Unlike the interactional approach, Faerch and Kasper (1983b) do not view negotiation of meaning as a necessary element; they adopted a psycholinguistic approach in which CSs are considered as a part of goal-oriented, intellectual behaviour. They refer to 'intellectual behaviour' as "all those psychic and behavioural actions which involves cognitive processes" (1983b, p.23). Therefore CSs are viewed as mental procedures which do not involve the interlocutor's support in solving communicative problems. With a similar definition of CSs, researchers such as Bialystok (1990) and the Nijmegen Group argued that CSs are inherently mental procedures and consequently CS research should investigate the cognitive processes underlying strategic language use. They believed that not understanding the cognitive psychological and psycholinguistic dimensions of CS use would lead to taxonomies of doubtful validity.

Faerch and Kasper (1983b) list two fundamentally different ways learners may choose in order to overcome the problems or difficulties in communication. They may either adopt avoidance behaviour (i.e. trying to do away with the problem by changing the communicative goal) or rely on achievement behaviour (i.e. resolving the problem by developing an alternative plan). As a result two types of strategies were classified: achievement strategies and reduction strategies.

The typology of Faerch and Kasper (1983b) is regarded as an advancement or development on Tarone's work. It is presented below in Table 2.2:-

Table 2.2 Faerch & Kasper's Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

<p>1. REDUCTION STRATEGIES</p> <p>A. Formal Reduction Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Phonological b. Morphological c. Syntactic d. Lexical <p>B. Functional Reduction Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Actional reduction b. Modal reduction c. Reduction of propositional content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic avoidance • Message abandonment • Meaning replacement
<p>2. ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGIES</p> <p>A. Compensatory strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Code switching b. Interlingual transfer c. Inter-/Intra-lingual transfer d. Interlanguage (IL) based strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalization • Paraphrase • Word Coinage • Restructuring e. Cooperative f. Nonverbal strategies <p>B. Retrieval strategies</p>

(Source: Faerch & Kasper 1983b, p. 52)

2.5 Taxonomy for the Present Study

The taxonomy chosen for data analysis in this study is based on Dornyei and Scott (1997). They suggested that 'problem-orientedness' has become a "primary defining criterion for CSs" (p. 182). The rationale for using this taxonomy is that it is based on problem-solving strategies which is an extension to the problem-management approach first classified by Dornyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b) as pointed out in Dornyei and Scott (1997) " ..., how CSs contribute to resolving conflicts and achieving mutual understanding". Moreover, Dornyei and Scott (1997) taxonomy includes the largest

number of CSs and is considered one of the recent taxonomies of CSs compared to the other taxonomies.

Dornyei and Scott (1997) explain that the CSs in this taxonomy are divided into three basic categories (examples below are taken from Dornyei and Scott 1997):

1. Direct strategies, which provide an alternative, manageable, and self-contained means of getting the meaning across, for example using ‘circumlocution’ to compensate for the lack of a word. Most of the traditionally identified CSs such as message reduction, word coinage and code switching fall under this category.

2. Indirect strategies, which do not provide alternative meaning structures, but on the contrary facilitate the conveyance of meaning indirectly by creating conditions for achieving mutual understanding, preventing breakdowns and keeping the communication channel open; for example using fillers or feigning understanding. Although not meaning related, indirect strategies play a significant role in problem-management

3. Interactional strategies, by which the participants cooperatively perform troubleshooting exchanges; for example to appeal for and grant help, or request for and provide clarification. Mutual understanding is a key factor of successful exchange of meaningful information.

According to Dornyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b cited in Dornyei and Scott 1997) these three basic categories are related to the four types of communication problems discussed earlier in 2.3.1. The taxonomy of Dornyei and Scott 1997 and its categories and sub-categories are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Dornyei and Scott's Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

DIRECT STRATEGIES	INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES	INDIRECT STRATEGIES
<p>A. Resource deficit-related strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message abandonment • Message reduction (topic avoidance) • Message replacement • Circumlocution • Approximation • Use of all-purpose words • Word coinage • Restructuring • Literal translation (transfer) • Foreignizing • Code switching (language switch) • Use of similar sounding words • Mumbling • Omission • Retrieval • Over-explicitness (waffling) • Mime (nonlinguistic/paralinguistic strategies) <p>B. Own performance problem-related strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-repair • Self-rephrasing <p>C. Other-performance problem-related strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other-repair 	<p>A. Resource deficit-related strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct appeal for help • Indirect appeal for help <p>B. Own-performance problem-related strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension check • Own-accuracy check <p>C. Other-performance problem-related strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for repetition • Asking for clarification • Asking for confirmation • Guessing • Expressing non-understanding • Interpretive summary • Response repeat • Response repair • Response rephrase • Response expand • Response confirm • Response reject 	<p>A. Processing time pressure-related Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of fillers • Self-repetition • Other-repetition <p>B. Own-performance problem-related Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal strategies <p>C. Other-performance problem-related strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feigning understanding

(source: Dornyei and Scott 1997, p. 197 & Table 1, p.188-193)

The taxonomy of CSs and their definitions based on Dornyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b in Dornyei & Scott 1997) follows:-

2.5.1 Direct Strategies

As explained earlier in 2.5 'direct strategies' are those CSs which offer alternative and independent ways to be able to get meaning across. According to the taxonomy of Dornyei and Scott (1997) 'direct strategies' are divided into three sub-categories i.e.

‘resource deficit-related’, ‘own performance problem-related’ and ‘other performance problem-related’ strategies (see Table 2.3).

2.5.1.1 L2-based Resource Deficit-related Strategies

Message abandonment: Leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.

Example: It is a person er...who is responsible for a house, for the block of house... I don’t know...[laughter] (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 188).

Message reduction (topic avoidance): Reducing the message by avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic languagewise or by leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources.

Example: I was looking for “satisfied with a good job, pleasantly tired,” and so on, but instead I accepted less (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 188).

Message replacement: Substituting the original message with a new one because one is not feeling capable of executing it.

Example: [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 (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 188).

Circumlocution (paraphrase): Exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action.

Example: “it becomes water” instead of “melt” (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 188).

Approximation: Using a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate or a related term, which share semantic features with the target word or structure.

Example: plate instead of “bowl” (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 188).

Use of all-purpose words: Extending a general, “empty” lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking. The over use of “thing, stuff, make, do, thingie, what-do-you-call-it”.

Example: I can’t work until you repair my...thing (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 188).

Word coinage: Creating a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to and existing L2 word.

Example: Using “dejunktion” and “unjunktion” for “street clearing” (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 189).

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.

Example: On Mickey’s face we can see the... so he’s he’s he’s wondering (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 189).

Use of 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.

Example: Using “cap” instead of “pan” (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 189).

Omission: Leaving a gap when not knowing a word and carrying on as if it had been said.

Example: then...er...the sun is is ...hm sun is... and the Mickey Mouse... [Retrospective comment: I didn’t know what ‘shine’ was.] (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p.189).

2.5.1.2 L1-based Resource Deficit-related Strategies

Literal translation: Translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1/L3 to L2.

Example: I made a big fault [translated from French] (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 189).

Foreignizing: Using a L1/L3 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphology.

Example: saying ‘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.

Example: Using Latin “ferrum” for “iron” (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 189).

2.5.1.3 L1 or L2-based Own-performance Problem-related Strategies

Retrieval: In an attempt to retrieve a lexical item saying a series of incomplete or wrong forms or structures before reaching the optimal form.

Example: It’s brake er...it’s broken broked broke (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 189).

Self-repair: Making self-initiated corrections in one’s own speech.

Example: then the sun and the weather get be...gets better (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 190).

Self-rephrasing: Repeating a term, but not quite as it is, but by adding something or using paraphrase.

Example: I don’t know the material...what it’s made of... (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 190).

2.5.1.4 Other-performance Problem-related Strategies

Other-repair: Correcting something in the interlocutor’s speech.

Example: Speaker:...because our tip went wrong... [...] Interlocutor: Oh, you mean the tap. Speaker: Tap, tap... (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 190).

2.5.2 Interactional Strategies

According to Dornyei and Scott's (1997) definition, 'interactional strategies' are those CSs by which the participants cooperatively perform trouble-shooting exchanges. Similar to 'direct strategies' which included several sub categories, 'interactional strategies' are consisted of several divisions according to Dornyei and Scott's (1997) taxonomy of CSs which will be presented as follows (see Table 2.3).

2.5.2.1 L1 or L2-based Resource Deficit-related Strategies

Direct appeal for help: Turning to the interlocutor for assistance by asking an explicit question concerning a gap in one's L2 knowledge (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 191).

Example: it's a kind of old clock so when it struck ser...I don't know, one , two , or three o'clock then a bird is coming out. What's the name? (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 191).

Indirect appeal for help: Trying to elicit help from the interlocutor indirectly by expressing lack of a needed L2 item either verbally or nonverbally.

Example: I don't know the name... [rising intonation, pause, eye contact] (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 191).

2.5.2.2 L1 or L2-based Own-performance Problem-related strategies

Comprehension check: Asking questions to check that the interlocutor can follow you.

Example: And what is the diameter of the pipe? The diameter. Do you know what the diameter is? (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

Own accuracy check: Checking that what is said is correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question intonation.

Example: I can see a huge snow... snowman? Snowman in the garden (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

2.5.2.3 L1 or L2-based Other-performance Problem-related strategies

Asking for repetition: Requesting repetition when not hearing or understand something properly.

Example: pardon? What? (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 191).

Asking for clarification: Requesting explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure.

Example: What do you mean?, you saw what? [Also ‘question repeats’, that is, echoing a word or a structure with a question intonation . (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 191).

Asking for confirmation: Requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly. Repeating the trigger in a ‘question repeat’ or asking a full question.

Example: You said...?, You mean...?, Do you mean...? (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 191).

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 (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 191).

Example: Oh. It is then not the washing machine. Is it a sink?

Expressing non-understanding: Expressing that one did not understand something properly either verbally or nonverbally

Example: Interlocutor: what is the diameter of the pipe? Speaker: The diameter? Interlocutor: the diameter. Speaker: I don’t know this thing. Interlocutor: How wide is the pipe? (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

Interpretive summary: Extended paraphrase of the interlocutor’s message to check that the speaker has understood correctly.

Example: So the pipe is broken, basically, and you don’t know what to do with it, right? (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

Response repeat: Repeating the original trigger or the suggested corrected form (after an other-repair)

Example: Speaker:...because our tip went wrong... [...] Interlocutor: Oh, you mean the tap. Speaker: Tap, tap... (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

Response repair: Providing other-initiated self-repair.

Example: Speaker: The water was not able to get up and I... Interlocutor: Get up? Where?

Speaker: Get down (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

Response rephrase: Rephrasing the message.

Example: Interlocutor: And do you happen to know if you have the rubber washer?

Speaker: pardon? Interlocutor: The rubber washer... it's the thing which is in the pipe (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

Response expand: Putting the problem word/issue into a larger context.

Example: Interlocutor: Do you know maybe er what the diameter of the pipe is?

Speaker: Pardon? Interlocutor: Diameter, this is er maybe you learnt mathematics and you sign er wit th this part of things (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

Response confirm: Confirming what the interlocutor has said or suggested.

Example: Uh, you mean under the sink, the pipe? For the... Speaker: Yes. Yes (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 192).

Response reject: Rejecting what the interlocutor has said or suggested without offering an alternative solution.

Example: Interlocutor: Is it plastic? Speaker: No (Dornyei & Scott 1997, p. 193).

Having discussed the most influential approaches of CSs to the current study, now we move on to provide details of studies on CSs.

2.6 Studies on Communication Strategies

Most research on CSs has focused on lexical difficulties (Kasper & Kellerman 1997, p. 7). To elicit CSs, many different elicitation tasks have been used. For example Poulisse (1990) used picture description task, by asking the language learners to describe the objects they saw to be identified by a native speaker after listening to the recordings of that picture description. Concept-identification task (Paribakht 1985) was another technique for eliciting CSs. Poulisse et al. (1990) used a story-telling task to elicit CSs of the learners by asking them to retell in English a story which was read to them in their native language. Studies based on tasks such as direction-giving (Lloyd 1997), information transfer (Yule et. al 1990), interview and conversation (Poulisse & Schils 1990) were carried out to observe CSs used in more authentic situations.

Empirical studies on CSs have shown the relationship between proficiency level and the choice of CS (Bialystok 1983; Faerch & Kasper 1983b; Frohlich & Paribakht 1984; Poulisse & Schils 1989; Chen 1990; Liskin-Gasparro 1996). In Paribakht's (1984) study three groups of twenty adult subjects (intermediate, advanced and native speaker) were required to communicate twenty lexical items comprising both abstract as well as concrete terms to the native speaker in an interview setting. She concluded that the choice and frequency of CS is dependent on the proficiency level.

There are studies showing how variables such as language proficiency, personality and learning situations influence the communication strategies used. Poulisse and Schils (1990) found that less proficient EFL learners used more communication strategies and the type of communication strategies used were dependent on the task given.

Other studies have focussed on the taxonomy of CSs of Dornyei and Scott (1997) (Cha 2007; Lafford 2004). In order to provide a proper perspective on the nature of Koreans' use of English in the multinational workplace Cha (2007) investigated CSs used by

some Koreans in an international business setting. Fifteen Koreans working in companies in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia were examined. Data was collected by using questionnaire, tape-recording and interview. Results showed that L2-based resource deficit strategies were employed more frequently. ‘Literal translation’ and ‘simplification’ were the most frequently used CSs. It indicates that participants tended to resort to their L1 by thinking in L1 and translating to English. This was confirmed by answers provided by the subjects.

Another study based on Dornyei and Scott’s taxonomy of CSs was on CSs used by learners of Spanish as a second language. Lafford (2004) investigated the frequency and types of communication strategies used by learners of Spanish as a second language in two different contexts (those students who did not travel to the country where the target language was spoken and stayed in their home country called ‘at home’, and those who travelled to study in the country where the target language is spoken called ‘study abroad’). The results revealed that students in the ‘study abroad’ context consistently used fewer communication strategies than those in the ‘at home’ context. It also showed that both groups used L2-based resource deficit strategies more frequently compared to the other CSs.

As the current study has been conducted in Malaysia, therefore a number of recent studies on CSs in Malaysia will be presented in the next part.

2.7 Studies on Communication Strategies in Malaysia

Some other recent studies which were carried out in Malaysia have identified the type and frequency of CSs used in English in different contexts by employing different methodologies (Chacko 2005; Ismail 2004; Chong 2004; Abdullah 2004; Said 2004; Hoon 2004). Each of these studies will be presented as follows.

There are studies on the type and frequency of CSs, using different tasks of eliciting data. Chacko (2005) identified the type and frequency of CSs used in a story-retelling task by audio-taping 36 Malay students with “mixed” (high and low English proficiency). Results showed that pauses, lexical substitution, message reduction and code switching respectively were the most frequently used communication strategy by both proficient and non-proficient students.

Another study on the type and frequency of CSs belongs to Ismail (2004). She examined the influence of proficiency on the frequency and type of CSs employed by non-native Japanese language learners by audio and video-taping 30 learners grouped in 3 different pairs according to their language proficiency (high-high, high-low and low-low) in a task (3 tasks for each group) based study consisting of interview, picture description/ picture construction and conversation activities. This study revealed that the high proficiency learners in the high-low group used CSs the most (almost all types of strategies). The study suggests that high proficiency learners make maximum effort to convey their message to their low proficiency interlocutors. It also confirms that the type and frequency of communication strategies used depends not only on the language proficiency of the speaker but also on the type (topic, picture description/construction, interview or conversation activities) and difficulty of the task(s) given and the language proficiency of the interlocutors. Ismail’s (2004) study is similar to the current study in having three different proficiency pairs (high-high, high-low and low-low). However Ismail’s (2004) study examined CSs used by one ethnic group i.e. Malays, while the current study compares the CSs used by participants of different ethnicity communicating in English. The results are expected to show the influence of ethnicity on the use of CSs. It is also expected that like in Ismail’s (2004) study the high proficiency participants in the high-low group in this study use more CSs compared to

the participants in the high-high group. The results of the current study will be compared with the study of Ismail (2004) in Chapter Four.

A study on the types on CSs using a different CSs elicitation task is Chong's (2004) which identified the influence of successful and unsuccessful negotiation based on the types of CSs used in teacher-led and student-led small-group interaction in an English course in a college in Malaysia. The stimulus was a text from a book entitled 'Let's Start Talking' for high beginning and low intermediate students. Chong audio-taped and observed a very small group of participants (n=7). The results showed that the teacher-led group interaction was more successful. Learners were more attentive to signals made by the teacher. The CSs identified were strongly influenced by the interlanguage of participants.

Studies on CSs using topic-based elicitation tasks which examined the influence of proficiency on the type of CSs used belong to Abdullah (2004) and Hoon (2004). In her study Abdullah (2004) examined the influence of proficiency on the types of CSs used. The task was an oral task in which pairs of students had to prepare a written text based on a similar topic given to them, a day earlier and they had to then present it in class. A limited number of students (n=8) divided into four groups consisting of two high proficiency and two low proficiency, were audio-taped for 5 to 10 minutes during the oral English assessment. Other methodologies used in this study were observation, questionnaire and interview. The results demonstrated that reduction and achievement strategies were mostly employed. The study also revealed that high proficiency learners used more CSs. Previously prepared tasks enable high proficiency language learners to benefit from their greater linguistic resources. Thus, they can avoid and reduce breakdown in conversations.

Another study on CSs using topic-based elicitation task belongs to Hoon (2004). She investigated the influence of proficiency on the type and frequency of CSs students used in topic-based discussions by audio and video-taping (10 to 15 minutes) a limited number of participants (n=8) divided into two groups. Participants consisted of two different English language proficiency (intermediate and low). The researcher of this study did not mention whether the data collection of each group involved subjects with similar or different language proficiencies. The data was collected in class but after school so as to reduce the background noise and time limitations. The results showed that intermediate language proficiency students used interactional strategies and paralinguistics more than other strategies. The low proficiency students mostly used reduction strategies.

There are studies on CSs using several elicitation tasks such as Said's (2004) study which discovered the reason bilingual students have adopted certain types of CSs, by audio-recording role-play tasks, interviewing and observing 26 participants divided into 6 groups. The study concentrated on code-switching and the use of non-verbal communication to communicate successfully. Non-verbal communication contributed much in helping the speakers convey their meaning successfully.

Looking at the studies above, there are three studies (Hoon 2004; Ismail 2004 and Chacko 2005) which are quite similar to the present study. All three studies looked at the type and frequency of the CSs used by different proficiency groups. Each study revealed a different outcome. The results of the present study will be compared to the above mentioned studies in Chapter Four.

2.8 Conclusion

The studies on CSs are numerous therefore this review of literature has presented those which have a direct relevance to this study. The chapter presented an overview of communicative competence, its components and also provided different definitions of CSs. This study focuses on CSs employed by Arab and Iranian students while communicating in a group in a non-classroom setting. The two major theoretical approaches to CSs i.e. 'interactional approach' and 'psycholinguistic approach' which have influenced the establishment of the different strategies and their related taxonomies were presented in this section. Finally a comparison of the current study to earlier studies on CSs in Malaysia was provided and similarities and differences were discussed.

The next chapter will present the methodology which involves the steps and procedures determined and followed in order to collect the data for the current study.