CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Language is omnipresent in our lives and we are always using it in different ways to communicate with other people. Communication then, according to Zhang (2009, p.99) is studied as the means of transmitting ideas, and the main means of communication among people are those that involve the use of words—oral communication and written communication, which are promoted through an extensive application of the communication strategies by manipulating a limited linguistic system. Tarone (1980) suggested that communication strategy is related to the "mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (p.419). Getting this into perspective, a communication strategy could be viewed as an effort to bridge a gap. Viewing this from another perspective, Faerch and Kasper (1984) maintained that a communication strategy is an essentially conscious scheme aimed at alleviating a problem on the way to reaching a communicative goal.

Researchers have invested a great deal of effort into the studying of communication strategies and of their identification and classification. According to Dornyei (1995), four studies that began in 1970 pioneered the ground studies into the communication strategies which he describes as the new "area of research" in applied linguistics. Those studies include Selinker's (1972) article on interlanguage that introduced the idea of strategies of second language (L2) communication. Vairadi (1973, published in 1980) and Tarone

(1977) elaborated on Selinker's notion by providing a systematic way to analyze communication strategies. Savignon (1972) introduced a groundbreaking language teaching research involving a communicative approach, or as she put it "coping strategies" that involved teaching communication strategies (Dornyei, 1995, p. 55). Dornyei, however, also puts forward the idea that total and perfect agreement on the definition of communication strategy does not exist among the scholars. According to Corder (1981), a functional definition researchers see eye to eye on is one that refers to communication strategies as "a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his [or her] meaning when faced with some difficulty" (as cited in Dornyei, 1995, p. 56).

Tarone's (1978) categorization of communication strategies could possibly be the most widely used. She came up with a scheme of her own based on a task involving nine learners in a picture elicitation practice. Throughout her observation, the subjects were continually employing five different communication strategies: "avoidance (topic avoidance and message abandonment); paraphrase (approximation, word coinage, and circumlocution); conscious transfer (literal translation and language switch); appeal for assistance and mime" (as cited in Tarone, 1981, p. 286).

Communication strategies in this study are therefore described as the application of various techniques on the part of the interlocutors involved in authentic communication events to overcome barriers on the way to a successful understanding. In other words, the strategies are implemented at any time the parties involved in the communication decide to reach a communicative goal but do not share the same structures of meaning. The present study also illustrates to map out the communication strategies applied by the interlocutors in the selected communication events.

There have been attempts in the past to elucidate the meaning of communication strategy, and contrasting it with the meaning of other terms such as learning strategy and production/ perception strategy. Communication strategies are suggested to be expressive of the learners' way of employing what they know in their attempt to communicate with speakers of the target language. It is also suggested that communication strategies have some sort of interactional function; that is, they are employed in a shared negotiation of meaning between the two interlocutors (Tarone, 1981).

Language acquisition, on the other hand, could be defined as a process throughout which language capabilities develop in human. While first language acquisition focuses mainly on the ways language develops in children, second language acquisition deals with the development of language in adults as well. Generally, language acquisition theorists fall into one of these two categories: those who emphasize nature and those who purport nurture as the more significant factors that make acquisition more explicable. Those who emphasize nature are of the view that acquiring a language has more inborn origins while the proponents of nurture believe that language acquisition is shaped not by inborn endowments of nature but by other factors such as exposure to language, teaching and necessity (Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). The present study is concerned with two major issues: firstly, the strategies foreign waiters employ to communicate as they lack proficiency in the target language; secondly, the methods adopted by them to obtain adequate proficiency in the work.

Accordingly, this literature review will first discuss communication strategies by providing differing definitions and highlighting their importance in relation to the present study.

Then, some language acquisition theories that are largely responsible for shaping the theoretical structure of this study will be reviewed.

2.1 The Notion of Communication Strategy

When second-language learners try to communicate with competent speakers, an interesting phenomenon seems to happen. This phenomenon is documented in some studies as an attempt of the speakers to communicate meaningful content while facing some obvious "deficiencies in the inter-language system" (Tarone 1981, p.286). For researchers in second language acquisition, it would be useful to discover some ways of defining this phenomenon. Studies related to Communication Strategies point to a phenomenon that "occur in interactions of intralanguage speakers with others" (Tarone, 1980, p.418). Tarone (1980) holds that in order to overcome and transcend the problems on the way to successful communication, second language users use their "restricted intralanguage" (p.418).

Jaafar (2006) suggests that " 'in situations where the appropriate systematic target language used has not been formed,' communication strategies are treated as attempts" by the language learners to make up for the "difficulties or inadequacies they face in trying to communicate" or convey their meaning to their "communication partner" (p.121). Therefore, it would be useful to observe some examples of strategies taken from Tarone (1978). However, this list of strategies is not proposed to be a comprehensive classification of all existent communication strategies. It does, however, help in arriving at a definition of the notion of communication strategy.

Paraphrase

Approximation:

It is defined as the application of one single word or structure that even the learners know is wrong. However, these words or structures share "enough semantic features" with the item desired by the speaker (e.g. pipe for water pipe).

Word Coinage:

It is defined as the ability of the learner to coin a new word that makes up for the desired concept (e.g. air ball for balloon).

Circumlocution:

It is defined as the learner's attempts to give a description that bears an account of the characteristic communication strategy or elements of the desired object or action rather than using the appropriate item or structure in the target language (e.g. That small kid is driving that toy. I do not know it's name. It has, uh cycles.).

Borrowing

Literal translation:

It is defined as the learner's attempts to give a word for word or verbatim translation in the target language of what s/he wants to say in the native language (e.g. "He invites him to drink," for "They toast one another.").

Language switch:

It is defined as expressing the desired item or structure in the native language (e.g. balon for balloon, tirtil for caterpillar).

Appeal for Assistance:

It is when the learner asks for the meaning of the desired item in the target language (e.g. (What is this? How do you call it?).

Mime:

This may include many common or personally devised nonverbal ways of representing items or concepts (e.g. pointing to something instead of naming it).

Avoidance

Topic avoidance:

It is defined as leaving the topics and avoiding talking about concepts by the learner because the target language "item or structure is not known."

Message abandonment:

Abandoning a message is a major breakdown in the flow of communication when the learner is not able to continue his/her talk.

On the other hand, Jaafar (2006) provides a list of communication strategies as follows: "circumlocution, simplification, paraphrase, translation, the use of formulaic expressions, repetition, rephrasing, language shift, appeal for assistance, code switching and gestures" (p.121). As put earlier, differing terminologies and taxonomies are applied in the process of identifying and classifying. Bialystok (1990) suggests that "if we ignore the differences in the structure of the taxonomies by abolishing the various overall categories, then a core group of specific strategies that appear consistently across the taxonomies clearly emerges" (as cited in Dornyei, 1995, p.57). In an attempt to achieve a core group of the offered taxonomies and classifications Dornyei (1995) suggests two groups of communication strategies[1]:

First group comprises communication strategies "Following Traditional Conceptualizations" based on studies done by Tarone (1977), Faerch and Kasper (1984), and Bialystok (1990). This group involves the following strategies:

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[1] They are produced as **FIGURE 1** in (Dornyei, 1995, p. 58)

Avoidance or Reduction Strategies

1. Message abandonment: that is leaving the "message unfinished" by the speaker because of deficiencies in language.

2. Topic avoidance: the speaker eschews talking about "topics" or "concepts" that have language difficulties.

Achievement or Compensatory Strategies

3. Circumlocution: that is the speaker describes his or her desired object or concept in more words when at loss for a word (e.g. the thing you keep ice in for refrigerator).

4. Approximation: that is the speaker probes his or her vocabulary repertoire to find a word closely related to the wanted (e.g. big car for truck).

5. Use of overgeneralizations (or all-purpose words): that is "extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts" where the speaker is lost for specific words (e.g. Too much saying *thing*, *make*, *that*).

6. Word-coinage: that is the coining new "nonexistent L2 word" (e.g., thousand leg worm for caterpillar).

7. Use of nonlinguistic means: that is the speaker tries to convey his/her meaning through "mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation."

8. Literal translation: that is the speaker tries to express the meaning by a word to word translation of his/her intended word, expression or "structure" from LI to L2.

9. Foreignizing: that is the speaker uses an "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)."

10. Code switching: that is the speaker uses an "LI word with LI pronunciation or a L3 word with L3 pronunciation in L2."

11. Appeal for help: that is the speaker resorts to the addressee for help either directly (e.g. How do you say…?) or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact).

Hedging strategies (also known as Stalling or Time-gaining Strategies)

12. Use of fillers/hesitation devices: that is using some filling words to gap pauses or probably to hold the floor for some more time (e.g., well, uh, em).

From among the communication strategies discussed here, code switching is emphasized and observed in studies related to the multilingual societies. Jaafar states that "although code switching is a type of communication strategy," this phenomenon is used both by the low proficiency and by proficient speakers (2006, p. 122). Moreover, David (2007) opines that code switching is frequent among the members of a multilingual society where ethnic languages are spoken next to the one common language, usually the national language. David shows that "code choice has played an important role in inter-ethnic communication especially in multi-cultural societies" (David 2007, p.2). The second categorization that Dornyei proposes is based on the researchers at Nijmegen University (Netherlands). They "criticized the existing typologies of communication strategies as being product oriented." Instead, they suggested a "process-oriented classification" (Dornyei, 1995, p.57). They are as follows:[2]

Conceptual strategies

That is "manipulating the target concept to make it expressible through available linguistic resources."

(a) Analytic strategies-specifying characteristic features of the concept (e.g., circumlocution). (b) Holistic strategies: that is "using a different concept which shares characteristics with the target item (e.g., approximation)."

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[2] They are produced as **FIGURE 2** in (Dornyei, 1995, p. 58)

Linguistic/code strategies

That is "manipulating the speaker's linguistic knowledge."

(a) Morphological creativity: that is coining new words "by applying L2 morphological rules to an L2 word (e.g. grammatical word coinage)."

(b) Transfer from another language.

Based on these examples, it is necessary to reevaluate two widely used definitions of communication strategies. The first defines communication strategy as: " 'a systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language (TL), in situations where the appropriate systematic TL rules have not been formed' " (Tarone, 1981, p.287). However, the meaning of "systematic attempt" is not exactly clear, nor is it possible to use this definition to differentiate production strategy[3] from a communication strategy. The second Definition: "a conscious attempt to communicate the learner's thought when the interlanguage structures are inadequate to convey that thought" (p.287).

The two definitions given here focus on the learner's systematic attempts at expressing and even decoding meaning in the target language as well as emphasizing the inadequacy of the interlangugae structures. Faerch & Kasper (1984) stated that the real issue with communication strategies is to determine how the learner "utilizes his limited knowledge to cope with various communication situations" (p.63). Communication strategies do not seem to have any relationship with the speaker's linguistic knowledge, rather they describe the learners' way of using their knowledge as they try to communicate with speakers of the TL. To decide that communication strategies are related to language use is to question the relationship of these strategies to communicative competence. Communication competence

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[3] Tarone defines production strategy (PS) as "an attempt to use one's linguistic system efficiently and clearly, with a minimum of effort." (Tarone, Communication Strategies, Foreigner talk, and Repair in Interlanguage, 1980, p. 3)

has sometimes been defined as the ability to use a person's linguistic system appropriately in a communication events.

Canale and Swain (1980) have suggested a wider definition of communicative competence which would include linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Using their framework, the following discussion will give a clearer understanding of communication strategies by contrasting it against some other terms. The aim here is to differentiate between sociolinguistic competence and communication strategies. While both sociolinguistic competence and communication strategies deal with the use of linguistic knowledge, the difference between them is that communication strategies are used to compensate for some deficiency in the linguistic system, and is focused on finding different ways of using what people know for the expressing of the message without considering appropriateness.

By contrast, sociolinguistic competence assumes the existence of a linguistic system -- the linguistic system has to be mutually known -- which is exchanged between both interlocutors based on a mutual knowledge of social norms. The definition of communication strategy should go beyond the attempts of the learner using a limited linguistic system for communication. So often, language is taken merely as a tool, which is simply used. Language, instead, is part of the communication that is created by the involved parties in the communication event.

The function of communication strategies, according to Tarone (1980), seems to be primarily to negotiate an agreement on meaning between two interlocutors. In an attempt to expand the meaning of communication strategies, therefore, she opines that the very term signifies the mutual attempt of the speaker and the hearer to presume a shared meaning at

times when essential structures of meaning are not shared. The structures referred to could be either one of the linguistic or sociolinguistic rules.

As such, communication strategies could be described as finding ways to bridge the linguistic knowledge of both of the second-language learner and the "target language interlocutor" in real time communication. As means to achieve this end, strategies like "approximation, mime, and circumlocution" could possibly be used. Other possible strategies may include "message abandonment and avoidance" which may ultimately leave the message behind wherever both the interlocutors feel exhausted to bridge that gap; that is, to agree on a shared meaning (Tarone, 1981, p.288).

2.1.1 Communications Strategies vs. Other Strategies

Alongside the communication strategies applied in the act of communication, there are some other set of strategies known as the 'production strategies'. According to Tarone (1980), production strategies could be any one of the attempts that applies a speaker's "linguistic system," with least of effort, as succinctly and efficiently possible. Production strategies and communication strategies however, no more share common grounds when it comes to the interactional nature of communication wherein meaning is negotiable; that is, production strategies are stripped of communication strategy's interactional focus.

Therefore, "prefabricated patterns, discourse planning, and rehearsal" could be categorized as production strategy since they aim at simplifying the speaking task in real time communication (Tarone, 1981, p.6). Aono and Hillis (1979) hold that rehearsed parts might be inflexible to unanticipated interruptions made by the listener. Thus, rehearsing does not seem to carry features of the interactional nature of communication, which focuses on negotiating meaning.

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Learning strategies form the third notion held here. Tarone (1981) defines a learning strategy "as an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language to incorporate these into one's interlanguage competence" (Tarone, 1981, p.7). It is the desire and motivation to learn the target language that forms the basis for the forces behind the learning strategies rather than any intention to communicate meaning. In relation to that, define learning strategies as "behaviors or thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (O'Malley & Chamot 1990, p.17).

Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information ...; specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Griffiths, 2008, p.84). According to Oxford (1990) learning strategies for L2 are "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques-such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task-used by students to enhance their own learning" (Hsiao and Oxford, 2002, p.369).

Hsiao and Oxford (2002) extend strategy as a "conscious movement" taken to lead to a goal. In the furtherance of their discussion they call for attention to the possibility of the strategies to be "controllable"; that is, the learner should be able to control the strategies s/he applies in order to systematically organize the process of learning (p.369). The ultimate end is to have some level of conscious meaning in applying L2 strategies. The L2 strategies will help in building the learner's independence; consequently, the learner will later use them to control her/his learning process.

Accordingly, Cohen and Aphek (1980) include strategies like using "mnemonics" in the process of learning target language vocabulary. Tarone (1981), catagorizes mnemonicommunication strategy as learning and not communication strategies. The discussion is furthered by including 'memorization or repetition' of challenging structures of the target language as some other possible learning strategies (Tarone, 1981, p.290). Although learning strategies differ functionally from the strategies mainly responsible for enhancing communication, to distinguish them is a challenging task. It is possible to say that attaining language mostly takes place via actively taking part in real life communications. Moreover, communication strategies pave the way for learners to be more successful in the attainment of the language. Tarone (1980) makes it clear that communication strategies might help learning purposes if they are applied in actual use. However, giving a clear image of the relationship between the learning strategies and communication strategies can be challenging; that is, could we say that a communication strategy can also be a learning strategy? With previous definitions in view, we could say that a person could have a communication strategy which is not a learning strategy, and the other way round.

One important reason to define strategies other than communication strategy (i.e. production strategy and learning strategy) and distinguishing them from each other is that knowing them gives a better understanding of the communication strategies. That is, some of these strategies, in a way or another , are related to communication strategies and drawing a separating line between them seems necessary. Therefore, a prior knowledge of the strategies applied at communication events will help in identifying them easier. But this does not mean that we will end up in an objective classification. Tarone (1981) sums up the passing criteria for a strategy to be considered a communication strategy:

(1) A speaker desires to communicate meaning X to a listener;

(2) The speaker believes the linguistic or sociolinguistic structure desired to communicate meaning X is unavailable, or is not shared with the listener; thus

(3) The speaker chooses to (a) avoid (not attempt) to communicate meaning X or (b) attempt alternative means to communicate meaning X. The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning."[4] (p.4)

One could put any of these strategies together and then decide which one is a learning strategy or a production strategy and not a communication strategy. Tarone's model could tell us whether a strategy is or is not a communication strategy if it lacks any one of her model's criteria.

However as a case to the point, it is theoretically possible to distinguish communication strategy and learning strategy on the basis of the first criterion presented above - the motivation underlying the use of the strategy. The problem, of course, arises in that firstly we have no way of measuring that motivation behind the dseire to communicate meaning X; that is, what is the obejctive measure for the subjective motivation. Secondly, it may be that one's motivation is both to learn and to communicate; that is, the interlocuter is motivated to learn the langugae and overcoming the barriers on the way to successful communication is not the end goal. And thirdly, one may unconsciously acquire language even if one is using a strategy solely to communicate a meaning. This last reason preoccupies itself with language theories that emphacize the unconscious learning of the language.

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[4] These criteria are given in a table in (Tarone, *Communication Strategies, Foreigner talk, and Repair in Interlanguage,* 1980) and they appear again in (Tarone, *Some Thoughts on the Notion of Communication Strategy*, 1981)

Tarone (1980) defines learning strategy as "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the the target language." If we take her definition of communication strategy's into account, we will note that "the desire to communicate meaning X" is the missing criterion for learning strategy; that is, the primary goal as defined for the LS is not to communicate but to learn (Tarone, 1980, p.4). Canale and Swain (1980) consider strategic competence as one of the building blocks in the structure of communicative competence and define strategic competence as "verbal and nonverbal strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence" (as cited in Dornyei, 1995, p.2).

Maleki (2010) holds that "communication strategies play an important role in the development of strategic competence." Therefore, we "can define communication strategies within strategic competence framework" (Maleki, 2010, p.640). In defining the relationship between the strategic competence and the communication strategies, Dornyei (1995) refers to the ability of some people to communicate even with a small repertoire of linguistic knowledge. He ascribes this ability to the existence of the strategic competence and believes that the "communicative success" of the people who lack the vocabulary and grammar relies heavily on their "'ability to communicate within restriction'" by using their strategic competence (Dornyei, 1995, p.3).

Apparently, strategic competence develops in the process of picking up the L1; however, it might happen unnoticeably. Therefore, learners of L2 have already unknowingly mastered strategic competence in the L1 that could be transferred to the process of learning L2. According to Bialystok & Kellerman, (1987) a majority of adult language learners have

somewhat developed the level of such competence which also includes a range of applicable communication strategies, no matter what level of proficiency they are at in the L2. The discussion has thus far revealed that there are differing views on the definition of communication strategies and learning strategies.

2.2 Theories of Language Acquisition

There are many remarkable phenomena peculiar to the human beings. One of these characteristics is the ability to acquire language. It happens so naturally that we seldom notice how complicated the process is. Many studies have been done to explain the language acquisition process. As a result, various theories of language acquisition are put forward: some hold that a child is born with an innate ability to learn the language. The technical term for this innate knowledge is the Language Acquistion Device (LAD). On the other hand, some theorists emphasize the more social aspect of language and other theorists stress the importance of biological interactions.

According to Crain and Lillo-Martin (1999) a child is born with an innate faculty to learn any language. They base their argument on the theory of the Universal Grammar (UG), which they define as "a set of principles common to all human languages" (p. 4). Such a view gives an account for having UG included in the LAD. Therefore, the child brings the language acquisition device as the innate linguistic knowledge to the act of acquiring language. Such an understanding is informed by the ideas of the MIT linguist Noam Chomsky whose *Aspects of Theory of Syntax*, published in 1965, has propounded strong justifications for investigating theories related to innate knowledge. Crain and Lillo-Martin (1999) describe the primary facts with regard to language acquisition as the universality of language and the varying levels of "environmental inputs" given to the children (p.7). That

the language is universal gives an equal opportunity to every child everywhere. Any child learns the language of her/his environment regardless of the differences in the latitude of that exposure or the input: any language in any community suffices for language development.

It is also a fact that a child living in a community where more than one language is spoken can learn all of them; however, only one will be developed as the native language- cultural and environmental issues matter for the latter. These researchers believe in the "uniformity of language acquisition" that is common to all languages (p. 8). No matter how difficult a language seems to learn or is more complicated than other languages in terms of grammar and word use, one brings an innate linguistic knowledge or faculty of learning to the act of acquiring a language which is applied in the practice of learning the language or languages of the community.

Crain and Lillo-Martin (1999) further their discussion on the subject and suggest a scientific hypothesis, which they hold to bear an account of more important characteristics of language acquisition. Language acquisition, they opine, happens so rapidly. That is, the children learn the language of their environment in the early years before schooling. Children master the problems and complexities of language learning and they can encode and decode ideas in the form of linguistically intelligible forms by year five of their life. As a basic need, learning to communicate develops faster than other skills.

However, this is a direct consequence of being exposed over a long period to the language of the community. The last prominent element that Crain & Lillo-Martin (1999) identified as one of the characteristics of language acquisition is 'sequence' of steps through which a child acquires a language. They report that these stages are universal and almost the same

for all. However, individuals develop differently from each other and the way they pass through the stages of language learning could be different as well.

2.2.1 Some Observations Catalogued in Second Language Acquistion

In Second Language Acquistion (SLA), the observable phenomenon is that a language is learned. However, different studies could possibly yield different interpretation of the observable phenomenon and how it operates. Some of the observations in SLA research as listed in VanPatten & Williams (2006) are:

Observation (1) "Exposure to input is necessary."[5]. The second language learner should be exposed to the target language; otherwise, the SLA could not happen. Input, as VanPatten and Williams (2006) hold, "is defined as the language the learner hears (or reads) and attends to for its meaning" (p.9). Therefore, the second language learner has to be exposed to the langugae s/he is supposed to learn in a way that he or she comprehends the meaning of the input and responds to it.

Obsevation (2) "A good deal of SLA happens incidentally" (p.10). This observation reveals that much of the differing aspects of language are picked up by learners while interacting communicatively. In other words, the input carries a message within itself. While the learners are primarily focused on that message, other linguistic aspects and features are also acquired incidentally (e.g. vocabulary, morphology).

Obsevation (3) "Learners come to know more than what they have been exposed to in the input." This observation shows that learners will "attain unconscious knowledge about the

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[5] Krashen's "comprehensible input" hypothesis (i+1) is very famous in studies related to language acquisition and is at the same time a general scheme of language acquisition. Gass (1997) defines Krashen's hypothesis as the "bit of language that is heard or read and that contains language slightly ahead of a learner's current state of grammatical knowledge" (Gass, 1997, p. 82).

language" (VanPatten & Williams, 2006, p.10). Such a knowledge may not come from the input to which the second language learner is exposed to. Many grammatical rules are learnt uncosciously and learners come to know what is grammatically well-formed or ill-formed. For example the learner will unconsciously get the knowledge on the constraints of using 'shall' as the auxillary verb for the future. Also, as the learner progresses, s/he will learn many things about the L2. A learner of English as a second language will find out that an ambiguity arises from the following sentence:

The president told Mr. John, the secretary, that he would not sign the contract. The learner finds that an ambiguity spins around the pronoun he. The pronoun *he* here could both mean the president or the secretary.

Observation (4) "Learner's output (speech) often follows predictable paths with stages in the acquistion of a given structure." VanPatten & Williams (2006) here bring in the idea of the "developmental sequence" which gives an account of the development of learning new rules and structures and vocabulary in the L2 (p.10). For example, learning how to construct questions in English may begin by giving a questioning voice to the output sentences and putting auxilaries or *wh* words at the beginning of the sentences.

Moreover, there are 'acquisition orders' in which learning some grammatical structures come to happen earlier than others (VanPatten & Williams, 2006, p.10). For example, how to form past tense out of the regular verbs is learnt easier to learn than the past forms of irregular verbs.

Observation (5) "Second language learning is variable in its outcome" (VanPatten & Williams, 2006, p.11). The basic idea in this observation is that not all the learners of L2 will gain from their exposure to L2. This will include: achieving the unconscious

knowledge about the second language, speaking and comprehension abilities as well as other aspects of language use.

Observation (6) "Second language learning is variable across linguistic subsystems" (VanPatten & Williams, 2006, p.11). The basic idea to this observation is the variety of language systems. Language is composed of a number of elements or components which interact with each other (e.g. phones, phonemes,syntax and semanticcommunication strategy). The learners vary in developing the different aspects of language due to the language components' level of complexity.

Observation (7) "There are limits on the effects of frequency on SLA" (VanPatten & Williams, 2006, p. 11) This observation concludes that the long-held idea that the frequent occurance of some linguistic features might help that feature to be acquired earlier could not hold true all the time. For example, teaching grammar rules however frequent in some methods does not guarantee learning these rules earlier. Therefore, language teaching methods have come a long way since the old methods like Grammar Translation Method to the very new ones with drastic changes in their objectives and principles.

Observation (8) "There are limits on the effect of a learner's first language on [his] SLA" (VanPatten & Williams, 2006, p. 11). The importance of the effects of the L1 on the learning of the L2 has been a subject of interest in the studies of SLA. To what extent L1 will affect the process of learning L2 is disputed among the researchers. Previously it was believed that L1 bears a lot of influence on SLA; something which is strongly challenged in present studies. Researchers suggest that such an influence is "selective" among the indivduals and varies across them.

Interestingly, there is a widespread belief that learning other languages within one family language could be easier. That is learning the L2 will be facilitated if L2 is from the same family of languages (e.g. French and English or French and Spanish). French and English share a lot of cognate words as well as English having many loan words from French. Gethin & Gunnemark (1996) mention that it is "naturally easier to learn a language that is close to one's own than to learn one with a very different vocabulary and grammar." At the same time, they also claim that "people who are good at learning one foreign language will almost always be good at learning others, even if those other languages are further from their own" (p.8).

Observation (9) "There are limits on the effects of instruction on SLA." It is commonly believed that the output equals the input (VanPatten & Williams, 2006, pp.11-12). However, an opposing view may not consider what is taught as what is learned. In other words, it is not possible to teach everything to an individual especially when we are dealing with language learners as one of the most complicated phenomena in the world. Many things are learnt by the learners unconsciously without direct instruction.

2.2.2 Social Interactionist Theory

The social interactionist theory specifically epitomizes the social view towards language, which puts emphasis on the environment and the milieu within which language acquisition takes place. This theory has its roots in the sociology of the social problems that occupies itself with numerous social issues (e.g., sociology of poverty, crime, mental illness, etc.). The social interactionist theory is strongly associated with the "progressive movement as a social and political response" to processes of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration (Maynard, 1988, p.311). Hacking (1975) speaks about an "immense

consciousness of language" which Maynard believes to be developing in a "variety of social scientific disciplines" (p.311). These disciplines, according to Maynard (1998), aim at understanding people's use of language to overcome "problems of most immediate interest"; moreover, it is to say that language use shows people's demonstration of "orientations, through structures of direct talk and interaction, to difficulties and issues that emerge most intimately and urgently for them" (p.312). According to Maynard and Perakyla (2006), "the sociological branch of social psychology has been most concerned with language". They also consider Mead's idea[6] of the "significant symbols" to be influential in the development of this theory (p.234).

The theory stresses the language pragmatics much more than grammar, which the theory proposes to come in at the later stages of the language acquisition process. Such a way of dealing with language plans to organize the beginner and advanced speakers of a language, whether it is a child or an adult or even if one is a second-language learner or a fluent speaker, in a special arrangement where feedback is usually provided. Unlike the modularity stance[7], the social-interactionist view towards language supposes "intimate bidirectional influences between language development and nonlinguistic developments in other domains (e.g., social cognition) and a critical role for experiences, particularly experiences in social interaction with caregivers and other supportive, competent language users" (Fletcher and Miller, 2005, p.53).

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[6] Mead (1934), "originated the suggestion that humans employ *significant symbols* that, when emitted by one party, elicit the same response in that party as in the party to whom the symbol is directed" Maynard and Perakyla (p.234).

[7] According to Fletcher and Miller (2005) modularity view towards language "presumes strong innate constraints on development, a rather minimal and circumscribed role for experience, and a relative independence of language development from other facets of development" (p.53).

The theory argues that the home, the cultural surroundings, and their effects on language acquisition in the early stages of childhood are the main emphasis. It does not view language acquisition as an ability which is innate in human beings, but as a process which develops through the successful negotiation of the environment within which the acquisition occurs. Accordingly, the theory suggests that among the language parts, vocabulary has strong ties with the environment it is used in; or it is alternatively bound by the culture wherein speech is indispensable and understood.

The premises of this approach are culture and environment based. Therefore, it cannot be held as universal. Actually, in social interactionist theory, language is believed not to be universal ever; it is rather considered to be bound to time and context. From one point of view, it is to say that language is utilitarian. That is, language develops in an environment in the context of which it is strongly needed and best understood. In other words, the theory suggests that language is best comprehended in its initial context or environment and transitions to any other environment are therefore taken as problems.

In the social interactionist theory social context is emphasized. As such, the immediate inference would be that the language learner is engaged in a considerable negotiation as a result of the needed and continuous relationship and engagement between the context, environment, the learner and speech. How language is pragmatically picked up by the learner is central to social interactionist theory and underlies its approach. On the other hand, theories which are more behaviorist in nature i.e. Chomsky's, put a lot more emphasis on the grammar and language structure. Moreover, in the social interaction engagements and negotiations make room for giving feedbacks and doing corrections. Supporters of interactionism, therefore, base their argument predominantly on the idea that

for utterances to be intelligible or to make sense one must have an awareness of the context he is in. In addition, comprehensibility and not grammar is the most important concern for language acqusition in early childhood.

However, according to Chomsky the very act of picking up the words will go nowhere solely-- they do not make sense on their own-- unless they are put right via teaching the grammar rules and structures. There are many other perspectives on language acquisition. While some view the importance of the relationship between the learner and the culture, others emphasize the relation between the utterances made by the native speakers or speakers with a considerably developed level of proficiency in L2 and the learners.

2.2.3 The Emergentist Theory

Some theorists opine that the process of the acquisition of a language is cognitive. This process, according to them, develops from the interaction between the environment and the pressures, which are biological in nature. O'Grady (2010) states that "emergentist approaches to language necessarily stand in opposition to theories of the language faculty that posit an innate universal grammar"(p.1). According to this theory, language learning has to start by both the environment and the provided conditions mutually; that is, these two, as the main impacts on learning a language must efficiently cooperate to allow one to pick up the language.[8] Those who support such a theory believe that cognitive processes in general are strongly effective in acquiring a language and they finally lead into a result,

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[8] However, according to O'Grady(2010):

> "A significant amount of emergentist work within linguisticcommunication strategy adopts the techniques of *CONNECTIONISM*, an approach to the study of the mind that seeks to model learning and cognition in terms of networks of (assumedly) neuron-like units. In its more extreme forms, connectionism rejects the existence of the sorts of symbolic representations (including syntactic structure) that have played a central role in explanatory work on human language" (p.2).

which leads to a set of phenomena related to language i.e. learning the words and vocabulary and picking up the grammatical rules. Many empirical studies approve the claim of these theories. Such studies depict the underlying principle of language learning, which says it is a rather complex process and is more complicated than the general belief (MacWhinney, 1999).

2.2.4 The Relational Frame Theory (RFT)

Hayes, Barnes-Holmes and Blackledge (2001) account for the source and origin of language competence and complicatedness. According to the Skinnerian behaviorism, RFT holds that one learns a language merely via interacting with one's surroundings or environment. The concept called functional contextualism in language acquisition was introduced by the RFT theorists. Such a concept emphasizes the way psychological events (i.e. thoughts, feelings, and behaviors) are predicted and identified. However, RFT takes a separate way from Skinner's through defining one specific type of "operant conditioning" recognized as "derived relational responding"; that is, a kind of learning process that is known to happen solely among humans because humans possess a special capacity for learning languages (p.3).

2.3 Issues Related to English Acquisition among Foreign Waiters

Foreign waiters refer to those who are not from the same country of origin as their hosts from whom they seek employment. There is no single reason as to why people seek job in a foreign country but people usually migrate to another land to look for oppurtunities to find better jobs and consequently afford better lives. Unlike the immigrant waiters who plan to reside for longer times in the host land, the foreign waiters' preliminary goal is to get job with a considerable pay. Foreign waiters in order to be integrated in the new environment,

and, more importantly, to be employed need to pick up the language of their new place of residency. These waiters have to communicate in their workplaces with their peers, supervisors, and customers if they work in service sectors or industries. Most of the peers, supervisors and customers are people who speak languages other than their own. Knowing how to communicate in the language used in their workplaces will provide them with a better opportunity to manage problems related to their work (e.g. talking to their supervisors or employers about the problems they face).

Goldstein (1997) is of the view that "language learning that is not perceived to be necessary and useful to the way people live out their lives is language resisted" (p.2). That is, the waiters learn English because they have to and it is perceived to be necessary to their current life. Whether to be fluent or illiterate in English language seems to be related to economic self-sufficiency. A working proficiency in English is related to higher wages and more secure employments in countries where English is the lingua franca. Foreign waiters who do not know English are more likely to have non-continuous employment and to earn less than those who can speak English (Burt, 2003). Statistics provided by the U.S. Census Bureau (2000 and 2003) explains why the immigrant waiters in U.S. need to learn English.

An analysis of the data obtained on immigrant earnings in the U.S revealed a positive relation between earnings and English language fluency (Burt, 2003). Burt writes that:

> "Forty-two percent of the participants in federally funded adult education programs are studying English (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Yet barriers such as time, transportation, and childcare may keep many from attending classes (Van Duzer, Moss, Burt, Peyton, & Ross-Feldman, 2003)" (Burt, 2003, p.1).

However, this may not hold true for foreign waiters in Malaysia. Firstly, waiters in Malaysia are not immigrants-- this is related to the Malaysian immigration laws. Secondly, despite the Malaysian language policy, which announces Bahasa Melayu as the national language, English seems to be the second language of the three major Malaysian ethnic groups[9]: Malay, Chinese and Indians.

In the metropolitan Kuala Lumpur (KL) the use of English is widespread and it is spoken almost everywhere in the city alongside with other ethnic languages in this macro-Malaysian multilingual society. Such an image shows how important it is for a foreign waiter working in KL to know English especially for interacting with the locals, employers, supervisors and other foreigners. Acquiring a considerable level of proficiency in English is emphasized for waiters involved in the food industry and service sectors as they are interacting with customers from different parts of the world.[10] In the following section, the discussion will be furthered by drawing on the workplace and the communicative realities in its context.

Unlike a classroom, the workplace context is like an "unwieldy canvas" that involves "the whole communicative environment" (Roberts, 2005, p.118). Some researchers such as Mawer& Fletcher (1999) treat the workplace as a curriculum. In such a context, the ability to communicate in the new language (English in the present study) is promoted as well as many other patterns (i.e. the ability to socialize with new people in the new workplace; developing ways of staying things indirectly) related to the act of communication. If

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[9] "With independence in 1957 the rise of nationalistic mindsets resulted in the displacement of English as a medium of instruction and with time Bahasa Melayu was made the medium of instruction. The use of Bahasa Melayu as the national language has helped in creating a national identity of Malaysians." (David, 2007, p.2)

[10] Especially, in recent years there seems a considerable growth of the number of foreign students, businesspersons, and tourists from different nationalities.

Mawer's idea be true, in the context of the workplace we could expect to see a wide range of means of learning a language by the waiters.

However, this may not hold true in the present study for some obvious reasons. In the context of Kuala Lumpur, big companies, hotels and restaurants take in employees with a considerable proficiency in English because they are required to function in English, for example those who are employed as promoters -- they should be able to describe and explain in English the products they are employed to promote. Nevertheless, not all the workplaces (e.g. eateries, cafes, security posts etc.) employ waiters who have good command of the English language and not all the foreign waiters in Malaysia[11] are good in English. Despite this, the workplace is where language is used for practical purposes. Moreover, the workplace is the site to learn the kind of language needed for specific jobs as well as promoting other communicative patterns and behaviors. Roberts (2005) suggests that the "'novice' English speaker learns to use language as a social practice and through language learns the socio-cultural knowledge that is 'wired into' language use" (p.118).

Thus, the discussion so far emphasizes the importance of the workplace as the site where language could be acquired. The workplace in the present study is an eatery in Kuala

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[11] Foreign workers have been arriving in Malaysia in large numbers and their number had dramatically increased in the last few years. Home Minister Datuk Seri Hisammuddin Tun Hussein said "as of December last year, there were some 2.4 million foreign waiters in Malaysia"; that is; about 20% of the total workforce. (*The Star,* 18/03/2010). Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) says, "in Malaysia, foreign workers can be employed in the manufacturing, construction, plantation, agricultural, services and domestic help sector. Services sector consists of fourteen sub sectors e.g. restaurant, launderette, welfare homes, cleaning services, wholesale/retail, goldsmith, barber, metal/scraps/recycle activities, cargo handling, hotel, caddy in golf club, textile and spa/reflexology."
According to the employment policies of MIDA only nationals from specified countries mainly from South East Asia (e.g. Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines (male only), India, etc) are allowed to work in approved sectors.
(http://www.mida.gov.my/en_v2/index.php?page=employment-of-foreign-waiters)

Lumpur; therefore, the interactional effect of its environment on the way waiters acquire the language and the methods they apply to acquire the language will be investigated. Burt (2003) suggests that providing English as an on the job second language (ESL) class is a way to provide instruction to those who have problems accessing programs outside of work (Burt, 2003). Formal language programs in the context of work can improve both work skills and language skills at the same time (e.g., ABC Canada, 1999; Burt, 1997; Hayflich, 1995; Mikulecky, 1992, as cited in Burt, 2003). However, due to "scheduling issues, high cost, perceived lack of benefit to the company, and the sense that it is not their responsibility," few employers pay for such instructions (p.16). What Burt (2003) speaks about providing on job instruction seems to be very effective. However, the probability of having (ESL) classes on job in the workplace in the present study is even lower as the cost of instruction might supersede the wages or even the income of the restaurant.

2.3.1 The Length of Time It Takes to Learn English

Employers and employees often have unrealistic ideas about the amount of time it takes to learn English. Researchers posit that "it takes from 2 to 5 years" for a child to be socially "adept in a second language and from 5 to 8 years to become academically" comparable to native speakers. Therefore, it seems that providing some few hours of language instruction at work would not help too much. Moreover, the foreign waiters do not have the same education and consequently they may not hold the same views towards and abilities in learning English (Burt, 2003, p.16).

However, the immigrant waiters have chosen to live in their target country while the foreign waiters in Kuala Lumpur may leave Malaysia anytime for different reasons. Such instability will affect any instruction should it be provided ever.

2.3.2 Language Use in the Workplace and Elsewhere

The pivotal idea to this issue is that even if the waiters acquire the language within the limited provided instructions, they will use their native tongue among themselves. In order to choose to speak a foreign language, there should be a need to speak that language. Moreover, in the workplace, bilingual waiters make use of code switching strategy, which was shown to be a communication strategy.

For example, in a conversation held in Bengali, waiters may give names of workplace tools, foods and drinks in English. In an English conversation, personal opinions and abstract concepts might be better expressed in Bengali. However, Milroy & Muysken (1995) hold that code switching and choosing to speak a language with a person, and another language with another person to facilitate ease and clarity of communication. In these contexts, is more likely to be an indication of linguistic deficiency rather than bilingual proficiency.

Burt (2003) opines that motivation could help facilitate the language acquisition if the learners (workers) are motivated to speak English on the floor all the times. This, however, is not applicable in the present study since no classes are held in and motivating the waiters to talk in English all the times seems to be a mere fantasizing of the topic.

2.3.3 Language and Identity

"The decision to use or to not use the target language and the accompanying workplace behaviors" could possibly be affected by the waiters' choice to assert or maintain their identity (Burt, 2003, p.17). This issue is related to ethnography; it is suggested that ethnography is "a kind of common sense that we are born with". Moreover, ethnographic

tools are supposed to be means to "understand the unfamiliar and seemingly hostile contexts of the workplace" (Roberts, 2005, p.119). This issue is important to the present study. Since the foreign waiters are new to both their environment and their workplaces, they need to be observed in terms of their integration into the new language and new communicative behaviors. Moreover, these foreign waiters have entered into a multilingual and at the same time multiethnic society where the ethnic identities are asserted in different ways (e.g. language, dressing, religion, etc.). Therefore, there seems to be a relationship between their strategies and methods to integrate into such a multicultural society and their attempts to acquire English.

All in all, all the works studies here in a way or another have helped greatly to firstly identify the very nature of the communication strategies and some existing language learning theories and their importance in language learning. Secondly, their ways of experimentation and the shape of their models have been influential in terms of devising the protocols, administering them and finally analyzing the results.

2.4 Summary

As put earlier, the present study is concerned with two major issues. Firstly, the strategies foreign waiters employ to communicate as they lack proficiency in the second language; secondly, the methods adopted by them to obtain adequate proficiency while at work. As our goals are set, heed will be taken to identify the kind of strategies the waiters use and to identify which communication strategies are more frequent than the others are. Moreover, we will see the ways the waiters or their employers choose to alleviate the problems with communication at workplace and how waiters obtain better proficiency in English while at work. In the furtherance of this discussion, some previous studies done about English

language at workplace and some ways to tackle the problems with English language at workplace were presented.