COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND REALIZATION PROCEDURES

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0. Introduction

The study of communication strategies (CS) has been the focus of a number of applied linguists whose main concern is the analysis of second-language use. Different definitions and different taxonomies of CS have been offered, mostly based on the observation of regularities in the behaviour of interlanguage (IL) users. Among the best-known taxonomies we find the proposals in Varadi (1973 / 1980), Tarone et al. (1976), Tarone (1977), Corder (1978), Bialystok & Fröhlich (1980), Faerch & Kasper (1980, 1983b, 1984), Bialystok (1983), Faerch et al. (1984), Paribakht (1985), and Poulisse (1993). For comparative reviews of the different proposals, see Ellis (1985, 1994), Bialystok (1990) and Poulisse (1990, 1993).

Many studies also add some empirical material with different aims, such as finding out whether or to what extent CS are related to the learner's L1 (Tarone, 1977), whether they are dependent on the task to be carried out (Galván & Campbell, 1979, Poulisse, 1990), or enquiring into the relationship between strategic behaviour and proficiency level (Palmberg, 1979, Paribakht, 1982, 1985, Poulisse, 1990, Manchón, 1987), inferencing ability (Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1980), personality (Haastrup & Phillipson, 1983) and teaching methods (Labarca & Khanji, 1986). Other studies have tried to establish differences between native and non-native speakers (Tarone & Yule, 1983 / 87), or to provide quantitative analysis of the relative frequency of specific strategies or the effect these have on communication (Bialystok, 1983).

It has been a general trend in the initial CS studies to take for granted that CS arise from the L2 learners' inability to cope with specific aspects of the communicative activity in which they are engaged. This has led many to treat CS almost exclusively as an L2-specific phenomenon. Symptomatic of this assumption is the large amount of research devoted to establishing the relationship between proficiency level and strategy use, and also the widely-accepted division between achievement and reduction strategies, as defended by Faerch & Kasper (1983b). In contrast to this restricted view, some more recent studies, such as Kellerman (1991) and Poulisse (1993), have made the claim that CS are not a distinctive L2 phenomenon and that research on CS has to be embedded into a more general framework of referential communication. This broader view has led to considerable improvement over previous accounts at least in terms of generality, parsimony, and psychological plausibility (see Kellerman 1991 for discussion).

In much the same vein, we take it that it is necessary to approach CS from the vantage point of a general theory of communication in order to provide the analyst with (i) a reliable definition of the concept of CS in terms of its relationship with other aspects of communication, (ii) a set of well-defined theoretical criteria for typological description, and (iii) reasonable grounds for empirical research into L2 behaviour and its relation with L1 behaviour; this may in turn provide further insights into communication theory.

This overall procedure rests on the assumption, implicitly shared by proponents of the broader view, that research in Applied Linguistics should proceed on the basis of a complementary feedback relationship between inductive and deductive procedures. However, our approach will differ from the other "broad" views in some respects. Thus, we shall consider all communicative behaviour, which includes language use, to be intrinsically strategic and reject, for reasons which will become apparent below, the idea of non-strategic communication. This idea, starting with Faerch & Kasper (1983b, 1984), has been either tacitly or explicitly accepted by most researchers in L2 strategies, including Poulisse (1993). In relation to this, we shall also reject the idea that strategic behaviour arises exclusively from difficulties in linguistic performance. In this, our view is quite similar to the one expressed by Tarone & Yule (1989) and Yule & Tarone (1990), who discuss strategic competence both in terms of solving communicative problems and of conveying and interpreting information. However, their focus of attention is not placed on the form of the communicative framework but rather on elicitation procedures designed to investigate the relationship between communicative functions and their associated linguistic forms (in L1 and L2). The resulting account loses in generality, parsimony, and psychological plausibility, a weakness which we shall try to overcome by focusing our attention on the communicative framework.

In what follows we shall first explore the concept of communication strategy, which we shall largely base on a understanding of communication in terms of Sperber & Wilson's (1986) relevance theory. As a result, our description will differ substantially from previous accounts. We shall also propose a distinction between the concept of CS and that of *realization procedure* (RP). The latter is actually more akin to what researchers have so far called "communication strategy". We shall further distinguish between local and general CS and argue that a workable typology of CS can only be based on the latter since local CS depend exclusively on the idiosyncrasies of particular communicative tasks, making them little predictable. Finally, we shall compare our position with some of the most relevant proposals in the literature on CS and suggest that CS, since they hinge on communicative goals, are common to both L1 and L2, while RPs may vary according to the language user's linguistic competence.

1. Communication as strategic activity

As we have remarked before, definitions of CS usually focus on problems that L2 learners encounter as they strive to use the target language. Let us examine a representative sample of these definitions:

[1] a systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed (Tarone et al., 1976 / 83: 5)

[2] a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty (Corder, 1978 / 83: 16)

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

[4] techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language (Stern, 1983: 411).

[5] problem-solving devices that learners resort to in order to solve what they experience as problems in speech production and reception (Faerch et al. 1984: 154).

[6] strategies[1] which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to his own linguistic shortcomings (Poulisse, 1990: 22).

All these definitions share a number of features: strategies are conscious plans ("techniques", "methods", "devices", "attempts") to solve communicative deficiencies. Definitions [1], [4], [5] and [6] are explicit in identifying the cause of such deficiencies in the language user's imperfect knowledge of the linguistic system. In [2] and [3] the cause is implicit, although these definitions are more satisfactory in that they place the notion of strategy within a wider communicative context. However, these two, together with [4] and [6][2], only seem to consider the production point of view, while [1] and [5] also include comprehension problems.

As Faerch & Kasper (1983), and Bialystok (1990: 3-5), have pointed out, the key characteristics of most definitions of CS are *problematicity*, *consciousness* and *intentionality*. The three are found somehow or other in the definitions above and we may agree that they are necessary in order to understand the concept of CS. But we only see intentionality as truly definitional both for L1 and L2 strategies while problematicity and consciousness are secondary to intentionality. We shall try to make this point clear with a brief description of what we understand by communication.

As Sperber & Wilson (1986) have noted, traditional models of communication are based on the notions of coding and decoding: an addresser encodes a message into a signal which is received and decoded by an addressee (cf. Shannon & Weaver, 1949). This traditional view has been challenged by some philosophers —like Grice (1975)— on the grounds that communication also involves producing and interpreting evidence. Sperber & Wilson have referred to the traditional model as the *code model* and to the other as the *inferential model*. In their view, both are complementary since an utterance has a variety of different interpretations, all compatible with the information that is linguistically encoded. However, only one interpretation will be selected as the most relevant one, according to the context of assumptions entertained by the addressee.

To give one example, borrowed and slightly adapted from Wilson (1994: 342ff.), imagine that a friend of yours is a keen club tennis player and that you know that he has a new doubles partner. You ask what it is like to play with him and obtain the following reply:

(1) He has much in common with John McEnroe.

Mere decoding of (1) will by no means give an interpretation. This will follow from our assumptions about John McEnroe. If we want to interpret the intended message, we need to use this knowledge and then draw an inference. There are a number of possibilities: we know (i) that John McEnroe is an excellent tennis player, (ii) that he has a

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1 Poulisse here only refers to «compensatory strategies», which are a subset of general CS. Compensatory strategies are similar to Faerch & Kasper's «achievement strategies» and are opposed to «reduction strategies» in that the former are based on commission rather than on omission. It will be noted that all the other definitions focus on commission as well, and could be called compensatory. For that reason, it has seemed appropriate to us to list Poulisse's fairly elaborate definition here.

2 Definitions [3] and [4] as such are vague about whether they refer to production and reception or only to production. However, from the context of discussion where they arise, we can gather that the authors only had production in mind.

good serve-and-volley game, (iii) that he is bad-tempered on court, (iv) that he is married to a film star, (v) that he enjoys rock music, and so on. In the absence of further clues, we shall rapidly discard assumptions like (iv) and (v), which are unrelated to the context at hand. For a plausible interpretation of (1) we favour to invoke assumptions like (i)-(iii); if none of them turns out satisfactory, we shall either go on to probe our knowledge about John McEnroe or ask for help. One likely interpretation, in the context we have provided, is that your friend's new partner is very bad-tempered while on court.

This discussion allows us to separate between what the speaker says and what he means[3]. There is still one third factor to take into account. Why did the speaker choose to say (1) instead of giving a much more straightforward response? For example, he could have said:

(2) He is very bad-tempered on court.

Why does the speaker take the risk of being misunderstood by saying and meaning different things? Surely because the risk is worthwhile. Utterance (1) conveys much more than the simple, explicit response in (2) does: it gives the addressee an idea of the attitude behind the speaker's words and it does so by implication: John McEnroe's behaviour on court is disliked by almost everyone; in the same way, we are entitled to assume that the speaker of (1) entertains the same attitude towards his new doubles partner, or else we would not have been put to the extra processing effort (1) involves as opposed to the more straightforward (2). Considerations of implied attitude, which are usually missing in indirect speech act accounts, are essential to Sperber & Wilson's theory.

So, utterance interpretation involves making the most relevant assumptions not only about what speakers say and intend, but also about what they imply. What speakers say is based on the code, but utterances are more than a code: they are instances of what Sperber & Wilson call *ostensive behaviour*, that is, behaviour intended to capture somebody else's attention. When behaviour is identified as ostensive it is assumed to be not only meaningful but also relevant, that is, to be the most economical or effective way of achieving the addresser's intended communicative effect.

It is clear then that communicative behaviour is essentially intentional or goal-oriented. And it is also problematic, but not only in the sense that speakers are confronted with coding and decoding messages, but also in the sense that they have to *interpret* the messages, which requires an analysis of a number of contextual variables. In this, problematicity is a necessary consequence of the need to interpret the speaker's intentions and naturally extends beyond the speaker's mastery of the code. The speaker's communicative activity requires a certain degree of planning which may be automatized to a greater or lesser extent depending very much on the speaker's previous experience with similar communicative situations.

Our recognition of communication as primarily goal-oriented and consequently strategic in nature places us in a position to define the concept of CS, which we shall do in the next section.

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[3] This distinction is by now commonplace in pragmatics; it is found in Searle's (1979) distinction between *speaker meaning* and *sentence meaning*, in the division between *direct* and *indirect speech acts* (Cole & Morgan, 1975), and in the theory of *implicature* as expounded by Grice (1975) and followers.

2. Communication Strategies and Realization Procedures

By a strategy we mean a set of procedures aimed at achieving a certain end. Consequently, by a CS we mean a set of procedures aimed at achieving a certain communicative goal. Since these procedures implement the strategy, we shall refer to them as *realization procedures* or RPs, a concept which will be addressed in more detail below.

The nature of CS is closely bound up with the nature of communicative goals. These vary in degree of generality and complexity; for that reason it is often the case that in order to reach an overall goal, the language user needs to set up a number of more specific subgoals with the aim of solving the general communicative problem. For example, imagine John has the goal of persuading a friend of his, Fred, to become involved with him in a fund-raising project for a local charity. Fred is suspicious of the administration of that particular project, but John knows that it is usually easy to appeal to Fred's humanitarian feelings, which may give him a chance. John starts a conversation in the hope that he will strike the right chord:

(3) John: You know, they still need people for the charity

Fred: You already know how I feel about it

John: Come on, Fred, think of all those poor homeless. Besides, this time nothing goes on overheads ...

In order for John to achieve his overall goal (persuade Fred to join the project) he needs to set up more specific subgoals. In the example given, John's first objective is to bring up the subject of his concern. But at the same time, John works under the assumption that Fred thinks that John wants to get him embarked upon the project; therefore John's first utterance is constructed to respond to another goal: to have Fred arrive at the conclusion, by way of implicature, that he is needed for the charity and that John is inviting him to join in. To achieve this other goal John's strategy is based on one single procedure: stating the need for working hands in the charity. By so doing John is simultaneously achieving his initial goal. Had Fred not given evidence that he had recovered the intended message, John could still have reacted by readapting his strategy to the ongoing situation, which is possible because he was wise to introduce the topic (ie. the charity) explicitly.

But in our example, John's covert request is taken as such by Fred, whose subsequent move is to give an excuse which is to be understood as a weak refusal. In the absence of a strong, blatant refusal, John feels free to launch a second attack where he uses his reserve ammunition: appealing to John's feelings and anticipating an answer to John's possible objection to the way the charity is administered.

We see how an overall non-communicative goal (NcG) triggers off a fairly complex piece of communicative behaviour. John could have tried to achieve his NcG by non-communicative means[4]. In our example, John's first strategy has been to use language as an effective way of communicating his desire. Once this choice has been made, John needs to set up a communicative goal (CG) which will be dependent on the character of the NcG and on the range of options which the social pragmatic system displays for him. He might have chosen to discuss, say, submarine fishing with Fred, but that would have proved fruitless for his purpose. Or he might have chosen a different CG, like asking Fred explicitly

[4] F. i., by working hard within the charity team for some time and then giving evident signs of his personal satisfaction about the progress made in the hope that Fred might later feel tempted to take part.

to become part of the charity project. But in our social system an explicit request can be too imposing and provoke a challenging attitude in the addressee. So John, in our example, chooses to be more tentative. This is his specific CS: to issue a tentative request.

There are a number of options for tentative requests, like asking questions about capability or willingness, but John's choice seems to be one of the most tentative possibilities allowed by the relationship between the social system and the linguistic system: making a statement about a third party's needs[5]. The kind of choice we are referring to is an instance of what we have called realization procedures or RPs. These are sets of options which in combination implement a strategy. Since the range of possible RPs is constrained in the way we have described, it follows that the number of possible CS is also limited and that we should be able to state them provided we are able to identify the possible combinations between RPs.

Each CS is dependent on a subgoal and is realized by means of a set of procedures. In our example, we see John use the following CS and procedures:

NcG: Get Fred to join the local charity team

CG: Have Fred build into his knowledge system the assumption that John wants him to join the local charity team

CS: Ask Fred to join the local charity team in such a way that (i) Fred feels compelled to do so but (ii) Fred has no solid grounds to complain that John is making the request.

RPs:

[1] Make a statement of fact about the charity's needs

[2] Make an appeal to Fred's feelings about the humanitarian object of the charity

[3] Override Fred's possible objections to the way the charity is run

Let us now focus briefly on the nature of RPs. In verbal communication, RPs are realized by sets of linguistic options. Consider these sentences as plausible alternatives to each of the realization options in (3):

(4) a. They are in need of more people for the charity
b. The charity is in need of more people
c. They would do fine with a few more workers at the charity
d. More working hands are needed for the charity

(5) a. Don't you ever think of the poor homeless?
b. You don't mean to say you don't mind about the homeless
c. Can't you think of the poor homeless for a minute?
d. I'm sure you are mindful of the homeless

(6) a. Besides, no money is spent on overhead charges
b. You know they've managed to do without overhead charges?
c. No money goes on overheads now
d. Not even a penny will go on overheads this time

5 We are generally expected to do our best in being beneficial to others as long as this is not unreasonably costly to us. This socio-cultural principle has been accounted for by Leech (1983) by means of a pragmatic scale called the *cost-benefit scale*. In the case under discussion, making a statement as an indirect form of request gives Fred enough freedom to ignore the implicit request value.

The linguistic system displays a number of options for the realization of every speech act. For a statement of fact, for example, we typically use in English a subject plus a predicator, plus a possible number of complements and adjuncts in the order here mentioned. Each of these constituents can be realized in a variety of ways, as can be seen from the sentences in (4). Similar comments would hold for the rest of the examples.

3. General Communication Strategies

So far we have seen how in order to achieve a NcG we may make use of CS which are intrinsically procedural. The example we have studied, however, is only illustrative of one kind of strategy which, because of its very specific situational nature, may be called *local communication strategy*. In this section we want to argue for the existence of CS of a more general kind, to which we shall refer by the name of *general communication strategies*.

Local CS operate on the basis of specific well-defined communicative goals, as we have been able to see in our analysis of (3) above. They are a means to achieving a particular end and they are as optional as the goal itself. That is, only after the individual has chosen to use language in order to achieve his non-communicative goal can local CS do their work. Local CS, like all CS, are constrained by the range of available RPs, but their use is further affected by other aspects of the communicative activity. Consider again John's first turn in example (3). Why did he choose to talk to Fred about the needs of the local charity? Because he trusted that Fred would be able to understand not only what he said, but also what he intended and what he implied. In other words, because John was confident that Fred could derive the right set of assumptions from his utterance. In Sperber & Wilson's relevance-theoretical framework this has been explained in terms of the balance between *contextual effects* and *processing effort*: As Wilson has aptly put it:

> Contextual effects are achieved when newly-presented information interacts with a context of existing assumptions in one of three ways: by strengthening an existing assumption, by contradicting and eliminating an existing assumption, or by combining with an existing assumption to yield a contextual implication: that is, a logical implication derivable neither from the new information alone, nor from the context alone, but from the new information and the context combined. [...] The processing effort required to understand an utterance depends on two main factors. First, the effort of memory and imagination needed to construct a suitable context; second, the psychological complexity of the utterance itself. Greater complexity implies greater processing effort; gratuitous complexity detracts from relevance. [...] Relevance, then, depends on contextual effects and processing effort. The greater the contextual effects, the greater the relevance; but the greater the processing effort needed to obtain these effects, the *lower* the relevance. (Wilson, 1994: 346-348).

A contextual effect is, according to Sperber & Wilson, an alteration in the individual's *cognitive environment* or mental context. In general, we can say that any type of informative behaviour can produce a contextual effect. But only communicative behaviour can be said to be produced with an intended balance between potential contextual effects and processing effort. When the balance is optimal (that is, the intended effects are produced with the least possible processing effort) we say that the communicative behaviour has been *optimally relevant*.

Noting that human communication is guided by the principle of relevance (PR) is by no means a trivial observation. If we did not abide by this principle communication would simply not exist. As communicators we produce our messages with the implicit presumption that they will be taken as optimally relevant —whether they are actually relevant or not— by our addressees. We trust that our messages will be processed. Addressees also trust that communicators will try to be optimally relevant.

If such is the importance of the PR for communication, it should have some sort of influence on CS. We believe that the PR explains the language user's attitude towards the communicative act. Thus, when language users feel that the processing effort they are being put to is too strong for the anticipated contextual effects, they may decide to abort the entire communicative process or at least part of it. Grice (1975) already referred to this kind of behaviour as "opting out" of the Co-operative Principle (CP). For example, one may not want to hurt somebody else's feelings by giving some requested information —in Grice's theory by keeping the maxims of Quantity—, and thereby refuse to talk. However, Grice's observation only explains why some contributions to the linguistic communicative act or discourse may have been avoided. But it would never explain why one may not want to read a difficult philosophical treatise, or why some people take delight in processing highly figurative language which others abhor. These attitudes are understood better in terms of selfishness than of co-operation: if the expected contextual effects are presumed to be rewarding enough, the individual will go about any amount of processing effort to obtain them. The PR also explains why we apparently "opt out" of a co-operation maxim: discourse participants may refuse to talk because they do not want to produce any undesired contextual effects. Sometimes the refusal to participate is a matter of *cognitive economy*, (a term which we would like to substitute for Sperber & Wilson's notion of *processing effort*, since the latter only takes into account the role of the addressee). Participants may feel that the expected communicative outcome of their contributions are not worth the effort of constructing their messages.

One obvious implication of what we have said is that local CS can only exist to the extent that the language user is willing to take part in the discourse. We shall later see how this explains much of what people do when using an L2. Now we want to suggest that the balance between effort and effect, the way we have presented it, results in the set of general strategies which we have already called general CS. We shall make a distinction between three modes of general strategic behaviour in communication through language or discourse: (i) information strategies, (ii) text-context strategies, and (iii) the strategy of negotiation.

Information strategies are production strategies. Speakers, upon constructing their messages, have two reverse options which are scalar and procedural in nature. These are:

[1] Other things being equal, use a (verbal) ostensive stimulus which is rich in explicit assumptions and poor in implicit assumptions

[2] Other things being equal, use a (verbal) ostensive stimulus which is rich in implicit asumptions and poor in explicit assumptions.

We can refer to option [1] as the *explicit information strategy*, and to [2] as the *implicit information strategy*. In terms of the PR the more explicit a message is, the greater the possibility of achieving the intended set of effects. But overexplicitness may run counter to cognitive economy by imposing too heavy a processing load on the addressee[6]. RPs for

6 To this we can add that there are other factors, like politeness, which usually have influence on the way we present the information. Consider again our example about John, Fred and the local charity and compare: (i) *You know, they still need people for the charity* // (ii) *Join the charity, will you?; they need more people* // (iii) *Join the charity and become a good helping hand.* // For the context of our example, (iii) is less polite than (ii), which is less polite than (i). This is due to (iii) giving Fred a lesser amount of choice about an activity which in principle is non-beneficial for him. Similarly, (ii) gives the addressee less option to refuse than (i) where the request value can even be ignored.

strategy [1] will essentially consist in using non-ambiguous lexical items and syntactic constructions, and in working non-inferentially, that is, in making explicit all meaning elements (including intentions and attitudes). Strategy [2] will require opposite procedures.

In relation to production strategies, it may be observed that sometimes speakers make use of non-linguistic CS which also serve an information purpose. The organization of this kind of behaviour in interaction is fairly complex (see Kendon, 1990). However, for the sake of simplicity, we can distinguish two overall functions of these strategies when they are not intended to replace linguistic strategies: they may be ways of adding meaning to what is said or they may be ways of making up for some communication deficiency. Thus, we may speak of the existence of *complementary* and *supplementary* procedures for the realization of linguistic information strategies. Both types of procedure are mutually exclusive.

Text-context strategies are reception strategies. Here we distinguish two reverse processing options, which are, as is the case with information strategies, scalar and procedural:

[1] Other things being equal, supply minimum contextual information and rely maximally on textual features.

[2] Other things being equal, supply maximum contextual information and rely minimally on textual features.

Here, we can refer to [1] as the *textual strategy*, and to [2] as the *contextual strategy*. Contextual information is, as we have noted, mental information. It consists of all the assumptions that make up the speaker's cognitive environment. These assumptions derive from the way speakers interpret the context of situation, from their world knowledge, and from their interpretation of previous discourse. It has been noted that this kind of information is usually well-organized and that it usually provides us with strong expectations about what we are going to find in the discourse[7].

RPs here are based on interpretation cues. For example, for strategy [2] the receiver may decide to pay little attention to the syntax of the message and base interpretation preferably on the usual conceptual relations between certain lexical items. For strategy [1] the receiver may focus on detailed syntactic processing to the detriment of conceptual cues.

Finally, we have the phenomenon we want to call *negotiation*, partly following a conversational tradition where negotiation is seen as the shaping of meaning through dialogue (Martin, 1992), but with a different perspective in mind. We think of negotiation as a strategy followed by language users when faced with production or interpretation difficulties. Note that negotiation is simply one option within the system of general CS. For example, alternating between contextual strategies [1] and [2] in a same discourse may have as a goal to solve an interpretation problem. But another choice is to ask the speaker to deliver the message or part of it again. This is a case of negotiation. The language user is not shaping but recovering meaning. Negotiation in this interpretation is taken to mean the process whereby discourse participants appeal to sources other than themselves for help either in making meaning of some aspect of the ongoing communicative event or in cons-

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7 There is a large amount of literature in cognitive science and in discourse analysis on the way our knowledge is organized for processing. For the discourse perspective see, for example, the revision in Beaugrande & Dressler (1981); for the cognitive science perspective, see Lakoff (1987). For critical discussion of both perspectives and specific proposals, see Ruiz de Mendoza & Otal (forthcoming).

tructing their own messages. The term "negotiation" is appropriate in the sense that, even though the activity is self-centred, each user is presumed, when making use of this strategy, to be willing to recover the intended assumptions; if recovered, common grounds with the other interlocutors will have been established. This does not mean that by negotiation the interlocutors will necessarily come to share points of view or goals but rather that they will be able to improve their knowledge about some aspects of the communicative activity. The attitude behind negotiation can be roughly paraphrased as follows:

> For reception: "You, as the speaker, have produced an ostensive stimulus with the goal that I, as the addressee, may modify my cognitive environment in a certain intended way. I am willing to set about the processing effort required for that purpose, but only if you co-operate with me by helping me to repair that part of the communicative event that I hereby attempt to make manifest to you".
>
> For production: "I, as the speaker, am willing to produce an ostensive stimulus with the goal that you, as the addressee, may modify your cognitive environment in a certain intended way. I will produce the most relevant stimulus to the effect only on condition that you help me to repair that part of the communicative event that I hereby attempt to make manifest to you"

Negotiation is initiated by repair requests made by one of the interlocutors and is completed after the relevant repairs have been made. Repair requests are realized by means of either *explicitation* or *corroboration* procedures which focus on part or all of the following factors:

[1] The formal nature of the ostensive stimulus

[2] The nature of the interlocutors' communicative goals

[3] The addresser and addressee's cognitive environments

[4] The addresser and addressee's assessment of each other's cognitive environments

Let us consider the conversations below:

(7) (Merrit, 1976: 333)

A: May I have a bottle of Mich?

B: Are you twenty one?

A: No

B: No

(8) (Gumperz, 1982: 164)

[At a luncheon counter, the waitress is talking to a friend]

Friend: I called Joe last night

Waitress: You did? Well what'd he say?

Friend: Well, hi!

Waitress: Oh yeah? What else did he say?

Friend: Well he asked me out of course.

Waitress: Far out!

In conversation (7) A's request for permission is turned down after B, as addressee, repairs that part of his own cognitive environment where A's age is in question. B asks A explicitly to provide him with correct information. Imagine B had already surmised that A was not of age and had only wanted to confirm his assumption. He could have used a corroboration procedure, like, for example:

(9) You are not twenty-one, are you?

Conversation (8) is more complex. In it we find a fairly skilful conversational use by the waitress of explicitation procedures which is explained in relation to the PR and politeness. Consider the waitress's first turn. She works under the assumption that her friend is specially interested in Joe and that she would have not raised the subject of her relationship with him unless she had some relevant information to give, of which she probably has some personal evaluation (the suspicion that Joe asked her friend out; note that here the repair focuses on discourse factor [4] above). But her friend's first turn has been little explicit with respect to the truly important information. The same holds for her second turn, where the giving of the relevant information is delayed. This moves the waitress to insist, with the implication that she is really intent on obtaining the information.

It is worth noting that the waitress's insistence is also guided by politeness. Imagine the conversation had taken a different turn:

(10)

Friend: I called Joe last night
Waitress: You did? Well what'd he say?
Friend: Well, hi!
Waitress: Ah, yes.

The way the waitress closes the exchange in (10) implies that she is not really so interested in her friend's news, which in normal circumstances will put their friendship in danger.

Repairs are often asked by means of questions about the form or the meaning of the message: *What do you mean?, Did you mean to say that ...?, Are you suggesting that ...?, Did you say ...?, What do you mean by ...?, Isn't that what you meant?,* etc., or by making manifest where one feels the misunderstanding has taken place*: I'm sorry, but I thought you said / I heard ...* This procedure is also useful for any other kind of repair*: I'm sorry, but I thought ..., I'm afraid I missed the point,* etc[8].

4. AN EXPLANATION OF L2 CS TYPOLOGIES.

Now we are in a position to see where CS in the context of L2 studies fit within our own framework. We shall examine the typologies in Faerch & Kasper (1984) and Faerch et

[8] It is worth mentioning that politeness plays an important role in the way a repair is attempted. Some procedures are based on the pragmatic scales of indirectness, optionality and cost-benefit (see Leech, 1983). It is polite to blame one's misunderstanding on oneself because one takes the responsibility of the extra production effort to which one's interlocutor is put. On the other hand, it would be impolite of one's interlocutor to refuse to provide help if the repair has been appropriately requested. This is where the scales of indirectness and optionality enter the picture. The more direct our request is the lesser amount of choice we give our interlocutor. The following repair requests are ordered from less to more polite: // a. You should speak more clearly, did you say *thirty*? // b. Did you say *thirty* or *thirteen*? // c. I think you said *thirty*, didn't you? // d. I'm sorry, but I couldn't hear well, did you say *thirty*? // e. Oh, yes, *thirty*. // The procedure in (e) is very risky since the repair request is left for the interlocutor to derive by implicature. Also, the interlocutor has wide margin to decide whether to co-operate or not; nothing is explicitly requested of him.

al. (1984), as representative of the initial studies, and on Poulisse (1993), as representative of the later trend to generalize in terms of an encompassing theory of communication.

Faerch & Kasper (1984) deal with production, not with reception; however, Faerch et al. (1984) also consider reception. In production, the basic division is between *reduction* and *achievement* strategies. Both are ways of dealing with a problem in communication, the former by giving up part of the original communicative goal, the latter by keeping the goal and finding alternative ways of achieving it. Achievement strategies can be L1-based (like code-switching, foreignizing, and literal translation), IL-based (like paraphrase, generalisation, restructuring and word-coinage), interactional (appeals) and non-linguistic (gesture or facial expression). Reduction may take place either at the pragmatic or at the referential level (with topic avoidance or meaning replacement). In reception, strategies take the form of either *general repair requests* (the learner expresses lack of understanding in general), or *specific repair requests* (the learner specifies where the repair is needed).

In our view, the division between reduction and achievement is problematic, both kinds of strategy being but two sides of the same coin. In fact, partial reduction can be seen as a form of achievement. For example, saying *He plays* for *He does sport*, where there is meaning replacement, is but a form of paraphrase. Is paraphrase to be seen as a form of achievement or as a reduction strategy? In much the same way, other achievement strategies, like substitution, are reductionistic. If the L2 learner wants to say *rabbit* but he cannot remember the word and uses the hyperordinate *animal*, he is trying to achieve his CG but not without impairing it. In terms of the PR, the only form of reduction is to abandon part or all of the discourse (sometimes only temporarily). Avoiding L2 rules which are not mastered or certain speech functions and topics are not truly reductionistic if the learner uses other alternatives instead.

A second problem that we find in all acounts of CS is that they do not make any separation between CS proper and RPs. In fact, all typologies list what we have called RPs, which are no different from those commonly used in L1. This is particularly true of three of the so-called IL-based strategies: paraphrase, restructuring and word-coinage are often used in L1. It is not clear what Faerch et al. understand by generalisation, which the authors treat as IL-based: according to them the procedure consists in using a "generalised IL term" for one which is not known, like saying *People from all countries* for *People from all parts of the world*. However, the procedure seems to be rather one of substitution, like saying *animal* for *rabbit*, which is also very productive in L1. Paraphrase (and circumlocution, which is suggested by other authors) is a way of elaborating the ostensive stimulus with the purpose that it is kept explicit in spite of a communication problem; thus, it is an RP for the explicit information strategy. The same is true of restructuring, where the language user feels unable to complete his utterance and tries an alternative. Both procedures are widely used in L1, also to make up for deficiencies (as in false starts). Word-coinage at advanced stages of L1 use is evidence of mastery of the system. But it can also be used to compensate a true communicative problem. Again it is an RP for our explicit information strategy.

It might be argued that L1-based strategies (or procedures, in our terminology) are specific to L2 learners. However, the procedures of code-switching, foreignizing and literal translation are not at all uncommon among people who master more than one linguistic code, if only for different reasons. The three, in being attempts to make the ostensive stimulus explicit, are RPs for the explicit information strategy.

Interactional strategies (eg. asking for help about how to name an object) are not really achievement strategies, but rather procedures for making specific repair requests, and perhaps Faerch et al. should have listed them with these. The difference is that for them repair requests are not production but reception strategies (ie. the learner expressing a comprehension problem). From our point of view, as can be seen from our treatment of repairs in the previous pages, there is no need to separate interactional strategies from repair requests: it is the same kind of procedure applied to different moments of the speech event.

Non-linguistic strategies (or procedures) are frequent both for L2 learners and for native speakers. We have already mentioned the existence of complementary and supplementary procedures for the realization of the information strategy. For obvious reasons, in L2 communication these procedures are largely supplementary, but both can be found as ways of helping along to reach a given CG.

Finally, Faerch et al., on addressing the issue of reception strategies, note that learners need to make extensive use of *inferencing* and of *repair requests*. However, as we have seen, repair requests are not interpretation procedures. On the other hand, inferencing, as used by these authors, is best explained as part of our more general contextual strategy.

Now, let us turn to Poulisse's proposals. Her work focuses on *compensatory strategies*, which are a subset of CS quite similar to Faerch & Kasper's *achievement strategies*. Poulisse has used an adaptation of Levelt's (1989) speech production model. In it, we find a conceptualization pre-verbal stage, where the content and intention of the message is planned. This is followed by a formulation stage in which the message is encoded and planned phonetically. Finally, in a third stage, the message is articulated (for details, see Poulisse, 1990, 1993).

One essential feature of the model, which serves Poulisse to define CS, is that in the second stage the speaker tries to access lexical items on the basis of the information of the pre-verbal message. Thus, whenever the speaker finds a problem in having access to a word he or she may either give up the initial plan or devise an alternative plan and use a compensatory strategy.

Levelt's model also lies at the base of Poulisse's distinction between *conceptual* and *linguistic* strategies, which parallels the distinction between conceptual and linguistic knowledge. Conceptual strategies are further subdivided into analytic or holistic. The former tend to make explicit the features of the lexical item which cannot be accessed (as in paraphrases and circumlocutions), while the latter tend to group the features in a related lexical item (as in substitution).

In more recent work, Poulisse has reformulated her initial proposals (see Poulisse, 1993, and her contribution to this volume) in order to endow her account with still a greater level of generality. For example, she observes that the distinction between holistic strategies and the linguistic strategy of transfer does not reveal any differences in the processes involved in their use. In both cases we have similar underlying substitution processes: L2 learners may thus substitute "animal" for "rabbit", if they cannot have access to this word, or simply use the mother tongue equivalent. This is the *substitution* strategy. For cases where the speaker applies L2 morphological and / or phonological encoding (as in foreignizing) Poulisse proposes the *substitution plus* strategy. A third generic strategy is the *reconceptualization* strategy, which in being defined as "a change in the preverbal message involving more than a single chunk" (Poulisse, 1993: 181) covers cases which were before analysed as conceptual analytic strategies (eg. paraphrase).

Poulisse's account is to be commended for at least two reasons. First, it is a serious attempt to use a general model of communication in describing CS use. Second, it achieves a great degree of generality (which is precisely one of her fundamental aims). However, there are problems with it. First, in dealing exclusively with compensatory (ie. achievement) strategies, Poulisse has reduced the scope of her analysis considerably. This would be perfectly justifiable were it not for her repeatedly avowed desire to embed CS use in a broad communicative framework. As a result, her account misses some important generalizations about CS use in the domains of processing and interaction which are characteristic of L1 and L2-related communicative behaviour[9].

A second problem is that Poulisse's typology of compensatory strategies is grounded in a code model of communication, which results in a rather partial treatment of the phenomenon. For example, it misses the fact that sometimes speakers tend to make explicit intentional and attitudinal elements of their messages when they are not sure that they have been rightly conveyed. While L1 speakers make a rather occasional use of the explicit information strategy in this manner, L2 speakers are more prone to employ it to avoid misunderstandings[10].

A third problem concerns Poulisse's proposal of a distinction between substitution and reconceptualization strategies and the rather strange subtlety of introducing the variety of substitution strategy called the "substitution plus" strategy. Substitution and reconceptualization have both a conceptual basis, as we have already pointed out when discussing Faecrh & Kasper's typology. And there is substitution in both cases. In one, a lexical item is replaced by a description; in the other, by a related lexical item. These are two related procedures which are subsumed under our explicit information strategy. Then, the "substitution plus" strategy is simply another procedure where the substituted lexical item is additionally made to resemble an L2 form. It is true that this may involve further cognitive effort, as Poulisse has been careful to remark, but it is not clear why this typological criterion is not used to specify further varieties of the reconceptualization strategy as well. For example, take the case of "picture-place" and "a place where you look at pictures", for "art gallery" where, according to Kellerman (1991: 146), the same cognitive process underlies the two different linguistic realizations. Would one need to make a distinction between "reconceptualization" and "reconceptualization plus" strategies just because circumlocution is more costly to produce?

The problem of cognitive economy is better taken care of in our own proposal since production and processing costs are usually taken into account by the speaker before communicating. Thus, an L2 speaker with a deficient mastery of the L2 system may abandon discourse processing if the expected benefit in terms of contextual effects does not make up for the increased processing cost involved. But if this speaker decides to attempt the processing venture, he or she will surely need to make extensive use of contextual information to the detriment of textual features (this is our "contextual" strategy). A similar attitude may be found behind linguistic production. If the production cost is too high, the speaker may decide to abandon his or her communicative goal. But if the goal is not abandoned, the speaker will have to make use of either of the two information strategies that we have proposed.

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9 In our own empirical study of L2 learners' communicative behaviour it was found that repair procedures had a prominent role when the students were made to interact. It was also found that students made frequent use of the contextual strategy in comprehension activities. See Ruiz de Mendoza et al. (1995).

10 In Ruiz de Mendoza et al (1995) we have observed that the use of the explicit information strategy for attitudinal elements is more frequent when the L2 speakers have a higher grammatical competence.

To summarize, Poulisse's proposals, although more general than previous ones, fall short of providing an adequate account of CS in L2. Her categories can ultimately be reduced to those of previous accounts, which undermines her attempt to analyse CS in terms of the underlying processes rather than of the products (see Poulisse, 1993, and this volume). In contrast, the analysis we have provided does reveal underlying processes, which fall under the category of general CS, while the products depend on the specific realizations made by the speakers and correspond to categories like the ones described by Faerch & Kasper.

5. Final Remarks

Our analysis reinforces the hypothesis that communicative behaviour in L1 is not essentially different from communicative behaviour in L2. The differences are more a matter of the relative use of procedures which in any case are valid for both types of communication. Thus, it is more common to observe paraphrases, restructurings and repair requests in L2 use as compensatory procedures, but this does not mean that these procedures are uncommon in L1 use.

It has also been suggested that the use of some CS goes hand in hand with IL development. In relation to this, we would like to suggest one possible line for future research: if we make language learners aware of the possibility of exploiting realization procedures of different kinds for communication purposes, would this have an effect on their achieving native-like competence? There are two fundamental reasons why this should be so. First, strategic behaviour is essential for communicative competence and being aware of its possibilities must bring about an increase in the individual's ability to communicate; also, since many of the procedures are common to L1 and L2 use, strategic behaviour is privileged with respect to other aspects of communication where transfer from the mother tongue is potentially harmful. Second, we learn our mother tongue not only as part of our maturational process, but also as an effective way of interacting with others; as the child develops his / her L1, he / she makes use of CS (Bialystok, 1990) which are very often similar to those used by the adult learner of an L2. If this is so, it might be convenient to investigate whether inducing adult learners to make extensive use of CS (and their related procedures) triggers off the same acquisition devices that operate during L1 learning. Not all the learning by adults is done on a conscious pre-planned basis, and enhancing CS might promote beneficial unconscious language acquisition.

In any case, we hope to have provided the reader, as was our goal, with a theoretically sound framework for exploring communication in L2, and with a workable view, definition and typology of communication strategies.

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INDICE