

An Investigation into Communication Strategy Usage and the
Pragmatic Competence of Taiwanese Learners of English within a
Computer Mediated Activity

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ABSTRACT

In order to increase the competitiveness of Taiwan to international environment, Taiwanese Government has become aware of the importance of English in reforming English education and establishing a new language testing system in leading to more successful language learning. However, many scholars in Taiwan are dubious as to whether this reformed English education has really improved the English communicative ability of learners. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to investigate learners' communicative competence in terms of communication strategy usage and pragmatic competence, by means of administrating a set of communicative task based activities within a computer mediated environment to provide evidence of the current learning outcomes. The administration of the set of communicative task based activities took place in August 2006. Drawing upon the framework proposed by Bachman (1990), both strategic and pragmatic competence could be identified. After data collection, the learners' speech data was analysed based on the taxonomy of Poullisse (1993) and the findings revealed that the learners employed the re-conceptualisation strategy more frequently than the substitution strategy. A new strategy, named 'additional strategy', was also discovered during this study. By means of adopting the six criteria of pragmatic competence as suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995) to score the learners' responses, the results of learners' performance were low with no distinct differences between three given speech acts. Based on the coding scheme of Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Beebe *et al.* (1990), it can be suggested that the learners were influenced by Chinese culture which resulted in inappropriate responses to the situations. Therefore, this study suggests that Taiwanese learners of English need to improve their communicative competence, particularly in terms of communication strategies and pragmatic competence. Furthermore, it can be said that it is vital to adopt a communicative task based activity into classrooms in Taiwan to increase opportunities for learners to interact with each other to improve language learning and teaching contexts.

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Chapter one

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The ability to speak the English language is seen by the government and people of Taiwan as being an important indication of gaining the status of an international and globalised country. Facing the arrival of the global village era, international affairs such as politics, economics and cultural exchange among countries rely on communication in English. Consequently, the English language is regarded as a necessary tool for communication universally. As a result, learning English in Taiwan has become a whole national movement in the Twenty-first Century. Language learners of all ages are devoting themselves to becoming multi-lingual citizens within this global village.

The Government and people of Taiwan strongly perceive the importance of employing English in communication in order to achieve the Government's intention of becoming the hub of Asia Pacific Operations in an increasingly globalised world. In addition to this, the Taiwanese Government has announced that English may become the second official language in the next eight to ten years (Liao, 2004, p.121). Therefore, a great deal of attention has been placed on language learners and educators, as well as on the reform of English Education with a view of improving the teaching and learning of the English language in Taiwan.

In the past, English learning focused on developing reading and writing skills resulting in learners not being able to master speaking and listening skills (Department of Elementary Education, 2003). The Ministry of Education in Taiwan, therefore, promulgated the Nine-Year Joint Curricula Plan in an attempt to develop the '*Communicative Competence*' (Hymes, 1967, 1972) of language learners and improve English Education. This communicative competence has come to the forefront of ongoing discussion as will be explained below. In order to achieve this educational goal, the Ministry of Education made an important decision in revising the English curriculum, adopting the '*Communicative Language Teaching*' approach (term will be explained later) and improving test formats. As a result, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, that is, has been used in language teaching and learning

contexts in recent years and is consequently developing the learners' communicative competence. Regrettably, this approach has not however made a marked improvement on the teaching and learning of the language (Liao, 2006) due to some unexpected problems which occur in the whole educational context. Before proceeding to the main research topic, a description of English education in Taiwan, the revised English textbooks, English teaching, English language testing and the potential for adopting technology into speaking assessment is provided in the following sections to enable the reader to understand the research context.

1.2 Research Context

Formal English education in Taiwan, traditionally, is implemented in junior high schools, that is, pupils aged from 13 to 15, and senior high schools, that is, pupils aged from 16 to 18, and is regarded as a compulsory course. English is taught as a discipline rather than as a communication tool (Yang, 1997). This issue has been debated for a long period of time. The Ministry of Education realized that unsuccessful English language teaching and learning had existed in Taiwan for a long time; therefore, the policies of language education were improved to reflect the needs of the society. A significant decision was made to extend English education to nine years, starting from the fifth grade of elementary school in 2001. The aim of English teaching and learning focuses on developing communicative competence rather than memorizing and delivering knowledge of the language (Department of Elementary Education, 2003, p.1).

In order to clarify the research context concerning English language education, communicative teaching approaches and language testing in Taiwan, the researcher will expound more detail in following sections.

1.2.1 English Education in Taiwan

English has traditionally been the only foreign language required at different levels of schooling, thus, foreign language education in Taiwan means English education (Su, 2000). English has been a compulsory course for Taiwanese students from junior high school all the way through to the first year of university for many years.

According to the Taiwanese Ministry of Education's policy of English in 1994, the average instruction time for such a required subject in junior and senior high schools, is three to six hours per week, depending on the students' year of study, with more hours allocated to seniors who are preparing for examinations to go to the next stage of education. However, some teachers may increase instruction time at their own discretion due to the expectations of students and parents, as well as the competition between schools and classes. Generally, the acquisition of speaking skills is not the main purpose of learning English for Taiwanese students, but to fulfil the course requirements or to pass the entrance examinations to the next level of schooling as the test contents do not assess speaking ability.

At the tertiary level, English is the only required foreign language course for the first year university and college students. The instruction time, basically, is two to three hours per week; however, it is also possible for each university to make a decision to increase instruction hours based on its own faculty policy.

English education in Taiwan formally starts in junior high schools. Since there is a growing need to communicate in English in this global village, the Ministry of Education acknowledged that English education should be reformed urgently. In September 2000, a radical education reform of elementary and junior high school programs was introduced. The Nine-Year Joint Curriculum aimed to integrate the two stages of Taiwan's educational system and create well-rounded individuals who are able to cope better with a variety of roles in society. Therefore, English education has become one of the important targets of the reformed Education.

English, for the first time, became a compulsory course in elementary school since 2001, after the Ministry of Education's announcement in 1998 (Dai, 1998). Students are required to take English courses from the fifth grade of elementary school. Furthermore, the focus on adopting the principles of communicative approaches in teaching and the development of the students' ability to communicate in English are the main issues to be taken into consideration. The goals of the new reform are illustrated specifically by the Ministry of Education as follows:

- (1.) *to develop students' basic communication skills in English;*
- (2.) *to cultivate students' interest in learning English and develop better learning habits and methods;*
- (3.) *to promote students' understanding of local and foreign cultures and customs.*

(Department of Elementary Education, 2003, p.2)

The reform of English education, when implemented, was essentially expected to improve language teaching and learning in Taiwan.

1.2.2 The Revised English Textbooks in Taiwan

There are two main stages of formal English study in Taiwan: one is the period of junior high school and the other is the period of senior high school. The English textbooks based on the curriculum play a major role in language teaching. According to Chen's (2000) study, most senior high school English teachers greatly depend on assigned English textbooks when they teach students. Similarly, the findings of Huang's (2003) study reveal that vocational high school English teachers also greatly rely on textbooks. Therefore, it is essential to have English textbooks based on a well-planned curriculum before implementation in schools and revision based on the needs of teaching and learning from time to time.

It is noteworthy that the English textbooks in Taiwan have experienced some major revisions and each revision has reflected the influence of teaching methodologies and theories. Shih (1998) states that the curriculum standards of junior high schools emphasised the grammar translation theory before 1968; the next, in 1971 focused on reading and writing, with slightly more attention given to listening and speaking than previous standards. The curriculum developed in 1985 was intensively criticized for providing an inadequate level of basic oral and aural communicative competences for junior high school students.

In 1994, the Ministry of Education (MOE) commenced working actively in education reform and one of the major works was to reform textbooks and teaching materials. The revised textbooks for junior high school English education were introduced in 1994 and implemented by all junior high schools in 1997. The major

difference in these revised textbooks was that more emphasis was placed on developing the communicative competence of language learners.

The criticism of English textbooks, regrettably, was still being discussed in 2001. The issue concerning junior high school textbooks was that they had still not deviated from a form-based, structure-oriented syllabus. Although the newly developed textbooks were supposed to be based on '*Communicative Language Teaching*' (CLT) principles, that is, teaching of second or foreign languages that emphasized interaction as both the process and the ultimate goal of learning a language. Consequently, language teaching emphasis still relied heavily on accuracy-oriented and test-driven activities (Su, 2000) and memorising and mechanical learning processes were still promoted in language teaching and learning practice. In order to meet the need for well developed textbooks, the MOE ultimately decided to allow private publishers to develop and produce the junior high school textbooks in 2002 under supervision of the National Institute for Compilation and Translation (NICT), which is affiliated to the MOE. The textbooks were required to be inspected by the NICT before publication and distribution.

The revision of textbooks for senior high school, on the other hand, had similar development stages to the revision of junior high school textbooks. The latest English curriculum standard for senior high schools was established in 1995 to begin a new era in senior high school English education in Taiwan. Importantly, in contrast with the previous curriculum standards, the 1995 curriculum standards paid more attention to developing language learners' interests and independent learning abilities through learning methods and attitudes (Chern, 2003). In other words, senior high school textbooks placed more emphasis on the communicative functions of English language and learners' strategies in language learning. That is, the revised curriculum standards brought in the communicative approach as the central guiding principle and emphasised learner-centeredness in the senior high school textbooks. On the basis of these principles, the goals of the curriculum encouraged students' involvement in communicative activities in real-life situations in order to develop the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing in classroom settings.

There are no standardized textbooks available or being used nationwide either at the junior high school or senior high school levels since the implementation of the new curriculum in 2002. Textbooks that conform to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) based curriculum standards have been developed by private publishers and reviewed by the National Institute of Compilation and Translation (NICT) since then.

1.2.3 The English Language Teaching Approach in Taiwan

Prior to the new curriculum implementation in 2002, traditional English education placed greater emphasis on reading skills and aimed to promote students' grammar knowledge in reading and translation. Language teachers placed more focus on teaching linguistic forms with a mechanical learning process. This has been used for a long period in the Form Focus Instruction (FFI) such as the Grammar Translation Method (Chastain, 1988) and the 'Audiolingual Method' (Brooks, 1964) into English teaching contexts in Taiwanese high schools. More explicitly, teachers who adopted the approach of FFI strongly emphasized the teaching of linguistic structures and forms, because they assumed these were an effective approach in developing the grammatical competence of language learners in order for them to produce language in accurate ways (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004; Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Another reason for focusing on teaching and learning linguistic forms is to meet the expectations of the previous national curriculum. Chen (2002) indicates that most junior high school English teachers implemented FFI in their classrooms to cultivate students' translation abilities, which helped students to read and understand English texts for sitting entrance examinations. Su (2000, p.110) named this phenomenon the '*teach to test*' practice.

At the tertiary level, the learners feel less pressure while studying English. However, the focus of English teaching is still placed on reading and grammar translation, mainly reading and translating literary books (Chern, 2003). There is less motivation to learn English amongst university and college students if they are not majoring in English. University students are only required to take English as a subject in the first year of study with no support of the four skills in English to students' acquisition from the universities. As for language teachers, the teaching target is only to

develop the reading skills of learners sufficiently to read English articles for their own academic study.

English teaching and learning in elementary schools is a more recent development, based on the execution of the Nine-Year Joint Curricula Plan since September 2001. There are two stages of pedagogical emphasis in English instruction. At the elementary school stage, language teaching and learning focuses more on developing students' listening and speaking abilities. At the junior high school stage, the focus is on developing and integrating the four language skills. According to Yeh and Shih (2000), one of the main characteristics of the English curriculum guidelines was that it included the adoption of a communicative teaching approach. The changes in the English curriculum are significant in many respects, for instance, the use of phonics instead of phonetic symbols to teach pronunciation, the diversity of topics and genres suggested for teaching materials, and the use of multimedia and multiple assessments in teaching. The difference between the use of phonics and phonetic symbols to teach pronunciation is that phonics teach language learners to blend the sounds of letters together to produce approximate pronunciations of unknown words, and phonetic symbol is a system of phonetic notation based on the Latin alphabet and devised by the International Phonetic Association as a standardized representation of the sounds of spoken language. These guidelines have been considered in accordance with the unique nature of the language learning of young learners and signify a direction that departs from the traditional Form-Focus language teaching approach for teenagers. There is a strong emphasis within both stages on developing students' interests in English learning through a natural and meaningful learning environment provided in the new English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Today, more and more language teachers in Taiwan are willing to attempt to implement a '*Communicative Language Teaching*' (CLT) method, instead of traditional language teaching approaches such as FFI in their classrooms. With respect to CLT, this is an approach to the teaching of second or foreign language students that places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts. That is, CLT makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication in order to develop learners' communicative competence. Therefore, the learners may have adequate ability in order to apply knowledge of both formal and sociolinguistic aspects of a language to

communicate. FFI is not regarded as an effective teaching approach for developing communicative skills of language learners, and is no longer a recognised method for the CLT curriculum developed in 2001. According to the findings of the research carried out by Chang (2001) in junior high schools and Chang and Huang (2001) in senior high schools, teachers in secondary schools believe in CLT approaches for improving language teaching and learning practice. Hence, the CLT approach has, unsurprisingly, prevailed in most English learning and teaching contexts in Taiwan.

1.2.4. English Language Testing in Taiwan

Testing is an integral part of all education systems. Its purpose is to help improve teaching methods for teachers and to measure the learning outcomes for learners. After formal education in junior and senior high schools, the learning outcomes are basically shown by the results of examinations. There are two main examinations towards higher education in Taiwan; one is the Basic Competency Test (BCT) for junior high school graduates entering senior high school; the other is the College Entrance Examination for senior high school students entering colleges or universities. English is required as a main subject in both examinations. Additionally, to further assess English proficiency, there is a recently developed English assessment system entitled the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), and it is administered by the Language Training and Testing Centre (LTTC) in Taiwan. The LTTC is under the supervision of a Board of Directors with the President of National Taiwan University presiding as Chair, with other members, including representatives from National Taiwan University, the Council for Economic Planning and Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economics Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Foundation for Scholarly Exchange. Importantly, this language assessment system assesses the English proficiency of language learners at different levels in response to the policy on English education reform.

Basic Competency Test

The first main English test, the BCT, was developed from the Secondary School Joint Entrance Examination (SSJEE) and started to replace the SSJEE in 2001. Originally, the format of the SSJEE mainly included cloze items, multiple choice items, short-answer questions and translations, with the objective of testing students' grammatical competence rather than communicative competence. Students' oral and

aural abilities were entirely neglected in this examination (Chen, 2002). Significantly, the major difference between the BCT and the SSJEE is that the BCT test format in English is multiple choice items with the objective on testing students' contextual reading competence (Chen, 2002) to meet the new curriculum objective. Consequently, the BCT tends to assess the communicative competence of language learners instead of assessing only their grammatical competence.

College Entrance Examination

Similar development of the test format also took place in the college entrance examination. Traditionally, the focus of the previous English test was to assess vocabulary, phrases and grammatical knowledge of high school students. Moreover, this test included multiple choice items, translating sentences and writing a short composition to assess the writing skills of the learners. However, the writing topics were not related to communicative language use. For example, the English test included translating poems in 2000, and writing a short passage concerning 'nearsightedness', which was a task in 1993. These tests did not aim to assess the communicative competence of the test-takers. Fortunately, in recent years the English test has gradually tended to assess reading comprehension rather than testing test-takers' knowledge of grammatical rules. The topics of composition also tend to relate to the daily life experience of high school students such as 'If I won the One Million Pounds Lottery Prize' in the 2002 college entrance examination English test.

The GEPT

An additional English test was developed to promote life-long learning, after low English proficiency among university students and many adult language learners was noticed. The Government believes that learning English should not cease after schooling. Only by learning constantly, will language learners develop their English proficiency.

The purpose of developing the GEPT rather than using some international language tests such as TOEFL to assess Taiwanese learners of English is that the GEPT adopts a criterion-referenced measurement, whereas TOEFL employs a norm-referenced measurement (Su, 2004, p.3). The criterion-reference measurement is concerned with assessing test takers' performance without comparison to other individuals, but with a criterion of successful performance at a given level. Therefore, a series of performance

goals can be set for individual learners to achieve at their own rate. On the other hand, norm-referenced measurement interprets an individual's score in relation to other scores of individuals in the population. More explicitly, by adopting this approach, the test taker's performance is not evaluated in terms of whether the test takers meet some criterion, but considers how good the test taker's performance is in comparison to other test participants (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007; McNamara, 2000). In line with the aim of the MOE to set up a language testing system, the GEPT is expected to promote the notion of life-long learning and to encourage learners to achieve the goal of continuing their English learning. So it focuses on whether individual's learning outcomes reach some criterion at a given level rather than comparing their performance across a population.

The LTTC in 1997 has encouraged scholars to come together to discuss and further develop an appropriate assessment system. Later this project was supported by, and awarded partial funding from, the MOE. Since 2004, the centre has established five levels of examination, that is elementary, intermediate, high-intermediate, advanced and superior, based on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment). In the GEPT, the elementary level is equivalent to Band A2 (Breakthrough), the intermediate level is equivalent to Band B1 (Threshold), the high-intermediate level is equivalent to Band B2 (Vantage), the advanced level is equivalent to Band C1 (Effective operational proficiency), and the superior level is equivalent to Band C2 (Mastery). In relation to other well known international language tests, for example, Band C2 is equivalent to IELTS Band 8 or above. The learners will be able to understand their ability based on the CEFR to refer to other well known examinations after obtaining the result of the GEPT.

The most essential design of the GEPT is that it examines the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of learners (LTTC, 2005), whilst the college entrance examinations merely assess reading and writing skills. The issue of the weakness of the university entrance examination has been debated for a very long time as it focuses on evaluating language learners' reading and writing skills and neglects speaking and listening skills. The GEPT attempts to improve the negative impact of the college entrance examinations by means of balancing the assessment of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Consequently, it could promote the notion of the

communicative language teaching method, and hopefully improve on the deficiencies of traditional language teaching approaches, such as teaching grammar and translation skills. Zeng (2003) suggests that improving the contents of English tests could be an alternative method to lead English teaching towards developing the communicative competence of language learners in Taiwan. That is, testing could be a tool to direct teaching in Taiwan's educational context.

In contrast to the limitations of previous testing approaches, the GEPT attempts to evaluate the four skills of language learners. Not surprisingly, the test has now become extremely popular in Taiwan, since first being administered in 2000. Currently, there are over two million people sitting this test and over thirty-nine universities recognised the results of the GEPT as a part of an entrance requirement. Moreover, over one hundred universities insist on their students passing the GEPT at least at the intermediate level as a requirement for their graduation. Consequently, it has now become an established form of English language testing, and has been adopted by the Taiwanese government and most educational sectors. For instance, the Central Personnel Administration (CPA) declared that current civil servants are additionally required to pass at least the elementary level of the GEPT and the results would form one of the criteria for evaluating public servants' annual efficiency, in 2005. Furthermore, more and more universities are treating the GEPT as an alternative test for entering or graduating from universities. Some national universities such as the National Taiwan University now require first year students to prove their English language ability by passing at least the intermediate level of the GEPT, which is the equivalent to Band 4 or above in IELTS or the score 137 in TOEFL-iBT (The equivalence of each level of the GEPT to TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS Band score, See Appendix I). Other universities and universities of technology have also set up the requirement for final year university students to pass the intermediate level or above of the GEPT before being awarded their degrees (Su, 2004).

The GEPT includes five levels: elementary, intermediate, high-intermediate, advanced and superior. The content of the GEPT has four sections: listening, reading, writing and speaking.

The aim of this investigation places focus on the learners' performance in terms of their use of communication strategies and their pragmatic competence through

communicative based activities. Therefore, prominence will be given to the content of the speaking test; each level of the speaking test in the GEPT will be illustrated in the following sections.

The content of the speaking tests comprises of different tasks as the levels increase. The elementary level includes reading aloud a short passage and five sentences, as well as answering seven short questions.

The intermediate level consists of reading aloud two or three passages, answering ten questions and describing a picture.

The high-intermediate level includes answering eight questions, describing a picture and discussing a theme.

The advanced level evaluates the interactive communication skills of language learners so, the tasks in this level will involve introduction, information exchange and topic discussion. At this level, the whole testing process involves two test participants and an interlocutor and an assessor.

The superior level includes a ten minute presentation and having a discussion with an examiner based on the previous topic for another ten minutes.

As different tasks are involved in the advanced and the superior level, two examiners are required at the advanced level and only one examiner at the superior level. Moreover, the speaking tests contain different tasks at different levels because, as the speaking skills develop, more attention is paid to Taiwanese language teaching and learning contexts.

1.2.5 The Potential to Adopt Technology into the Speaking Assessment

In recent years, the increasing role of computers and the development of the Internet have played an increasing part in education and seem to offer greater potential in language learner advancement (Chapelle, 2001; Chapelle and Douglas, 2006). In addition, such modern technologies have been used synchronously in second language

instruction within classrooms and asynchronously in distance learning between teachers and students (Hubbard, 2004, p.58).

Furthermore, it is not surprising that the number of computer-based language tests (CBTs) has grown rapidly during the last decade. It is noteworthy that the technological advantage of CBTs can offer greater flexibility in delivering tests without fixed dates and locations (Alderson, 2000). Currently, the assessment of reading, writing and listening skills is now being administered through CBT testing. For example, TOEFL-iBT has been administrated worldwide, including countries such as Taiwan and some Asian other countries.

Even though Chiang (2005) states the GEPT attempts to show its positive effect on improving the speaking ability of language learners, currently the GEPT in Taiwan has fewer interactive functions with real people, that is, mutual communication. For example, the elementary and intermediate level of speaking tests include tasks such as reading aloud, responding to fixed questions and picture description where test participants can only respond to the questions, which are pre-recorded on the tape. Only tasks such as topic discussion and information exchange in the advanced and superior levels are involved in interaction with real people. As a result, assessing the learners' oral skills in terms of communication strategy use and pragmatic competence seems to be neglected in the lower level of this test.

According to the report of the LTTC, the percentage of oral test passes at elementary level was around 80% while only around 34% of test takers passed intermediate level from 2000 to 2002 (LTTC, 2005). This report reveals that language learners need to further develop their speaking abilities in order to pass a higher level of oral tests, as is evidenced by the above percentages. The high percentage pass rate in elementary level speaking tests is not surprising, because language learners are only required to obtain a sufficient survival related conversation ability enough to pass the lower level of speaking tests. As the level increases in the speaking tests and more language knowledge and strategies are required, the percentage passing oral tests becomes lower. The interpretation of this could be that the language learners are not competent enough to express themselves through speaking and communicating with

others. It can be assumed that a lower percentage of students passing a higher level of speaking tests such as the advanced level can be predicted.

To improve on the lack of function of mutual communication when communicating with others, a communicative task based activity in a computer mediated environment could potentially be an alternative method for use in a large scale classroom. In a computer mediated environment, it is possible to adopt different communicative tasks that allow participants to interact with others via the Internet during the activity to investigate the learners' communicative competence.

Employing communicative based tasks within a computer mediated environment can improve on the tape mediated oral tests' difficulties, in directly investigating the learners' ability to cope with deficiencies in English language mutual communication. As a result, the advantage of technology supports the intention of this research in evaluating oral skills from another angle. This will be done by employing different communicative based tasks to directly investigate communication strategies and pragmatic competence (terms will be explained and discussed in Chapter Two) used in a computer mediated environment.

1.3 Statement of Problems

Within the new English curriculum implemented in 2001, communicative language teaching and testing approaches were introduced into English education in order to improve the English proficiency of language learners in Taiwan. However, after executing these modifications in English education, the communicative competence of Taiwanese learners of English does not seem to have improved much.

The issue of the poor English ability of Taiwanese university students has been intensively discussed in recent years. An investigation of the English ability of Taiwanese university students in one university and two universities of technology was conducted by a human resource company and two researchers from universities in 2005 (Shih, 2005). Basically, the difference between national universities and universities of technology in Taiwan is that national universities require students to obtain higher

scores in the college entrance examination than the universities of technology. The findings revealed that students studying at national universities reached the English standard of employee requirement of national enterprises, while students studying in the Applied Linguistic department at the university of technology only touched the lowest English standard, and the students from the technology university, not majoring in Applied Linguistics did not reach the English standard of the employee requirement. The English standard of the employee requirement of national enterprises is the score 492 in TOEIC, which is equivalent to the intermediate level of the GEPT. These results revealed that many graduate students might not be employed because of their English deficiency even though they have completed their university or college studies.

A recent document reported by American ETS (Education Testing Services) concerning the performance of Taiwanese students in TOFEL-iBT from 2005 to 2006 (this Internet-based test consists of listening, reading, writing and speaking test and measuring language used in an academic, higher-education environment) showed that the results of Taiwanese students' performance were ranked as fourth from last among Asian countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, India and Pakistan in the list. In particular, the speaking score was also 2 points lower than the average score of 19 points: that is, the total score in the speaking test was 30 points and Taiwanese students only obtained 17 points (Chiang, 2007).

Furthermore, in the TOEIC, which measures the ability of non-native English-speaking examinees to use English in everyday work activities, and recently the new TOEIC Speaking and Writing Tests, which have been added to the TOEIC and combined with the TOEIC Listening and Reading Test, the results of Taiwanese students were ranked as fourth from last among the Asian countries for two successive years (Chiang, 2007).

There may be several aspects to these disappointing results. Firstly, the problem may have occurred when the new textbooks were developed by private publishers. The private publishers had different perspectives on the communicative language teaching and learning approach, and the textbooks provided by private publishers were more concerned with the listening and speaking skills than with the reading and writing skills, as they believed that communicative language teaching should focus on teaching

speaking and listening skills (Xie, 2004). For example, the current junior high school textbooks include fewer units and less vocabulary, and the concepts of grammar are no longer emphasized (Liao, 2002). Moreover, most junior high school textbooks only comprise a one thousand word English vocabulary and two thousand vocabulary as the references resources, as suggested by the Ministry of the Education (Huang, 2003). Under these circumstances, when faced with limited vocabulary and unclear grammar concepts, it is very difficult to expect language learners in both junior and senior high schools to communicate with native speakers or use English to express themselves well.

Secondly, classroom teaching in secondary schools tends to be focused on passing examinations; not only term examinations but also annual college entrance examinations (Wang, 1995). Wang (1995) strongly argues that the Taiwanese secondary school system is crucially linked to students' focus on attaining a tertiary level education. Moreover, scholars such as Wang (1995), Yuan (2003) and Jin (2004) criticise the fact that Taiwanese educational philosophy has been dominated by examinations directing teaching for a long time. Teachers in secondary schools face the dilemma of the need to prepare their students. This has led to the secondary sectors modifying their teaching approaches from CLT to FFI in order to meet the needs of their charges (Chen, 2002). As a result, too much emphasis is placed on the drilling of grammatical forms and rote memorization of language structures exemplified in textbooks, instead of focusing on language interaction, for example, using language to negotiate meaning through conversation. Consequently, Taiwanese learners of English do not have the necessary ability to deal with real life communicative situations after completing their secondary education (Department of Elementary Education, 2003). Due to the high pressure of the preparation for examinations, the communicative language teaching approach would finally become an ideal teaching approach in secondary schools.

Thirdly, Lin (2000) and Liao (2002) claim that some language teachers believe the communicative teaching approach only develops the abilities of speaking some survival related English such as ordering food or greeting people; they are then considered to have obtained the ability of speaking. However, as Liao (2002) argues, it is difficult to believe that only learning English survival conversation related to daily life will provide enough ability to engage in various topics by means of negotiation and discussion with

others in English contexts. In conclusion, learners' communicative competence cannot be developed entirely based on teaching or learning survival related conversations.

Finally, Su (2004) makes the significant point that even though the GEPT is a popular language test system in Taiwan; it is still difficult to prove whether those attaining higher grades in the GEPT reveal a higher level of '*pragmatic competence*'; this allows speakers not only to use language in order to express a wide range of functions, but also to perform these language functions in appropriate ways to the contexts (Yeh, 2005; Huang, 2004). This phenomenon may result from the focus on teaching for passing language tests (Su, 2000; Li, 2007). Chiang (2005) suggests that teachers avoid using material that is not directly related to examinations, although it could be the case that students may actually only be willing to learn examination material even though teachers are attempting to develop the communicative competence of learners.

Little has been done in Taiwan regarding the investigation of the communication strategies and pragmatic competence of learners and, in particular, focusing on those learners who have already passed the intermediate level of the GEPT at the very least. The GEPT has been regarded as a communicative language test in comparison with traditional English tests and acts as a passport to further studies and employment on assessing the reform of English Education. However, it still remains doubtful when considering this that learners at an intermediate level really possess the abilities of adopting communication strategies to cope with deficiencies in their English language communication and obtaining knowledge of foreign culture and the use of language in appropriate social contexts. This research, therefore, has attempted to employ a communicative task based activity in a computer mediated environment to discover the extent of the communication strategies and pragmatic competence of Taiwanese learners of English at the intermediate level.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The present study is an investigation of the learners' communicative competence in terms of communication strategies and pragmatic competence. It aims to examine the

communication strategies and pragmatic competence of Taiwanese senior high school language learners who have passed the intermediate level of GEPT. Firstly, this study investigates the communication strategies of Taiwanese learners of English in coping with their lack of language resources. Secondly, it attempts to examine the pragmatic competence of Taiwanese learners of English in dealing with different social situations. The use of discourse analysis as a mean to analyse the learners' speech data will provide evidence on the strategies the learners preferred to use, how learners operated compensatory strategies while encoding the target items and the difference between higher and lower scoring learners on the use of strategies. Furthermore, the analysis of the learners' utterances produced by the students in responding to the different social situational contexts can provide indications as to their performance of speech acts of apology, request and refusal, what discourse variances the learners produced to respond to the social situational tasks, and in what situations the learners performed better. The object of this study is to understand the learners' communicative competence in terms of communication strategy and pragmatic competence, in order to provide some information on improving such competence in the language learning and teaching contexts.

1.5. Research Questions

In order to achieve the goals of this study, the researcher formulated the following two research questions and sub-questions to direct this study.

Research Questions and Sub-questions

1. How do Taiwanese EFL learners cope with deficiencies in their communicative competence in the English language?
 - 1-1. Which strategies do the learners prefer when responding to the tasks?
 - 1-2. How do the learners operate the compensatory strategies to respond to each task?
 - 1-3. What differences exist between the high scoring and low scoring learners on employing compensatory strategies?

2. To what extent do Taiwanese learners of English demonstrate their pragmatic competence within different given social contexts?
 - 2-1. How do the learners perform when using speech acts of apology, request and refusal?
 - 2-2. What discourse variances are there when the learners respond to the tasks?
 - 2-3. Under what social situations do the learners perform better?

1.6. Significance of the Study

A number of researchers are increasingly interested in examining the communication strategies and pragmatic competence of language learners (Poulisse, 1990, 1993; Littlemore, 2003; Hudson *et al.*, 1992, 1995). Through the investigation of the communicative competence of Taiwanese language learners, mainly focusing on compensatory strategies and pragmatic competence, the researcher hopes to reveal some information in order to provide some suggestions for the Taiwanese Education department, and language learning and teaching contexts for further improvement of the communicative competence of language learners.

This study could potentially provide insights into the investigation of communication strategies and pragmatic competence of Taiwanese senior high school learners of English. Hopefully, the findings derived from this study will provide some suggestions regarding the development of language learners' communicative competence to the Taiwanese Education department, and language learning and teaching contexts. Evaluation of the learners' communicative competence will lend more potential to language learners in terms of successfully learning the English language.

This study also attempts to provide evidence concerning how language learners cope with their deficiencies in their English language whilst involved in communication and speaking appropriately in different socially cultural contexts. As a result, by means of evaluating communication strategies and the pragmatic competence of the learners, the language teachers can be aware of the current strengths and weaknesses of the learners in order to modify their teaching approach by promoting the notion of communicative competence.

The findings of this study could also provide some evidence with regards to a response to the policy of English education reform. Since 2001, the reformed English education attempted to improve the communicative competence of the learners; however, the result does not seem promising. The findings will assist the Ministry of Education in making future policies for developing language learners' communicative competence. Additionally, the findings of this study could produce some benefits to language educators in terms of awareness of the current weaknesses and strengths of English language education, and provide alternative propositions on their decisions regarding selection and design of teaching materials

1.7 Organization of the Study

After explaining the significance of this study in relation to previous research, the researcher will go on to explain its general structure. The present study is divided into seven main chapters. Chapter One introduces the background of the current related research and states the purpose and significance of the study.

The reviews of the related literature are provided in Chapter Two and Three. Chapter Two concerns the discussion of communicative language ability and communication strategies. Pragmatic competence and politeness theory are discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four delineates the research design, data collection and analysis procedures, which includes the research methods, selection of the sample, and background information of research participants, construction of the research instruments including the procedures for validating the instruments and building reliability of the instruments, administration of the research and analysis procedures.

Chapter Five reports on the findings of this study through the use of discourse analysis as a means of illustrating the learners' use of communication strategies when responding to the target items, and their pragmatic competence when performing in different social situations. The presentation of the results obtained in this study intends

to respond to the research questions that were posed at the commencement of the study and guided by this study.

Chapter Six discusses the findings obtained in the study and the research questions that guide the investigation. Also, the theoretical frameworks and outcomes of relevant previous research on these topics will be examined.

The last chapter presents a summary of this study and addresses the contributions made. The limitations of this investigation are outlined, and recommendations for further research are provided.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature (I): Communicative Language Ability and Communication Strategy

The following chapter will discuss the theoretical and analytical frameworks of this study and examines the assessment criteria for investigating the communicative competence of Taiwanese high school learners in terms of communication strategies and pragmatic competence. In order to communicate effectively in a second language (SL) or foreign language (FL), communication strategies and pragmatic competence must be utilised. Attention has been drawn to these important factors in terms of learners' English education. Currently, the development of communicative competence has become one of main concerns in language teaching and learning contexts. However, many scholars such as Wang (1995) and Jin (2004) have highlighted tests and examinations as being the main driving force behind language teaching and learning in Taiwan. Many language classrooms in Taiwan tend to place emphasis on the fluency and accuracy of learners' speaking ability, that is, grammatical competence. This researcher however, is interested in investigating the learners' oral ability in terms of communication strategy usage and pragmatic competence.

The purpose of this chapter is to present some theoretical background on which research on communication strategies and pragmatic competence has been based. This chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section, the concept of communicative competence and its main characteristics are discussed. In the second section, the concept of communication strategy is identified and different frameworks of communication strategies are analysed; specifically those of Færch and Kasper (1983) and Poulisse (1990, 1993), attention is paid to those that have dealt with the compensatory strategy as analysis of speech production in this study. Subsequently, the taxonomy of Poulisse (1990, 1993) and the subtypes of compensatory strategy as elaborated by Littlemore (2003) will be discussed in detail.

2.1 The Notion of Communicative Competence

The assessment of second language performance spread as a result of the notion of communicative competence in the late 1960s and early 1970s (McNamara, 1996). The main influential theory behind language performance in applied linguistics is Hymes's theory of communicative competence (Hymes, 1967, 1972). Hymes was the first person to propose the notion of communicative competence, thus providing a great stimulus to the current major focus in grammatical competence (Schachter, 1990). It is suggested by many linguists that there is a need to pay more attention to linguistic competence, rather than the knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics because linguistic knowledge focuses on determining *what forms are used and in what ways they are used in production* (Schachter, 1990, p.39).

Hymes's (1972) theory is, originally, a development of Chomsky's (1965, p.4) distinction. Chomsky's (1980, p.59) distinction refers to *grammatical competence* and *pragmatic performance*. With reference to Chomsky (1980, p.59), focus is too limited and concerns only knowledge of language. In other words, interest is constrained to competence as language knowledge and rules learning; namely, the study of syntactic structure as being an integral part of language learning. Therefore, in contrast to Chomsky's distinction, Hymes's notion of communication competence concerns both knowledge and ability (Widdowson, 1989, p.130).

Consequently, Hymes (1972) believes that the model of competence must take communication into account and therefore divides *communicative competence* into two categories; the knowledge of language, and the capacities in language-use underlying performance in real time, that is, *knowledge* and *ability for use* (Hymes, 1967, 1972). In other words, he suggests that competence should be regarded as '*the overall underlying knowledge and ability for language use which the speaker-listener processes*' (p. 13).

In conclusion, as Hymes (1972) notes, communicative competence refers to the way in which people who obtain such competence '*convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts*' (Brown, 2000, p.246). It is said that communicative competence is a dynamic, interpersonal construct and relies on '*the cooperation of all the participants involved*' (Savignon, 1983, p.9) so only by

means of performance in the process of communication, the communicative competence of individuals can be examined.

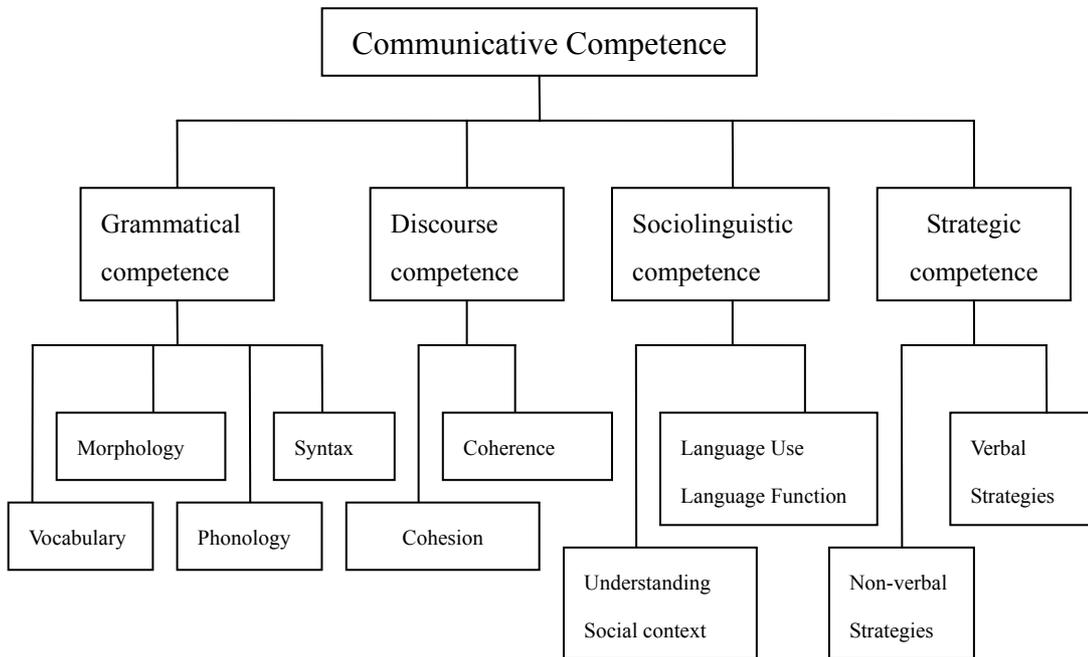


Figure 2.1 Canale's (1983) adoption of the Canale and Swain's (1980) Communicative Competence

Canale and Swain (1980) carried out the work of defining and developing the theory of communicative competence proposed by Hymes (1972). Communicative competence is viewed as a guide to '*more useful and effective second language teaching and allow[ing] more valid and reliable measurement of second language communication skills*' (p.1). In Canale and Swain's (1980) framework, emphasis was given to *grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence* as communicative competence.

They, however, failed to model *ability for use* in their framework because they '*doubt that there is any theory of human action that can adequately explicate 'ability for use'*' (p.7). Therefore, they define *ability of use* as what they call *communicative performance*. Communicative performance in their definition is '*the realization of these competencies and their interaction in the actual production and comprehension of utterances and the actual demonstration of this knowledge*' (p.6). More explicitly, they distinguish the communicative competence and communicative performance as being

two different aspects. Hence, it seems clear and simple to understand that they define the communicative performance as firmly indicating actual use or ability for use.

McNamara (1996) argues that the framework of Canale and Swain (1980) has its weakness. For example, the inclusion of strategic competence within communicative competence can be problematic because it incorporates the possession of '*coping strategies*' into their framework; however, this actually refers to the performance. According to McNamara's (1996) viewpoint, this should be defined as communicative performance rather than communicative competence in such a model.

With reference to the requirement of a model of underlying abilities or skills in performance, Canale (1983) revised the previous model of communication competence presented with Swain in 1980, and made a distinction between *communication competence*, which refers to the underlying knowledge of the rules of communication, and *actual communication*, which relates to the use of this knowledge in real acts of communication. He therefore believes that communicative competence covers both knowledge and ability for use in the same way that Hymes (1972) suggested, and claims that '*one who can perform knowledge in actual situations, requires a distinction between underlying capacities (competence) and their manifestation in concrete situations (actual communication)*', (Canale, 1983, p.6).

Canale (1983) alters his position and moves back to Hymes's (1972) distinction by using the term '*actual communication*' (Canale, 1983, p.5) instead of communicative performance. He explains that actual communication is '*the realization of such knowledge and skill under limiting psychological and environmental conditions such as memory and perceptual constraints, fatigue, nervousness, distractions and interfering background noises*' (Canale, 1983, p.5). Moreover, he also argues that '*both knowledge and skill underlie actual communication in a systematic and necessary way, and are thus included in communicative competence*' (Canale, 1983, p.6). As a result, the main change advanced by Canale (1983) from the original model proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) deals with the separation of discourse from sociolinguistic competence.

Canale's (1983) framework of communicative competence now consists of four components; grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic

competence and discourse competence (see Figure 2.1). The only notion of competence that remains the same as that in the previous model is grammatical competence, whilst the others have significant changes. In the previous definition, grammatical competence contains *'knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology'* (Canale and Swain, 1980, p.29).

The second competence is sociolinguistic competence. Earlier Canale and Swain (1980) define this competence as two sets of rules; one is socio-cultural and the other is the rules of discourse. The notion of sociolinguistic competence has later been expanded the original notion and modified by Canale (1983). He defines sociolinguistic knowledge as knowledge of *'the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors such as status of participants, purposes of the interaction, and norm or conventions of interaction'* (p.7). That is, he notices that it is not only the utterances of language users that form interactions in socio-cultural contexts, but it is also necessary to consider the appropriateness of non-verbal behaviour, and the awareness of physical spaces and distances involved in communication for creating *'social meaning'*. Namely, this competence allows people to utter and interpret the language used in specific socio-cultural contexts and to gain the knowledge that is required to understand the socio-cultural rules of language and of interaction. Therefore, with possession of this competence, a language user can make judgements as to the appropriateness of an utterance, that is, on the appropriateness of *'whether function, attitudes and ideas are appropriate to context and how appropriate the realizations of function, attitudes and ideas are in specific contexts'* (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007, p.41).

The third subcategory is strategic competence. Canale and Swain (1980) defined this as *'the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence'* (p.30). More explicitly, this competence refers to the ability of language users to make repairs, cope with imperfect knowledge, and sustain communication through a set of compensatory strategies such as *'paraphrasing, circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance, and guessing, as well as register and style'* (Savignon, 1983, p.40-41). Canale (1983) extends the scope of the earlier notion of strategic competence and suggests that this competence should also take the ability to

'enhance the effectiveness of communication' (p.11) into account. Therefore, Canale (1983) views strategic competence as an operation of interaction with grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence. A clear definition was given by Canale (1983, p.11):

Of course such strategies need not be limited to resolving grammatical problems: actual communication will also require learners to handle problems of a sociolinguistic nature...and of a discourse nature (e.g. how to achieve coherence in a text when unsure of cohesion devices).

Broadly speaking, the definition of strategic competence is no longer to be constrained to solving linguistic problems as a compensatory strategy. Alternatively, it has been considered by Brown (2000, p.248) to be the ability that enables people to manipulate language in order to reach a communication goal.

The last subcategory in Canale's (1983) framework is discourse competence. Significantly, this is introduced as the fourth aspect of communicative competence in comparison to his previous model devised with Swain in 1980. This competence is concerned with *'how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres'* (Canale, 1983, p.9). In turn, the *'unity of a text is achieved through cohesion in form and coherence in meaning'* (p.9). Likewise, Alptekin (2002) echoes this concept and explains this competence as *'through the connection of a series of sentences or utterances to form a meaningful whole'* (p.58). Hence, cohesion and coherence serve as the basis of discourse competence and are expressed as an inter-sentential relationship (Brown, 2000, p.247).

To summarise, grammatical competence and discourse competence reflect the use of the linguistic system itself where sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence are defined as the functional aspects of communication (Brown, 2000, p.247).

McNamara (1996) argues that the model of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) have dominated second language testing for a decade because *'Its most influential feature was its treatment of the domains of language knowledge as including, in addition to grammatical competence,*

sociolinguistic competence (following Hymes), strategic competence and (subsequently) discourse competence' (p.61). However, some critics show their dissatisfaction in relation to the model of Canale and Swain (1980) and subsequent modifications of Canale (1983). For example, Spolsky (1985) disagrees with the exclusion of performance from the framework of Canale and Swain (1980) as he refers to discussions on tests of functional proficiency. Moreover, Shohamy (1988, p.167) remarks on the lack of examination of internal relationships between components of communicative competence, where the model of Canale and Swain (1980) merely list the components of communicative competence.

Schachter (1990) points out that the framework proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) do not distinguish sufficiently between sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. In particular, Schachter (1990) asks '*where does pragmatics fit into the Canale and Swain framework? Is it assumed not to exist? Or is it thought to be coextensive with discourse competence?*' (p.42). Schachter (1990) strongly argues that the concept of the separation of discursal and sociolinguistic knowledge into distinct components is not clear, because unified spoken and written text depends on contextual factors such as status of the participants, purpose of the interaction, and norms or conventions of interactions to be considered as its appropriateness (p.43).

In summary, the models of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) of communicative competence characterizes a learner's competence in a language in terms of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. They provide a view of the knowledge and skills that an individual speaker needs to obtain in order to communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in a second language. However, their models do not explain communicative competence clearly, and reveal a lack of interrelation between those four components; only listing the components under the communicative competence. Moreover, even though Canale (1983) had revised the previous model with Swain (1980) and separated discourse competence from sociolinguistic competence, the discourse and sociolinguistic competences are not clearly distinguished and account for the concept of pragmatic competence. As a result, it will be difficult for this researcher to identify the pragmatic competence of Taiwanese intermediate learners of English based on the models of Canale and Swain (1980) and

Canale (1983) of communicative competence. As a result, these models will not be considered as evidence in this study.

The frameworks of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) of communicative competence have subsequently been modified over the years (Brown, 2000). Bachman (1990) was the first researcher to explicitly divide language knowledge into organizational and pragmatic competence. The most prominent modification should be recognised as Bachman's (1990) distinction, which concerns '*communicative language ability*'.

Bachman (1990) developed his theoretical framework of *communicative language ability* (Bachman, 1990, p.85) to incorporate additional components, after refining the concept of communicative competence from Chomsky (1965), Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). Bachman (1990, p.81) also believes that his model can be treated as a basis of and provide benefit to both the development and use of language tests and language testing research.

The expanding framework of Bachman (1990) (see Figure 2.2 below) is more comprehensive and explicit than previous models proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). As McNamara (1996) argues, the distinction that Canale and Swain (1980) make is that they tend to avoid models of performance. Even after Canale (1983) subsequently attempted to modify his position to reveal such a model, he still retained and extended inconsistencies in relation to *knowledge* and *ability for use*. Through refining the earlier models, Bachman (1990) suggests '*the ability to use language communicatively involves both knowledge of competence in the language, and the capacity for implementing, or using this competence*' (p.81). Consequently, in Bachman's (1990) framework, he explicitly classified the composition of 'knowledge' and the composition of a 'skill', which remains ambiguous in the model of Canale (1983), (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007, p.42). Another improvement in the framework of Bachman (1990) is that his framework not only presented extensions of earlier models but also intended to '*characterize the processes by which the various components interact with each other and with the context in which language use occurs*' (p.81). The following sections explain the Bachman's (1990) framework in more detail.

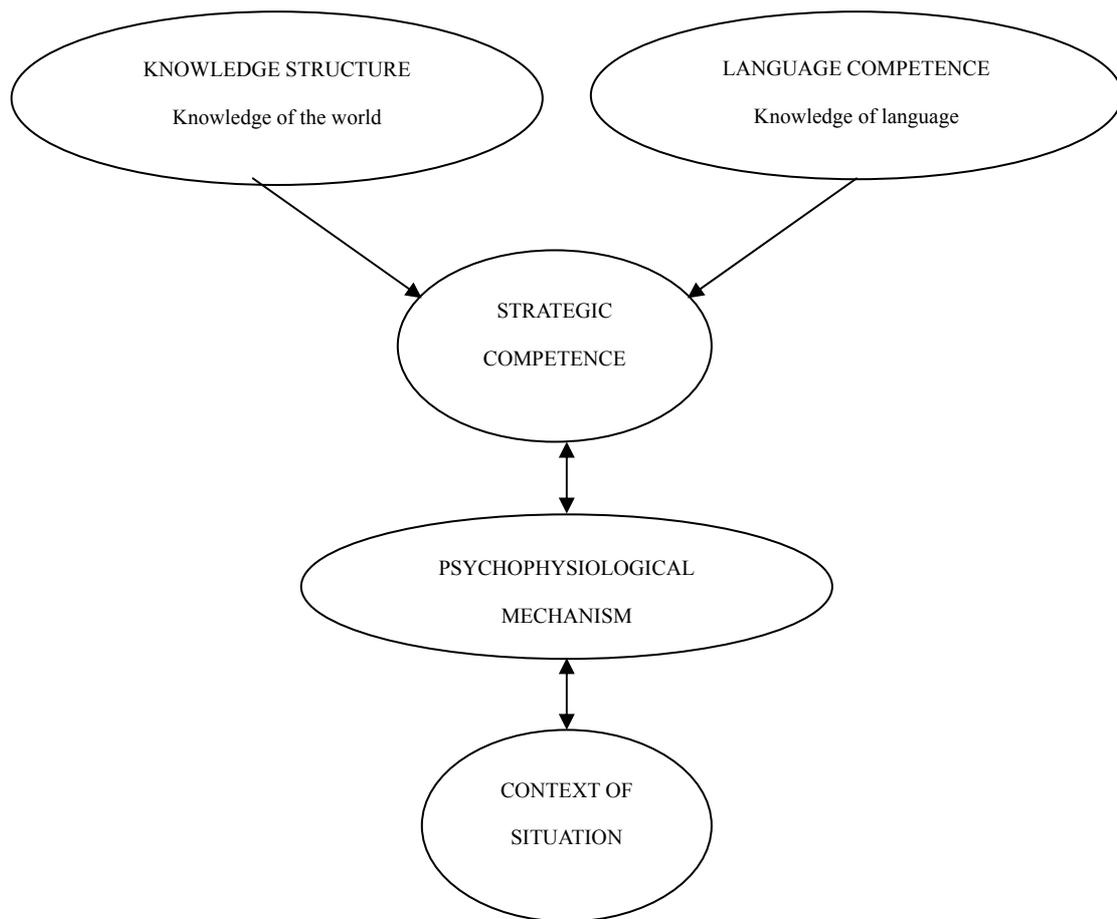


Figure 2.2 Components of Communicative Language Ability in Communicative Language Use adopted from Bachman (1990, p.85)

The framework of communicative language ability proposed by Bachman (1990, p.84) includes three components: language competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms (see Figure 2.2).

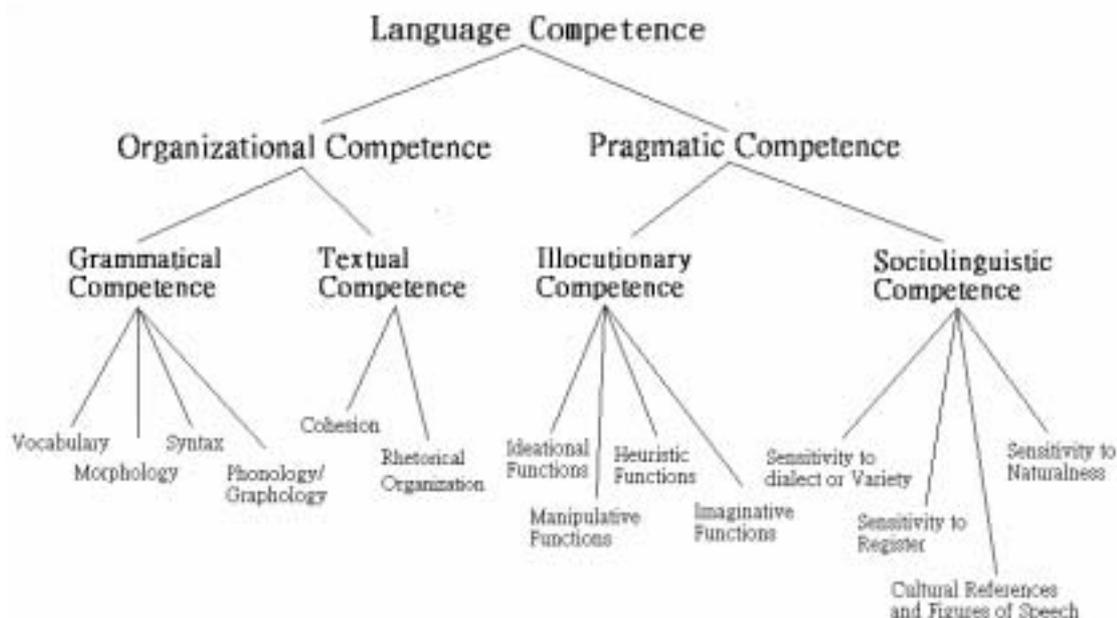


Figure 2.3 Components of Language Competence adopted from Bachman (1990, p.87)

Essentially, language competence consists of a set of knowledge components. Bachman (1990) reorganizes and re-categorises the components of knowledge by splitting them into two categories: organizational competence and pragmatic competence (see Figure 2.3). Grammatical competence and textual competences are included in organizational competence, and illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence are incorporated in pragmatic competence respectively.

With reference to strategic competence, Bachman (1990) distinguishes it as *‘the mental capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualized communicative language use’* (p.84). More significantly, he attempted to amend the inconsistency of Canale and Swain’s (1980) and Canale’s (1983) models by beginning to specifically discuss the aspects of the area that Hymes (1972) called *‘ability of use’* through an expanded strategic competence in his framework. In other words, strategic competence is recognized here more notably in the ability of use rather than knowledge.

Separating strategic competence from language competence is a crucial step (McNamara, 1996, p.71) in allowing test designers to clarify the conceptualization of language performance in test settings. It also allows for an improved examination of the claims of tests in assessing communicative language ability. Bachman believes that

strategic competence ‘*provides the means for relating language competencies to features of the context of situation in which language use takes place and to the language users’ knowledge structures (sociocultural knowledge, ‘real-world’ knowledge)*’ (Bachman, 1990, p.84). More explicitly, strategic competence in terms of speaker competence is considered as capability, which means that the speakers have the ability to relate the language competence to the language user’s knowledge structure (the knowledge of the world) and the situational context where communication take place. In other words, when the speaker lacks knowledge structure or awareness of the feature of context, language competence is deficient in strategic competence.

After discussing the language competence and strategic competence, it is now necessary to consider the psychophysiological mechanisms that are involved in language use. Bachman (1990) refers to psychophysiological mechanisms as ‘*neurological and psychological process involving the actual execution of language as a physical phenomenon*’ (p.84). In turn, these are stages of receiving and producing utterances. When communication takes place in the real world, psychophysiological mechanisms interact with the context of the situation where utterances are received and produced. The context of the situation is the only part in Bachman’s (1990) framework concerning speaker’s use of language to interact with the real world, where the processing of language in their brain does not take place.

In conclusion, three main areas of Bachman’s (1990) framework are outlined and existed as being, language competence; knowledge of language, strategic competence; the cognitive aspects of ability for use, and psychophysiological mechanisms; modalities of performance (McNamara, 1996, p.68). In the following sections, these three areas will be discussed in more detail.

Language Competence

Language competence (see Figure 2.3) refers to knowledge of language and consists of organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence comprises the knowledge to produce or recognize grammatically correct utterances, understanding their propositional content (*grammatical competence*) and organizing them in order to form text (*textual competence*). The sentence-level and inter-sentential rules consist of organizational competence (Brown, 2000). Four

components are identified in grammatical competence as a part of organizational competence: the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology/graphology. The textual competence model in Bachman's (1990) framework is similar to Canale's (1983) notion of discourse competence.

Originally, the two components in discourse competence existed as cohesion and coherence in Canale's (1983) model. Subsequently, Bachman (1990) groups cohesion into textual competence and leaves coherence out completely. Consequently, coherence is classified to be '*subsumed under illocutionary competence*' (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007, p.44) or '*divided between illocutionary competence and strategic competence*' (McNamara, 1996, p.69).

Textual competence encompasses two main elements, comprising cohesion and rhetorical organization. Cohesion includes ways of explicitly indicating semantic relationships such as conjunction, lexical cohesion and those conventions that control the order of the information in discourse. On the other hand, rhetorical organization is concerned with the overall conceptual structure of a text, and considers the effect of the text on the language user. There are several methods of developing rhetorical organization such as narrative, description, comparison classification and process analysis. The two abilities relate to the knowledge of how texts are structured in a spoken or a written form in order to be accepted as conventional by listeners and readers.

Pragmatic competence concerns '*the organization of the linguistic signals that are used in communication, and how these signals are used to refer to persons, objects, ideas and feelings*' (Bachman, 1990, p.89). In other words, this competence refers to '*the acceptability of utterances within specific contexts of language use, and rules determining the successful use of language within specified contexts*' (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007, p.44). Therefore, pragmatic competence consists of the knowledge of pragmatic conventions for performing proper language functions ('illocutionary competence') and the knowledge of sociolinguistic rules of appropriateness ('sociolinguistic competence').

Bachman (1990) re-organized the model of sociolinguistic competence proposed by Canale (1983) to become more detailed and to associate illocutionary competence with sociolinguistic competence into pragmatic competence in order to clarify the notion within his framework. In his model, he explains that '*illocutionary competence enables us to use language to express a wide range of functions and to interpret the illocutionary force of utterances or discourse*' (Bachman, 1990, p.94). It seems reasonable to surmise that illocutionary competence pertains to language function, as suggested by Halliday (1973), and speech acts are outlined in the relative theory by Austin (1962) and Searle (1975, 1979).

The language functions comprise four aspects including ideational, manipulative, heuristic and imaginative. Firstly, the ideational function refers to '*the use of language to express propositions or to exchange information about knowledge or feeling*' (Bachman, 1990, p.92-93). Secondly, the manipulative function pertains to getting the hearers to do what the speakers would like them to do. There are three functions in relation to manipulative function; these are instrumental, regulatory and interactional. The instrumental function is used to describe the use of language in order to get things done through the use of speech acts such as uttering suggestions, requests or commands. The regulatory function is used to control the behaviour of others such as formulating and stating rules, laws or norms of behaviour. Moreover, the interactional function is used to manage interpersonal relationships which involve context and relationships. Thirdly, the heuristic function is concerned with the use of language in extending our knowledge of the world around us such as learning or problem solving. The last is the imaginative function and it is used to create or extend our own environment for humorous or aesthetic purposes.

Bachman (1990), furthermore, defines sociolinguistic competence as '*the sensitivity to, or control of the conventions of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language use context; it enables us to perform language functions in ways that are appropriate to that context*' (Bachman, 1990, p.94). There are four abilities that exist under sociolinguistic competence: sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, sensitivity to register, sensitivity to naturalness and cultural references, and figures of speech. More particularly, aspects of language used exist as field of discourse, mode of discourse and style of discourse showing differences in register.

Further details of pragmatic competence that has been focused on this study will later be discussed in Section 2.3.

Strategic Competence

The important distinction made by Bachman (1990) in his framework in contrast to Canale and Swain's (1980) model is that he places more focus on the relationship between competence-knowledge of language, and performance-ability for use. Strategic competence is separated from language competence in this instance and is treated by Bachman as a component of communicative language ability in communicative language use (Bachman, 1990, p.87). McNamara (1996) also argues that a significant step in Bachman's (1990) model was to separate strategic competence from language competence as a capability rather than an area of knowledge.

In Bachman's (1990) framework, furthermore, the role of strategic competence should no longer be regarded as a compensatory strategy during communicative breakdown, as was evident in Canale and Swain's model (1980). Instead, this is central and plays a key role in all communication (Skehan, 1998, p.161). In Bachman's (1990) model, strategic competence is no longer to be treated as a way of coping with problems, but as a more general cognitive capacity to manage communication. Its purpose is to mediate between knowledge structures (knowledge of the world), language competence and the context of situation (the real world). In turn, the strategic competence in Bachman's (1990) framework is analogous to a decision maker who chooses specific words, and attempts to differentiate between various receptive and productive ways of negotiation to establish meaning (Brown, 2000, p.248).

Bachman (1990) further illustrates that communicative competence is a dynamic system, in which knowledge structure and language competence feed into strategic competence. In other words, strategic competence aims to ascertain the degree to which linguistic intentions are efficiently executed (Rose and Kasper, 2001, p.64). Within the whole system of communicative competence, strategic competence plays the role of the engine to drive the model to promote the ability for language use. Therefore, Bachman (1990) extends the formulation of Færch and Kasper (1983) by including the components of assessment, planning and execution to provide a general description of strategic competence in communicative language use.

The assessment component involves:

- identifying the information needed for attaining a communicative goal in a particular context;
- determining which language competence is most effective in achieving the communicative goal;
- discovering what level of ability and knowledge are shared with interlocutors; and
- evaluating the extent to which the communicative goals has been successful.

The planning component involves:

- retrieving items from language competence and formulating a plan;
- selecting the appropriate modality or channel; and
- producing an utterance which promotes the most efficient use of existing language ability.

The execution component consists of:

- Using the relevant psychophysiological mechanism to implement the plan in the modality and channel appropriate to the communicative goal and the context

Psycho-physiological Mechanisms

The learners' psycho-physiological mechanisms would be involved in the actual execution phase of language use (Færch and Kasper, 1983) when strategic competence emerges in the process of communication. Psycho-physiological mechanisms encompass the channel (auditory and visual) and the mode (receptive and productive). That is, auditory and visual skills are employed in receptive language use and neuromuscular skills such as the employment of articulators in productive language use (Bachman, 1990, p.107-8). Strategic competence interacts with psycho-physiological mechanisms which combine in any given situational context. In turn, when the communication takes place, psychophysiological mechanisms interact with the context of the situation where utterances are received and produced. The context of the situation is the only part in Bachman's (1990) framework concerning speaker's use of language to interact with the real world.

This researcher remains aware that Bachman and Palmer (1996) later revised Bachman's (1990) framework and renamed their model to include language use and language test performance. However, their model is not relevant to this study as the purpose of this study aims to investigate the learners' communicative strategy usage and their pragmatic competence. As it stands, it is necessary to employ a theoretical framework which could facilitate this researcher to identify the competence that this researcher aims to investigate and the framework of Bachman (1990) is appropriate to be drawn upon and employed into this study. As a result, the framework of Bachman and Palmer (1996) will not be discussed further.

In addition, many researchers such as McNamara (1996), Young (2000) and Chalhoub-Deville and Deville (2005) argue that Bachman's (1990) model presents a cognitive/psycholinguistic ability model, rather than interactional competence model. It is because the Bachman's (1990) model of communicative language ability consists of both '*knowledge of competence in the language and the ability for implementing or executing that competence*' (Bachman, 1990, p.81) in specific contexts. More explicitly, a central idea in conceptualizing and modelling language ability and use is that the context and the communication generated by discourse interactants, that is, the representation of L2 use in context. The link between 'ability-in language user' and 'the context' are two important concepts in communicative language ability but two structures are separated.

Bachman (1990) suggests a dynamic interaction between ability and situation and so proposes an 'ability-in language user' based on 'language use – in context' to construct representation. Even though Bachman (2002) in his recent publication shows his position has been advanced in 1990, he still distinguishes communicative language ability between the 'ability targeted' and 'the context in which they are observed' (Chalhoub-Deville, 2003, p. 372) in his model.

Chalhoub-Deville (2003) points out that the reason why Bachman attempts to maintain the separation of the language use situation and the ability underlying performance is to permit generalization on the basis of transferable abilities. Even though Bachman's framework intends to illustrate what an individual needs to know and to do in order to communicate, the focus of communicative competence is on a

single individual language user in a social context but this could be problematic (Young, 2000).

As Jacoby and Ochs (1995) suggest that the abilities, actions, and activities do not belong to the individual but are jointly constructed by all participants. Similarly, Swain (2001) believes that a dynamic representation of interaction is co-constructed by all participants in a given situations. Ultimately, Bachman's (1990) position is considered to be different from those who consider the '*language use situation primarily as a social event in which ability, language users, and context are inextricable meshed*' (Chalhoub-Deville, 2003, p. 372). That is, the social perspective of interaction. Those interactional competence researchers propose their position as 'ability-in language user-in context'.

Young (2000) argues that interactional competence is fundamentally different from Bachman's (1990) framework that suggests that abilities interact with contexts. In the notion of interaction competence, it interprets that interaction is co-constructed by all participants, each of whom contributes linguistic and pragmatic resources to a discourse practice and is specific to that practice. While the communicative competence shows that an individual assesses a situation as of one kind rather than another, plans appropriate responses to the situation, and executes the plans to the shifting dynamics of the context, the interaction competence indicates that communication does not only refer to the ability and the context, but also to some theory of how two people interact. As it stands, the interaction competence researchers seek to explain the variation in an individual speaker performance from one discursive practice to another, rather than an individual user in a specific social context.

The interaction competence comprises a descriptive framework of socio-cultural characteristics of discursive practices and the interactional processes by which discursive practices are co-constructed by participants. Therefore, Young (2000) claims that interactional competence is a future elaboration of second language knowledge and suggests that there is a need to add competence in the six interaction features which are a knowledge of rhetorical script, a knowledge of register specific to the practice, a knowledge of pattern of turn-taking, a knowledge of topical organization, a knowledge of an appropriate participant framework, and a knowledge of the means for signalling

boundaries between practices and transitions within the practice itself (Young, 2000. p.9).

In summary, three main areas in the model of Bachman (1990) of communicative language ability have been outlined and discussed above. Apart from the organizational competence that involves grammatical and textual competences, the important contribution in comparison to the previous models of Canale and Swain's (1980) and Canale's (1983) is that the pragmatic competence, which includes illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence in organizational competence, is identified. Moreover, a significant step in Bachman's (1990) model was to separate strategic competence from language competence as a capability rather than an area of knowledge. This competence allows learners to relate language competence to the knowledge structure and the situational context which communication takes place.

However, many interactional competence researchers, such as Young (2000), argue that Bachman's model does not account for the fact that the interaction is co-constructed by all participants in a given social context; his model only refers to an individual language user interacting with the context. Therefore, interactional competence researchers reject his notion that distinguishes the communicative language ability according to the 'ability targeted' and 'the context in which they are observed'; instead proposing their position as 'ability-in language user-in context'.

Even though interactional competence researchers provide their view of a dynamic interaction in which the abilities, actions, and activities do not belong to the individual but are co-constructed by all participants, this research focuses on the investigation of an individual's performance in various contexts rather than exploring the interactions between participants. As a result, the framework of Bachman (1990) provides a useful base for this research in order to identify two competences; these are strategic competence and pragmatic competence of Taiwanese learners of English. After discussing the framework of Bachman (1990) of communicative language ability, the theoretical conceptions in relation to strategic competence will be discussed in the following sections.

2.2 Communication Strategy

The purpose of this section is to present some of the theoretical background on which research into communication strategies has been based. In the first subsection, the notion of communication strategy will be discussed. The second subsection illustrates the typology of Færch and Kasper (1983). Subsequently the Nijmegen project will be reviewed and the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) will be discussed in the third and fourth subsections. The final subsection focuses on Littlemore's (2003) specific elaboration that was based on the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) to classify the subtypes of compensatory strategy.

2.2.1 The Notion of Communication Strategy

There are three components included in strategic competence within Bachman's (1990) framework: assessment, planning and execution. That is, assessing what is said, planning utterances and executing the plan. In turn, the ability to assess the situation, plan an utterance verbally and also perform an utterance is to successfully execute plans and achieve goals. More explicitly, in order for the plan to match the goal, the language users have to analyse the given situation and their resources in respect of the goal in order to construct and select an appropriate plan.

Corder (1983) offers an explanation of communication strategies as '*a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty*' (p.6). Corder (1983, p.17) argues there is a balance between linguistic resources and expression of meaning while communicating. For instance, native speakers ideally have the linguistic resources to express the intentional meaning they always wish to communicate. On the other hand, language learners sometimes lack a balance between linguistic resources and expression of meaning insofar as they will not convey their messages successfully because of the lack of their linguistic means; subsequently, communication strategies will be employed by the learners based on their choices.

Færch and Kasper (1983) more explicitly indicate that communication strategies are used in the situations based on the problems that take place within the planning or execution phase. When problems occur within the planning phase, it shows that the

language learners confront a problem in constructing or developing a plan which could provide adequate means in order to assist them in achieving their communication goals (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.23).

Problems in the planning phase may arise from two causes; one is the insufficiency of linguistic knowledge or difficulty of reaching a given goal, for example, inadequate knowledge on the use of specific types of illocutionary act or specific topics. The other is an expectation of problems in executing a given plan, such as fluency or correctness. Explicitly, the components of the planning process include retrieving the relevant items from organizational competence and formulating a plan in order to achieve the communication goal. So the problem lies in which strategies should be employed when speakers face the difficulty in retrieving the relevant items such as insufficient levels of language. The avoidance of engagement with the problems in this phase or the development of an alternative plan to protect themselves could prevent problems in these instances.

With respect to the occurrence of problems within the execution phase, problems that emerge while the language learners attempt to execute the plan are revealed (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.23). When problems occur within the execution phase, the learner is supposed to retrieve the items or rules that are contained in the plan but cannot be accessed. As Færch and Kasper (1983) argue, '*this is the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon, well-known from L1 communication*' (p.34). Here, the learners fail to find the word, and even though they may know it, it is not easily recalled.

It can be concluded that whenever language users are involved in the course of interaction, it is possible that they will confront problems. No matter whether the problems occur in the planning phase, execution phase or during interaction, the speakers will attempt to adopt strategies, namely communication strategies, to solve their communication problems whilst they possess inadequacies in their inter-language resources.

Communication strategies, as Ellis (1994) agrees, are a part of the planning process and are useful for the speakers to tackle the problems that prevent them from executing their initial plan. Similarly, Tarone (1983) suggests that communication strategies '*are*

used to compensate for some lack in the linguistic system, and focus on exploring alternate ways of using what one does know for the transmission of a message' (p.64) while the problem occurs. It is evident that the planning process plays a prominent role in communication and therefore communication strategies exist in the planning process.

There are two broad theoretical approaches to communication strategies; one is the interaction approach and the other is the psycholinguistic approach. The interaction approach '*can be viewed as discourse strategies that are evident in interactions involving learners*' (Ellis, 2003, p.369), that is, employing the discourse management techniques to avoid communication problems while interaction occurs between learners. The most widely cited taxonomy emerging from the interactional approach is Tarone (1977, 1980, 1981).

The psycholinguistic approach can be treated as a '*cognitive process involved in the use of the L2 in reception and production*' (Ellis, 2003, p.369) that is, distinguishing communication strategies from procedure, planning and tactics. The learners employ these strategies to overcome some problems while they execute their original plan. The psycholinguistic approach is best illustrated by the work of Færch and Kasper (1983), (Ellis, 2003; Poulisse, 1990).

When comparing the taxonomies of Tarone (1977) and Færch and Kasper (1983), Ellis (2003, p.398) suggests that the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983) provides a basis for classifying the communication strategies into categories (see Table 2.2) instead of only listing them like Tarone's typology (1977). This has resulted in the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983) being regarded as a psycholinguistic framework allowing for the classification of the communication strategies into categories rather than just listing them (Smith, 2003) while also being more detailed and advanced than that of Tarone. Moreover, Bachman (1990) extends the formulation of Færch and Kasper (1983) to illustrate the strategic competence. Therefore, the next section will address the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983).

2.2.2 The Taxonomy of Færch and Kasper

The communication strategies in the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983) are regarded as ‘*strategic plans*’ (Ellis, 2003, p.400) because they are classified based on the learners’ intention either to avoid the problems or to achieve some solutions to them. Færch and Kasper (1983) suggest a system for classifying communication strategies on a basis of a framework proposed by Corder (1983). Corder (1983, p.17) suggests that there are two options for confronting a problem while interacting. The first is *message adjustment strategies*; or risk avoidance strategies including topic avoidance, topic abandonment, semantic avoidance and message reduction. The second is *resource expansion strategies*; including switching, borrowing, inventing, paraphrasing and paralinguistic strategies, these are clearly ‘*success oriented*’ through risk-running strategies (see Table 2.1). The former involves the modification of messages to the available resources. The latter involves an attempt to increase resources by means of selecting strategies in order to achieve their communicative intentions.

Table 2.1: The Typology of Corder (1983, p.17)

<i>Message adjustment</i>	<i>Resource expansion</i>
Increase adjustment: <i>Topic avoidance</i> <i>Topic abandonment</i> <i>Semantic avoidance</i> <i>Message reduction</i>	Increase risk: <i>Switching</i> <i>Borrowing/inventing</i> <i>Paraphrasing</i> <i>Paralinguistic strategies</i>

In the typology (Table 2.1), Corder (1983) explains that the speaker adopts the message adjustment strategy to diminish the linguistic problems. As a result, entire topics can be avoided, specific meanings within topics can be abandoned, a set of semantic relations can be avoided, or given messages can be reduced, where only part of the plan originally intended remains. Bialystok (1990) echoes ‘*this ordering is the sequence of most global to least global (most local) strategies*’ (p.30).

Poullisse (1993) argues that when the speakers employ message adjustment strategies, they adjust the message to become congruent with linguistic resources. In contrast, when the speaker adopts the resource expansion strategies, they are at risk of increasing, extending or manipulating the available linguistic system in order to allow

his utterances to become capable of realizing the intended message by the target language listener.

In this study, more concern will be placed upon resource expansion strategies. Here, the speakers are at risk of communication failure so they aim to extend the available linguistic resource to solve their linguistic deficiency. Bialystok (1990) argues that when the speaker employs the strategy of switching language, they carry the greatest risk of failure because it is considered to be the least effective strategy in improving the comprehension of a target language interlocutor. Bialystok (1990) suggests that when speakers adopt a paraphrasing strategy, they are more likely to be successful. In comparison to other strategies within the resource expansion strategy, the use of paralinguistic strategy may be less communicatively efficient, but involves the least risk-taking (Bialystok, 1990, p.30). Poullisse (1993) also argues that the strategy of borrowing is more frequently used among less proficient L2 learners than among highly proficient L2 learners in some situations (p.169).

The typology of Corder (1983), as mentioned earlier, is the basis of Færch and Kasper's (1983) taxonomy. Basically, the concept remains the same and suggests that the learners facing a communication problem have two choices: firstly, they can discard the problem by terminating the difficulty, namely, *avoiding* the obstacle, and secondly, they can resolve the problem by developing an alternative plan, namely, *achieving* a solution. These two choices illustrate the major division in their taxonomy.

The main key points to Færch and Kasper's (1983) approach are the notion of problem-orientedness and potential consciousness. Problem-orientedness distinguishes between non-strategic communication goals and strategic goals. The former refers to the goals that can be reached without difficulty and the latter present themselves to the speakers as problems. In this sense, strategies are those plans that were developed in response to problems. Potential consciousness is secondary as it is derived from problem-orientedness; that is to say, that in it a speaker experiences a problem in reaching a goal, and this implies consciousness about there being difficulty.

In their classification, two choices can be made; one changes the original goal to avoid problems through a *reduction strategy* (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.36-37) while

the other maintains the original goal and attempts to overcome the problem by means of developing an alternative plan through an *achievement strategy* (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.36-37). The choice between these two main strategies is based on two considerations: one is the learner's behaviour (that is, whether it tends to be avoidance-oriented or achievement-oriented) and the other depends upon the nature of the encountered problem. An overview of types of behaviour and types of strategies is shown in Figure 2.4.

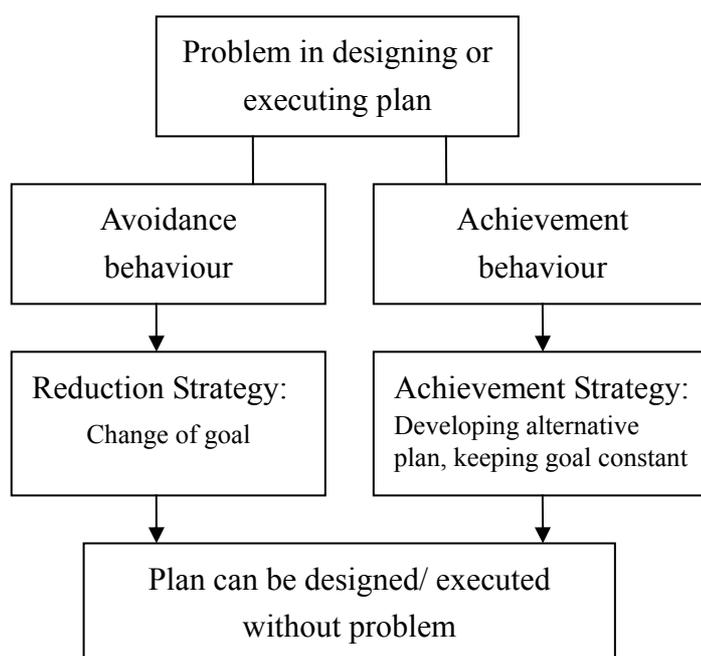


Figure 2.4: An Overview of the Types of Behaviour and Types of Strategies adopted from Færch and Kasper (1983, p.37)

Færch and Kasper (1983) begin with two main categories; the *reduction strategy* and *achievement strategy*. Achievement strategies can be L1-based (like code-switching, foreignizing, and literal translation), inter-language-based (like paraphrase, generalization, restructuring and word-coinage), interactional (appeals), and non-linguistic (gesture or facial expression). Reduction way takes place either at the pragmatic or at the referential level (with topic avoidance or meaning replacement).

The following Table 2.2 illustrates the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983).

Table 2.2: Overview of Communication Strategies proposed by Færch and Kasper (1983, p.52-53)

<p>Formal reduction strategies Learner communicates by means of a 'reduced system, in order to avoid producing non-fluently or incorrect utterances by realizing in sufficiently automatized or hypothetical rules/items</p>	<p>Subtypes: <i>Phonological</i> <i>Morphological</i> <i>Syntactic</i> <i>Lexical</i></p>
<p>Function reduction Strategies: Learner reduces his communicative goal in order to avoid a problem</p>	<p>Subtypes: <i>Actional reduction</i> <i>Modal reduction</i> <i>Reduction of the propositional content:</i> <i>Topic avoidance</i> <i>Message abandonment</i> <i>Meaning replacement</i></p>
<p>Achievement strategies: Learner attempts to solve communicative problem by expanding his communicative resources</p>	<p>Subtypes: <i>Compensatory strategies</i> <i>(a) code switching</i> <i>(b) interlingual transfer</i> <i>(c) Inter/intralingual transfer</i> <i>(d) IL based strategies:</i> <i>(i) generalization</i> <i>(ii) paraphrase</i> <i>(iii) word coinage</i> <i>(iv) restructuring</i> <i>(e) Cooperative strategies</i> <i>(f) Non-linguistic strategies</i> <i>Retrieval strategies</i></p>

In the reduction strategy, formal reduction and functional reduction are included. Formal reduction refers to the parts of the linguistic system that include *phonology*, *morphology*, *syntax* and *lexicon*, which are avoided.

With respect to functional reduction, this arises when language users have to avoid certain situations that exceed their communicative resources. For instance, such situations may require the use of specific types of illocutionary acts and specific topics. As a result, the language learners sometimes decide not to engage in communication and the use of such function by means of adopting *actional reduction*, *modal reduction* and *reduction of the propositional content*. Based on Harder's (1980) observations, when the speaker chooses to adopt *actional reduction* and *modal reduction*, this gives a distorted image of their personality to their interlocutor as avoidance takes place and communication is given up.

Furthermore, the *functional reduction of the propositional content* consists of three subtype strategies; *topic avoidance*, *message abandonment* and *meaning replacement*. In relation to *topic avoidance*, the language learners perceive the problem within the planning phase and decide not to formulate communication goals. *Message abandonment* refers to the retrieval problems that occur in the execution phase. For example, when the learners initiate communication, they soon run into problems or difficulties such as lack of target language form or rule. As it stands, they may decide to shorten their communication by means of stopping mid-sentence without appealing for help from their interlocutors in order to finish their utterances. With respect to *meaning replacement*, this strategy tends to manipulate the situation in which the learners confront problems either within the planning phase or the execution phase; they prefer to maintain the topic by means of using more general expression. Færch and Kasper (1983) admit the boundaries between these strategies were considered as points along a continuum: ‘At the one end, the learner says ‘almost what he wants to say about a given topic (=meaning replacement), at the other end he says nothing at all about this (=topic avoidance)’ (p.44).

By excluding *message abandonment* from *reduction of the propositional content* strategy, this could be regarded as ‘*forming a continuum*’. At one end of the scale, the learners have almost said what they want to say in a given topic, (i.e. *meaning replacement*) whereas at the other end the learners say nothing at all concerning the topic (i.e. *topic avoidance*), (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.44).

Achievement strategies, on the other hand, aim to facilitate the solving of learners’ problems that occur in either the planning phase or the execution phase by means of expanding their communicative resources. Færch and Kasper (1983, p.46) state that achievement strategy involves two main strategies; one is compensatory strategy that solves problems in the planning phase because of insufficient language resources, and the other is retrieval strategies for solving the problem occurring in the execution phase.

The achievement strategies are sub-classified based on the language resources that the learner uses to solve their planning problems. There are two main types of strategies; one is the compensatory strategy and the other is the retrieval strategy. The compensatory strategy comprises (a) code switching, (b) interlingual (IL) transfer, (c)

Inter-/Intralingual transfer, (d) IL based strategies, (e) cooperative strategies and (f) non-linguistic strategies. In particular, IL based strategies involve four subtype strategies; they are (i) generalization, (ii) paraphrase, (iii) word coinage, and (iv) restructuring. In the following sections, each subtype strategy will be discussed and examples presented.

- a. Code switching may involve varying expansions of discourse from a single word or sentence (Tarone, 1977). When the code switching is at the level of a single word, it could be referred to as ‘*borrowing*’ (Corder, 1983). For example, Do you want to have some ah- Zinsen or do you want to have some more...? (BO, Zinsen German for ‘interests’).
- b. Interlingual transfer refers to the combination of the linguistic features from Interlanguage (IL) and the first language (L1) (or any other language different from the second language (L2)). IL transfer may occur not only at levels of linguistic features such as phonological and morphological levels or lexical levels but also at the pragmatic and discourse level (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.47). When interlingual transfer takes place at the phonological and morphological level, it could be referred to as ‘foreignizing’. For example, Danish ‘*Knallert*’ pronounced as (knælə) for English ‘moped’. Moreover, at the lexical level, the learners may use ‘literal translation’ from L1 verbatim into L2 (e.g. ‘green things’ for grøntsager Danish for ‘vegetables’).
- c. Strategies of Inter-/Intralingual transfer could be applied when the L1 and L2 are formally similar. The result of this strategy is ‘*a generalization of an IL rule but the generalization is influenced by the properties of the corresponding L1 structures*’ (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.47). For example, the learners of Danish use svømme- svømmede (past tense) instead of ‘swim-swam’.
- d. Interlanguage (IL) based strategies are classified into four subtypes:
 - (i) Generalization: The learners solve their problems in the planning phase by means of filling the gaps with IL items that they do not normally use in such contexts. However, they assume that ‘*the generalized item can convey the appropriate meaning in the given situation/ context*’ (Færch and Kasper, 1983,

p.48). For example: The learner uses the superordinate term ‘animals’ to refer to ‘rabbit’.

- (ii) Paraphrase: The learners solve their problems in the planning phase by means of filling the gaps with a well-formed construction based on their IL system. The strategy of paraphrase could take the form of ‘*Descriptions*’ or ‘*Circumlocutions*’ (Tarone, 1977). The learner emphasises ‘*characteristic properties or functions of the intended referent*’ (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.49).

An example is that learners describe ‘interest’ as ‘having some more money’. ‘*Exemplification*’ is also recognised as a special case of paraphrase. Færch and Kasper (1983, p.50) state that learner uses ‘Puch’ for ‘moped’ for instance.

- (iii) Word coinage: this refers to learners creating new IL words.

Example given by Váradi (1983) is ‘airball’ for ‘balloon’.

- (iv) Restructuring: The strategy of restructuring could be used when the original plan has failed; however, learners still insist on communicating and keeping their intended meaning without using the strategy of message abandonment. As a result, the learners may have to get around the word by means of reconstructing their utterance. For example, the learner would like to express that he is hungry. ‘*my tummy- my tummy is- I have (inaudible) I must eat something*’ (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.50).

- e. Cooperative strategy is similar to ‘appeal for assistance’ in Tarone’s (1977) taxonomy. Through interaction, interlocutors share problems and may join together to solve the problem. The learner attempts to signal their problem to their interlocutor so that it can be solved on a cooperative basis. In turn, ‘appeal’ could be considered as ‘self initiated other repairs’ (Schegloff *et al.*, 1977, p.363) and the learner could use direct and indirect ways to indicate their problem. For example: by pointing to the sweater to indicate the colour that the learner intends to say.

- f. Non-linguistic strategies: it is also possible for learners sometimes to use mime, gesture and sound imitation (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.52) during their communication.

Non-linguistic strategies 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 communicative goal.

Retrieval strategies can be adopted when the learner experiences problems in the execution phase (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.46). That is, retrieval strategies are sometimes adopted when learners have problems in the execution phase. In other words, they may have difficulties in retrieving specific IL items even though they know that they possess the linguistic resources. Consequently, learners have to adopt six retrieval strategies, which are suggested by Glahn (1980). These are, '*waiting for the term to appear; appealing to formal similarity; retrieval via semantic fields; searching via other languages; retrieval from learning situations; sensory procedures*' (Færch and Kasper, 1983, p.52).

Criticism concerning the classification of Færch and Kasper (1983) has been received from many researchers such as Bialystok (1990) and Poulisse (1990, 1993). Bialystok (1990) argues that the problematicity and consciousness criteria reveal weakness in Færch and Kasper's (1983) taxonomy. Firstly, she claims that the communication language use is not normally perceived as problematic. For instance, native speakers attempt to use communication strategies to provide lengthy definition for words in order to ensure their listeners understand their intended meaning even though no communication problem has been taken place. Therefore, using problematicity as criteria can only account for using strategies in certain situations and not all communication. That is, the Færch and Kasper (1983) definition of communication strategies only attempts to overcome linguistic difficulty but does not attempt to reach a communicative goal, with or without problems in their definition of it.

Moreover, Bialystok (1990) criticizes that using consciousness as a criteria also reveals problems. In particular, Færch and Kasper (1983) claim that the plans that speakers develop may or may not be conscious and that this consciousness may change on different situations for solving the problems that the learners encounter in order to reach specific communicative goals. However, Bialystok (1990) argues that communication strategies in Færch and Kasper's (1983) framework are potentially conscious, because in their category, there is no 'independent means' for deciding which plan fall into either consciousness or not consciousness so that it can be assumed that '*one is left to assume that all plans are potentially conscious*' (p.5).

Poullisse (1990) also argues strongly that Færch and Kasper's (1983) taxonomy certainly presents some deficiencies. Firstly, Poullisse (1990) points out that there is a problem in the coding system in Færch and Kasper's (1983) taxonomy. Some of the criteria used to distinguish the different communication strategy types are not defined explicitly enough. For example, Færch and Kasper (1983) use words like 'appropriate' in the definition of generalization and 'well-formed' in the definition of paraphrase without indicating whether these should be interpreted from the point of view of the learner or the observer.

Secondly, Poullisse (1990) also argues that '*some of the distinctions seem to be non-existent or arbitrary*' (p.27). For instance, 'topic avoidance' and 'meaning replacement' is rather arbitrary. Apart from message abandonment in the functional reduction strategies, 'meaning replacement' and 'topic avoidance' should be seen as 'forming a continuum'. At the one end, the learner says 'almost what she wants to say about a given topic (meaning replacement) and at the other end he says nothing at all about this (topic avoidance). This description reveals the difficulty to draw the line between reduction strategies and compensatory strategies.

Similarly, Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal Campo (1997) argue that the division between reduction and achievement is problematic because partial reduction can be seen as a form of achievement. They doubt that '*meaning replacement*' could be a form of '*paraphrase*'. For example, when a learner says 'He play' or 'He does sport', if he preserves the topic by means of using more general expression or he uses the strategy of '*paraphrase*'. If the strategy is identified as paraphrase, Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal

Campo (1997) argue whether paraphrase is seen as a form of achievement or as a reduction strategy.

Thirdly, Poulisse (1990) criticises the definitions of '*meaning placement*' and '*generalization*' as they seem to capture the same phenomena on identifying strategies and there is no need to distinguish between them. '*Meaning placement*' is defined as the learner 'preserving the topic' but is referred to by means of a more general experience, therefore not explicitly explaining the use of 'a general expression'. The example of referring to 'animals' as 'rabbit' can be assumed as '*meaning placement*' because the utterance implies this kind of general expression is included. However, it is probable that this case could also be applied to the strategy of '*generalization*'. Under this circumstance, it is difficult to distinguish the difference between '*meaning placement*' and '*generalization*' and results in a certain amount of vagueness.

Poulisse (1990) also criticised the fact that Færch and Kasper (1983, p.49) considered '*paraphrase*' to be the same as '*exemplification*', but grouping exemplification together with 'description' as subcategories of 'paraphrase' is not clear or appropriate. Basically, '*exemplification*' refers to the use of hyponymic terms while 'generalization' relates to the use of superordinate terms. As a result, '*generalization*' and 'exemplification' are more alike than '*description*' and '*exemplification*'. This suggests that including 'description' within '*paraphrase*' and considering '*paraphrase*' as '*exemplification*' are not proper.

Moreover, Poulisse (1990) indicates that Færch and Kasper's (1983) taxonomy does not include the category of '*approximation*'. As she believes, '*approximation*' could have served as a suitable category to group superordinate (animal-rabbit), co-ordinate (hare-rabbit) and hyponymic terms (rose-flower) together. Therefore, the missing '*approximation*' category would mean that learners' utterances that include strategies of this kind would not be accounted for.

Finally, Poulisse (1990, p.28) claims that Færch and Kasper's (1983) taxonomy, like other traditional taxonomies, lacks generality because they tend to describe every different utterance in detail; so that when any utterance is slightly different from those covered by existing compensatory strategy types it would be identified as a new type of

compensatory strategy use. For example, Færch and Kasper's (1983) taxonomy distinguished between '*Code Switching*' and '*Borrowing*' on the basis of the number of words transferred from the L1 to the L2. Even if it is easy to make such distinctions consistently, it is doubtful whether those two strategies will explain much on the understanding of compensatory strategy use, and whether it is necessary to develop 'code-switching' as a new category.

Poulisse (1990, p.28) also criticises Færch and Kasper (1983) for presenting too many categories and subtypes where only a few instances of each exist, which would cause other researchers to derive their own understanding of the use of the strategies. Because she believes that those typologies of communication strategies are too vague to allow consistent classification, she suggests that related categories should be reorganised and classified into more comprehensive categories so that other researchers can distinguish the categories with greater ease and therefore draw a more generalised conclusion.

In summary, Færch and Kasper (1983) deal with production. 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, and the latter by keeping the goal and finding alternative ways of achieving it. Bialystok (1990) and Poulisse (1990, 1993) criticise the Færch and Kasper (1983) taxonomy as it involves several problems that result in the difficulty of identifying the communication strategies. Bialystok (1990) criticises that the notion of the problem-orientedness and potential consciousness involve certain weakness in their taxonomy because problem-orientedness only accounts for the communication when the problem occurred. Bialystok (1990) considers all plans developed by the speakers are all consciousness; this is different from the claim of Færch and Kasper (1983) concerning the consciousness about the problem in not all situations. Moreover, Poulisse (1990, 1993) criticises the fact that some definitions of strategies are not clear, for instance, a difficulty on distinguishing '*topic avoidance*' and '*meaning replacement*'. Sometimes the definitions of those categories do not indicate that they should be based on either the view of the learner or the observer. In their taxonomy, two strategies such as '*meaning replacement*' and '*generalization*' involve similar definitions. Moreover, the definition of '*generalization*' and '*meaning replacement*' seem to capture the same

phenomena but identify as two different categories. The problems of regarding ‘*exemplification*’ as ‘*paraphrase*’ are not clear and are also inappropriate as these categories are so similar to ‘*description*’; therefore, they should not be grouped together. In addition, Færch and Kasper’s (1983) taxonomy is similar to other classifications on the lack of generality. Creating new types of category for slightly different forms of utterances resulted in too many categories being included in their taxonomy. Therefore, it is suggested that there is a need to redefine the communication strategy and make the taxonomy to be more generality.

Poullisse (1993, p.163), in addition, criticises and indicates that their taxonomy does not offer much insight into the cognitive processes underlying communication strategy use. Similarly, some researchers such as Kellerman *et al.* (1987) at Nijmegen University criticised the existing typologies of communication strategies as product-oriented. Those typologies focused on linguistic product because they showed a tendency to illustrate strategy types with isolated examples. As a result, these typologies were merely descriptive. Most importantly, the product-oriented classifications of communication strategies failed to distinguish the psychological process from the linguistic product. Because the criteria that were adopted to distinguish between the various subtypes of compensatory strategy were not explicitly related to the processes underlying communication strategy use in the earlier studies, generalizations made with respect to these processes were missed out.

For those factors, the Nijmegen University group took such problems into account and proposed an alternative taxonomy to classify the compensatory strategies in a process-oriented manner. In other words, this taxonomy was based on the assumption that identifying the cognitive processes that underlie the choice of a strategy is essential.

Kellerman (1991) points out that there are three characters involved in this process-oriented typology. Firstly, the strategies included in this taxonomy are compatible with cognitive processing and problem-solving behaviour. Secondly, this taxonomy provides a few strategy types that are consistent with this data. Thirdly, this taxonomy should be developed based on a consideration that no strategies should be uniquely associated with certain tasks or certain items in order to be generalised across tasks, items, languages and learners.

The *Nijmegen project* was considered to be the most comprehensive study of communication strategies, and was carried out by a group of researchers at the University of *Nijmegen* (Poulisse, 1993, p.165). This project was intended solely to study the compensatory strategies where the focus was to investigate the proficiency effect; the relationship between communication strategy (CS) use in L1 and L2 and the effectiveness of various CS types (Poulisse, 1990, 1993).

As the *Nijmegen* project only studied compensatory strategies, Poulisse (1990, p.178) defines that they are '*strategies which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phases of an utterance due to (his own) linguistic shortcomings*' (p. 88). In other words, compensatory strategies were employed when the speakers encountered lexical problems. Lexical problems emerged when speakers had established a preverbal message containing chunks of conceptual, grammatical and linguistic information.

Subsequently, the speakers discovered that they could not access the correct lexical items in order to match all of the intended expressions. The reason for this failure could be twofold: one is that the intended lexical items simply do not exist in the speakers' lexicon, perhaps because they have not learnt it or because there is no available lexical items for them to express their intended concept in the target language. The other reason is that the lexicon does not contain the lexical item, meaning that speakers cannot retrieve it because they have temporarily lost access to it. For instance, learners occasionally forget vocabulary that they have learnt in the past.

The *Nijmegen* project has motivated this researcher to study the communication strategies of Taiwanese learners of English in term of their compensatory strategy usage. Therefore, this study aims to explore how Taiwanese learners of English manipulate their communication strategies, with particular focus on compensatory strategies in an effort to make communication effective when faced with a language deficiency. The investigation will focus on the learners' strategy use on solving their vocabulary deficiency, and the different strategy use between higher and lower scoring learners.

To understand the taxonomy of the compensatory strategy incorporated both, in the *Nijmegen Project* and later when revised by Poulisse (1993) is useful in facilitating this

researcher to identify the compensatory strategy use of the participants included in this study. The following sections will therefore discuss further the *Nijmegen Project* and the *Nijmegen* taxonomy as defined by Poulishse (1993).

2.2.3 The *Nijmegen Project*

The *Nijmegen project* established a new taxonomy of compensatory strategy and was regarded as the most extensive empirical series of research studies in communication strategies. The taxonomy developed by the *Nijmegen project* was adopted and used in several studies by many researchers such as Bongaerts *et al.* (1987) and Kellerman *et al.* (1990).

Compensatory strategies in the *Nijmegen* model have employed a rather different approach to previous taxonomies towards the classification of compensatory strategies. The researchers in the *Nijmegen Project* distinguish between these two basic types of strategy depending on whether a speaker predominately uses conceptual or linguistic knowledge (Poulishse, 1990, p.60-63). More explicitly, Kellerman (1991) explains that language learners either exploit the concepts to express their meaning through their available linguistic resources, or manipulate the language that is as close as possible in expressing their original intention. Therefore, compensatory strategies can be classified into two strategies; one is the conceptual strategy, and the other is the linguistic strategy in the original *Nijmegen* model.

Each of these two ‘*archistrategies*’ is subdivided into two compensatory strategies in the *Nijmegen* project. There are two subtypes included in conceptual strategies, that is, they are *holistic conceptual strategies* and *analytic conceptual strategies*, and *morphological creativity* and *strategies of transfer* are involved in the linguistic strategies. *Holistic conceptual strategies* refer to the speaker using the word for a related concept, while *analytic conceptual strategies* enable the speaker to analyse the concepts into their component properties.

Holistic conceptual strategies refers to the substitution of a word for a related concept and this related concept can be super-ordinate (vegetables for ‘peas’) or subordinate (hammer for ‘tools’) or at the same hierarchical level (table for ‘desk’). In contrast, the use of analytic conceptual strategy is for a speaker to indicate the intended

concept from the properties. For instance, when the speaker wants to say ‘spinach’ and utters ‘*it’s green...eat with potatoes...Popeye eats it*’ or says ‘this you use for a baby... that it can’t make... his clothes ...dirty for ‘bib’ (Poulisse, 1990, p.60-61).

Two strategies, *morphological creativity* and *strategies of transfer* are embraced in linguistic strategies. With respect to *morphological creativity* in linguistic strategies, the speaker exploits L2 rules of morphological creativity as a source to create comprehensible L2 Lexis (Poulisse, 1990, p.62). In other words, morphological creativity consists of existing L2 words, to which L2 morphemes have been added. For example, ironize to iron or shamefully for shameful. When speakers adopt *strategies of transfer*, they may adopt similarities between languages. Therefore, the speaker may choose to transfer the closely related words or phrases from one language to the other; speakers offer a replacement for the intended lexical item with another, which can either be a related item (e.g. ‘animal’ for ‘rabbit’) or the corresponding L1 item (e.g. ‘dutch: paprika’ for ‘English: green pepper’).

Poulisse (1993) found that some weaknesses exist in the taxonomy of the *Nijmegen Project* and it is necessary to improve upon it. As a result, she developed her taxonomy by improving those weaknesses. The following sections will be devoted to the discussion concerning those criticisms by Poulisse (1993).

Firstly, the problem in distinguishing between the strategies of ‘*transfer*’ and ‘*morphology creativity*’ is that sometimes difficult because some L2 words exist as L1 words, such as paprika (Dutch) and green pepper (English). Therefore, Poulisse argues that it is essential to identify those kinds of utterances based on the learner’s viewpoint; otherwise classifying the strategies becomes rather complicated (Poulisse, 1990, p.62). Therefore Poulisse (1990) suggests that these two strategies could not be classified as completely different subtypes of the linguistic strategies from the process-oriented perspective. In order to deal with such a case, she classifies them within the ‘substitution plus strategy’ (this term will be later discussed in Section 2.2.4) in her taxonomy as they share a common similarity between the two categories.

Secondly, Poulisse (1993) criticised the way in which analytic and holistic strategies were grouped together as conceptual strategies in the *Nijmegen* taxonomy, but

this seemed appropriate as they were classified as two different processes. This is because the conceptual holistic strategies refer to ‘*substitute the words for a related concept which shares some of the criteria properties*’ and conceptual analytic strategies is to express intended concept by listing its properties. It is possible for an utterance to combine those two strategies. For instance, ‘*large shoes*’ for ‘*boot*’ or ‘*they’re not uh really cars but big and high cars*’ for ‘*truck*’ (Poulisse, 1990, p.61). Therefore, sometimes it results in difficulty on identifying analytic and holistic strategies under this circumstance.

Analytic strategies, moreover, demand a re-conceptualisation of the entire preverbal message. This may result in changing several chunks as well as the considerable changes in form. As a result, Poulisse (1993) argues that it may be more appropriate to name them ‘*reconceptualisation strategies*’ (this term will be later discussed in Section 2.2.4) when referring to analytic conceptual strategies.

The last point is that this taxonomy proposes two basic approaches, ‘*conceptual*’ and ‘*linguistic*’ strategies for the solution of lexical problems in the original *Nijmegen* taxonomy. Poulisse (1993) argues that they were no longer able to deal with the distinction between conceptual and linguistic strategies and the process underlying these strategies (Poulisse, 1993, p.183). The reason is that the holistic conceptual strategies and linguistic strategies of transfer are very similar from a processing perspective.

For instance, if a speaker decides to replace the intended L2 words with corresponding L1 words or related L2 words, it is hard to examine whether the speaker has exploited his/her linguistic or conceptual knowledge, because the process of changing or removing one or more features from a particular chunk in the preverbal message are similar. In other words, this does not mean that all utterances can be classified and illustrated as either purely conceptual or linguistic and it is possible for the ‘*conceptual*’ and ‘*linguistic*’ strategies to interact in the utterances, for example, *clothes-maker* for ‘*tailor*’ and *underarm* for ‘*wrist*’ (Poulisse, 1990, p.63).

Another example is that the learners utter *flowerist* for ‘*florist*’. The existence of a Dutch word ‘*bloemist*’ may have been started the semantic analysis of the intended concept as ‘*a person having to do with flowers*’. The combination of ‘*flower*’ and ‘*-ist*’

as the assumption that ‘-ist’ is a morpheme denoting person. Hence, Poulisse (1990, p.63) argues that it is important to understand that interaction of the conceptual and linguistic strategies may occur.

Poulisse (1990, 1993) observes that the distinction between holistic strategies and the linguistic strategy of transfer does not reveal any difference in the processes involved in their use. For example, if L2 learners cannot access this word, they may substitute ‘animal’ for ‘rabbit’, or simply use the equivalent words from their mother tongue. In both cases, there are similar underlying substitution processes so that she names it as the *Substitution Strategies*. As Poulisse (1993) states, ‘*we can still say that Substitution Strategies may be linguistic or conceptual in nature, but we can’t say that the process underlying ‘conceptual’ and ‘linguistic’ Substitution Strategies are different*’ (p.182).

In summary, the *Nijmegen Project* classifies the compensatory strategy into two main strategies depending on whether the learners use the conceptual knowledge resource or the linguistic knowledge resource. Poulisse (1993) highlighted an awareness of the weaknesses in the *Nijmegen Project*. For example, the strategies of ‘*transfer*’ and ‘*morphology creativity*’ could not be classified as completely different subtypes of the linguistic strategies from the process-oriented perspective. This results in such strategies sometimes being difficult to identify because some L2 words exist as L1 words. Moreover, it is possible to combine the holistic and analytic strategies in an utterance so that it becomes difficult to be clear-cut on classifying the utterance in either the holistic or analytic strategies. In addition to this, the problem of identifying the conceptual strategies and linguistic strategies of transfer has also been noticed. As Poulisse (1990, 1993) claims, there is no purer explanation of the conceptual strategies and linguistic strategies as the interaction of those that may occur and when there are similar underlying substitution processes.

As such weaknesses existed in the *Nijmegen Project*, Poulisse (1993) attempted to establish her taxonomy as much improved against other traditional taxonomies. Through refining her taxonomy, Poulisse believes that her taxonomy has been more comprehensive in classifying and coding the use of compensatory strategies. The following section will be devoted to the discussion of the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993).

2.2.4 The Three Types of Compensatory Strategies

In Poulisse's taxonomy, she terms the three types of communication strategies as: substitution, substitution plus and re-conceptualization strategies instead of linguistic and conceptual strategies. Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy was important for this researcher to consider as the basis to identify the speech production of the participants in her study. Due to Poulisse's taxonomy having been developed to classify the compensatory strategy from a process-oriented perspective, it is useful to employ this typology into this current study to explore learners' underlying cognitive processes in their choice of strategy. In the following sections, the compensatory strategies proposed by Poulisse (1993) will be discussed in three parts; the first part pertains to the substitution strategies; the second is in relation to the substitution plus strategies; and finally the re-conceptualization strategies are considered.

Substitution Strategy

The use of this strategy is to replace the intended lexical item with another one in order to overcome the linguistic limitation. There are two ways to do it; one is to use related items such as 'animal' for 'rabbit' and the other way is the corresponding L1 item such as Dutch 'voorwoord' for 'preface' (Poulisse, 1993, p.180).

Traditionally, these two ways to substitute an intended lexical item are termed as different names in the taxonomies of Tarone (1977) and Færch and Kasper (1983). The use of related items is regarded as the strategy of *approximations* or *generalizations*. By means of adopting the corresponding L1 item, it is considered as the strategy of *borrowing* or *code-switching*. In the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), it was intended that these two strategies were classified as one as it was discovered that they shared a certain level of similarity when considering lexical access of L1 and L2. Moreover, Poulisse (1993) claims that the speakers decide to either change or omit from one or more features of a particular chunk, which are both kinds of substitution strategies. The decision of the substitution or deletion of features from a chunk is most likely affected by the speaker's knowledge of the preceding discourse, the situation and the world. Moreover, the decision not to substitute any words for the originally intended one, and of using an L1 instead of an L2 word particularly depends on '*the speaker's knowledge of the interlocutor; this person's knowledge of the language involved and the speaker's own knowledge of language similarities*' (Poulisse, 1993, p.180).

Substitution Plus Strategy

The second type of compensatory strategies in Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy is substitution plus strategy. She explains that the reason why such strategies are named as '*Substitution Plus*' is because they are always employed in combination with substitution strategies. This strategy considers '*the out-of-the ordinary application of L1 or L2 morphological and/or phonological encoding procedures*' (Poulisse, 1993, p.180), and may affect both L1 and L2 lexical items.

When speakers decide to use an L1 lexical item instead of the intended L2 item, they may do so in two ways. Firstly they will often apply L2 morphological and/or phonological encoding procedures to make it sound more L2-like. This is similar to Færch and Kasper's (1983) reference to the strategy of *foreignizing*. Secondly, an L2 lexical item is selected to substitute the originally intended one; this is regarded as *morphological creativity* by Poulisse (1990). For example, the creation of the verb '*ironize*' derives from the noun '*iron*' (Poulisse, 1993, p.180).

In the substitution plus strategy, Poulisse (1990) claims '*the application of alternative morpho-phonological encoding procedures is not fully automatic as the procedures are applied to lexical items to which they are not normally applied*' (p.180-181). The speakers have to decide whether they want to use a substitution plus strategy or not. It is possible that the decision to adopt substitution plus strategies works simultaneously with the decision to use a substitution strategy. Regardless of whether the decision to use substitution plus strategies is simultaneous or subsequent, the decisions for both choices are affected by the linguistic knowledge of the speakers. Poulisse (1993, p.180) provided an example to illustrate that speakers can only produce a form like *to ironize* if they know that in English the suffix *-ize* characterizes a verb. Therefore, this strategy is more complicated and demanding from a processing perspective than is the substitution strategy.

Re-conceptualisation Strategy

This strategy provides manipulation for the speakers to explain the item by encoding the conceptual features. Poulisse (1993) defines this as '*a change in the preverbal message involving more than one single chunk*' (p. 181). For instance, the speaker may opt to encode the conceptual features by listing its possessions, or by

substituting the word for a related concept that shares certain critical properties. Consequently, the speaker may describe the referent by using lexical items one step at a time (e.g., *it's green, you eat it with potatoes and Popeye eats it* for 'spinach') or combine two lexical items into one new word (e.g., 'cooking apparatus' for 'cooker'). By using this strategy, the speaker can also decide to add further background information in order for the listener to take advantage of understanding the context whilst interpreting the message.

Poulisse (1993, p.182) concludes that basically, only the substitution strategy and re-conceptualisation strategy can be used on their own, as the substitution plus strategy is always used in combination with substitution strategies. Furthermore, these three major types of compensatory strategy comprise a taxonomy which differs from the traditional psycholinguistic approach taxonomies such as the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983).

Even though Poulisse (1993) categorized the communication strategies based on the process-oriented approach and provided insights into the compensatory strategy, her taxonomy has still received many criticisms and has been addressed by Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal Campo (1997). Firstly, the problem of Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy is that it deals only partially with treatment of the phenomenon in communication. In particular, Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal Campo (1997) argue that she fails to identify the strategy of implicit and explicit information provided by the learners. They consider that the strategy of the speakers attempt to make explicit intentional and attitudinal elements of their message is essential when they are not sure that they have been rightly conveyed. Therefore, the speakers may use non-ambiguous lexical items and syntactic constructions to express and avoid misunderstandings. In turn, the speakers may use more explicit information and avoid providing implicit information. For example, when a speaker feels cold and would like the hearer to close the window, he may say 'could you close the window?' rather than 'here is freezing cold'. Therefore, it is evident that the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) does not take this strategy of providing explicit and implicit information into account.

Secondly, Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal Campo (1997) criticize Poulisse (1993) for reducing the scope of her analysis considerably in a broad communicative framework to

deal with compensatory strategies. They argue that she misses some important generalization about communication strategy use in the domains of processing and interaction related communicative behaviour. As Ruiz de Mendoza and Ota Campo (1997) argue, the strategy of self-repair is an important role when the learners interact with each other; this communicative behaviour is found in their empirical study. For example, the learners may attempt to repair their utterances such as 'I say...' to express their intended meanings.

Finally, according to Poulisse (1993), the 'substitution plus' strategy may affect both L1 and L2 Lexical items. That is, the substituted lexical item is additionally made to resemble an L2 form such as foreignizing and this strategy involves more cognitive effort. By contrast, Ruiz de Mendoza and Ota Campo (1997) doubt that there is such a typological criterion as 'substitution plus' strategy used in the reconceptualisation strategy and named as 'reconceptualisation plus strategy'. Ruiz de Mendoza and Ota Campo (1997, p.301) take an example of 'picture-place' and 'a place where you look at picture' for 'art gallery' to support the view of Kellerman (1991) as the same cognitive process underlies the two different linguistic realization. Therefore, Ruiz de Mendoza and Ota Campo(1997) wonder whether there is a need to '*make a distinction between 'reconceptualisation' and 'reconceptualisation plus' strategies just because circumlocution is more costly to produce*' (p.301).

In summary, Poulisse (1993) proposes an alternative taxonomy of communication strategy by modifying the typology of Nijmegen project that characterizes as process-oriented typology in order to endow her account with a still greater level of generality. She presents three types of communication strategy included in her taxonomy, that is, substitution strategy, substitution plus strategy, and reconceptualisation strategy. When learners cannot access a lexical item, they may use substitution strategy to replace the intended lexical item with another, or they can apply L2 morphological and/or phonological encoding (as in foreignizing), which is the substitution plus strategy. The reconceptualisation strategy is that the learners can make '*a change in the preverbal message involving more than a single chunk*' (Poulisse, 1993, p.181). This strategy was identified as conceptual analytic strategies (eg. paraphrase) in the typology of Nijmegen project before.

However, Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy has been criticised by Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal Campo (1997). Firstly they argue that the Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy only deals with part of communication strategies as she did not account for the learners' intention in their messages and fail to include the strategies of providing implicit and explicit information. Secondly, they criticise the fact that her taxonomy does not take the communication strategy use in the domains of processing and interaction related communicative behaviour into account, for example, repair strategy. Finally, Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal Campo (1997) question whether it is necessary to include reconceptualisation plus strategy as an extra category into her taxonomy since circumlocution in the reconceptualisation strategy involves more effort being made by learners.

The intention of this researcher is to investigate the lack of lexical items of the learners and so the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) was chosen to examine the learners' strategies. Even though some weaknesses exist in her framework, her typology could facilitate this study to achieve the above goal and allow this researcher to investigate how the learners operate and use the communication strategies based on their cognitive process from their linguistic products and the similarity and difference of the strategy usage between higher and lower scoring learners.

Even though Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy offers a clear explanation as to the nature of the compensatory strategy itself that she identifies, merely basing this on her explanation sometimes makes it difficult for novice researchers to identify those strategies. As a result, it would be useful to obtain some guidance with more detail about classifying the speech production data. Fortunately, more recently Littlemore (2003) elaborates on the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) by classifying the main three different types of compensatory strategy into more specific subtypes. In doing so, it has been helpful for this researcher to analyze her data more effectively.

As the language systems of Chinese and English are very different, this researcher does not expect the strategies of *foreignizing and morphological creativity* (i.e. the substitution plus strategy) to be included and will be seen in the speech production of this data. As a result, only two types of compensatory strategy suggested by the

taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), that is, substitution strategy and re-conceptualisation strategy will be of concern in this study.

2.2.5 The Elaboration of the Compensatory Strategy by Littlemore

Littlemore's (2003) elaboration in terms of substitution strategy and re-conceptualisation strategies will be presented and discussed in the following sections. The inclusion and exclusion of some subtypes may occur in this study, as some strategies may not be used due to the significant difference between the Chinese and English language. Therefore, those inclusion and exclusion of the subtypes of the strategy will be discussed in the following sections.

Based on the Poulisse (1993, p.180) definition of substitution strategy, Littlemore (2003) uses this strategy to replace the intended lexical item with another. There are two ways to accomplish this. The first is to use a related item such as approximation or generalization; the other is using the corresponding L1 item such as borrowing or code-switching. Littlemore (2003, p.337) identified six strategies to be included in the substitution strategy. She considers that substituting a lexical item could be using comparison target items with others, not only literal comparison but also metaphoric comparison, or indicating its generalization. As to using corresponding L1 items, she identifies that the words transferring from learners can be included into this category. Those subtypes are as follows:

- (1) *Original analogical/metaphoric comparison*: The participant compares the target item to another object in an analogical way (employing the word 'like') or a metaphorical way (not employing the word 'like'), which is original and idiosyncratic. For example: 'it's like chewing gum' (a slug) or 'this is like a pipe for smoking' (an acorn).
- (2) *Conventional analogical/metaphoric comparison*: The participant compares the target item to another object in an analogical or metaphorical way, which is conventional either in the L1 or the target language. The comparison is deemed to be metaphorical, rather than literal, as the two components are not from the same immediate semantic domain. For example: 'it's a kind of ball' (radish), where one item is an artefact and the other is a vegetable.

- (3) *Literal comparison*: The participant compares the target item to another object in a non-metaphorical way (i.e. the two components are from the same immediate semantic domain). For example: ‘it’s like a snail but without a shell’ (slug), both from the same biological taxonomy.
- (4) *Word transfer with L2 word approximation*: The participant uses an English word that resembles the French one. For example ‘it’s a lullaby’. (French for dragonfly = libellule).
- (5) *Super-ordinate*: The participant gives the name of the family to which the target item belongs. For example: ‘it is a kind of fish’ (swordfish).
- (6) *Simple word transfer*: The participant uses a French word without attempting to anglicize it. For example, ‘it’s a calamar’ (French for squid = calamar).

This researcher deems it is reasonable to ignore subtypes (4) and (6) in her later data analysis as she believes Chinese language and English language share less similarities. As mentioned above, this researcher believes it can be difficult for Taiwanese language learners of English to transfer Chinese to English in the same way that French speakers were able to in Littlemore’s (2003) study. As a result, four subtypes of substitution strategy will be decided and employed to analyse the speech data produced by the Taiwanese learners of English involved in this study. They are original analogical/metaphoric comparison, conventional analogical/metaphoric comparison, literal comparison, and super-ordinate.

With reference to re-conceptualisation strategies, Poulisse (1993, p.181) proposes that the learners may encode the conceptual features of the intended lexical item one by one, such as listing them, or combine two lexical items into one new word, or add further background information to their message. Littlemore (2003, p.338) suggests five subtypes. She considers that the analysis of the target items by describing the components of this item, and its activity, place function and the emotion inspired by it. Those subtypes are presenting as follows:

- (1.) *Componential analysis*: The participant describes the individual features of the target item. For example: ‘it has a red part at the top and a white part at the bottom’ (radish).
- (2.) *Function*: The participant states what the target item can be used for. For example: ‘this is something that you can eat’ (squid).

- (3.) *Activity*: The participant describes something that the target item does. For example: ‘it moves very slowly’ (snail).
- (4.) *Place*: The participant says where the target item can be found. For example: ‘this is often found on the side of a house’ (ivy).
- (5.) *Emotion*: The participant mentions an emotion that is often inspired by the target item. For example: ‘it makes people frightened’ (owl).

The taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) includes the strategy of adding further background information to their message into the category of re-conceptualisation strategy. However, Littlemore (2003) does not include this strategy into her subtypes; it is this researcher’s opinion that this may be due to there being no such strategy identified in her study. On the other hand, based on the definition of the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), this researcher believes that it is necessary to include the strategy of adding further information into one of subtypes in the category of reconceptualisation strategy. These six subtypes of the re-conceptualisation strategy are adopted to provide better guidelines for this researcher to categorize the data.

The subtypes of the substitution strategy and re-conceptualisation strategy, proposed by Littlemore (2003), have aided this researcher in identifying the strategy from the learners’ production. In so doing, it also helps this researcher explore what compensatory strategies the learners prefer to employ, how the learners operate the strategy in responding to the tasks, and the similarity and difference of employing the strategies between the higher and lower scoring learners.

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the theoretical and analytical frameworks of this study. The theoretical framework draws upon the framework of Bachman (1990), communicative language ability, to identify the strategic competence and pragmatic competence of Taiwanese high school learners of English. The significant features of the framework of Bachman (1990) is that he separates strategic competence from language competence as a capability, rather than an area of knowledge and improves the previous models of communicative competence by including illocutionary and

sociolinguistic competence into the pragmatic competence. Because the aim of this study is to investigate learners' strategic and pragmatic competence, Bachman's (1990) framework provides a guideline to facilitate this researcher in identifying both of these competences.

In order to select an appropriate taxonomy to identify the speech production of the participants in terms of communication strategy, the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) has been employed for this study. Poulisse's (1993) taxonomy has improved some weaknesses of previous taxonomy, in particular the taxonomy of Færch and Kasper (1983) characterises her taxonomy as process-oriented typology because it attempts to identify communication strategy from learners' cognitive process. She modifies the typology of *Nijmegen* project and classifies her taxonomy as based on substituting lexical items or encoding conceptual features. Therefore, she presents her taxonomy by including three types of communication strategy; substitution, substitution plus and reconceptualise strategy.

The important features of her taxonomy relate to the presentation of fewer strategies in comparison with other typologies. As Poulisse (1993) believes, no strategy should be uniquely associated with certain tasks or items. Moreover, developing more categories to describe slightly different strategies is not appropriate in order to achieve consistency and generalisability within the data. The taxonomy only deals with partial communication (compensatory strategies), when the learners are faced with a language deficiency; this received some criticism by Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal Campo (1997). The taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), however, can still be considered as useful taxonomy to apply to this study as this study aimed to investigate learners' vocabulary deficiency.

Littlemore's elaboration (2003) defines the subtypes of compensatory strategy based on the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993). The subtypes of strategy could offer a benefit to this researcher, as she is a novice researcher, on subdividing her data more effectively. Alternatively, the elaboration of Littlemore (2003) provides further insights into the strategy usage on each of Poulisse's (1993) categories, in order to facilitate this researcher to investigate the learners' strategy usage in each category. As Chinese and English language systems have less similarity, this researcher decided not to include the substitution plus strategy and includes the strategy of word transfer into her analysis.

Moreover, Littlemore (2003) did not include the strategy of adding further information in her elaboration, which was mentioned in taxonomy of Poulisse (1993). Therefore, this researcher has decided to include this strategy into this study in order to identify learners' speech data. As a result, the learners' cognitive process on encoding the target items could be more comprehensively explored. In doing so, it is aimed that the results of this study will satisfy its aim of studying how learners employ and operate each subtype of strategy in responding to the task items and the different strategy use between higher and lower scoring learners.

Chapter Three

Review of Related Literature (II): Pragmatic Competence, Theory of Politeness, and Developing Pragmatic Competence within Classroom Setting

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section addresses the concept of pragmatic competence, with subsections of illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence that are based on the framework of Bachman (1990) being examined. The second section stresses the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) and three social variables that play an important role will be highlighted as contextual factors. Some criticism of their framework and impoliteness theory will be discussed. Moreover, Chinese culture and pragmatic transfer resulting in pragmatic failure will be also brought into consideration and addressed. The third section discusses the classroom activities to encourage learners' pragmatic competence. The six components of pragmatic competence proposed by Hudson *et al.* (1995) and the studies of Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Beebe *et al.* (1990) will be addressed as the basis for assessing and classifying the pragmatic strategies in this study.

3.1 The concept of Pragmatic Competence

The purpose of this section is to present some of the theoretical background on which research into pragmatics has been based. In the first subsection, the notion of pragmatic competence will be discussed. The next two subsections will address areas concerning the illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence that are based on the framework of Bachman (1990). Theory of speech acts, incorporating the notion of the directness and indirectness of the speech act and the ways in which related to politeness, will be brought into discussion. Such theories influence the field of pragmatic competence, which pertain to how non-native speakers cope with social contexts compared to native speakers. Subsequently, sociolinguistic competence will be introduced and the distinction of form and function will be addressed by referring to the notion of language function proposed by Halliday (1975). Here, register has been highlighted as ability under sociolinguistic competence.

3.1.1 The Definition of Pragmatics

Several researchers attempt to provide a definition for the concept of pragmatics. For example, Wunderlich (1980) states that '*pragmatics deals with the interpretation of sentences (or utterances) in a richer context*' (p.304). According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is mainly concerned with the study of speaker, meaning and contextual meaning. Verschueren (1999) also supports this view and claims that pragmatics is the study of meaning in context and indicates that meaning is not regarded as a static concept but as a dynamic aspect that is negotiated in the process of communication. Therefore, it can be concluded that two important considerations should be made while studying pragmatics; one is the actual user of the language and the other is the context in which the users interact.

LoCastro (2003) stresses that the content is one of the key concepts in the definition of pragmatics, thus he defines pragmatics as '*the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and non-linguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organized activities*' (p.15). LoCastro (2003), furthermore, attempted to provide more details to describe all the aspects that were involved in pragmatics and characterize its features. In particular, LoCastro (2003, p.29) considered pragmatics to be characterised by the following:

- Meaning is created in interaction with speakers and hearers.
- Context includes both linguistic (co-text) and non-linguistic aspects.
- Choices made by the user of language are an important concern.
- Constraints in using language in social action (who says what to whom) are significant.
- The effects of choices on co-participants are analyzed.

Based on these pragmatic characteristics, LoCastro (2003) argues that pragmatics should be regarded as meaning in interaction rather than solely dealing with levels of sentence meaning, such as forms of analysis. Therefore, when outlining the characteristics in concept of pragmatics, focus has been placed upon users, context, interaction or real language use in communication. In agreement with this, Thomas (1995) has suggested that pragmatics carries the meaning in interaction and also indicated that pragmatics involves meaning negotiation between speakers and hearers, the context of utterances which includes physical, social or linguistic, and the meaning

potential of an utterance. That is to say, pragmatics cannot be constrained to either a speaker-oriented or a hearer-oriented approach, as both approaches should be taken into consideration while pragmatics takes place (Thomas, 1995).

In summary, it is worth noting that pragmatics depend on interaction among the users of the language. That is, users and context are not the only concerns; interaction is also important. During the process of communication, although conveying the intended meaning from speakers to listeners is important, the effect on the listener needs to be taken into consideration. As it stands, interaction also plays an essential role when dealing with pragmatics. Thus, concepts such as user, context, interaction, real language use or communication should be applied to pragmatics.

In the previous chapter, it has been seen that Bachman's (1990) framework involves an important contribution; pragmatics competence. The introduction of this competence as a specific area of study has been indicated by researchers to be the need to teach not only grammatical aspects but also pragmatic ones in the field of second language acquisition. Pragmatic competence is subdivided into illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence in the Bachman's (1990) framework of communicative language ability.

Similarly, as Barron (2003) notes, pragmatic competence is as '*knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realising particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and, finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages' linguistic resources*' (p.10). That is to say, when language learners obtain pragmatics competence, it enables language learners to create or interpret language that is appropriate to a particular language use setting (Niezgoda and Röver, 2001, p.65).

As this study is based on the framework of Bachman (1990) to identify the competence of the learners in terms of pragmatic competence that the researcher aims to investigate, it may be useful to discuss the illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence included in pragmatic competence proposed by Bachman (1990) in more detail. A review of the speech act theory and Halliday's language function will be included in the illocutionary competence and the sensitivity of register will be

highlighted in the sociolinguistic competence. Those relevant theories will therefore focus on discussing knowledge of pragmatic competence in the following sections.

3.1.2. The Concept of Illocutionary Competence

Bachman (1990) defines illocutionary competence as '*used both in expressing language to be taken certain illocutionary force and in interpreting the illocutionary force of language*' (p.92). Similarly, Ellis (1994) argues that illocutionary competence refers to the realization of speech acts that illustrate the intention of language users in performing specific actions; in particular interpersonal functions. So, this competence includes the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions to perform and interpret language function.

According to Bachman (1990), the notion of illocutionary competence can be best introduced and referred to through the theory of speech acts and language functions.

The Speech Act Theory

Austin (1962) and Searle *et al.* (1980) state that the theory of speech acts starts with the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a sentence, but rather, the performance of certain kinds of acts. The speech act theory was initially proposed by Austin (1962) and further refined by Searle (1969, 1976, 1979). Austin (1962) is regarded as the first scholar to propose that people use language not only to say things but also to do things. According to his performative hypothesis, Austin claims that when people use language, they do more than just make statements; that is, they perform actions. Later Austin (1962) discovered that not only performative verbs could perform actions. As Thomas (1995) points out, Austin's assumption regarding the connection between 'doing things with words' and performative verbs is clearly erroneous because there are many acts in real language use where it would be impossible to use a performative verb. As a result, he developed the classification of utterances into three acts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The first act refers to actual words uttered, namely, the act of *saying things*. The second act suggests the force or intention behind the words, that is, what is done *in saying something*. The last act indicates the effect of the illocution on the listeners, that is to say, what is done *by saying something*.

In contrast to Austin (1962), Searle (1969) also identified three types of speech acts; utterance acts, propositional acts and illocutionary acts. An utterance act is simply '*the act of saying something*' (Bachman, 1990, p.90). A propositional act is a speech act that a speaker performs when referring or predicting in an utterances. An illocutionary act is '*the function (assertion, warning, request) performed in saying something*' (Bachman, 1990, p.90) and consists of the delivery of the propositional content of the utterance (including reference and prediction) and a particular illocutionary force (intended illocutionary act). Moreover, the meaning of an utterance considered in terms of the propositional content and illocutionary force distinguished by Searle (1969) are similar to the terms of locution and illocution by Austin (1962) and Grice (1975): 'what is said' and 'what is meant' (Thomas, 1995, p.93).

The focus of the illocutionary act has drawn great attention from Austin (1962) and Searle (1976). On the basis of Austin's (1962) typology of illocutionary acts, Searle (1976) offers his classifications of speech acts that derive from the speaker's perspective and have an emphasis on the illocutionary point or purpose of the act. His influential classification of speech acts consists of five major categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations (p.1-16).

- (1.) Assertives: these commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc.)
- (2.) Directives: these are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: requesting, questioning)
- (3.) Commissives: these commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering)
- (4.) Expressives: express a psychological state (paradigm cases: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating)
- (5.) Declarations: effect immediate change in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing from employment)

Searle's (1975, 1979) classification assumes that these speech acts involve individual communicative function e.g. greetings, leave-takings, requests, offers, suggestions, invitation, refusals apologies, complaints, or expressions of gratitude (Rose and Kasper, 2001, p.5) and they are used systematically to achieve a particular purpose.

In other words, within this system, Searle (1975, 1979) addressed possible intentions of speakers and desired actions of the utterances for different situations.

Much debate has been aroused in regards to the classification of speech acts. The main criticism of Searle's (1979) typology is that it refers to the fact that the illocutionary force of a speech act cannot take the form of a sentence as Searle considered it. As Thomas (1995) claims, Searle's (1979) typology only accounts for formal consideration; however, speech acts cannot be regarded in a way that is appropriate to grammar as Searle attempts to do. More explicitly, Trosborg (1995) claims that the sentence is a grammatical unit within the formal system of language but the speech act involves a communicative function. Thus, Thomas (1995) suggests that these functional units of communication may not be characterised in form rules. Moreover, Leech (1983) also focuses on meaning and presents a functional perspective of speech acts against a formal viewpoint of Searle's (1979) typology.

In addition to this, Thomas (1995) also indicates that it is difficult to clearly distinguish speech acts based on Searle's (1979) typology because some speech acts in some senses related to one another, for example, asking, requesting, ordering, commanding or suggesting share certain key features; all of which involve an attempt by the speaker to make the hearer do things. However, if taking contexts and interaction into consideration, the speech acts are by no means interchangeable. Similarly, Thomas (1995) claims that speech acts are influenced by functional, psychological and affective factors. Therefore, Thomas (1995) suggests that the basis of the interactional meaning between speakers and hearers, and other factors like that of the context where they might be performed, should be brought into consideration while uttering speech acts.

Apart from these debates, Bierwisch (1980) criticizes that the entire theory of speech acts assumes that human language and communication can operate independently such as 'monologues' and 'non-verbal' communication between participants. Thus he argues that speech act theory is only a part of the whole theory of communication that involves linguistic utterances and not a theory of language. Moreover, Wunderlich (1980) suggests that speech acts should be coded by function rather than literal meaning; as literal meaning should always be language-specific.

Even though the typology of speech acts suggested by Searle (1979) received much criticism, it has made a considerable impact on the functional aspects of pragmatic theory. The next section will be devoted to discussing the direct and indirect speech acts. As the direct and indirect speech acts are considered as two pragmatic strategies claimed by Kasper and Schmidt (1996), they are universally available and are also connected with the term *on-record* and *off-record* from the politeness theory (this will be discussed in the latter of this chapter).

Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Searle (1979), furthermore, introduced the notion of an ‘indirect speech act’. The indirect speech act concerns the utterance carrying two illocutionary forces; Searle (1979) argues that ‘*one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by means of performing another*’ (p.60). That is, indirect speech acts are not literally performed, while a direct strategy consists of a direct relationship between a structure and a function to allow the structure and speech act to be matched. For example, ‘please close the window’ is a direct speech act because the utterance type and the function are related to the speaker requests the speaker to close the window. On the other hand, ‘can you pass the salt?’ is considered as an instance of an indirect speech act (Searle, 1975) because the speaker does not seem to mean a question for asking the hearer to pass the salt, but only a request to bring the salt. Therefore, the structure and function are not correlated, that is, the speakers utter a sentence means what he says but also means something more.

Similarly, LoCastro (2003, p.119) has explained that indirect strategies comprise an indirect relationship between a structure (declarative, interrogative and imperative) and a communicative function (statement, question and command or request), that is, a structure is not matched to a speech act. For example, the use of a direct speech act is declaratively related with a statement, whilst an indirect speech act would use declarative structure to make a request.

Searle’s (1979) speech act typology described above is useful for an overall classification based on functions that are provided in the speech act. Bachman (1990) considers a broader framework of functions in relation to language use by means of drawing on Halliday’s (1973, 1975, 1976) description of language functions. This language function will be discussed in the following sections.

Language Function

A set of functions proposed by Halliday (1975, p.19-20) provides the interpretation of the language of a very young child, and classifies functional or sociolinguistic approaches to early language development. Even though Halliday (1975, p.19-20) had only described this in the context of child language acquisition, Bachman (1990) believes that the set of functions could also be extended to adult's language use concerning several of the functions.

Based on the language functional concepts of Halliday (1973, 1975, 1976), Bachman (1990, p.92) classifies language functions into four macro-functions: ideational, manipulative, heuristic and imaginative function by means of regrouping the set of functions derived from Halliday's (1975, p.19-20) classification. As this study attempts to investigate the learners' pragmatic competence in second language socio-cultural contexts, the focus is to discover the extent to which the learners use the appropriate language function within a situational context. Therefore, prominence will be given to manipulative function.

Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) define manipulative function as '*the knowledge of manipulative function enables us to use language to affect the world around us*' (p.69). This includes the following three functions. Firstly, instrumental function relates to the expression of people's desire; namely, to get someone to do what the person wants him or her to do by uttering suggestions, requests, orders, commands or warnings. Secondly, the regulatory function is that by which a person controls the behaviour of others. In other words, the regulatory function is related to a particular person and the influence on this individual by regulatory utterance, such as stating rules, laws and the norms of behaviour. Thirdly, interactional function is regarded as *interpersonal function* (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p.70). It implies that it relates to establishing, maintaining and changing interpersonal relationships such as greetings or apologies, basically, interacting with others around the speaker.

This study focuses on investigating the learners' performance based on the speech acts of apologies, requests and refusals, thus, instrumental function and interactional function are important to this study. In other words, whether the learners perform appropriate language functions that are provided in the speech act in order to express

their desire and sustain or change their interpersonal relationships, while also interacting with different social situations, is the main concern of this study on examining the learners' pragmatic competence in the target language contexts.

After discussing the speech act theory and language function in the illocutionary competence, the importance of sociolinguistic competence involved in pragmatic competence will be focused upon and discussed in the following sections.

3.1.3 The Concept of Sociolinguistic Competence

This ability enables learners to use language appropriately in a given social cultural context. That is, in order for an illocutionary act to be successful, the speaker must satisfy given social contexts relating to a particular act. More explicitly, sociolinguistic competence facilitates language learners '*to relate language to context and interpret and encode meanings*' (Skehan, 1998, p.158).

According to Bachman (1990) there are four abilities within sociolinguistic competence; sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, sensitivity to differences in register, sensitivity to naturalness and the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. The focus of this present research pertains to how language is used to associate with different relationships between interlocutors in specific social settings. Sensitivities concerning register will be highlighted and discussed in the following sections.

3.1.3.1 Register

Language is used to communicate the potential meanings associated with particular situation types and displays its variation according to the use. Halliday (1978, p.32) argues that '*the notion of register is a form of prediction*'; this permits the speakers to know the situation and the social context of language use, so that they can predict the abundance of the language that will take place and the reasonable probability of being appropriate. Therefore, it is vital to understand the types of situational factors that determine the kind of selections made in the linguistic system.

Halliday *et al.* (1964, p.90-94) defined three variables that determine register: field of discourse, mode of discourse and style/tenor of discourse. The field of discourse

refers to the situational settings where language takes place, including not only the subject-matter but also the whole activity of speakers or participants in a particular setting, taking lectures or job interviews as examples. The mode of discourse relates to the channel of communication, including spoken and written medium. With respect to the style/tenor of discourse, this refers to the participants and their relationships.

The five levels of style/tenor in the relationships between the participants in the language use context, which are illustrated by Joos (1967), are frozen, formal, consultative, casual and intimate. Similarly, Trudgill (1995) states that '*linguistic varieties that are linked in this way to the formality of the situation can be termed styles, and can be thought of as being sited along a scale ranging from formal to informal*' (p.85-86).

Register in sociolinguistics, to sum up, means language used based on various social settings or situations. Different situations (e.g. formal meeting) or types of language (e.g. writing a report) and social relationships (e.g. teachers and students) require various forms of language use. These three variables are important for speakers because they are relevant in influencing the choice of language use. Moreover, register can be considered to share similar concepts to three social variables, namely the power, social distance and the imposition (those three social variables will be explained further in the latter of this chapter), proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Those social variables are important because they affect the choices of the speakers when interacting with the different socially cultural contexts. This being the case, the different levels of social variables can be designed and included into the pragmatic tasks for investigating the learners' performance on different social cultural situations in a target language context.

After discussing the notion of illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence, the following sections will discuss the politeness theory that concerns speakers' intentions on using the pragmatic strategies to express their politeness. Kasper and Schmidt (1996) claim that direct and indirect speech acts are regarded as two pragmatic strategies which are the *off-record* and *on-record* in the politeness theory. The most detailed argument for the universality of speech acts has been supported by the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987).

3.2 Politeness Theory

Lakoff (1975) is one of the pioneers in politeness research and the first to adopt Grice's (1968) assumptions on conversational principles in order to account for politeness. Lakoff (1975) also claims that politeness is a device employed to '*reduce friction in personal interaction*' (p.64). Similarly, Leech (1983) argues that politeness is a form of behaviour that is aimed at creating and maintaining harmonious interaction. Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987) also suggest that politeness can be a potential for aggression '*as it seeks to disarm and make possible communication between potentially aggressive partners*' (p.1). It can be concluded that politeness can be complicated during the interaction because of variability in participants and cultural expectation.

There are four primary theories of politeness: social-norm view, the conversational-maxim view, the face-saving view, and the conversational contract view. However, for the purpose of the present study, prominence will be given to the face-saving view because it consists of a comprehensive construct that deals with the analysis of speech act realization and the various factors that can affect it. The face-saving view has generally been accepted as the most convincing notion in politeness theory. The following sections will be discussed below through the work of Goffman (1967, 1971) and Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) claims that the names of Brown and Levinson (1978) have become synonymous with the word 'politeness' and it is unavoidable to mention it without referring to Brown and Levinson's (1978) theory. The notion of politeness is related to enhancing, preserving and defending face between interlocutors. The term 'face' was first adopted by Goffman (1967, 1971) and was described as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself, at the same time, others also assume they have taken during a particular contact. More explicitly, Brown and Levinson (1987) define 'face' as '*the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself*' (p.61).

Lakoff (1989) also argues that Brown and Levinson (1987) focus on politeness primarily as the strategic avoidance of 'face threatening acts' in order to maintain each

other's face or provides '*a means of minimising the risk of confrontation in discourse – both the possibility of confrontation occurring at all, and the possibility that a confrontation will be perceived as threatening*' (p.102). Brown and Levinson's model (1978, 1987) of politeness is related to the violation of Grice's (1975) 'Cooperative Principle', consisting of four maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner, since the violation of these rules occurs in interaction situations in which participants' main goal has to be the preservation of face. That is, politeness is regarded as an activity, which serves to enhance, maintain or protect face while they are involved in an interaction.

Additionally, face can be perceived from two dimensions; positive face or negative face. Positive face pertains to the self-image of someone being respected, appreciated and in agreement with others. In contrast, negative face refers to the desire of one's self-image being respected, appreciated and agreed and not being imposed on by others; namely, face is threatening. According to the notion of face-threatening acts (FTAs) in the politeness theory suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987), it can be assumed that some speech acts present face-threat in nature.

It is impossible for interlocutors to be included in an interaction without engaging the choices of seeking to avoid or perform FTA's. These two options offer the interlocutor the opportunity to reduce violation to other participants during their interaction. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), it was suggested that when speakers invite speech acts that may be FTA's into their communication, there is a sequential procedure for them to decide and choose.

The following Figure 2.5 proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987, p.69) illustrates this sequential procedure with named possible strategies for performing FTAs. As can be seen in figure 2.5, the higher the resulting number, the more polite the speech act will be.

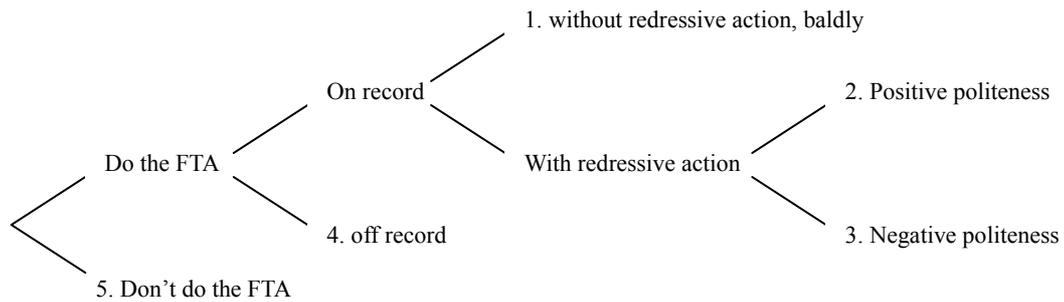


Figure 3.1: Possible Strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987, p.69) for Performing FTAs

The first option for speakers is to decide whether they would like to perform the FTA or not. If speakers decide to do so, they will then have another two choices, which are *on record* and *off record*. The distinction between these two choices is that *on record* allows speakers the opportunity to express their meaning clearly and explicitly, while *off record* allows the speaker to indicate their intended meaning through a hint or an indirect approach, that is, the meaning is negotiable in their interaction. Afterwards, speakers decide whether to adopt either an *on record* strategy or not to carry on to the next stage of action (*off record*).

While speakers determine to choose the strategy of *on record*, they may face two options; they are with or without redressive action. The use of redressive action pertains to softening the force of the speech act by the speakers and provides an action of ‘give face’ to the interlocutors. Therefore, it offers the benefit to the speakers by means of the use of face-saving politeness, which involves redressive action. In contrast, when speakers do not choose the strategy of redressive action, they may attempt to make the FTA baldly and without engaging in a redressive action. That is, they intend to express their meaning in a direct way without considering the potential face damage of the FTA. Ultimately, when choosing the redressive action, the speakers will go to the last stage and also be confronted with another two options; positive and negative politeness.

When using positive politeness, the speakers attempt to minimize the potential face threat by means of offering what hearers desire in order to give respect and agreement to the interlocutor. For instance, the speakers show their respect as much as they desire

to treat hearers as a member in a group or with friends. Hence, the FTA does not necessarily mean a negative evaluation of hearers' faces.

Negative politeness, by contrast, refers to hearers' basic desires to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. It is possible for speakers to use a speech act, which possesses a threat to their interlocutor's face so that the strategy of negative politeness will be employed to minimize the imposition of FTA. The use of negative politeness involves adopting a conventionally indirect approach to reduce a certain degree of imposing on hearers. For instance, the speaker may say '*could you spare me a match?*' as negative politeness and '*let me have your match, love*' as positive politeness (Ellis, 1994, p.161).

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategy presents not only how the speakers choose the strategy to manage the FTA but also concern the speakers' face and the other participants' face. When those pragmatic strategies available for the speaker to adopt, Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that individual assesses the notion of face depending on the given context and the relationship between speakers and hearers. In other words, the participants must adopt certain strategies in order to preserve hearers' face. The choice of which strategy to use will depend on the speakers' assessment of the size of FTA. Since *specific* situational factors determine *specific* linguistic features, it is essential to discuss the sociological variables that exist in many or probably all cultures and how these variables play essential roles in selection of linguistic features.

There are three independent, culturally sensitive variables that are calculated in the contextual factors proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), playing an essential role in speech act behaviours and the research of cross-cultural pragmatics. These variables are relative power (P), social distance (D) and the absolute ranking (R) of imposition in the particular culture and are involved with the assessment of the seriousness of an FTA.

- Relative power (P) is '*the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plan and self-evaluation*' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.77). That is, the power that exists between the speaker and the hearer. The relationship between speakers and hearers affects the degree of the power that the speaker can impose on the hearer. As it stands, it is reasonable to

assume that the more the hearer power increases, the more polite the speaker will be expected to be.

- Social distance (D) pertains to the distance between speakers and hearers. The degree of familiarity that exists between interlocutors.
- Absolute ranking (R) of imposition in the particular culture refers to the degree of imposition on the hearers. The relative degree of obligation for the hearers to cooperate with the particular speech act is a relevant factor in certain cultures. That is to say, it '*reflects the right of the speakers to perform the act and the degree to which the hearer welcomes the imposition*' (Hudson *et al.*, 1992, p. 7).

As relative power (P), social distance (D) and the rank (R) of imposition are considered as three pragmatic variables in the development of a more thorough form of assessment to researchers. The process of determining which variables are included in the contexts depend on the purpose of the research, and the pursuit of researchers' interests into various areas of pragmatics in selection of the degree of relative power, social distance and the ranking of imposition. Therefore, these three social variables are very important to this study since the situations used in the discourse completion tasks are formulated with different levels of power, social distance and imposition in the different situational contexts.

Even though Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory has been considered as one of the most influential linguistic views of politeness, many researchers such as Barron (2003), Gu (1990), Spencer-Oatey (2000), Blum-Kulka, (1987), Holmes (1995), Slugowski and Turnbull (1988), Wolfson (1988), Janney and Arndt (1992), Werhofer (1992) have challenged the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) and claim that several weaknesses exist in its framework. In order to discuss those issues raised by different researchers, the following sections will be devoted to discussing the criticism of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory in greater detail.

3.2.2 Criticism of Brown and Levinson's Theory

Several aspects of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory have been criticised. Firstly, Barron (2003) claims that the issue concerning universality of speech acts has been considered a controversial aspect on the grounds that it does not account for cultural differences in the theory of politeness. Similarly, other researchers such as

Gries and Peng, (2002), Gu (1990), Ide *et al.* (1992), Matsumoto (1988), and Mao (1994) claimed that the system of politeness theory is not universal and cannot be applied to other cultures, especially the Eastern culture. More recently, Spencer-Oatey (2000) also echoes this viewpoint.

More explicitly, some researchers such as Blum-Kulka (1987, 1989) and Wierzbicka (1985, 1991) also reject the claim of universality of the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) and indicate that the problem is in relation to the evaluation of politeness on the basis of the degree of indirectness in cross-cultural studies. Importantly, Meier (1995, p.387) argues that the term of ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’, ‘more polite’ and ‘less polite’ need to be treated with caution when their framework is applied cross-culturally. In addition, some Asian scholars such as Matsumoto (1988), Ide (1989, 1998), Gu (1990, 1992), and Mao (1994) claim that the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) focuses on individualism in Western culture to interpret the notion of face. Therefore, Gu (1992) concludes that politeness may be a universal phenomenon existing in various cultures; however, polite behaviour is considered to be culture and language specific. Therefore, as suggested by Gu (1992), the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) should be extended. As the participants included in this study are Taiwanese learners, it is useful to devote the latter section (3.2.3) to discussing politeness in Chinese culture.

Secondly, Holmes (1995, p.19-22) argues that the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987) does not account for all the factors affecting the choice of politeness strategies. As a result, she suggests that there is a necessity to include contextual factors such as formality and informality when analysing the politeness. Based on her viewpoint, speakers in formal settings emphasise the transactional role and focus on the informative content of language, while speakers in informal settings believe that personal relationships play a significant role in conversations and phatic functions of language. Moreover, she also claims that negative politeness is more frequently used in formal than in informal settings. In order to support her viewpoint, she provides an instance in which two barristers, who are brothers, would address each other as ‘learned colleague’ in court. Furthermore, she argues that women and men have very different viewpoints towards the interpretations of appropriate linguistic behaviour on the

formality of the context. Therefore, the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987) does not take formal and informal contexts into account.

Thirdly, Slugowski and Turnbull (1988, p.101-121) suggest that the factors influencing politeness should add 'affect'. Similarly, Fraser and Nolen (1981) and Fraser (1990, p.219-236) criticise the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) in that it presents a static model to account for real interaction. Based on this viewpoint, the degree of appropriate politeness should constantly be negotiated and reassessed during the interaction process. As a result, Slugowski and Turnbull (1988) suggest that interaction progress should be considered and brought into the model of politeness.

Fourthly, Janney and Arndt (1992) argue that the importance of interpersonal factors influence the choice of politeness strategies. They believe that '*emotive communication*', which refers to '*...the conscious, strategic modification of affective signals to influence others' behaviour*' (Janney and Arndt, 1992, p.529) is the centre of their alternative framework and can replace the notion of politeness suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). In their framework, speakers behave in an 'interpersonal supportiveness' while communicating. In other words, Janney and Arndt's (1992) framework conceptualizes politeness as embedded in a broader aspect of communication, that is emotive communication, and it concerns human emotion rather than sociological variables, while the speakers determine the choice of politeness strategies. Even though in their later work they revise this theory by adding the notion of 'social politeness', interpersonal politeness is still captured under the label 'tact'. Eelen (2001, p.17) argues that tact has a 'conciliative' function and tact could also be seen as an expansion of the notion of interpersonal supportiveness and refers to '*minimizing territorial transgressions*' (Arndt and Janney, 1985, p.294).

Mills (2003) also argues that when interaction takes place, utterances may be judged to be impolite. This means not only face threat, but also, more importantly a treat to the degree of solidarity and friendship, different relative status between participants. This shows that many factors are affected by judging impoliteness between individuals. Similarly, Kienpointner (2008) argues that the theory of politeness or impoliteness cannot exclude the emotions. Three social variables; namely, power, social distance and imposition, determine politeness in the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). In other

words, an independent variable affects the choice of politeness strategy. Importantly, all those three variables imply certain emotions. The positive emotion is usually accepted and appreciated while the negative emotion is rejected by the standard norms of cooperative behaviour. As a result, the great differences of power can create both positive and negative emotions, such as fear and respect, and different degrees of social distance are often combined with positive and negative emotions such as love, hate or angry. The rank of imposition in a culture often implies certain emotions. For instance, being intrusive is a fear in Anglo-Saxon culture but it is a desire to be included into a social group in Spanish culture (Kienpointner, 2008, p.247). Therefore, emotions should be also taken into account when analyse the polite and impolite utterances.

Lastly, one of the most severe criticisms of Brown and Levinson's model can be seen in Werhofer (1992). He argues that Brown and Levinson's (1987) model is an attempt to '*reconstruct systematically...the rationality that underlies polite talk*' (p.155). In other words, their model is only presented as a means of solving a '*problem in linguistic pragmatics, and not in the psychology or sociology of language*' (Werhofer, 1992, p. 155). More explicitly, he explains that Brown and Levinson's (1987) model is a production model of polite utterances because the individual needs an internal dialogue to take place within the speaker's mind while producing a polite utterance. Werhofer (1992) focuses on the rational procedures that the speaker needs to go through in order to choose an appropriate politeness strategy from Brown and Levinson's (1987) hierarchy when committing an FTA. He suggests instead that the intention to commit an FTA and the appropriate politeness strategy chosen in the utterance is sequential. The speaker must go from step 1 to step 2 and then on to step; it is impossible to regress. Therefore, it is evident that their model only represents the production model of polite utterances rather than what is going on in the speaker's mind.

After the above discussion of some criticisms of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, that is based on the notion of face threat, there is still a missing point; impoliteness (Mills, 2005). In other words, there is no inclusion of the analysis of impoliteness into their framework. Locher and Bousfield (2008) argue that impoliteness is ubiquitous and studies on impoliteness embrace the whole of Goffman's notion of facework, rather than just the face-saving aspect as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). Based on Goffman's (1967) '*aggressive facework*', Craig *et al.* (1986,

p.456-461) were firstly to discuss face-attack or face aggravation in relation to politeness theory. They indicate that the model of Brown and Levinson (1987) fails to treat face-attack strategies systematically and that this results in descriptive holes being left in the data analysis.

According to Eelen (2001, p.98-100), the model of Brown and Levinson (1987) particularly focuses on harmonious interactions but ignores impoliteness. In other words, their framework is generally not well constructed, conceptually or descriptively, to account for impoliteness. He also claims that the model of Brown and Levinson (1987) gives an impression that impoliteness could be considered as either pragmatic failure or merely anomalous behaviour (Bousfield and Culpeper, 2008).

Kienpointner (1997) argues that the Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, like many other theories that consider impoliteness, should be treated as exceptional. In fact, impoliteness and conflict commonly occur during interaction. Bousfield (2008) argues that '*impoliteness constitutes the communication of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts which are purposefully delivered*' (p.72). It is to say, the speakers' intentions are not clearly perceived by the hearer so the hearer needs to discover and interpret whether the speakers intended to be impolite. Moreover, Culpeper (2005) suggests that Tracy and Tracy's definition provides a better explanation of impoliteness. They define impoliteness as '*communicative acts perceived by members of a social community (and often intended by speakers) to be purposefully offensive*' (Tracy and Tracy, 1998, p.27). In turn, impoliteness is intentionality and the phenomenon of impoliteness is in relation to how offence is communicated and taken between interlocutors. Therefore, Culpeper (2005, p.38) considers impolite speech acts come about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2).

As Lakoff (1989), Kasper (1990), Beebe (1995) and Kienpointner (1997) claim, impoliteness can be strategic, and systematic. Culpeper (2005) argues that impoliteness is constructed in the interaction between speakers and hearers (p.38-39). Culpeper *et al.* (2003) were not the first researchers to be inspired by Brown and Levinson's politeness model to propose impoliteness model concerning a comprehensive treatment of

face-attack strategies. They remedied some weaknesses from other models which still draw from Brown and Levinson's (1987) model. Importantly, Culpeper (2005) explicitly abandons Brown and Levinson's (1987) distinction between positive and negative face and assessed interactions between the contexts. That is, he suggests that the focus of impoliteness is the role of context (Bousfield and Culpeper, 2008, p.162).

There are five strategies in the impoliteness model suggested by Culpeper (1996); they are Bald on record impoliteness, Positive impoliteness, Negative impoliteness, Sarcasm or mock politeness and Withhold politeness. Culpeper *et al.* (2003) argue that those strategies rarely occur singularly but are more often mixed, which is different from the claim of Brown and Levinson (1987). For example, an interruption may attack negative face as it impedes someone in some specific contexts, but it may also imply that the interruptee's opinion was not valued as a positive face issue. As a result, there can be primary effects for one type of face and secondary for another (Culpeper, 2005).

Moreover, Culpeper (2005) argues that this impoliteness model was originally designed as a compliment to the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987). However, there is an exception; 'sarcasm or mock politeness' is not the counterpart of off-record politeness. As sarcasm is inspired by Leech's (1983) conceptual irony, it suggests that politeness is used for impoliteness. An example illustrated by Leech (1983, p.142), 'do help yourself (won't you?)', said to someone who is greedily helping him/herself already. In this case, the hearer could be considered as impolite because he or she is supposed to wait until be invited to tuck-in. Consequently, this irony statement is using politeness for impoliteness.

Therefore, Culpeper (2005) later suggests an additional category, off-record impoliteness, in his impoliteness model. This is done in order to supplement the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987). He defines that '*Off-record impoliteness: the FTA is performed by means of an implicature but in such a way that one attribute intention clearly outweighs any others*' (p.44). Moreover, Culpeper (2005) concludes that the impolite belief is conveyed by impoliteness. More indirect forms of impoliteness, such as off-record impoliteness, should not be considered any less impolite than more direct forms; hence more indirect forms of impoliteness are more offensive.

In summary, politeness and impoliteness cannot be taken to be complete opposites because the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987) is not sufficient for analysing certain utterances that use politeness for impoliteness. Similarly, Eelen (2001) also argues that impoliteness should be analysed on its own terms, rather than being treated as a deviation form of politeness, because politeness theory cannot analyse impoliteness as the same way as it analyses the politeness. In particular, the exception is to treat ‘sarcasm or mock’ as part of the model of politeness. Therefore, Culpeper (1996, 2005) and Culpeper *et al.* (2003) developed the model of impoliteness, and those impoliteness strategies that are the counterpart of the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987), in order to analyse certain utterances that are considered as impoliteness. In particular, as Culpeper *et al.* (2003) argue, the impoliteness strategies rarely occur singularly but are more often mixed, which is different from the claims of Brown and Levinson (1987) regarding politeness. Also, impoliteness functions in very different ways from politeness and involve context-specific assumptions, that is, the utterances are only interpreted in a specific context (Culpeper, 1996, 2005; Culpeper *et al.* 2003; Mills, 2005). Therefore, Mills (2005) suggests that it is important to analyze impoliteness in a contextualised way and focus on what takes place in an interaction.

The politeness principle developed by Brown and Levinson (1987) is particularly important to this study, since the taxonomy employed to analyse the speech act has been constructed on the basis of the politeness theory, as it distinguishes between on record and off record. The model of Brown and Levinson (1987) has attracted the bulk of empirical work carried out on linguistic politeness, because their model provides ‘*an ideal toolkit to compare and interpret the ways in which speakers handle a range of different speech events across a range of different cultures*’ (Werhofer, 1992). Therefore, this researcher includes the politeness theory suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987) into her study to analyze and interpret her speech data.

After discussing the theory of politeness, this researcher also notices that politeness may be considered diversely in different social cultural situations. Therefore, the politeness in Chinese culture will be addressed, and the issues of pragmatic transfer and pragmatic failures will be also discussed in the following sections.

3.2.3 Politeness in Chinese Culture

Chinese face concerns the ideal social identity that is promoted as a *public* image. In contrast, Brown and Levinson's formulation of face is considered as an ideal individual autonomy, which is relative to a public *self*-image. That is, the Chinese concept of face focuses on the balance between speakers and hearers in the social relationship and diverges from the notion of the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) as it only concerns the face of individuals.

Chinese politeness is known as '*Limao*' and includes two major principles, which are sincerity and balance (Gu, 1990). These two principles interact with each other. That is, polite behaviour in Chinese society is sincerity and this sincerity should be reciprocated in order to achieve the balance (Gu, 1990).

Based on the investigation of speech acts and historical politeness in China, Gu (1990, 1992) also indicates that Chinese politeness can be grouped into four aspects: respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal and refinement.

- Respectfulness: positive appreciation or admiration of others concerning the other's face, social status and so on.
- Modesty: self-denigration.
- Attitudinal warmth: demonstration of kindness, consideration and hospitality to others.
- Refinement: self's behaviour to others, which meets certain standards.

Mao (1994) believes the 'face' in the definition of Brown and Levinson (1987) only focuses on the individual's 'want' and 'desire'. In Chinese culture, Mao (1994) claims face can be interpreted as '*a reputable image that individuals can claim for themselves as they interact with others in a given community*' (Mao, 1994, p.460). In other words, Chinese face is considered as a public image and it is determined by the participation of others.

When someone obtains face in Chinese culture, they gain recognition, not as much for one's claim to free their imposition, but to gain the respect or prestige of the community. Basically, the face (*mianzi* in Chinese) reflects the Confucian tradition. It advocates that the individual should subordinate themselves to the group or the

community, and regard self-cultivation as an act of communicating with, and sharing in, an ever-expanding circle of human-relatedness (Tu, 1985, p.249). As it stands, an individual is supposed to seek respect from the group or the community, but not to pursue the desire and the freedom of the individual in Chinese culture.

This study aims to investigate the pragmatic competence of the learners based on the selected task items. These items were designed to include different degrees of social variables in order to investigate the learners' performances in varied situational contexts under a computer mediated environment. The appropriate choices of the use of pragmatic strategy to perform in the situational contexts may be determined by the learners, who comprehend the pragmatics in the target language.

It is possible that learners use their native language-based pragmatic transfers, that is, the learners' are influenced by their mother tongue and culture when choosing the pragmatic strategy while performing (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993). Sometimes, those pragmatic transfers may result in negativity, namely, negative transfer or pragmatic failure.

In discussing the pragmatic transfer, it facilitates the researcher in identifying the causes of pragmatic failure and whether they occurred as a result of the affects of Chinese culture from the learners' performance. In the next sections, pragmatic transfer and pragmatic failure will be discussed in more detail.

3.2.4 Pragmatic Transfer

Kasper (1992) states that pragmatic transfer can be defined as '*the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information*' (p.207). Similarly, Barron (2003) agrees that pragmatic transfer refers to the learner's transfer of their pragmatic knowledge within such aspects as pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic (terms will be explained in the next section), and the result of those transfers is two-fold; either positive transfer or negative transfer.

Similar to Bachman's (1990) framework in pragmatic competence, Leech (1983, p.10) and Thomas (1983, p.99) also divide pragmatics into two elements;

pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The term ‘pragmalinguistics’, is similar to the term ‘illocutionary competence’ by Bachman (1990), and refers to pragmatic strategies such as directness or indirectness. Also, the abundance of linguistic forms can intensify or soften speech acts to convey interpersonal meanings. On the other hand, socio-pragmatics is similar to the term sociolinguistic competence by Bachman (1990), and refers to social perceptions underlying participants’ interpretation and performance of communicative action.

The illocutionary transfer at the level of form-force mapping is the selection of the linguistic relevance from the mother tongue into the target language. Whereas, sociolinguistic transfer indicates the transfer in learners’ awareness of a particular speech act being appropriate to the context in which it is performed (Takahashi, 1996). Pragmatic transfer results in one of two consequences: either positive or negative transfer.

The positive transfer refers to the similar pragmatic feature that exists in both the learner’s mother tongue and the target language. That is to say, when learners adopt these features appropriately, it can be considered as positive transfer. Negative transfer however, as defined by Maeshiba *et al.* (1996) is ‘...*the projection of first language-based sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge onto second language contexts where such projections result in perceptions and behaviours different from those of second language users*’ (p.155). Therefore, such transfer deviates from the second language norm and associates the potential for pragmatic failure at either the illocutionary or sociolinguistic aspect.

Many studies such as Cohen and Olshtain (1981), Blum-Kulka (1982), Olshtain (1983), House and Kasper (1987), House (1989), Olshtain and Cohen (1989), Wolfson (1989), Beebe *et al.* (1990), Robinson (1992), Bergman and Kasper (1993), Eisenstein and Bodman (1993), Takahashi and Beebe (1993) and Maeshiba *et al.* (1996) have paid more attention to negative transfer. Due to the use of the speech act deviating from pragmatic acceptability, it is therefore essential to discuss the cause of pragmatic failure in the next section in order to identify the problems resulting either from the linguistic acceptability of the utterance or social acceptability of a response.

After discussing pragmatic transfer and pragmatic failure, thought will be given to how language learners' pragmatic competence can be encouraged within the classroom settings in order to facilitate the learners not to commit pragmatic failure in social situational contexts. Since classroom organization offers learners the input and opportunities for practice to develop their pragmatic competence (LoCastro, 2003), it is important for the teachers to decide what types of instructions and activities are suitable for their learners and then implement them into the classroom. Therefore, attention is paid in the following sections to examining both the opportunities offered for the development of pragmatics in the classroom context and the different types of instruction that may be effective in promoting learners' pragmatic competence.

3.3 Developing Second Language Pragmatics in the Classroom

Many researchers such as Kasper (1997) and Rose and Kasper (2001) extensively discuss the previous studies on the effects of pragmatic instruction, and they believe that pragmatics can indeed be taught in the classroom setting. Similarly, Tateyama *et al.* (1997) and Wildner-Bassett (1994) also claim that pragmatic routines are teachable even to new foreign language learners.

The learners involved in this present study lack opportunities to be engaged in genuine communication in the target language as they are in a setting where English is being learnt as a foreign language. Because of this, they do not have chance to directly observe native speakers' appropriate use of pragmatics to follow. In other words, the language classroom settings in Taiwan where learners develop their language proficiency are considered as foreign language classrooms, therefore they experience difficulties with exposing themselves in the real-life interactions outside the classrooms. As a result, the learners can only receive the source of input and instances of pragmatic behaviour that come from the classroom settings (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, Kasper, 1997).

Similarly, Rose (1999) indicates, foreign language classroom involving large classes and limited contact hours that prevent teachers from organizing an appropriate environment to facilitate the development of learners' pragmatic ability. The language classrooms in Taiwan also maintain this phenomenon, as a result, it is necessary for the

teachers to create opportunities for their learners to develop their pragmatic competence in this specific context, so both explicit and implicit instruction in the classrooms is essential.

The explicit instruction is a teacher-fronted instructional setting and focuses on form-function relationship of the target pragmatic strategies. The learners can benefit from the teacher's explanation of the use of routine expressions. Based on explicit instruction, learners evolve a conscious process and are aware of the new knowledge that they are receiving from instruction in the classroom setting (Schmidt, 1993, 2001; Ellis, 1999). According to Ohta (2001), the advantage of this particular type of teaching is that it may enable learners to develop their discourse-pragmatic ability.

Implicit instruction is where learners develop a non-conscious process and they are not aware of what is being learned, but they only pay attention to the surface features of a complex stimulus domain (Reber, 1989; Winter and Reber, 1994). More explicitly, as Ellis (1994) indicates, implicit learning is the acquisition of knowledge regarding the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a naturally occurred process that is simple and without conscious operations.

Some research has been carried out on examining the effects of explicit and implicit instructions. For example, Martinez-Flor (2004) analyses these effects on the speech act of suggestion and results of her study show that both implicit and explicit instructional treatment groups outperformed the control group in awareness and production of the speech act of suggestion. Similarly, Alcón's (2005) study also confirms an advantage of explicit and implicit instructed learners over uninstructed ones in their awareness and production of requests. Moreover, Bardovi-Harlig (2001) argues that learners benefit from instruction in acquiring many aspects of L2 pragmatics; otherwise, the learners learn pragmatics more slowly. Therefore, it is evident that instructional intervention is necessary, as it aids the learners in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic ability.

Kasper (1997) suggests that a number of activities are useful for pragmatic development and these activities can be classified into two types: one is activities aimed at raising students' pragmatic awareness; the other is activities offering opportunities for

interaction. Through awareness-raising activities, students acquire sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge from observing particular pragmatic features in various sources of oral or written ‘data’, for example, native speaker ‘classroom guests’ (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.*, 1991), videos of authentic interaction, feature films (Rose, 1997), and other written and audiovisual sources.

Rose (1999) claims that the main goal of a pragmatic consciousness raising technique is not to deliver explicit instruction of speech acts but to ‘*expose learners to the pragmatic aspects of language (L1 and L2) and provide them with analytical tools they need to arrive at their own generalizations concerning contextually appropriate language use*’ (p.171). Based on this view, Rose (1999) proposes a model of observational style that is very useful. This technique involves several steps. Firstly, either teachers or learners collect interesting examples of cross-cultural speech act situations. After that, teachers introduce a target speech act to the learners in order to stimulate their interest and awareness. Secondly, teachers help the learners become familiar with a particular aspect of pragmatics to be investigated. Thirdly, teachers request that their learners collect and analyse data collected from their L1 in order to make the new concepts more accessible. Finally, teachers conduct an analysis of similar phenomena in the target language.

Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig (1992) also suggests that students can act as investigators; gathering their own examples of speech acts and then observing and recording naturally occurring data by means of administering questionnaires, or conducting interviews. The goal of this approach is to raise students’ pragmatic awareness of L1 or L2 speech acts with authentic information from their own environments.

Some researchers such as Rose (1994, 2000), Grant and Starks (2001), Washburn (2001) and Alçon (2005) consider that an EFL context is particularly difficult for developing learners’ pragmatic awareness. However, they may be motivated, based on this assumption, to carry out their studies by using authentic audiovisual input. They claim that authentic audiovisual input offers opportunities to address language use in different contexts. In particular, Rose (1994, 2000) claims that the use of authentic audiovisual activity, such as the use of video, film and TV, has received special attention

and is considered as an approach to develop learners' knowledge both of pragmatic systems, of their appropriate use.

Furthermore, based on audiovisual materials, there is the possibility for teachers to choose the most suitable segments and analyse them, allowing learners to see the pragmatic aspects. In addition, some communicative tasks, such as pragmatic judgement, can be based on audiovisual discourse analysis; this will allow learners to develop their pragmatic competence for communication in the target cultural contexts. Teachers of both native speakers and non-native speakers can use this approach.

Another approach is role-play tasks; these are also proposed by Bou-Franch and Garces-Conejos (2003) for the development of learners' pragmatic competences. They suggest a framework that adopts an explicit and direct approach to teaching pragmatic knowledge (Richards, 1990) and divide this teaching into different steps. The first step is to define politeness, followed by presenting both the Brown and Levinson (1987) and Scollon and Scollon's (1995) politeness systems to the learners. Once learners understand these concepts, they are given an awareness-raising task; that is, using an example to illustrate a phenomenon of politeness that is cultural-bound. After completing these stages, Bou-Franch and Garces-Conejos (2003) suggest that role-plays or other communicative activities could be also prepared to provide learners with interactive situations. Similarly many researchers such as Bardovi-Harlig (1992), Rose (1999, 2000) and Kinginger (2000), also argue that arranging productive activities allows learners to interact with other peers. It is evident that those activities provide benefits for assimilation of pragmatics in comparison with the limitations presented in the teacher-fronted classroom settings.

Moreover, several studies focusing on examining different pragmatic aspects adopt new technologies to collect production data (Kingerger, 2000; Wishnoff, 2000; Belz and Kinginger, 2002). Through the use of Internet communication tools such as e-mail or synchronous chat for the purposes of L2 linguistic development and intercultural exploration, the structure of participation in the classroom can be expanded (e.g. Belz, 2002, 2003; Kasper, 2000; Kinginger, 1998; Warschauer, 1996).

In particular, the tele-collaborative activity allows learners to get involved in an interaction by means of electronic discussion, debate, and dialogue with expert speakers who are at a similar age. As Kinginger (2000, p.23) argues, social interaction with native language users can be afforded a benefit on greater exposure to a wider range of L2 discourse options and the opportunities for peer-assisted while comparing the interactive formats of the traditional language classroom.

In Kinginger's (2000) study, the students were required to engage in a tele-collaborative activity consisting of exchanging introductions and personal information through email, discussing books and films through both synchronous and asynchronous communication, and constructing websites showing comparisons of their interpretations. The finding shows that the learners' development of awareness and appropriate use of L2 address forms would be helped by the tele-collaborative activity.

Similarly, Belz and Kinginger (2003) conducted a study based on German-American tele-collaborative activity. In their study, the finding shows that tele-collaborative activity enables the American learners to interact with expert-speaking German peers in order to develop learners' pragmatic awareness and approximation of the expert norm.

O'Dowd (2004, p.147) claims that one of tele-collaborative activities, namely, the use of email exchange, is another approach to develop learners' ability to be aware of their own and target cultures. The use of email exchange, sometimes combined with other online technology activities such as videoconference and online chat forums, plays an important role on online exchange activities connecting two different cultural groups of learners through their communication to develop their pragmatic as well as linguistic competence. Atawneh (2003) echoes this view and argues that two studies conducted by means of using email exchange proved successful in developing learners' awareness of pragmatics; one is the study conducted between Chinese and American, the other is between Japanese and American on communicating about cultural issues in those two countries. Similarly, the study of Plana (2003) also shows that the autonomy of the students is fostered by e-learning and that they are also encouraged to improve the acquisition of pragmatic competence through coping with real messages.

After discussing the how the technology facilitating the pragmatic awareness of the learners, several research approaches have also been proposed and used to collect the speech data of learners in order to analyse how pragmatic competence is learned. Many pragmatic studies such as Blum-Kulka (1989), Grahama (1995), Le Pair (1996), Olshtain and Cohen (1989), Maeshiba *et al.* (1996), Liao and Bresnahan (1996), Beebe *et al.* (1990), Takahashi and Beebe (1987), and House (2000) conduct their studies by investigating the learners' performance either between their first and second language or on the behaviour of the learners' native language; with an emphasis on examining learners' judgement and comprehension through speech production (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

Eslami-Rasekh (2005) suggests that those research approaches used for data collection in cross-cultural pragmatics research can also be used as a classroom activity for developing pragmatic competence. In this study a pragmatic research approach, namely a discourse completion task (DCT), was used to obtain the intended speech function from the learners. Within discourse completion tasks, learners responded in their L1 and translated it into L2 and then presented and compared the relevant data with native speakers of English. In so doing, benefits to the learners can be observed primarily in the pragmatic and also the linguistic resources.

A positive feature of a discourse completion task is that it involves a written description of a situation, followed by a short dialogue, with an empty gap that has to be completed by the learners. The context specific information in the situation is designed, and it is decided which particular pragmatic aspect needs to be elicited (Kasper and Dahl, 1991). One of the advantages of a discourse completion task is that it allows control over the contextual variables in the situational description. With differing variables in the discourse completion tasks, Kasper and Rose (2002, p.96) suggest that this tool provides some understanding on what affects learners' choices regarding forms and strategies employed in given situations. Thus, they claim that although not comparable to face-to-face interaction, it can provide pertinent information about learners' pragmatic knowledge on the specific pragmatic feature under study.

The decision of this researcher was to adopt the DCT, using a computer-mediated environment, in order to develop the pragmatic competence of the learners and also

understand the extent of the learners' abilities to deal with social situational fields in the target contexts. The reasons behind why the DCT items are widely adopted and attractive to most pragmatics researchers are two-fold. Firstly, resemblance to real-world speech act performances concerning semantic formulas is obtained; learners use this to understand different illocutionary acts and discover the social factors that they interpret. Secondly, they can be administered to a large numbers of learners in relatively short periods of time (Houch and Gass, 1996). Importantly, several studies have been conducted and have proved their validity (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993; Kasper and Rose, 1998; Billmyer and Varghese, 2000).

In this study, the researcher selected twelve situational based task items from the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995). These task items are close to the context that is familiar to learners in senior high schools in Taiwan and each task associates different levels of relative power (P), social distance (D) and the absolute rank (R) of imposition in the test. As Hudson *et al.* (1995) suggest, a *listening lab oral production test* allows the participants to respond orally to the situational based statements, taken from *open discourse completion tests*. Similarly, McNamara and Roever (2006, p.66) also suggest that the DCT items provide some information on whether learners have semantic formulas at their disposal to realize certain speech acts and also the learners' pragmatics.

This study displays similarities with many pragmatic studies, as it predominantly focuses on the learners' comprehension and awareness of speech acts. In this case, by means of adopting DCTs as a classroom activity, the speech productions are obtained from the learners in order to investigate their realization of the speech acts of apology, request and refusal. Thus, the learners' pragmatic competence can be judged. In particular, the reason for adopting these three speech acts is that they have drawn the most attention in previous studies of manipulative function (Ellis, 1994, p.167).

After administering this communicative task-based activity, the speech data will be collected in order to identify the use of pragmatic strategies. In the following sections, the criteria for assessing the pragmatic competence proposed by Hudson *et al.* (1995) will be discussed first, followed by the classification of the pragmatic strategies.

Approaches to Evaluating Learners' Speech Data

By adopting the criteria of Hudson *et al.* (1995) in this study, it is expected that the evaluation of the learners' pragmatic competence on coping with different social cultural situations in target contexts will be facilitated. The basis of the six components of pragmatic competence suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995, p.49) represent categories for evaluating the speaker's actual responses. These six components of pragmatic competence are as follows:

- Ability to use the correct speech act: employing a speech act on its appropriateness in a particular situation.
- Formulaic expression: using a particular English phrase, avoiding some types of L2 transferring, and allowing some grammar errors.
- Amount of speech used and information given: providing necessary information.
- Levels of formality: the degree of appropriate expression through word choice, phrasing, use of titles and choice of verb forms.
- Levels of directness: the appropriateness of the degree of directness.
- Levels of politeness: including formality and directness, among other things such as politeness markers.

Hudson (2001, p.284), furthermore, analyses these six criteria and asserts that the suitability of linguistic expressions and the amount of information provided is related more to language correctness. In contrast, formality, directness and politeness tend to characterize the more social aspects of language.

In this study, the six aspects of pragmatic competence proposed by Hudson *et al.* (1995, p.49) will be considered as criteria for two native speakers to rate the response of learners. The scores will be given on five-point rating scales ranking from very unsatisfactory (1), to completely appropriate (5), in the second section of the tasks.

The scores awarded by the native speaking assessors will be computed in order to gain an understanding of the performance of the learners in terms of the three speech acts. By comparing the social variables with learners' performance, this will aid the researcher in understanding whether the learners obtain pragmatic knowledge to choose the appropriate use of pragmatic strategy based on carefully evaluating those three

variables in the target contexts. Thus, the different types of tasks will also examine if the learners' performance is affected by Chinese culture norm.

In order to analyse the speech production collected from the learners, the studies of Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Beebe *et al.* (1990) serve as a basis for identifying the pragmatic strategies of the learners in this study when performing speech acts of apologies, requests and refusals. The following sections will briefly discuss their studies.

The most well known empirically based research project in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics is the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) carried out by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989). This project was mainly designed to investigate cross-cultural variations in the speech acts of request and apology so that a coding scheme could be developed to evaluate cross-cultural differences (Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989).

Similarly, Beebe *et al.* (1990) studied refusals produced by American English speakers and Japanese EFL learners. In their coding principle, the analysis of the refusals was based on a sequence of formulae coded in terms of their semantic content. The classification developed by Beebe *et al.* (1990) later became the best-known and most frequently cited taxonomy for analysing the speech act of refusal (Gass and Houck, 1999).

In this study, the researcher is only interested in examining the prominent features that differ between Western and Eastern cultures with a focus on those that have been discussed in previous studies. For example, Chinese people tend to use the direct strategy to make requests in comparison to English speakers. By identifying the different pragmatic strategy use between two cultures, it can easily be discovered whether the learners' pragmatic knowledge of language and culture have been influenced by their native language-based pragmatics. As a result, the speech data will not be analysed throughout, but instead, only certain strategies will be identified in order to understand whether the learners are influenced by their Chinese pragmatic knowledge when responding. More details regarding to the data analysis will be discussed in Chapter four, Section five (4.5).

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the theoretical and analytical framework of this study. The theoretical framework mainly draws upon Bachman's (1990) theoretical framework of *communicative language ability*. His model aids this study by identifying the two aspects of the communicative competence in which this researcher is interested: strategic competence and pragmatic competence. Different taxonomies in classifying communication strategy have been suggested by other researchers; these have been discussed and evaluated in the previous chapter (Chapter Two).

This chapter relates to learners' pragmatic competence. Emphasis has been placed on investigating learners' judgement, comprehension and awareness of speech acts through their speech production. Two theories are introduced when discussing the illocutionary competence; the theory of the speech act suggested by Searle (1975, 1979) and the notion of language function introduced by Halliday (1975). The discussion of these illustrates that the distinction of form and function in language use aid this study in identifying learners' illocutionary competence. Also, in sociolinguistic competence, the concept of sensitivity to register is highlighted and discussed.

Importantly, the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson's model (1987) is useful in this study because it illustrates the sequential procedure with named possible strategies for performing FTAs. Three social variables affecting the choice of pragmatic strategy are also essential for evaluating the learners' perception on different culture values. The tasks associate differing degrees of social variables; relative power (P), social distance (D) and the absolute ranking (R) of imposition, identified by Brown and Levinson (1987), and play an important role in designing test tasks in DCT to investigate learners' pragmatic competence.

The politeness theory has been challenged by many researchers such as Matsumoto (1988), Ide (1989, 1998), Gu (1990, 1992), and Mao (1994), as they consider that the system of politeness theory cannot be universally applied to other cultures, for example, Chinese politeness. Other researchers criticised the model of Brown and Levinson (1987) as it does not account for all the factors affecting the choice of politeness strategies and presents a static model to account for real interaction, when it should also

take human emotion into account. In addition, another group of researchers such as Culpeper (2005) also argue that the model of Brown and Levinson (1987) does not account for face-attack or face aggravation.

Even though the model of Brown and Levinson (1987) has weaknesses, it distinguishes between on record and off record as being universally available. This model is important to the current study as it offers a benefit in comparing and interpreting the learners' speech production in different social situations and allows this researcher to investigate learners' politeness manners on dealing with situations in the target language contexts.

Because politeness may be considered diversely in different social cultural situations, Chinese culture is discussed and taken into account while analysing speech data. The discussion concerning pragmatic transfer and pragmatic failure is helpful for this study in order to interpret the pragmatic failure on the performance of the learners. It may be because they were not aware of the pragmatics of the target language when transferring their native language-based pragmatic strategy that further resulted in them being rude to the native speakers.

The development of second language pragmatics has drawn attention to the language teaching and learning context. Many researchers have carried out studies of pragmatic instructions. The results prove that employing computer technology in classrooms can offer opportunities to engage in real communication. Also, a good feature of the DCT is a resemblance to real world speech act performances where semantic formula can be elicited. Because of this, it has been adopted as a classroom activity to investigate learners' realization of the speech acts by many researchers. This has inspired the current study to use the DCT to elicit learners' speech production under a computer-mediated environment.

Finally, six criteria suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995) will be employed for two assessors to evaluate the speaker's actual responses in order to provide more information concerning the learners' pragmatic knowledge. Additionally, the studies of Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Beebe *et al.* (1990) can assist this researcher in identifying the pragmatic strategies of the learners. By analysing the learners' pragmatic

strategies in different social situations, the strategies learners used when responding to the tasks can be better understood. As well comparing the social variables involved in the task items against the learners' performances, information can be interpreted on whether the learners' performances are better in one social situation than another and also whether they are affected by Chinese cultural norm.

Chapter Four

The Research Design

This chapter consists of seven sections. It discusses the methodology of the present research where the adopted approach, methods and instruments have been identified and justified. Firstly, the section '*A Case Study Approach*' discusses how and why the 'case study' is appropriate for this study; the aim of the research and the research questions are considered in relation to this. Section two focuses on choosing a methodology for this study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been adopted for collecting and analysing the data, which focuses on the rationale behind the research design. Section three then discusses the decision in relation to the choice of sampling technique. Section four illustrates the procedure of the study, which includes a discussion regarding the design of communicative tasks based activities within a computer environment as the research instrument, the pilot study and the description of the process of data collection in the main study. Section five describes the methods of data analysis. Section six considers the importance of validity and reliability and how they are applied to this study. Section seven pertains to the ethical issues involved in this study.

4.1 A Case Study Approach

The aim of educational research as critical enquiry is to allow educational judgments and decisions to be made in order to improve educational action. As Bassey (2002, p.109) argues, educational research is interested in improving action through theoretical understanding. In educational research, the case-study approach has a long and distinguished heritage.

The case study was classified by Stake (1994, p.237; 1995, p.3-4) into three main types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies. He distinguished the differences between these three kinds of case study, not because it is useful to categorise case studies into one of the three types, but because the methods the researchers choose to use are dependent on their research interests.

Based on the purpose of this study, this present research can be identified as an intrinsic case study. The focus of the study is on the investigation of the communication strategies and pragmatic competence of Taiwanese EFL learners in a senior high school whilst completing a computer mediated oral activity. The researcher is interested in the specificity of this study and in learning about this particular case, and not so much in its wider application or its generalisation to a wider problem. It can therefore be said that both the instrumental case study, which incorporates the understanding of wider issues rather than solely concerning a particular case, and the collective case study, which coordinates individual studies to gain a fuller picture of the phenomenon, are unsuitable for the purpose of this present study.

Moreover, according to Bell (1999), the greatest strength of the case-study approach is that *'it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify, or to attempt to identify, the various interactive processes at work'* (p.11). In turn, the distinction of a case study is its holistic focus on the *'bounded system'* (Smith, 1978) in context. Yin (2003, p.13) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that:

- *investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when*
- *the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.*

(Yin, 2003, p.13)

When phenomenon and context are not manifested in a real life situation, the case study allows for the employment of a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence to obtain multiple sources of evidence. In other words, one of the significant features of case study research is its use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the issue within investigation (Yin, 2003). Since the case study approach is flexible in employing evidence both of a quantitative and qualitative nature in the study (Johnson 1992, p.83), this researcher believes that a case study approach is the most appropriate method for the current study.

4.2 Choosing a Methodology

In choosing an appropriate methodology and the identification of suitable research techniques, it is crucial to consider the research aim and the research questions posed at the commencement of the study. Such consideration will assist in establishing the correct choice of research techniques for the data collection, and the analysis and the interpretation of such data in terms of its epistemological relevance.

The main research questions that shape this study have emerged from critical and extensive reading of the literature that deals with the investigation of Taiwanese language learners' communication strategies and pragmatic competence through a computer-mediated oral activity. As in most research designs, questions evolve and change as the study develops. Therefore, the evolution of research questions will be used to guide methodological choice, to assist data collection, analysis and interpretation, and to frame the discussion of the findings.

Research Questions and Sub-questions

1. How do Taiwanese EFL learners cope with deficiencies in their communicative competence in the English language?
 - 1-1. Which strategies do the learners prefer when responding to the tasks?
 - 1-2. How do the learners operate the compensatory strategies to respond to each task?
 - 1-3. What differences exist between the high scoring and low scoring learners on employing compensatory strategies?

2. To what extent do Taiwanese learners of English demonstrate their pragmatic competence within different given social contexts?
 - 2-1. How do the learners perform when using speech acts of apology, request and refusal?
 - 2-2. What discourse variances are there when the learners respond to the tasks?
 - 2-3. Within what social situations do the learners perform better?

This study was designed to administer a computer mediated oral activity to investigate the communicative competence in terms of two perspectives; communication strategies and pragmatic competence of the Taiwanese EFL learners in a senior high school through two different types of communicative tasks. In order to examine and investigate the research aims and questions of this study, the mixed research strategies were chosen, that is, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies would be adopted after collecting the data from the study, and importantly; to be devised in response to the purpose of the study.

Howe (1988) claims that social science research need not employ only one kind of understanding. He argues that both a 'scientific' and an 'interpretive' understanding should be granted as a legitimate form of knowledge no matter whether it is derived from positivistic research or naturalistic research. The term 'scientific' that Howe (1988) uses is the same as other researchers use the term 'positivist'. Therefore, it is permissible for researchers to mix the methods of the two paradigms that include the research designs, data gathering techniques, types of data and analysis in order to permit the different kinds of understanding. By means of adopting a variety of methods to satisfy the research aim, this researcher was able to gather a wide range of evidence.

Moreover, as Creswell (2003, p.211) argues, a mixed methods approach is possible for the researcher to collect both the quantitative and qualitative data in phases (i.e. sequentially) or at the same time (i.e. concurrently). The phases of data collection depend on the researchers' initial intentions for implementing either the qualitative or the quantitative data.

In order to achieve the research goal, the intention of this researcher in the current study was to collect both the quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously through the administration of a communicative task based activity. The purpose of the implementation of this activity is to gather both numeric information and text information. After collecting the data, two native speaking assessors graded the samples, and the participants' speech production was also coded and analyzed by two coders; that is, this researcher and her colleague. Subsequently, the computed results were then analyzed and scrutinized by the researcher in order to present both quantitative and qualitative information.

A mixed methods approach, could therefore, act as a better approach in this study and prove to be beneficial when collecting diverse forms of data based on the inquiry. In doing so, it was hoped that the research findings could provide better understanding and information in order to respond to the main research questions one and two.

After addressing internal validity, the next section will focus on sampling strategies and the application of which to this study.

4.3. Sampling

According to Morrison (1993) and Cohen *et al.* (2000), the quality of research not only depends on the appropriateness of the research methodology and instrumentation, but it also needs to adopt a correctly selected sampling strategy. In turn, the choice of which strategy to adopt in the research has to take into consideration how to achieve the purpose of the research, the time scales and constraints, the methods of data collection and the research methodology. Moreover, the choice of sampling strategy has to be appropriate and valid to satisfy all the aforementioned factors. The following sections will focus on sampling strategies.

This study was identified through non-probability sampling. When researchers adopt the strategy of a non-probability sample, they are not interested in representing their sample to the whole population. For instance, it intends to illustrate a particular group, such as a class of students who are taking a particular examination. In comparison with a probability sample, this would draw randomly from the wider population and is normally used by those who would like to make a generalization to the wider population. Therefore the non-probability sampling technique was administered in order to obtain full knowledge of this particular group.

Moreover, purposive sampling, that is, the sample chosen for a specific purpose, is one of several types of sampling involved in non-probability sampling and is considered to be suitable for this study. Purposive sampling was chosen as the method for this research because its advantages allowed the researcher to build up a sample on

the grounds of satisfying the needs of this research, for example, the age of participants and the English proficiency of the participants.

In this study, the researcher aimed to target a particular group who had passed a particular language test, that is, the GEPT. More specifically, the participants involved in this study were required to pass the intermediate level of the GEPT. The reason why this researcher intended to study participants who had passed the intermediate level of the GEPT is that the intermediate level of the GEPT is equivalent to the level of B1 Threshold (LTTC, 2005). The interpretation of the level of B1 Threshold is that the test participants can clearly understand the main points of familiar matters and deal with most situations whilst travelling, as well as they can produce simple connected text on familiar topics and describe their experience, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans (Council of Europe, 1996).

According to English proficiency at this level, it is anticipated that participants who have attained this level of English proficiency should be able to express their thoughts and feelings, and be able to answer questions about their daily life. Moreover, the learners with this level of English proficiency were concerned with the ability to respond the tasks involved in this activity.

The researcher also aimed to target a particular group whose participants' age ranged from 15 to 17 years. The reason for selecting this particular age range was that these participants were the first group who would have benefited from the reformed English education since 2001, as English became as a compulsory course at their 5th grade of their elementary School. This researcher could therefore gain more knowledge concerning the development of the learners' communicative competence after the reformed English education.

Another consideration pertains to computer knowledge, as the participants involved in this study need to interact individually with the computer when taking this activity. Therefore, it was necessary for them to have some knowledge of computers. As the Taiwanese Ministry of Education has implemented computer lessons in elementary school since 1995, it was not necessary for this researcher to train the participants or to require them to have the ability to use computers when partaking in this study.

Importantly, an appropriate sample size is relied upon for the purpose of this research. Too large a sample size sometimes causes the researcher difficulties in managing the data; on the other hand, too small a sample might cause the data to become an unrepresentative reflection on the target population. The researcher should also bear in mind that the sample size might also be constrained by time, money, stress, administrative support, the number of researchers and resources (Cohen *et. al.*, 2000, p.93).

As quantitative and qualitative methods are employed in this study, the sample size needs to be manageable insofar as the researcher requires a moderate sample size in order to provide a representative amount of speech data. This researcher considered the time constraint of this PhD study, hence the numbers of participants had to be manageable. However, reducing the sample size too significantly could have led to not gaining sufficient speech data to identify communication strategies and pragmatic strategies. Finally, the decision was made to include 30 participants from a prestigious private secondary school situated in southern Taiwan.

After discussion of the sampling strategy, the following section concerns the procedure of the study. The next sections will discuss the important actions required at each stage and the different stages involved in the procedure of the study. The procedure of this study is divided into three stages; preparatory stage, polite study and formal study.

4.4 The Procedure of the Study

The procedure of this study was divided into three stages; preparatory stage, pilot study and formal study.

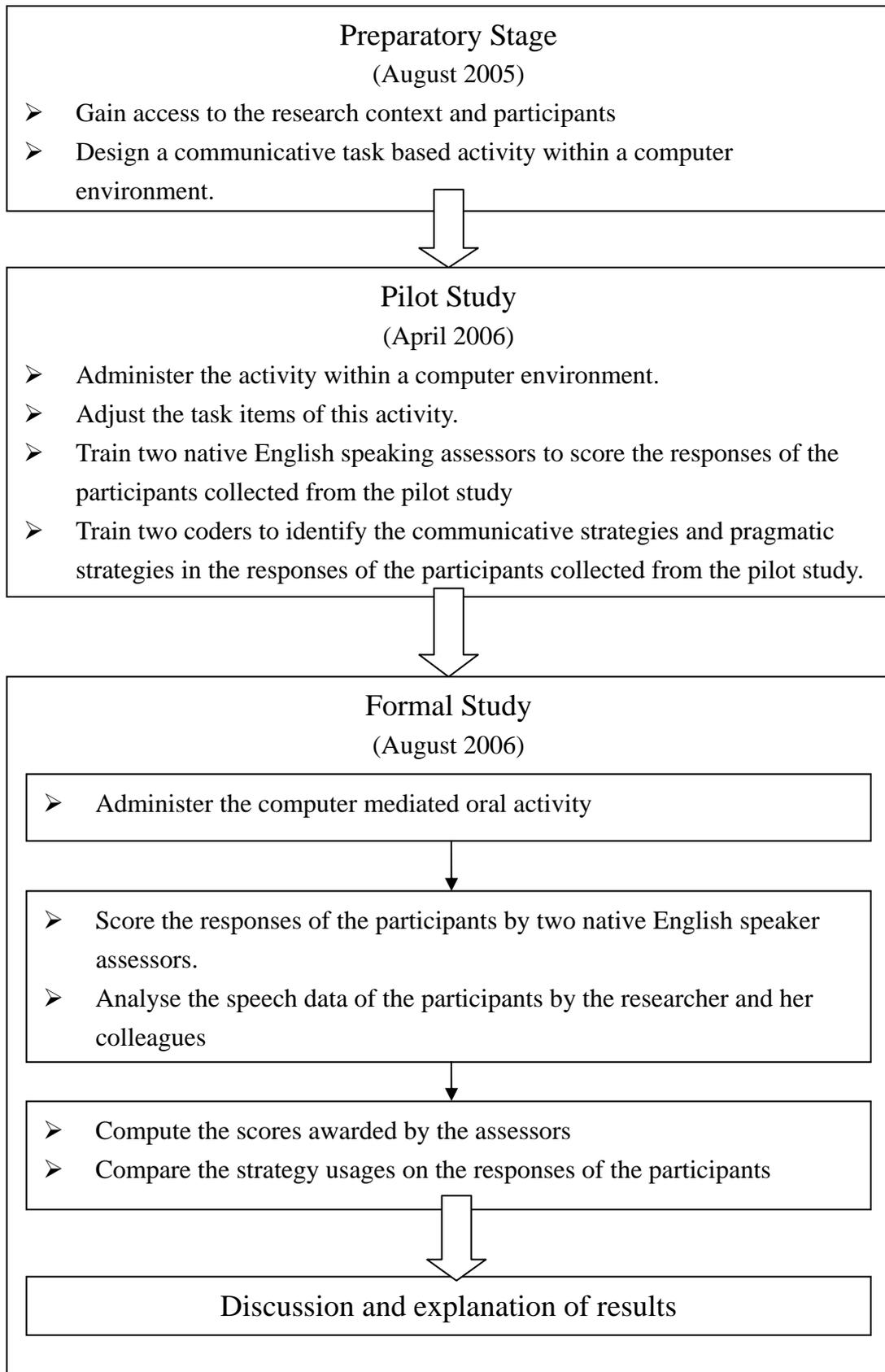


Figure 4.1: The Procedure for the Study

4.4.1 Preparatory Stage

At this stage the researcher gained access to the research context, a private high school situated in southern Taiwan by telephoning and sending a letter to the school authority, and relevant teachers in order to obtain approval to conduct this research.

After approval was gained from the school authority, the researcher discussed an appropriate time to meet with the teachers and research participants. Informed consent from all the students involved in this research was acquired prior to commencement of the study. More details concerning ethical issues will be discussed in the latter section (4.7).

The research instruments required for this study chiefly concerned a computer mediated activity. During the preparatory stage of the present study, a communicative task based activity was designed to directly investigate the communication strategies and pragmatic competence of Taiwanese high-school students within a computer based environment. The design of this activity as the research instrument in this study will be discussed in the following sections.

The Design of the Activity within the Computer Environment

The purpose of this study was to elicit the speech of the participants so as to investigate Taiwanese students' communication strategies and pragmatic competence in a computer mediated oral activity. The researcher's intention was to employ this activity within a computer environment as an instrument for the collection of data in response to the research questions.

There are few computer mediated oral activities that include investigations of both communication strategies and pragmatic competence available in the commercial market in Taiwan. In order to carry out this study, the researcher decided to design an oral activity that combined these two perspectives of investigation within a computer based environment. Moreover, this activity incorporated a pilot study to further aid the design of the research instrument. The details around improving this activity in the pilot study will be discussed in the latter section (4.4.2).

By incorporating an activity within a computer-based environment into this study, the computer acts as a tool for using the Internet as a means of human interaction and for the delivery of the activity. Therefore, further considerations had to be taken into account in the planning of the design of the computer mediated oral activity. In particular, the fact that computer mediated activity tends to promote certain constraints from technical perspectives, including the consideration of hardware, software and the speed of the delivery or downloading of the tasks from the web.

This researcher attempts to illustrate how this activity was constructed and highlights some concerns that were taken into account prior to the stage of constructing the activity in the following sections. The discussion focuses on the consideration of designing the prototype and good interface design.

(1) Designing the Prototype

Primary considerations when setting up an activity within a computer mediated environment included the hardware and the software program. As this activity took place in the school language laboratory of the aforementioned secondary school, this facility was of a high standard, in terms of both the language laboratory and the computer rooms. This researcher therefore had confidence in the computer equipment and systems with regards to the efficiency of the hardware, such as hard disk size, central processing unit (CPU), screen resolution and network bandwidth for the Internet connection.

In terms of software, attention was paid to browser compatibility and third party software. Different browsers have significantly different operations and icons so the communicative based activity developer or designer was required to decide on the relevant web browser and its suitability for tasks delivery. The participants were able to browse the web pages in this computer mediated oral activity with the use of one of the most popular web browsers, Microsoft Internet Explorer. This is best used to interpret and display the downloadable HTML data as the tasks were written on two HTML files located on the server side (i.e. the teacher's computer).

Two types of third party software were used in this activity; one for the computerized recorder to record speech production into audio files, and the other a tool

for communicating through the Internet. It was necessary to provide this software for the activity and to ensure that all the machines used had been installed with the required software before the activity began.

Firstly, speech production of the participants in this study was recorded as 'wav' files from a sound recorder, namely the Super MP3 Recorder Professional. This sound recorder was chosen for its simple features, where its operation could easily be understood as the quality of sound recorder was so clear. The responses of the participants were sent back to the server by means of server-side programs (Roever, 2001, p.84-94). Human assessors were then able to score this data later. After all of the speech data was sent to the server side, the researcher then transferred it to a portable driver for the two assessors to score and also for the researcher and her colleagues to later analyse.

Secondly, the use of a communication tool allowed interaction to take place between two participants within the computer-based environment. Online communication tool resources are sufficient for this. The intention of this researcher was to adopt MSN Instant Messenger as a communication tool, but only to use audio communication, not video. Due to the popularity of this communication tool for online chatting, it was easy to request students to sign in using their own account before the activity started, rather than requesting the participants to register with a new communication tool.

The reason not to use video was to prevent the participants from using their body language or facial expressions during the first section of the activity, as this would have resulted in the generation of insufficient speech data to analyse the participants' use of communication strategies. Moreover, the second section of this activity involved the participants interacting with the computer to respond the tasks individually. As a result, it was not necessary to use video.

Once the decisions had been made regarding the choice of hardware and software, the next stage concerned designing a good interface in the computer to facilitate the process of undertaking the tests.

(2) Good Interface Design

Fulcher (2003) argues that interface development and design play an extraordinarily important role in computer-based language testing. When designing an interface, many other researchers such as Fulcher (2003), Lynch and Horton (2001), Skaalid (1999), Shneiderman and Plaisant (2005) and Norman (1990) have already considered and attempted to draw on some significant issues.

The first step in good test interface design, as Fulcher (2003) suggests, is *'the construction of a model or 'map' of what the product will look like, and what the routes through the test are'* (p.388). That is, providing a conceptual model of the site by means of using a site map or an index as necessary to demonstrate the structure of the activity content and the routes in the activity. In the light of this consideration, the structure of this activity was described and placed in the activity direction to inform the participants and provide an overview of the activity.

Moreover, Lynch and Horton (2001) suggested that the goal of page design is to establish a consistent, logical screen layout by means of a careful, systematic approach. Clear, consistent icons and graphic or text-based overviews can provide a better service to the users; that is, it gives users the confidence to find what they are looking for without wasting time.

Striving for consistency is an important rule when designing a web page (Shneiderman and Plaisant, 2005; Lynch and Horton, 2001). That is, each page presents a similar format in order for participants to manoeuvre easily in the system, and any page emerging and presenting on screen should not come as a surprise to participants (Fulcher, 2003).

The researcher acknowledges that clear titles on any page containing a main theme was very significant for the participants, in particular, who were sitting the computer mediated activity for the first time. Every care should be taken by the designer when designing a page layout in order to enhance the feeling of computer mediated activities. In this activity, the clear, consistent icons and graphic or located images or text-based overviews hoped to facilitate the participants, and avoid negative impacts from the

layout, as too many surprises in a computer based activity could influence their performance and incur unsatisfactory results.

Furthermore, enlarged images for the main activity were located in the same place on every screen. This consistency could aid the participants in observing the image easily without looking around the screen in order to match their expectation. The same consideration was also taken while designing the tasks in the second section, which included three parts. Each part of the test included four images and texts that appeared on one page.

After consideration of the layout of the page design, text and colour were the next concerns. The basic principle of all computer mediated activities is that they should be clear on the screen and easy to read for all participants. The text style is therefore one of the main salient concerns. There are many key issues that need to be taken into account so as not to interfere with the participants' ability to read at their normal speed.

Tullis *et al.* (1995) suggested that a small font size could reduce reading speed on a computer interface. In line with Skaalid (1999) and Tullis *et al.* (1995), the Times New Roman font was chosen in 18 point size, which most participants should have been familiar with in this activity. This research supports Fulcher's (2003) suggestion in that a mixture of fonts may interfere with the ability of participants to read the text, therefore no distractions appeared in this activity.

Another special design requirement was that text was to be accompanied by the sound of it being read aloud. This researcher hoped that this would pose an aid to the participants in adopting a reading speed from the computer without having to worry about their low reading speed in the second section of the activity.

The use of colour was another concern as this was a key to the most important part of the tasks. This was taken into account by the researcher, since too many combinations of colours could be problematic and may have resulted in participants feeling discomfort such as eyestrain or headaches (Fulcher, 2003). Maximising the contrast between colours is also important by differentiating between hue, lightness and saturation in the design of the activity (Chisholm *et al.*, 2000). For example, using high

levels of contrast, like black text on a white background would be better than red on an orange background.

In this activity, the researcher aimed to make the screen look neat and clear. The images in section one would be colourful in order to identify the object from the natural environment. The second section was based on the different situational contexts involving more complex images and descriptions of situations. The images in this section were presented only in black on a white background.

After discussing the design of the prototype and a good interface, the following sections will focus on the discussion of the communicative task based activity.

The Communicative Task Based Activity

The first step in this study was to construct an activity that consists of what the researcher intended to investigate. There were two sections including several task items where the aim of this activity was to investigate Taiwanese learners' communicative language ability with regards to communication strategies and pragmatic competence. In light of the consideration regarding constructing the activity, the first section of this activity developing process for tasks in section one was informed by the findings of Poullisse (1990), as reported previously in the literature review chapter. In section two, a series of tasks were adopted from the 'listening lab' version developed by Hudson *et al.* (1995). By using these tasks, it was hoped that sufficient speech production could be elicited to investigate the learners' communication strategy and pragmatic competence.

The researcher used multiple task items for the investigation of communication strategies and pragmatic competence. In light of the finding of Roever (2004, p.291) which suggested that an aural input for L1 Japanese test takers could be challenging, as they often had to struggle to fully understand spontaneous spoken English, in comparison to written English, this researcher decided to display the tasks on the respondents' computer screen. It was hoped that by doing so one might avoid a misunderstanding of the questions through an inability to hear the tape recording properly, e.g. the questions may be spoken too quickly and constrain the participants' full understanding of the content.

Furthermore, consideration of the ‘cognitive familiarity’ (p.23) term by Skehan (1996) for enhancing performance conditions of the participants was taken; this computer mediated oral activity allowed participants to choose questions that related to familiarities within their daily lives. It was expected that a more satisfactory activity performance would be achieved. Moreover, through the depiction of computer screen images, the participants were offered visual information to aid comprehension of the tasks.

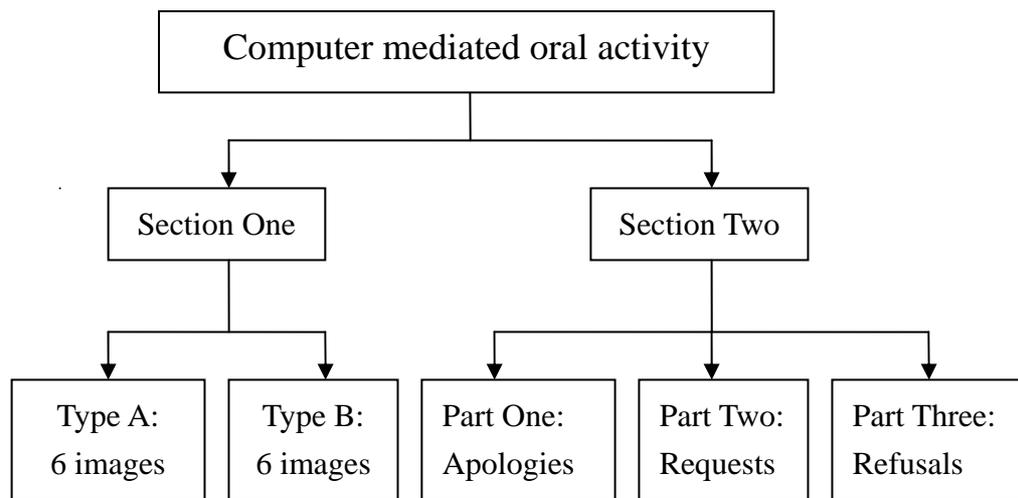


Figure 4.2: The Content of the Activity

The computer mediated oral activity (see Figure 4.2) consisted of two sections: one included the description of the images, that is, the task required the participants to describe images and the other concerned responses to given situational statements, that is, responding to different situational contexts. Owing to the first section involving interactional tasks, two versions of the interactional tasks displaying different images were included in this section. These two versions were then presented to a pair of participants. For example, Subject A and Subject B became a pair they would complete both versions of the interactional tasks displayed on their computer screens. Section one of the activity consisted of twelve images divided in two types: Type A and B. Section two of the activity consisted of twelve situational tasks which were divided into three parts: the situational contexts of apologies, requests and refusals. The tasks in the section two will be discussed in the latter sections.

Section One: Description of Images Task

Consideration will be given to participants' ability to describe pictures in section one of the activity. In this section, participants were given six images that had been selected by the researcher. It is worth noting that these depictions have not appeared in any English textbooks used by the aforementioned secondary school.

Based on the suggestions from the previous studies findings of Poulisse (1990) and Littlemore (2003), this researcher acknowledges that it is significant that pictures are chosen of different types of objects in order to elicit different communication strategies by the participants on image description.

The main issue concerning the selection of different types of task items is that Littlemore (2003) disagrees with the way in which Poulisse (1990) adopted mostly pictures of household objects in her study. The inherent bias in using this type of pictures would affect the participant's attitude towards 'function' strategies, that is, saying what function the item is for. Furthermore, the extensively utilised pictures of plants and animals may also constrain the applicability of the findings. It is suggested by Littlemore (2003) that task items taken from different types of objects may be more effective for the use of different strategies (Littlemore, 2003, p.335).

After a long discussion with two English teachers at the aforementioned high school, this researcher decided on a total of twenty images, but only used twelve images at first and later divided them equally into type A and type B. That is, each type in section one included six images, as this researcher believed it was possible that some task items were originally selected and might find they were unsuitable after conducting the pilot study. Therefore, selection of more than twelve task items was necessary. More details concerning this issue will be discussed in the section of the pilot study (4.4.2). Finally, after improving the task item in the pilot study, in the main study the task items (see Appendix II) were decided on and these images included, in type A, jellyfish, cactus, binoculars, otter, dragonfly and roundabout, and in type B, ostrich, ointment, grasshopper, mirage, squid and scarecrow.

Additionally, in order not to discourage participants, a simple ‘filler’ item should be added, with the name of the images displayed as a trial or an aid as suggested by Littlemore (2001). For this reason, this researcher decided to carry out a practice session prior to the main activity in order for the participants to familiarise themselves with the procedures prior to actual activity. The proposed images were shown on the computer screen individually as they would be in the activity process.

The activity shown on a computer screen to subject A was as follows:



Figure 4.3: Type A computer screen as chosen by subject A

By clicking on the image on the computer screen an enlarged version of the image on a separate page could be seen, this made it easier for the participants to clearly view and understand the presentation of the images. The example of an enlarged version of the image can be seen in the following Figure 4.4.



Figure 4.4: The enlarged image shown on a separate page

The images chosen by Subject A were not shown on the screen of Subject B. The screen of Subject B (see Figure 4.5) only presented some instructions. Therefore, Subject B was not able to predict which item Subject A had chosen and was about to describe. Subject B was allowed to request more information about the image chosen by Subject A in order to gain full comprehension of the description of the image on screen given by Subject A to identify the item.



Figure 4.5: The screen of Subject B

After Subject A described four out of the six images individually, Subject B was required to name these items in Mandarin in order to show if he or she had understood Subject A's description. When Subject B announced the correct name of the four objects in section one of the activity in Mandarin, this part of the activity was completed. It was the performance of Subject A that was of concern to the two native speaking assessors and two coders at this stage, as Subject B only played a supporting role. The computer recorded the oral performance of each subject within a pair of participants and all speech data collected were later scored by two native English-speaking assessors based on the learners' English proficiency and the level of comprehension. As well as the participants' responses were also coded, which was carried out by the researcher and her colleague according to the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) and classification of Littlemore (2003).

Section Two: Oral Role Play Tasks

Task items from the study of Hudson *et al.* (1995) have been adapted for use in section two of the activity, namely the designed oral role play tasks (ORPT). In Hudson *et al.*'s (1995) study, each version included twenty-four situational based tasks. However, this researcher considered that some of these situations may either be unfamiliar to Taiwanese high school students or that they may not have taken place within a Taiwanese context, so she ultimately chose twelve situational tasks from it. The reasons behind choosing certain tasks was that participants would be more familiar with those that are relevant to their daily lives, and therefore, they could employ the relevant knowledge (world schema) they had accumulated in order to perform their pragmatics.

The ORPT contains twelve items (see Appendix II), each of which describes a situation assigned to a speech act, namely 'apologies', 'requests', or 'refusals', with each given situation associated with different relative power (P), social distance (D), and the absolute ranking (R) of imposition (Brown and Levinson, 1987). For example, Task 1 in Part one was a situational context concerning the speaker being required to apologize to his housemates because of being late, so this task involved a -P, -D, and -R. Task 2 of Part one was designed to require the participant to apologize to the counter clerk because he knocks a few menus on the floor while paying the bill, so this

task was associated with +P, +D and -R. All task items are presented in Appendix II and the different P, D and R involved in the task items are also be presented in Chapter Five (Research Findings).

The ORPT was administered by utilising a computer-mediated format and consisted of twelve situational task items; including four items that employ ‘apologies’, ‘requests’ and ‘refusals’ on the images displayed on the screen. For example, the apology section (see Figure 4.6) is as follows:

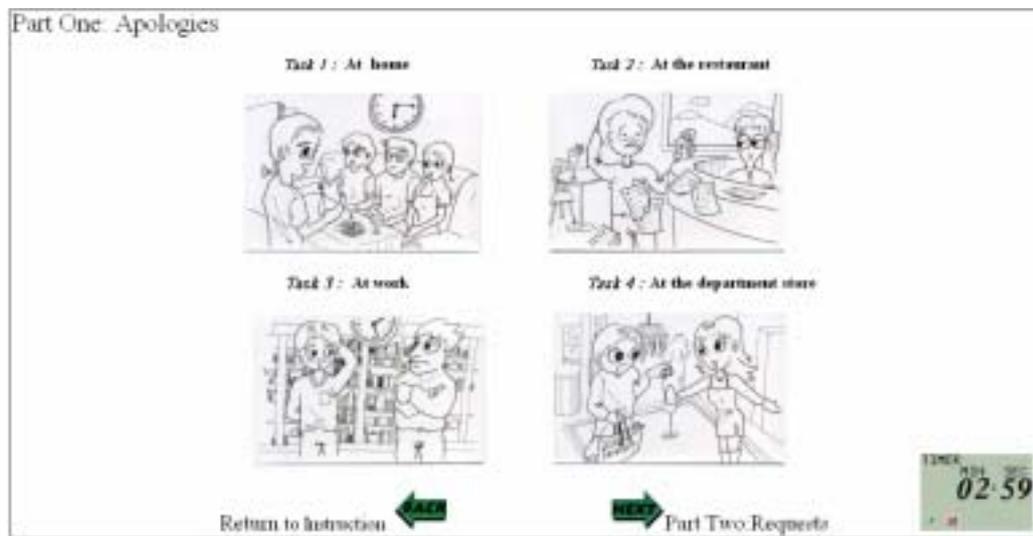


Figure 4.6: The tasks in the apologies section of the ORPT

The participant clicked on each of the task item images in order to respond to them, the image was then enlarged and the situational-based task item was read aloud to them, as well as being displayed on screen. An example of a task item can be seen in Figure 4.7 below:

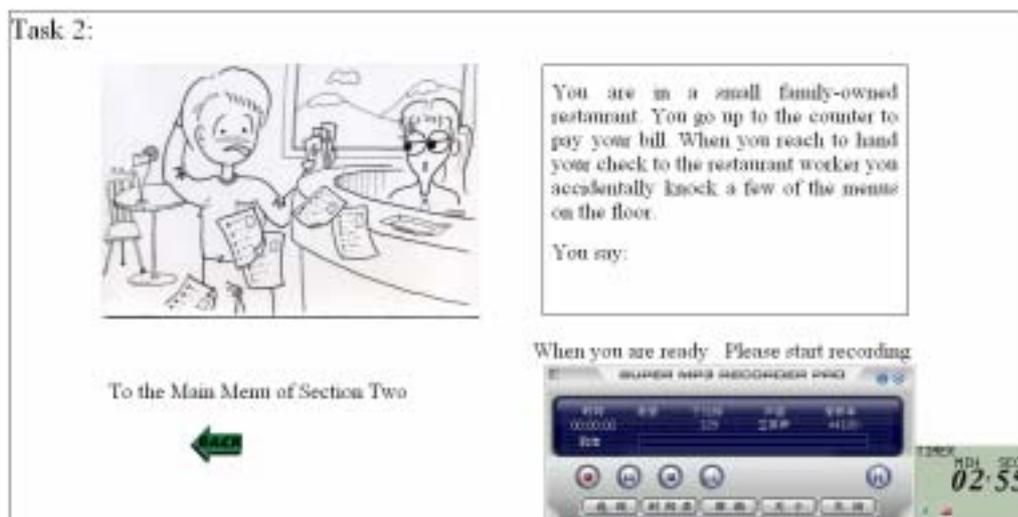


Figure 4.7: Task item two in the apologies section of the ORPT

The participants were required to respond to two task items in each part so that they chose a total of six task items from a choice of twelve from three parts of this section of the ORPT. These six items can be the ones that the participant feels the most confident of completing. The oral responses to the six items are recorded on the computer by the participant and are later scored by two native English-speaking assessors based on the criteria suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995) and coded by this researcher and her colleague according to the code schemes proposed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Beebe *et al.* (1990).

A tape recorder (see Figure 4.8) is displayed on the computer screen that requires the participants to click the red button  to start or blue button  to finish the recording.



Figure 4.8: The tape recorder displays on the computer screen

Green (2000, p.31) suggests that a timer needs to be clearly visible on the screen when there is a given time limit for completing the whole or parts of the activity. As a result, the computer screen in the present study displays a timer on the right-hand, lower corner (see Figure 4.6) in order to keep participating students informed of the time. Although participants may not have completed the tasks within the time limit, an audible warning signal indicates the end of the activity time allowance. The participant can then no longer record their response.

4.4.2 Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to investigate the possible problems and risks that could be potentially present during the formal study (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). It is also important to carry out a pilot study to verify that the research context and design methods are appropriate for an acceptable outcome of the study. The main focus on this study was to pilot a set of communicative task-based activities within a computer mediated environment. Two main concerns of this pilot study will be discussed in the following sections; one is task items and the other is the layout of the computer oral activity.

In April 2006 a pilot study was administered to eight participants who volunteered to take part in this study, all were from the aforementioned high school and had passed the intermediate level of the GEPT. The aim of administering a pilot study was to ensure that the task items had been selected appropriately for the participants, and that the layout of the design of the computer mediated activity was clear and easy enough for participants to use.

As Fulcher (2003, p.399) claims, it is important to carry out a small scale item trial in order to specify the task items and task prototype for test designers or developers to decide on the inclusion or exclusion of items in the test. Consequently a small scale item trial was carried out in the form of piloting a set of communicative tasks based activity within a computer mediated environment. The eight participants were grouped into pairs to undertake the first section of the activity, and separated individually in the second section. The first section of the activity involved six images and second section included twelve situational tasks.

Fulcher (2003) also offered some useful suggestions to designers to improve the tests within a computer mediated environment. Fulcher (2003, p.399) has proposed many perspectives by which the observers should concentrate on specific features of the interaction between the test takers and the interface as follows:

- Are the test-takers able to navigate easily from one item or page to another?
- Can they easily respond to each prompt?
- Is the speed at which they are able to work appropriate?
- Do they stumble or become confused? If so, why?

As a result of this advice, this researcher was able to evaluate the interface on the computer by means of observing the performance of the participants during the pilot study in order to improve this computer mediated oral activity. Any problems that arose through undertaking this activity in the pilot study would be alerted to the researcher to inform the participants in the main study. Therefore, the participants in the main study could benefit from possible repetitions of events in the pilot study.

The introduction to the computer mediated oral activity was conducted before the actual activity commenced. The researcher attempted to explain explicitly how to undertake the activity on the computer including details of the activity time and the numbers of the task items that they had to select and respond to. Moreover, in order to avoid technical problems from occurring, such as the loss of connection with some of the web pages in this oral activity, the pages were all checked through prior to the activity.

Initially, participants were provided with an assigned address of a website and requested to connect up to it. After the researcher made sure every participant signed into this website, they were allowed to experiment with the computer by means of a practice session so that they would become more accustomed with the layout and the selection of items, as well as operating the computer voice software to record their responses.

The researcher acted as an observer in the language laboratory while the activity was conducted. Throughout the pilot study, it was discovered that the participants were continuously shifting between the pages without responding to the tasks that they had originally chosen in the preparatory time. As Fulcher (2003, p.399) suggested, the

observers are permitted to intervene when participants require help on what they should do next, or when navigating the interface on the computer. Therefore, the researcher decided to stop the activity and discuss the participants' concerns and before restarting when everyone was clear about what to do.

Moreover, soon after finishing this activity, an informal interview took place. The eight participants involved in the pilot study were invited into the language lab and encouraged to express their feelings concerning the carrying out this activity in order to gain the participants' opinions regarding the layout and task items involved.

There were some improvements to be made after the pilot study. Firstly, original images were presented in an enlarged format on screen with the name of the target objects in Mandarin and English. However, this researcher observed that participants attempted to pronounce the vocabulary aloud in English before they devoted themselves to describing the images to their partners by using any communicative strategies. During the interview, the participants expressed the opinion that written English along with the images confused them as they wondered what they should do with the images. Moreover, they assumed that the name of the target objects that they were not familiar with; their partners might have been familiar with. They, therefore, explained that if they attempted to pronounce the words, this could have been the way they helped their partners indicate objects.

However, the purpose of this research was to investigate the communication strategy usage when the learners lacked of vocabulary. As a result, the learners only devoted themselves to pronouncing the English words presented along with the images without attempting to use any strategies to describe the images. Within these circumstances, the purpose of the activity was misunderstood and the intention of the researcher was not achieved. Consequently, it was decided that only the Mandarin description would be presented along with the images to prevent confusion of the learners when doing the tasks.

Secondly, when selecting the task items included in this activity, the researcher and two high school English teachers selected twenty images which had not appeared in the textbook. Even though this activity only required twelve images, the researcher believed

that some images might cause some difficulties when the participants had to respond to them. Therefore, it was necessary to prepare more than twelve images in order to replace any inappropriate images with alternatives, should they have appeared in the original version.

The replacement of inappropriate images in section one was considered as a necessary adjustment, as the researcher discovered that some images were not chosen by any participants during the pilot study, for example, the 'porter' image presented in the original version of Type A. Discussion with the participants revealed that they found difficulties describing this target item as they seemed to have no idea about the image or its context.

Images such as this were replaced with alternatives after the discussion with the participants during the interview. A total three original images pointed out by the participants were later replaced by the remaining eight images. The adjustments were made as follows; the image of 'porter', 'paramedic', and 'encyclopaedia' had been replaced by the images as 'binocular', 'mirage' and 'otter'. Consequently, the final selection of images was presented to participants in Type A and Type B of section one (see Appendix II).

Thirdly, owing to the participants' indecisive behaviour in selecting and then abandoning their items of choice, the researcher discovered that it was vital to add conditions to the instructions to facilitate the successful completion of the computer-based activity. The refined rules explained that the participants were required to indicate their selected task items by means of saying the number of the task item, and recording this on the computer at the end of the preparatory session.

In the stage of pilot study, additionally, a training session took place to practice grading and coding the responses collected from the pilot study. It was important to employ two native speaking assessors to ensure that all scores and responses coded were as reliable as possible.

The two native speaking assessors involved in the study were very experienced as they carried out this role within many language institutions for many years. Both are

British and also teach at the applied linguistic department of the university in Taiwan. Their involvement in this study was important for scoring the participants' speech productions collected from the pilot study as well as the main study.

The rating criteria given to the assessors provided a standard to which they could refer during the process of marking the learners' speech production to promote reliable and consistent scores. Although they already had experience of scoring other kinds of oral assessments, this was the first time the two assessors scored speech samples based on this criteria, and in particular the second section regarding the evaluation of the learners' pragmatic competence. Therefore, it was necessary for the two assessors to receive training on the scoring of both sessions in this study with the use of a computer training manual (see Appendix IV).

Before they read the training manual, the researcher attempted to explain the significance of this oral activity and pointed out the criteria of which the assessors should be aware. After this, both assessors read the criteria individually and then discussed the key issues raised, in order to ensure a total understanding of the rating criteria. By doing this, it was expected that the two assessors had gained some understanding regarding the purpose of this activity and applying the rating criteria to complete the scoring process.

The speech data collected from the first section of this activity in the pilot study was scored by the two native speaking assessors based on the rating components of the GEPT speaking test, provided on the official website of GEPT (2006). The components included pronunciation and intonation, vocabulary and grammar, intelligibility, relevance and fluency. The learners' English proficiency in this study was scored based on a given five-point scale ranking system ranging from very unsatisfied (1), to completely satisfied (5) in order to indicate the different levels in terms of these five components (the description of each scale see Appendix III). The second section regarding the exploration of the participants' pragmatic competence involved the assessors being required to score the participants' responses based on the criteria (see Chapter Three) suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995); also a five-point scale rating system ranging from very unsatisfied (1), to completely appropriate (5).

Additionally, the learners' speech data was transcribed by the researcher and her colleague and subsequently both sets of transcribed data were compared to search for differences. More details regarding the transcription of speech data will be discussed in a latter section (4.5). After the differences were sought agreement was reached, a training session was held. The purpose of training coders at this stage is that they can consistently apply the coding systems that have been developed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Beebe *et al.* (1990). As Ary *et al.* (2006, p.465) argue, it is essential to employ several coders who are able to code the speech data using the same scheme and obtain consistent results in order to contribute to the reliability of the discourse analysis, that is, to achieve inter-coder reliability. In this study, therefore, the speech productions were coded by both the researcher and her colleague.

The taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) was employed to identify two main compensatory strategies; one being substitution and the other reconceptualisation. Moreover, the elaborated version of Littlemore (2003) helped facilitate this researcher to identify the subtypes of substitution and reconceptualisation strategies from the participants' speech data. In order to identify the learners' pragmatic strategy use in the situational tasks involved in the different levels of social variables, code schemes suggested by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Beebe *et al.* (1990) were adopted.

Firstly, this researcher and her colleague were given a list of strategy formulae with the definitions and examples of each category. Once familiarised with the different taxonomies to identify the use of the communication and pragmatic strategies, they were requested to code the participants' responses collected from the pilot study based on these classifications. If disagreements arose, it was suggested that they discuss these differences in order to reach an agreement.

For example, the decision relating to strategy usage was based on the coders' interpretation; therefore some disagreement between the two coders may have come about from this. Sometimes, it was difficult to decide which strategies were used by the participants and it was tricky to identify them as being one strategy or the other. More details about the process of how agreement was reached and how decisions were made regarding strategy usage will be discussed in the data analysis section (4.5).

Additionally, another issue was raised during the coding procedure. As much research into categorising speech production based on particular taxonomies has been found, some utterances did not fit into any category of this particular taxonomy. In the pilot study, for instance, a participant attempted to request that his listener translate English words into Chinese meaning in order to guess the target item in Chinese. Taking the response of the task item '*jellyfish*' as an example, the participant tried to ask his listener to translate the English words '*water*' and '*mother*' into Chinese and then combine these two words to guess the name of the target item in Chinese. A strategy of this kind could not be identified as either a substitution or reconceptualisation strategy as suggested by Poulisse (1993); therefore, based on the discussion of the coders, a new category was created and named as an '*additional strategy*', this category was then included into the classification for use in the main study. As a consequence of the pilot study, additional strategy was created and added to the taxonomy of communication strategies.

Moreover, some differences were also found after comparing all the results from the two coders. This could have been due to the different interpretations of the two coders. For example, S3 described the task '*roundabout*' by saying '*all roads comes [sic] from it*'. One coder considered this utterance as referring to the function of the target item, while the other coder assumed it meant that they were providing extra information. Similar was the response of S20, when he described the task item '*squid*' by saying '*it allow [sic] people to eat it*'. One coder assumed this utterance was referring to the function of the target item, while the other believed it was providing extra information because the function of a squid is not to provide food.

These above examples showed evidence that the utterances could not provide clear-cut interpretations; they could be interpreted as different strategies based on the coders' perceptions. Consequently, it was important to invite an expert experienced on coding speech data to make decisions on the utterances that should require categorisation of strategy use. A professor from an Applied Linguistic department in Taiwan was invited to be involved in this study to help categorize the problematic utterances, for example '*all roads comes [sic] from it*' for describing the task '*roundabout*' could be identified as either the strategy of function or extra information, in order to make agreement and fit them into the most appropriate categories.

The advantages of the assessors and coders having an opportunity to score and classify the learners' responses as practice at the stage of the pilot study are two-fold; their understanding and familiarisation of the rating criterion and coding systems helped improve the degree of inter-rater/coder reliability, and any problems or disagreements occurring within the scoring and coding process could be highlighted. Therefore, it would be reasonable to conclude that this study benefited by training the assessors and coders at the pilot study stage.

After the pilot study, the researcher improved the task items and modified the participants' instructions on the computer mediated activity in order to obtain a better outcome from the main study. When the improved format and activity tasks (see Appendix II) were ready, the main study could commence.

4.4.3 The Main Study

The main study was carried out at the aforementioned school and the computer based oral activity was administrated in August 2006. This activity lasted around twenty-five minutes and the participants' responses were recorded as *wav* files in the computer's hard drive.

4.4.3.1 The Participants

The researcher carried out the main study at the aforementioned school. The number of participating students was expected to be around thirty, all of whom were from two classes. These students all had to have obtained high scores in school subjects such as English and Mathematics when they graduated from their previous junior high schools and all had to have passed the intermediate level of the GEPT.

The total number of participants who actually took part with this study was thirty-six. After the introductory section of the activity, two students decided to withdraw from the study because they felt that they were not ready to undertake the activity. Another four students decided to withdraw in the middle of the activity. In accordance with ethical issues, the participants had the right to withdraw at any stage of the study; consequently, the researcher had a final number of thirty participants.

4.4.3.2 The Computer Mediated Oral Activity

The computer mediated oral activity comprised two sections, which aimed to investigate the communicative competence in terms of communication strategies and pragmatic competence. The tasks in section one were aimed at investigating the participants' communication strategies; the tasks in section two related to evaluating the learners' pragmatic competence.

Table 4.1: The Schedule of the Activity

Time Schedule	Stage of the Activity
	Section One
Two minutes	Preparatory stage (Subject A): Selecting the task items and preparing the response
Five minutes	Subject A: Interaction with their partners and recording their responses
Two minutes	Break: Shifting the role and Subject A is not allowed to record
Two minutes	Preparatory stage(Subject B): Selecting the task items and preparing the response
Five minutes	Subject B: Interaction with their partners and recording their responses
Two minutes	Break: terminate the communication tool (i.e. MSN messenger) and get ready for the start of section two
	Section Two
Two minutes	Preparatory stage: Selecting the task items and preparing the response
Five minutes	Recording their responses
Total Time	Activity completion within twenty-five minutes

The activity lasted for approximately twenty-five minutes in total (see Table 4.1). Section one lasted for around seven minutes, including two minutes for preparation and five minutes for each participant to respond to the questions. As the first section involved interactional tasks, the participants shifted their roles to complete this section for both sides. For example, Subject A took seven minutes to complete his task while Subject B played an assisted role. Subsequently, Subject B took another seven minutes to finish the task, while the Subject A would act in an assisted role. Between the shifting role of Subject A and B, there was an interval of two minutes. Once Subject A completed his selected tasks, both Subject A and B were required to take their earphones off and stop their communication. After the interval of two minutes, Subject B started to

complete his selected tasks and took both Subject A's and Subject B's earphones off when he finished. Therefore, the time spent on section one was sixteen minutes.

Furthermore, between section one and two, there was another interval of two minutes. After this, section two commenced and lasted for seven minutes including preparation time of two minutes, and five minutes to record the responses.

Section one contained two types of tasks (i.e. Type A and B), which required participants to complete the tasks in pairs. For instance, Subject A took Type A and Subject B took Type B. The two types presented different images on the screen, therefore, when participants played an assistant role, they would not perceive the same images displayed on the screen as that of their partners.

Each type included six images where the participants were requested to respond to four out of the six in this section. Therefore seven minutes, including preparation time, was sufficient for the completion of section one in this activity. Basically, the first two minutes allowed participants to prepare their responses and the remaining five minutes allowed for the recording of their responses. However, they were allowed to start recording their responses before the response time if they were ready to speak.

Section two involved twelve situational task items selected from the study of Hudson *et al.* (1995). All situational task items were associated with images in order to facilitate the comprehension of the statements. The statements of task items were also read aloud while the participants viewed the page.

These twelve situational task items were categorised by three speech acts; apologies, requests and refusals. As a result, each of the four situational task items was arranged on one page, where the pages in this section totalled three. The enlarged images with statements would appear while the participants clicked on the main page of apologies, requests and refusals.

In this section, the participants were requested to respond to two task items in each speech act, that is, the total number of task items to which participants had to respond to was six to complete the section. The duration of this section was seven minutes; the first

two minutes was for the selection of task items that participants preferred and for preparation of their responses. The remaining five minutes was to respond to the task items and record them. Similar to section one, the participants were allowed to record their responses whenever they were ready during the allocated time.

Collection of Data

The instrument used in this study was an activity within a computer based environment. By using this research instrument, the learners' speech data could be collected through their responses to the tasks. The speech productions of participants were saved into the computer hard drives as *wav* files as soon as they completed their tasks. After all of the participants had finished the activity, the researcher transferred all files from an indicated computer into a mobile disk and transferred it for later scoring and analysis.

After data collection, the participants' responses were scored by two native speaking assessors and coded by this researcher and her colleague. The process of data analysis will be discussed in the following sections. The results from the scoring and coding data were computed and compared, as explained in Chapter Five (research findings) and discussed in Chapter Six (Discussion).

4.5 Data Analytical Procedures

The process of analysing data aims to answer and tackle each of the research questions. A total of thirty participants took this activity which involved two sections. The first one was in relation to the use of compensatory strategies and the second one was concerned with the pragmatic strategies used in the situational contexts. In this study, data analysis comprised of two activities: one was the quantitative analysis and the other was qualitative analysis.

Regarding the quantitative analysis, the data collected from the responses of the tasks in this activity was scored by two native speaking assessors. Subsequently, the scores given by the assessors would be further computed. By means of quantitative methodology, the researcher utilized Microsoft Office Excel 2007 to compute the data

in order to understand which kind of compensatory strategies the participants employed when they encountered a lack of vocabulary. The results derived from computation of the data will be illustrated by pie charts or bar charts.

The aims of the first session of this activity were around gaining knowledge concerning the participants' preferences when using the compensatory strategies to overcome their vocabulary deficiency, to explore how the participants operated their compensatory strategies when responding to the tasks and to understand the different strategy usage between the higher and lower scoring learners. Therefore, the level of comprehension and linguistic proficiency was treated as crucial criteria in judging the participants' performances.

The second session looked to explore the pragmatic competence of the participants. Therefore, aims focused on attempting to understand the participants' performance on the speech acts of apology, request and refusal and investigation of how the participants evaluated the social variables in order to respond to the tasks. Also it was attempted to understand within which social situations the learners performed better, based on the six aspects of the pragmatic ability (see Chapter three) suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995); the assessors scored the participants' performances on the speech acts of apology, request and refusal in order to understand how the learners' performed.

A total of thirty participants formed the production data. Before coding the participants' speech data, it was essential to transcribe the speech production collected from the files which was recorded by participants' computers. Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that the level of detail in the transcription reflects the level of analysis the researcher intended. As the purpose of this study was to explore the participants' communication strategies and pragmatic competence, it was important for this researcher to transcribe every word from the responses in order to analyse the communication strategy usage in describing the target objects and the pragmatic strategies employed in response to different social situations.

This researcher was also aware that the discourse devices such as pauses, intonation and sudden loudness of emphatic words would influence the interpretation and the clarity of the speech data. However, such discourse devices were not considered

in the transcriptions in this study because the focus of the study was placed solely on the strategy usage. As a result, the transcription was emphasized as being word for word from the participants' responses to carrying out further discourse analysis.

Subsequently, the transcribed speech data were analysed based on the taxonomy suggested by Poulisse (1993) and Littlemore (2001) and coding of the participants' communication strategies and the participants' pragmatic strategies was in line with the coding systems of Beebe *et al.* (1990) and Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989). In order to make the whole process of identifying compensatory strategies and pragmatic strategies as consistent and reliable as possible, one colleague from the Applied Linguistic and TESOL research field was involved in this study to code the participants' strategy usage in this activity. Coder-reliability will be discussed in the section of validity and reliability of this study (4.6).

In relation to the communication strategy, the data (see Appendix III for a sample of the participants' production data) was identified by the researcher and her colleague based on the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), and the subtypes of substitution and re-conceptualisation strategy suggested by Littlemore (2001, p.241-265). After conducting the pilot study, four sub-categories of substitution strategy; that is original metaphoric comparison, conventional metaphoric comparison, literal comparison and super-ordinate, and six sub-categories of reconceptualisation strategy; that is componential analysis, function, activity, place, emotion and extra information, and additional strategy were decided on and employed in this study to code the participants' speech data.

During the process of identifying the use of the strategies from the speech outputs of the participants in this present study, the researcher found that some speech production from the participants involved the repetition of words or sentences, for example, S1 said, '*...eh, they fly...look like butterfly...it quite like butterfly*'. This response, '*look like butterfly*' and '*it quite like butter fly*' could be identified as repetitive. Another example, S2 said,

S2: it's an animal and the most bigger bird in the world

S2: birds...bigger...the most bigger bird in the world.

In the above utterances, only two strategies were identified. The first utterance '*the most bigger bird in the world*' and the second utterance '*bird.....bigger...the most bigger bird in the world*' was considered as a repetition and identified as the one strategy.

The researcher believed that counting the repetition of words or sentences from each response did not help in clarifying the strategy precisely used by the participants. By excluding the repetitions of word or sentences, the results would delineate an actual picture of how Taiwanese learners of English used compensatory strategies when encountering their English deficiency.

The researcher believed that the presentation of identifying the learners' strategy usage in a suitable and useful format for analysis is essential. It provides a systematic method for readers or other researchers to understand how the researcher dealt with the data in this study. This can also be beneficial as an ongoing process throughout the research, such as re-checking or re-counting the use of strategies. Therefore, this researcher developed a form by which to identify the use of the substitution strategy, re-conceptualisation strategy and additional strategy.

The process of identifying the speech data involved two stages; the first was to classify two main strategies, namely, the substitution strategy and the reconceptualisation strategy or, when the utterance could not fit into those two categories, they would be classified into additional strategy. Subsequently, the subtypes of the substitution and reconceptualisation strategies were later classified.

An example of the classification of the use of the strategies is shown below in Table 4.2. The first column presents the student number, substitution strategy, re-conceptualisation strategy and additional strategy. The second column first row shows the task items; ostrich and ointment. Within each main strategy, the subtypes of strategies were presented.

Table 4.2: An example of the classification of the use of the strategies

S12	Substitution Strategy	Re-conceptualisation Strategy	Additional Strategy
Ostrich		biggest bird in the world (2.6)	
		it can't ...can't fly (2.3)	
		run very fast (2.3)	
Ointment	Medicine (1.4)		
	like Chinese... Chinese medicine (1.3)		
			high high...very tall very high in Chinese (using Chinese (L1) to hint the name of object)

Based on the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), the definition of substitution strategy is to replace the intended lexical item with another or to adopt the corresponding L1 item in order to overcome the linguistic limitation. The reconceptualisation strategy describes the item by encoding the conceptual features, for instance by using lexical items one step at a time, combining two lexical items into one new word, or adding further background information.

The first segment of the utterance '*biggest bird in the world*' was identified as the reconceptualisation strategy because it provided background information of the target item. The second segment '*it can't ...can't fly*' and the third '*run very fast*' were also classified as reconceptualisation strategy because those utterances were the description of the features of the target item in terms of its activity.

In the second task, the response '*a kind of medicine*' was identified as a substitution strategy as the participant attempted to replace the intended lexical item (*ointment*) with another (*medicine*) by referring to the target item to its superordinate level. The responses '*like Chinese... Chinese medicine...*' were also identified as a substitution strategy because it compared the target item to another object instead of describing its features.

As mentioned above, during the pilot study two coders had found that some utterances could not be classified as either substitution or reconceptualisation strategy. As a result, two coders decided to name this strategy as '*additional strategy*'. This was appropriate for the response '*high high...very tall very high in Chinese*' which did not fit into either the substitution strategy or reconceptualisation strategy. This response occurred because the participant attempted to request that his interlocutor translate the English word into Chinese in order to guess the name of the target item in Chinese.

After coding the main types of compensatory strategies, the researcher continued to identify the subtypes of compensatory suggested by Littlemore's (2003) elaboration (for definition of subtypes strategies see Chapter Two). Within the subtypes of the substitution strategy, four strategies were employed in this study:

- (1) Original analogical/metaphoric comparison (recognised as strategy 1.1), for example, the utterance of S5 in describing the task item '*Jellyfish*', '*they come out whole, bunch with...like glue*'.
- (2) Conventional analogical/metaphoric comparison (recognised as strategy 1.2), for example, the response of S13 to the task item '*dragonfly*', '*it looks like airplane*'.
- (3) Literal comparison (recognised as strategy 1.3), for example, S23 responded the task item '*dragonfly*' by saying '*it looks like butterfly but it isn't*'
- (4) Super-ordinate (recognised as strategy 1.4), for example, S6, S16 and S26 referred the task item '*grasshopper*' to its higher hierarchy 'an insect'.

With regards to the subtypes of substitution strategy, six strategies were included as follows:

- (1) Componential analysis (recognised as strategy 2.1), for example, S9 responded to the task item '*cactus*' by saying '*it doesn't have any leaves....in fact, its leaves look like pin to save the water... the centre is like hole...urm...or I should say...thick stick*'.
- (2) Function (recognised as strategy 2.2), for example, the response of S15 in task item '*binoculars*' was '*people use it to see things far away from them*'
- (3) Activity (recognised as strategy 2.3), for example, the response of S14, when describing the task item '*ostrich*' said, '*it can run very fast*'.
- (4) Place (recognised as strategy 2.4), for example, S9 described the task item '*Cactus*' by uttering '*living in the desert*'.

- (5) Emotion (recognised as strategy 2.5), for example, S25 described the task item ‘Cactus’ by saying ‘*you will get hurt if you touch it*’.
- (6) Extra information (recognised as strategy 2.6), for example, S14 provided an example to the task item ‘mirage’ by saying ‘*for example when people feel very thirsty and walk many days and then they will see a river not far from them, but when they go there, there will be nothing...*’.

After completion of the analysis of the responses collected from the first section of this activity, the next concern would be focused on analysing the participants’ pragmatic strategy use in the speech production collected from section two of this activity.

Identification of the Pragmatic Strategies

For this stage of the data analysis, the coding categories proposed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) were adopted to identify the participants’ apology and request strategies. The coding classification of Beebe *et al.* (1990) was employed to identify refusal strategies. Based on the coding system of Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989), the present study focused on identification of the apology strategy as follows:

- (1) Explanation or account, for example;
S4: *I work too late.*
- (2) Taking on responsibility, for example;
S29: *that’s all my fault.*
- (3) Offer of repair, for example;
S9: *I will pick them up.*
- (4) Promise of forbearance, for example;
S26: *I won’t be late next time.*
- (5) Apology intensification, for example;
S3: *I’m so so sorry.*

Moreover, based on the code scheme suggested by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989), a request utterance could be segmented into three parts; alerter, a head act and adjuncts to the head act. Alerter is based on attention arousal such as sir, landlord or hello. The head act of request is divided into three major levels of directness. These three levels are direct, conventional indirect and non-conventionally indirect. Moreover, the internal modifications operate within the head act to strengthen and mitigate the force of request.

The strategy of time intensifier is one of the strategies in internal modifications and was discovered in the participant's utterances. Additionally, adjuncts to the head act could also be termed as supportive moves and are used for supporting or aggravating the speech act by external modification. Based on the speech data, the grounder, that is indicating the reasons, is one of the strategies in the supportive moves and found in most participants' responses. The following examples provide evidence of request strategies:

- (1) Directness request strategy examples are:

S28: *I want to be interviewed in the morning.*

- (2) Conventional indirect request strategy examples are:

S6: *Could you let me apply this first?*

- (3) Non-conventionally indirect request strategy:

Based on this data, there was no example classified into this strategy:

- (4) The strategy of time intensifier, for example,

S17: *... so please view my application form as soon as possible....*

- (5) Grounder, for example,

S8: *...I need to pay my tuition fee soon because our school is going to start...so I have to pay my fees...*

According to the coding system of Beebe *et al.* (1990), the learners' responses are mainly classified into six strategies. The following categories were adopted to identify the refusal strategies in the responses of the main study.

- (1) Direct refusal; the examples:

S15: *...I can't do it....*

- (2) Regret; the examples are:

S7: *I am so so sorry.*

- (3) Reason; the examples are:

S16: *...I have a date with my friends tonight...*

- (4) Alternative; the examples are:

S18: *....can you ask other teacher to do it....*

- (5) Positive opinion; the examples are:

S2: *I really like this item.....*

(6) Alerter; the example is:

S10:...*head teacher*....

After completing the identification of the compensatory strategies and pragmatic strategies on all participants' responses, these results facilitated the researcher to investigate how the learners coped with deficiencies in their communicative competence of the English language, and to what extent the learners demonstrated their pragmatic competence within different given social contexts. The results aimed to respond to research questions one and two.

Two issues need to be taken into consideration whilst carrying out research. One relates to the validity and reliability of the research and the other considers ethical issues. In the following sections, this researcher will initially discuss the validity and reliability of the research and will then explore the ethical issues.

The following section discusses reliability and validity in more detail, and how they can be applied and acted as safeguards to this study.

4.6 Reliability and Validity of the Research

Brock-Utne (1996) argues that both validity and reliability are equally significant in research paradigms. When the choice of methods and approaches have been determined for the data collection, it is crucial to critically examine external and internal issues of reliability and validity that may affect the study (Yin, 2003; Bell, 1999; Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

As this research adopts both quantitative and qualitative research methods, it is crucial to examine not only the more traditional ways of relating to the positivistically oriented research, but also the different perspectives as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) on scrutinizing the naturalistically oriented research. In assessing the qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.300) propose the notion of trustworthiness and adopt an alternative concept to internal validity, external validity and reliability by including the terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability to

address the studies and findings. The following sections discuss how validity and reliability play a significant role and enhance in this research.

4.6.1 Validity

According to Sapsford and Evans (1984), validity is '*the extent to which an indicator is a measure of what the researcher wishes to measure*' (p.259). Validity is connected with the truth of research findings and so is a crucial criterion for all types of educational research. In order to apply this criterion to the present study, it is important to discuss internal and external validity as suggested many researchers such as Cohen *et al.* (2000) in the following section.

4.6.1.1 Internal validity

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) define internal validity as '*the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question*' (p.186). More specificity, as Cohen *et al.* (2000) state, '*internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issues or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data*' (p.107). Therefore, it relates to the degree of accuracy in both quantitative and qualitative research and the finding has to be accurate in describing the phenomena being researched (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p.107).

In this study, the activity that included a set of task items within a computer based environment acted as an instrument to collect data. In order to draw unambiguous conclusion from the results, it is essential to ensure the task items were valid in order to collect the data that this research intended to investigate. As a result, two steps were used to reinforce the internal validity of this research.

Firstly, this researcher needed to seek evidence that the task items used '*represents a balance and adequate sampling of all the relative knowledge*' (Ary, 2006, p.244). In order to make sure the employment of the task items presented all the relative knowledge, the first section of this activity involved image description. The selection of images was informed by the Poulisse (1990) study and avoided choosing the task items from solely the homogeneous images, such as pictures of household items. Littlemore (2003) argues that employing various types of task items could elicit different compensatory strategies from the image description. Therefore, the task items from the

first section included different kinds of images such as animals, plants, tools and traffic. By doing this, the researcher could ensure the validity of task items involved in this activity, in order to collect speech data that the researcher intended to investigate.

The task items in the second section of this activity were adopted from the study of Hudson *et al.* (1995). Originally, twenty four task items were included from the study of Hudson *et al.* (1995), but some did not relate to either the Taiwanese context or beyond to the world knowledge of the Taiwanese high school learners. Therefore, it was decided to select the task items that were relevant to the daily life of Taiwanese high school learners. Twelve tasks items were finally chosen and divided into three parts; that is, four task items were included in each part to elicit the participants' responses in terms of the identification of speech acts of apology, request and refusal.

Secondly, the strategy of participant feedback (also called member checks) was also used to ensure internal validity (Merriam, 1988; McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p.296). Therefore, during the pilot study, the participants were interviewed after completing the activity. Based on their opinions, the researcher modified some task items in order to make sure the learners were able to respond to the task items designed for this activity, as well as checking the response time, as to whether it was enough for them to complete the tasks.

By means of completing these two steps to reinforce the internal validity of this research, this helped to ensure that the collected speech data was that the researcher intended to gain and analyze. These results could then provide information to respond to the research questions and satisfy the research goal.

4.6.1.2 External validity

The purpose of external validity is to '*establish the domain in which a study's findings can be generalized*' (Yin, 2003, p.34). That is, external validity refers to the degree to which the results can be generalized to the wider population or situations.

As this study was regarded as a case study, Ary *et al.* (2006, p.458) state that the extent to which case studies can produce valid generalizations is limited. Similarly,

Stake (1988) also argues that '*in the case study, there may or may not be an ultimate interest in the generalizable*' (p.256).

In order to consider the issue of generalizability in the case study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) alternatively propose the concept of trustworthiness for the evaluation of naturalistic research. Here, instead of external validity, the notion of comparability and transferability is suggested. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Eisenhart and Howe, 1992, p.647).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) remind that the naturalistic researchers should provide a sufficiently in depth description or rich source of data for the study for readers and users of research to determine whether transferability is possible. Similarly, Schofield (1992, p.200) suggests that it is crucial in qualitative research to provide a clear, detailed and in-depth description so as to assist other researchers to decide the extent to which findings from one piece of research could be generalizable or transferable to another population or situation.

The data in this study were kept systematically by means of the computer. The records of data comprise a collection of this activity within a computer mediated environment, a voice file of speech products from the activity, speech data transcripts and analysis, and the scores awarded from assessors. This provides evidence and enables other researchers to check over the research step-by-step in order to certify that the conclusions are justified for perceived trustworthiness.

Furthermore, this researcher attempted to describe the procedure of the study, such as the data collection and analysis strategies, and these were reported in detail in order to provide a clear and accurate picture of the methods used in this study. Providing a thorough description can allow other researchers to identify and recognize similarities in new contexts and determine whether transferability is possible. In other words, when other researchers are interested in transferability, they can obtain '*a base of information appropriate to the judgment*' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.124-125) through the in-depth descriptions of the study in order to achieve naturalistic generalization (Stake and Trumbull, 1982; Stake, 1995, p.85; Merriam, 1988).

4.6.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to ‘*a degree of confidence that replicating the process would ensure consistency*’ (Bush, 2002, p.60). More explicitly, it relates to the possibility that replicating a research procedure or method would result in identical or similar results, that is, the consistency of the finding in the research. In order to ensure the reliability of this study, the coder-reliability and inter-rater reliability were taken into account.

Burke and Larry (2004, p.139) claim that the important issue of inter-rater/coder reliability often requires training. In other words, when some degree of training and practice precedes the scoring/coding that takes place, the agreement between two or more scorers/coders can be improved (Burke and Larry, 2004, p.139). Therefore, in order to achieve the inter-coder and inter-rater reliability in the main study, the same group of the assessors; two English speaking assessors, and two coders; this researcher and her colleagues, were employed. With regards to the agreement establishing the inter-rater and inter-coder reliability in the main study; the researcher had given the two coders and assessors the speech productions from the pilot study to practice their scoring and coding so to reach a reliable agreement.

Evaluation of the degree of agreement that exists between two or more scorers is referred to as inter-rater reliability. Therefore, in this study the two native speaking assessors, who were discussed earlier (4.4.2), were employed to score the participants responses in order to achieve inter-rater reliability. According to Burke and Larry (2004, p.139), the simplest way to determine the degree of consistency between two scorers is to compute a correlation coefficient between the scores provided by the different scorers.

Reliability is often calculated and a reliability coefficient of zero stands for no reliability at all while a reliability coefficient of +1.00 stands for perfect reliability. Certainly, researchers want reliability coefficients to be strong and positive (i.e., as close to +1.00 as possible) because this indicates high reliability. After correlating the scores awarded by the two English assessors, the reliability coefficient was 0.86. According to Wang and Wang (2006, p.138), the satisfaction level of the reliability coefficient is between 0.80 and 0.89 and the acceptance level of reliability coefficient is between 0.70 and 0.79. The coefficient of inter-rater reliability is suggested as reaching

0.85-0.90. Based on the result of this study, the inter-rater reliability was satisfied.

In order to achieve agreement on the few different scores in the main study, the researcher invited another native speaking scorer, a lecturer from a prestigious university in southern Taiwan, to score the different scores awarded by the two native speaking assessors. Fortunately, the scores he awarded to these differences in scoring were the same as one of the two assessors had already made. Ultimately, the researcher resolved any existing disagreement and arrived at a total agreement of scores.

With regard to the coder reliability, two researchers were involved in this study. One was the actual researcher herself and the other was her colleague from her previous university. Her colleague was experienced in transcribing practice because she had conducted a lot of research which investigated learners' speech, so she was considered as an appropriate person to be involved in this study.

Initially, the researcher and her colleague transcribed the learners' speech production individually. After transcription of the speech data, both transcriptions were compared in order to check for any differences. The comparison between the two transcriptions not only found typing mistakes, but also some sounds were unclear, such as 's' in some responses. Finally the transcription was completed and the speech data was ready to be analysed.

To reinforce inter-coder reliability, the researcher and her colleague began to code speech data individually. In an attempt to construct expert validity, 10% of the participants' speech data was coded by a professor from the Applied Linguistic department in Taiwan, who was an expert in coding speech data. After this, it was found that the result of 10% was consistent with those coded by the researcher and her colleague. Consequently, the other 90% of students' were considered to be consistent and valid.

4.7 Ethical Issues

Many researchers such as Burgess (1989), Seidman (1998), Bogdan and Biklen (2003), Cohen and Manion (1994) and Cohen *et al.* (2000) have underlined, that a number of ethical implications are paramount in relationships between researchers and the research process. For example, when gaining access, and handling field relations, the principles of informed consent, and questions concerning harm, deception, confidentiality and anonymity are of prime importance. In particular, Cohen and Manion (1994) and Cohen *et al.* (2000) suggested that informed consent should include four elements: competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension, as it is necessary to protect the rights of participants in their decision as to whether to be involved in the research or not.

In this study, the researcher understood that it was vital to consider not only an ethical framework prior to the research process but also, as far as possible, during and after the study. Ethically, there were three main issues that should be considered; the potential harm and benefit that might affect participants; whether informed consent is granted through every step of the research process and a guarantee of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity exists, as suggested by many researchers such as Singleton (1993), Miles and Huberman (1994), Mason (1996), and Marshall and Rossman (1999).

Informed Consent

Creswell (2003, p.64-65) indicates, importantly, that the consent form should include the right of participating voluntarily in this study, the right to withdraw at any time, the nature and procedure of the research, the right to ask questions and have a copy of the results and the signatures from both the participants and the researcher for agreement on these specifications.

In this study, the individuals were informed in advance about the study's aims, its purpose, and the importance of the location of the research. As a result, the consent forms were given to co-ordinators and the actual participants to sign in order to gain permission from individuals in authority to access the school for those partaking in this research. The attitudes expressed by those taking part and their willingness and

cooperation lent a great sense of gratitude on the researchers part in that the study was able to run smoothly and successfully.

The Potential Harms and Benefits to Participants

Before carrying out this study, the researcher unequivocally and openly informed the participants about the nature of the research. In addition to this, it was also clarified that the data collection would be analysed as part of a doctoral study and the data collected would be reported as the main findings of such a thesis. Certainly, it was the responsibility of the researcher to make sure that the participants in this study were in no danger or subjected to physical, psychological, social, economic or legal harm (Sieber, 1998) or deception occurring during the process of research. Moreover, due to the participant's devotion of time to the study and their tolerance and acceptance of it, gratitude would also be marked by the researchers.

Guaranteed Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity

In order to protect participants' privacy during the stages of data collection, the analysis and reporting of findings of this research, the researcher did not disclose the results of performances of individual participants undertaking this oral activity other than in this study. The researcher informed and explained to the participants that the use of the results would only be for this doctoral study. If it were necessary to use the data in future research or other publications, the researcher promised that permission would be gained from the participants in advance.

The principles of confidentiality and anonymity are particularly essential and occur in the stage of reporting data where the researcher should abide by them in order to assure no potential harm to participants involved this study. This researcher followed the suggestion of Berg (2001), and Creswell (2003) by using pseudonyms for participants, for instance, 'Subject A' or 'Subject B' or Student 1 (S1). In doing so, the personal information concerned in the study was certainly not to be revealed to the public, and would help to distinguish their identities in achieving a high level of confidentiality to the participants.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter is related to the discussion of the research design involved in the study. The study is based on a combined research methodology to achieve an investigation of the compensatory strategy usage and pragmatic competence of Taiwanese EFL learners within a computer mediated environment. The combined research methodology enabled the researcher to explore the extent to which compensatory strategies were used by the learners to overcome their vocabulary deficiency and learners' pragmatic competence on coping with situations in the target language contexts. This researcher employed a case study as a research approach to focus on studying a particular group of Taiwanese EFL learners. This was because one of its significant features allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data in order to gain more knowledge regarding the learners' communicative language ability after reformed English education. A series of communicative task based activities was designed and implemented to thirty participants involved in this study in August 2006. These activities acted as a research instrument to collect data. The participants gave informed consent following appropriate research and ethical practices. After collecting the learners' speech productions from this activity, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to analyse the data. Firstly, the participants' speech data was given to two native speaking assessors to score. Secondly, the speech data was transcribed and coded by this researcher and her colleague. The issues of validity and reliability were also taken into account. Ensuring the tasks involved in this activity represented a balance and adequate sampling of all the knowledge, and improving the tasks by interviewing the participants after the pilot study helped verify the internal validity, and providing thorough descriptions for transferability helped reinforce the validity. Employment of two coders and two raters in this study and providing the training session for them helped to enhance reliability. Finally the ethical issues regarding the informed consent, the potential harms to participants, and guaranteed privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were also considered. The next chapter presents the findings with regard to participants' responses to the tasks.

Chapter Five

Research Findings

The purpose of this study is to investigate two aspects of communicative competence of Taiwanese senior high school language learners, in terms of their use of compensatory strategies and pragmatic competence. This chapter attempts to answer the research questions posed in Chapter One (Section 1.5) and reports the results of data analysis in detail. There are two main sections contained within this chapter. The first concerns the findings of the investigation into the participants' compensatory strategy usage and aims to respond to the first research question and its sub-questions. The second section deals with the investigation into pragmatic competence and attempts to respond to research question two.

5.1. Analysing the Speech Data on Compensatory Strategies

In this section, the results are split into three parts. Firstly, the compensatory strategies used by the participants are categorised based on the two main strategies proposed by Poulisse (1993); substitution and re-conceptualisation strategies (see Chapter Two, Section 2.2.4). The subtypes of substitution and re-conceptualisation strategies used by the learners are based on the elaboration of Littlemore (2003). The findings are clearly presented using percentages of each main strategy and subtype used. In section two, the strategies employed by the learners when responding to the tasks are discussed. In the last section, it is demonstrated the differences in use of strategies between higher and lower scoring learners.

5.1.1 Categorising the Compensatory Strategies

In order to understand how Taiwanese EFL learners cope with deficiencies in their English language communication, it is important to understand the types of compensatory strategies employed by the participants. Therefore, this section reports the findings in relation to the first sub-question of research question one in this study: Which strategies do the learners prefer when responding to the tasks?

Initially, two types of compensatory strategies were focused upon and used to identify the speech data (see Appendix III) in this study; the substitution and re-conceptualisation strategies (see Chapter Two). The difference between the two types of strategy is that the substitution strategy can be used to replace the intended lexical item with another in order to overcome the linguistic limitation, whereas re-conceptualisation strategies provide manipulation for the speakers to explain the item by encoding the conceptual features.

After categorising the use of the strategies, some utterances were discovered that could not be grouped into these two types. For instance, the speech data relating to translating Chinese words into English. These utterances were therefore classified under Additional Strategy.

The total strategy usage was calculated from the participants' responses on the tasks. In order to ascertain which strategy was employed more frequently than others, it was necessary to compare across the total use of the strategies. Table 5.1 shows the total use of substitution strategy, re-conceptualisation strategy and additional strategy. Figure 5.1 is also represented as a pie chart below, clearly illustrating the percentage use of the three strategy types.

Table 5.1: The Use of Compensatory Strategies

	Substitution Strategy	Re-conceptualisation Strategy	Additional Strategy
Strategy usage (number)	152	353	4
Total strategy usage	509	509	509
Percentages	29.9%	69.4%	0.8%

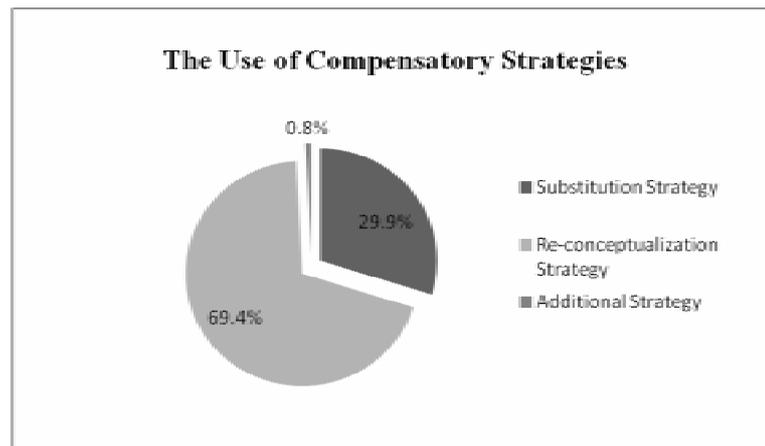


Figure 5.1: The Use of Compensatory Strategies

As can be seen, the percentage use of re-conceptualisation strategies (69.4%) is more than twice that of substitution strategies (29.9%). This suggests that Taiwanese language learners tend to use re-conceptualisation strategies more frequently to overcome their vocabulary deficiency.

Interestingly, the results of this study revealed the employment of an additional strategy used by Taiwanese language learners in dealing with their language deficiency. The percentage usage of additional strategies is 0.8% of the total; it is worth mentioning that this additional strategy has been employed by language learners from different geographical areas like Taiwan, rather than those from European countries used in most communication strategy research, for instance, Denmark or France.

This researcher also aims to examine the subtypes of substitution strategy used by the participants in this study as elaborated by Littlemore (2003) (see Chapter Two, Section 2.2.5). The subtypes of the substitution strategy are: original metaphoric comparison, conventional metaphoric comparison, literal comparison and super-ordinate. Table 5.2 shows the percentage use of each subtype of the strategy. As mentioned earlier, the total of substitution strategy usage was 152. The strategy of original metaphoric comparison was used only once, conventional metaphoric comparison was used 3 times, literal comparison was used 62 times and super-ordinate was used 85 times.

Table 5.2: The Subtypes of Substitution Strategy

	Original metaphoric comparison	Conventional metaphoric comparison	Literal comparison	Superordinate
Strategy usage (times)	1	3	62	85
Total strategy usages	152	152	152	152
Percentages	0.7%	2.0%	40.8%	55.9%

The most frequently used strategy was super-ordinate (55.9%), as shown in Table 5.2 above. This indicates that over half of the learners preferred to describe target objects from a general viewpoint by starting off saying '*it is a kind of*'.

The second most frequently used strategy was literal comparison (40.8%), suggesting that the learners described target objects frequently by comparing them with another object in a non-metaphorical way by saying '*it's like*'.

The remaining two strategies used were original metaphoric comparison and conventional metaphoric comparison (0.7%, 2% respectively). Both strategies were used when the target objects were compared with another object in either an analogical or metaphorical way. The difference between these two strategies is that one is viewed from an original and idiosyncratic perspective and the other from a conventional viewpoint, from either the L1 or the target language when describing the objects.

The percentage frequency of each subtype of re-conceptualisation strategy used is shown in Table 5.3 below. The six subtypes of re-conceptualisation strategy are: componential analysis, function, activity, place, emotion and extra information. Table 5.3 shows the subtypes of the re-conceptualisation strategy use. As mentioned earlier, the total number of re-conceptualisation strategies used was 353. The strategy of componential analysis was used 102 times, function was used 56 times, activity was used 53 times, place was used 73 times, emotion was used 14 times and extra information was used 55 times.

Table 5.3: The Subtypes of Reconceptualisation Strategy

	Componential analysis	Function	Activity	Place	Emotion	Extra information
Strategy usage (times)	102	56	53	73	14	55
Total strategy usages (times)	353	353	353	353	353	353
Percentages	28.9%	15.9%	15.0%	20.7%	4.0%	15.6%

The highest percentage rate reflected the strategy of componential analysis (28.9%). This suggests that the learners preferred to describe the target items individually.

The findings for the strategies of function (15.9%), activity (15.0%) and extra information (15.6%) demonstrate that there were no great differences between these three strategies as employed by the learners. That is to say, when the learners commonly described the target objects, they focused on their functions, activities, or provide some further information to describe the target objects.

The strategy of place (20.7%) displays a slightly higher similar percentage rate than the three aforementioned strategies, meaning that more learners in this study used the places in which the objects are likely to be found while describing them.

Finally, the lowest percentage rate found was in the use of the emotion (4%) strategy. This strategy allows the participant to describe an object by provoking a specific emotion. However, the result suggests that the participants did not seem to encode the target items from the emotion inspired so that they were not interested in adopting it to describe the target items.

5.1.2 The Operation of Communication Strategies

This section reports the findings in relation to the second sub-question of research question one in this study: How do the learners operate the compensatory strategies to respond to each task?

There is a total of twelve target items presented in this section; they are divided into two types of activity; Type A and Type B. Each type of activity includes six task items. The participants were allowed to choose four out of six task items to respond to in order to complete this section. Therefore, it is possible that some task items would be

selected more frequently than others. The task items in Type A are: jellyfish, cactus, binoculars, otter, dragonfly and roundabout. Whilst in Type B the task items are: ostrich, ointment, grasshopper, mirage, squid and scarecrow. During the activity, the participants attempted to employ different communication strategies to overcome their vocabulary deficiency. In order to understand how the learners operate the communication strategies that they believe are most effective and require less effort, it is important to examine the participants' strategy use in each task item in this activity.

When examining the participants' speech production it was noted that, firstly, almost every participant responded to task items by using the strategy of super-ordinate, which is a subtype of the substitution strategy, for example:

S1 described the task item 'jellyfish' as:

'A kind of fish and it doesn't look like fish...'

S2 described the task item 'ostrich' as follows:

'It's an animal and the most bigger bird in the world'

S13 described the task item 'cactus' thus:

'This is a plant... it lives in the hot place and...'

Secondly, as well demonstrating the use of super-ordinate strategy by most participants, the findings also show that most participants employed strategies that allowed them to make the least effort whilst showing most comprehension when responding to task items.

A total of 10 participants selected the first task item 'jellyfish' to respond to and more than half of those described this target item by employing the strategies of componential analysis, activity, place and extra information. For example, S16 responded as follows:

S16: it's animal urm...it's like fish but it's not fish. It's under the sea and it's soft. If
(place)

you were bitten by it, you will die.
(extra information)

S16: no...it's soft...have many legs
(componential analysis)

S16: No...

S16: yes...it's white. One kind of swimming...a kind of swimming
(activity)

The task item 'cactus' was selected by a total of 14 learners; more than half of them employed the strategies of componential analysis and place to describe it. For example, S25 responded to this task item.

S25: It's plant and it live in the desert...uh...plants are like tree...you can't touch it,
(place)
either. It's green and ...urm...it lives in the desert. It doesn't need much water.
(componential analysis)

S25: it is green
(componential analysis)

S25: you can or no...you can't touch it.

A total of 13 participants chose the task item 'binocular', more than half of these learners employed the strategy of function to describe it. For example, S7 responded thus:

S7: mmm...its...this is a very useful things when you want to see the stars or moon you have to use it...and through...through this...
(function)

Only two learners responded to the task item 'otter' and they both used strategies of componential analysis, activity and place. For example, S11 responded:

S11: that's an animal...it's looks like big mouse...it can swim...have a big big tail
(activity) (componential analysis)

S11: yes, it has a big tail...look like kangaroo or big mouse.
(componential analysis)

S11: it's colour is brown
(componential analysis)

S11: its colour is brown and it has a big tail and it can swim.

S11: in the zoo but it is not in Taiwan.
(place)

A total of 13 participants responded to the task item 'dragonfly'. The majority of these participants described the word by using strategies of componential analysis, activity, place and extra information. For example, S23 responded to this task item.

S23: it can fly in the air. It's an insect, not bird or animal.
(activity) (place)

S23: you can see in summer...it looks like butterfly but it isn't...it's...
(extra information)

S23: its colour is red or green one...it can fly...
(componential analysis)

S23: Not really....it can't really fly very high...sometimes you can see them at our
school.
(place)

8 participants chose 'roundabout' to respond to, with more than half using componential analysis and function to describe it. Take S15 as example:

S15: It is important traffic, if you look from sky, they look like circle.
(componential analysis)

S15: No, the cars and motorcycles will drive around there to go to another road.
(function)

A total of 14 participants chose to describe the task item 'ostrich', most tended to employ strategies of componential analysis, activity and providing extra information. S16 responded as follows:

S16: you know this bird it can run very fast but it can't fly.
(activity)

S16: you can see it in Australia or Africa, I think...

S16: this bird is very very big and its eggs are also the biggest in the world.
(componential analysis) (extra information)

12 participants responded to the task item 'ointment' with more than half using literal comparison, and function to describe it. The response of S28 provided an example:

S28: it's a medicine and it's like water..

S28: No..no...it is not liquid...it is like cream. You can put on your hand first and
(literal comparison)
then you put on your face or the place you got hurt...
(function)

A total of 8 learners chose to respond to the task item 'grasshopper' and more than half of the learners attempted to use the strategies of componential analysis, and activity to describe this object. The responses of S22 provide examples:

S22: It's a small...a very small animal. It's green...it has the same colour as leaves
(componential analysis)

and it can jump high.
(activity)

A total of 6 learners selected the task item ‘mirage’ to respond to and more than half of the learners inclined to use the strategies of place and extra information to indicate. For example:

S24: this is something happened in the desert. When people walk in the desert and
(place)
feel thirsty, they suddenly will see something or water or trees or plants in front
(extra information)
of them not far away. They always want to go to the place, but actually it is not
there. They think they see it.

A total of 5 participants chose the task item ‘squid’ to respond to, where the strategies of activity and place were employed by more than half of the learners when describing this object. For example:

S28: it’s a kind of fish, in water it may make water become black when some other
(place) (activity)
sea animals want to attack or kill it...

S28: not octopus ...but it’s similar to octopus

A total of 15 learners chose the task item ‘scarecrow’ to respond to and more than half of the learners used the strategies of literal comparison, function and place to get the point across. For example:

S22: it’s not the real person... It’s always standing in the farm for...for...urm..
(literal comparison) (place)
scare the birds coming to eat corns.
(function)

Additionally, the findings also show that some strategies were less used by most participants when responding to the tasks. Two strategies were identified as such, including, the strategies of original and conventional metaphoric comparison. In this study, these strategies were only used four times inclusively; that is, original metaphoric comparison once and conventional metaphoric comparison three times. For example:

When S1 described jellyfish,

S1: A kind of fish and it doesn’t look like fish...it’s a kind of fish but it doesn’t look like fish...and it has no eyes and long hands...and look like the ball and float
(conventional metaphoric comparison)
around...

When S5 also described jellyfish and said,

S5: This a kind of fish and they're living in the sea...and they have a lot of legs and they're swimming very funny and slowly, whenever you got bite from them, I think you will hurt very...so badly and they came out whole bunch with...like glue and...erm...sometimes you hard to see them because...
(original metaphoric comparison)

When S9 described the roundabout,

S9: It is using in a traffic, it's circle.....and urm.... it is near Tainan train station. it is near Tainan train station.

S9: It is look like UFO...
(conventional metaphoric comparison)

When S27 described dragonfly and said,

S27: No...it has six legs...it has big eyes and it looks like airplane
(conventional metaphoric comparison)

Moreover, the strategy of emotion was also used less frequently by the learners in comparison to other strategies. In particular, the learners focused on describing the task items; jellyfish, cactus, ointment and mirage in such cases. For example:

When S5 described the task item 'jellyfish', he uttered

S5: This a kind of fish and they're living in the sea...and they have a lot of legs and they're swimming very funny and slowly, whenever you got bite from them, I think you will hurt very...so badly and they came out whole bunch with...like glue and...erm...sometimes you hard to see them because...
(emotion)

When S15 described the task item 'cactus', he uttered

S15: They are plants... they are lives in the hot place. If you touch their leaves, it will maybe let you feel hurts.
(emotion)

When S18 described the task item 'ointment', he uttered

S18: No...if you feel no good and itch...it has different colour...different hurt to use different one...
(emotion)

When S24 described the task item 'mirage', he uttered

S24: this is something happened in the desert. When people walk in the desert and feel thirsty, they suddenly will see something or water or trees or plants in front (emotion) of them not far away. They always want to go to the place, but actually it is not there. They think they see it.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the learners employed an additional strategy which was not included in the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) and was therefore named by this researcher as an 'additional strategy'. A total of three participants who were S3, S12 and S27 used this strategy:

When S3 described the task item 'roundabout', he uttered

S3: not...it's a traffic name.. traffic
S3: and all roads are come from it..
S3: circle...2 words in Chinese
(additional strategy)

When S12 described the task item 'ointment', he responded

S12: a kind of medicine
S12: like Chinese... Chinese medicine...
S12: and high high...very tall very high in Chinese
(additional strategy)
S12: these two words

When S12 described the task item 'mirage', he responded

S12: The first world is ocean in Chinese
(additional strategy)
S12: and then the city
(additional strategy)
S12: and how to say...something in your body if it is broken you will die

When S27 described the task item 'jellyfish', he responded

S27: they live in the sea....and...it seems to float everywhere.
S27: two words in Chinese....water...water the first word... and....and...the second word is mother....
(additional strategy)
S27: you put two words together....water mother....

In conclusion, the strategy of super-ordinate was employed by most participants to describe the task items, and most learners employed the strategy of literal comparison to describe the task items ointment and scarecrow. The strategy of componential analysis

was used by most participants when describing the task items jellyfish, cactus, otter, dragonfly, ostrich, grasshoppers and roundabout. The strategy of function was used by most participants to describe the task item binoculars, roundabout, ointment and scarecrow. The strategy of activity was used by most learners to describe the task items jellyfish, otter, dragonfly, ostrich, grasshopper and squid. The strategy of place was used by most learners to describe the task items jellyfish, cactus, otter, dragonfly, mirage, squid and scarecrow. Finally, the strategy of extra information was used in the task items; dragonfly, ostrich and mirage.

After investigation of the operation of the strategies by learners in the different task items, it is also interesting to explore how the different strategy usages operated between the higher and lower scoring learner. Thus, the next section will focus on the strategy usage of higher and lower scoring learners.

5.1.3 The Difference in Compensatory Strategy Usage between High and Low Scoring Learners

This section reports the findings in relation to the third sub-question of research question one in this study: What differences exist between the high scoring and low scoring learners on employing compensatory strategies?

A total of four tasks should have been completed by each participant in this section and the responses of each task were scored by two native speaking assessors individually. Scores were awarded based on a five-point scale from 1 (unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) on each task so the full score was 20 points. After obtaining the scores, the total scores were averaged in order to understand the learners' performance on selected tasks. As observed, the range of the learners' scores was from 2.5 to 4.5. By means of dividing the scores into three levels in order to obtain the higher and lower scores, the lower level could be considered as lower than 3 points and the higher level could be considered as higher than 4 points. In addition to this, the middle level could be between 3.1-3.9 points. Consequently, 7 higher scoring participants and 7 lower scoring participants were identified from these results.

Table 5.4: The strategy usage between the lower and higher scoring learners

	Substitution Strategy	Re-conceptualisation Strategy	Additional Strategy	Total Strategy
Lower scoring learners	36	70	4	110
Percentage	32.7%	63.6%	3.6%	100%
Higher scoring learners	38	76	0	114
Percentage	33.3%	66.7%	0%	100%

Table 5.4 above shows that the higher scoring learners total strategy usage was 114 times, while the total strategy usage by the lower scoring learners was 110. The higher scoring learners used the substitution strategy 38 times and the lower scoring learners 36 times. The higher scoring learners used the re-conceptualisation strategy 76 times and the lower scoring learners 70 times. Finally, the lower scoring learners used the additional strategy 4 times while the higher scoring learners did not use it their responses at all.

In comparison to the strategy usage between the substitution strategy and re-conceptualisation strategy, both lower and higher scoring learners used the re-conceptualisation strategy more than the substitution strategy. Table 5.4 illustrates that the higher scoring learners used the substitution strategy 33.3% of the time while the lower scoring learners used 32.7% of the total use of the strategy. Similarly, the higher scoring learners used 66.7% of the re-conceptualisation strategy while the lower scoring learners used 63.6% of it. This finding suggests that both higher and lower scoring learners had a similar way of responding to the tasks as both groups tended to use around twice the amount of re-conceptualisation strategies as substitution strategies. The only difference was that the lower scoring learners used the additional strategy in their responses whereas the higher scoring learners did not.

Table 5.5: The subtypes of substitution strategy use between the lower and higher scoring learners

	Original metaphoric comparison	Conventional metaphoric comparison	Literal Comparison	Super-ordinate
Lower Scoring Learners	0	1	10	25
Total strategy usage	110	110	110	110
	0%	0.9%	9.1%	22.7%
Higher Scoring Learners	0	0	21	17
Total strategy usage	114	114	114	114
	0%	0%	18.4%	14.9%

Table 5.6: The subtypes of reconceptualisation strategy use between the lower and higher scoring learners

	Componential analysis	Function	Activity	Place	Emotion	Extra information
Lower Scoring Learners	21	12	15	10	2	10
Total strategies	110	110	110	110	110	110
Percentage	19.1%	10.9%	13.6%	9.1%	1.8%	9.1%
Higher Scoring Learners	19	13	8	19	2	15
Total strategies	114	114	114	114	114	114
Percentage	16.7%	11.4%	7.0%	16.7%	1.8%	13.2%

In comparison to the subtypes of the substitution strategy, Table 5.5 shows that the lower scoring learners used the strategy of super-ordinate extensively; 25 times (22.7%) out of a total of 36. However, they only used the strategy of literal comparison 10 times (9.1%). So, they greatly depended on using the strategy of super-ordinate.

In contrast, the higher scoring learners employed the strategies of literal comparison and super-ordinate at a similar frequency, but used literal comparison slightly more than super-ordinate. They used the strategy of literal comparison 21 times (18.4%) and the super-ordinate strategy 17 times (14.9%).

In relation to the subtypes of re-conceptualisation strategy, Table 5.6 shows that the lower scoring learners used the strategy of componential analysis more frequently than the other strategies. The total use of the strategy of componential analysis was 21 times (19.1%) in comparison to the other subtypes of strategy which were used around 10-15 times (9.1%-13.6%), except for the strategy of emotion, which was used only 2 times (1.8%).

In contrast, the higher scoring learners used a more equal amount of the subtypes of re-conceptualisation strategy, around 13-19 times (11.4%-16.7%), except for the strategy of activity which was used only 8 times (7.0%) and the strategy of emotion that was used 2 times (1.8%).

In conclusion, the findings show the lower scoring learners used the strategy of super-ordinate (22.7%) in the substitution strategy most frequently, along with componential analysis (19.1%) in the reconceptualisation strategy. Unlike the lower scoring learners, who greatly depended on the use of the super-ordinate strategy (22.7%), the higher scoring learners used the strategies of literal comparison (18.4%) slightly more frequently than the strategy of the super-ordinate (14.9%) when responding to the tasks. Regarding reconceptualisation strategy, the higher scoring learners did not only employ this particular strategy; they used the strategies of componential analysis (16.7%), and place (16.7%) more frequently. Moreover, both higher and lower scoring learners used the strategy of emotion the least frequently.

Having coded and analysed the compensatory strategies, the findings identified the frequency of strategy usage, how the participants used the compensatory strategies when responding to tasks and the differences between the higher and lower scoring learner's employment of the strategies. The next analysis is carried out on the pragmatic competence of the test participants.

In order to gain further knowledge as to the extent to which Taiwanese learners of English performed their pragmatic competence within different given social contexts, the analysis was based on the scores awarded by two native speaking assessors involved in the study. The scoring of the responses of section two in this communicative task based activity was based on six criteria (see Chapter Two, Section 2.3.5) suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995, p.49).

5.2. Analysing the Speech Data on Pragmatic Competence

The speech data was collected from the second section of the communicative task based activity, and was later analysed. The main purpose of this section is to present the findings concerning the demonstration of the learners' pragmatic competence in different social situational contexts, in order to respond to research question two, and its sub-questions.

This section consists of three parts; the first part pertains to the average scores showing the performance of the learners on the speech acts of apology, request and refusal. The second section displays the results from the analysis of learners' responses in order to discover the learners' discourse variance while responding to different social situational tasks. Finally, analysis was carried out in order to acknowledge whether the learners were influenced by their native language-based pragmatics in coping with different social cultural situations in the target language contexts. The last section presents the findings concerning the average scores against different social variables; that is, relative power (P), social distance (D) and the absolute rank (R) of imposition involved in each task.

5.2.1 The Performance of the Participants on the Speech Acts of Apology, Request and Refusal

This section reports the findings in relation to the first sub-question of research question two of this study: How do the learners perform when using speech acts of apology, request and refusal?

The scores awarded by the two native speaking assessors were computed in order to observe the differences on the participants' performance. The assessors scored the learners' speech based on six criteria proposed by Hudson *et al.* (1995, p.49). These criteria were (1) ability to use the correct speech act, (2) formulaic express, (3) amount of speech used and information given, (4) levels of formability, and (5) levels of directness (6) levels of politeness. Each criterion was given a five-point rating scale ranking from very unsatisfied (1) to completely appropriate (5) and the total scores were 30 points in the second section of the tasks.

After obtaining the scores from the assessors, this researcher averaged the total scores and the results are shown in Figure 5.2 below. This illustrates the average scores in the speech acts of apologies, requests and refusals.

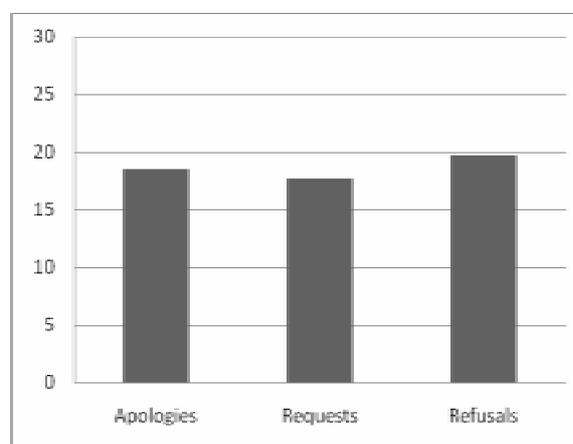


Figure 5.2: The Average Scores in Apologies, Requests and Refusals

The average scores present as 18.5 out of 30 points in apologies, 17.75 out of 30 points in requests and 19.75 out of 30 points in refusals, as can be seen in Figure 5.2 above. This finding illustrates that the learners performed best in the speech act of refusals. The second best score presented in the speech act of apologies and the worst in the speech act of requests. Overall, the average scores in the three speech acts do not present any marked differences. In other words, the learners obtained similar realisations in the speech acts of apology, request and refusal.

After presenting the findings regarding the learners' performance on the speech acts of apology, request and refusal, the next concern will be given to exploring the learners' discourse variance in response to the different social situational tasks. The results will be presented in the following sections.

5.2.2 The Discourse Variance on the Learners' Responses

This section reports the findings in relation to the second sub-question of research question two of this study: What discourse variances are there when the learners respond to the tasks?

Firstly, the participants' speech was analysed based on the coding schemes proposed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) to investigate the realizations in the speech acts

of apology and request, and based on the coding scheme proposed by Beebe *et al.* (1990) to examine the realizations in the speech act of refusal.

A total of 12 task items were involved in the sections of this activity. Each four task items comprised a part, and each part was designed to explore the learners' realization of speech acts of apology, request and refusal. This activity was designed for the participants to choose the task items which they were confident of responding to. The participants were required to choose two tasks in each part, in which of six tasks should be selected in order to complete this section. As a result, some task items may have been chosen more frequently than others.

The following sections discuss the findings concerning the learners' discourse variance on each task feature.

The Speech Act of Apology

In the speech act of apology, six main strategies were identified from which to analyse the speech data. These pragmatic strategies are IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices), taking on responsibility, explanation or account, offer of repair, promise of forbearance and apology intensification.

By examining the learners' speech, the findings show that most learners tended to use the apology intensification. For example,

S2: sorry...I am very sorry...I pick them up now ...sorry...I just come to.

S12: sorry, I'm so sorry I will pick them up for you, I just come here to pay the bill.

S18: I'm so so sorry I will pick it up right away.

S27: I want to pay my bill...oh...I am very sorry I am no purpose to knock these menus on the floor. I will pick up for you. Sorry I feel so sorry.

In the first part, the first task that was chosen by 20 participants and it presented a situation which described the speaker arriving home later than he planned so that all his housemates were waiting for him to discuss a house matter. This task involved a lower social power (-P), a smaller social distance (-D) and a lower level of imposition (-R) and the learners mainly used three semantic formulas (i.e. strategies) to respond it.

Firstly, around three fifths of the learners (13 out of 20) used the strategies of taking on responsibility, promise of forbearance and explanation or account after employing the strategy of apology intensification in the first task. Take the response of S10 as example;

S10: I am very sorry that I'm late for our meeting because I got something to do on my way home. Sorry about this...and it won't happen again...
(apology intensification) (taking on responsibility) (explanation or account)
(promise of forbearance)

The second task was selected by 21 learners and this task presented a situation describing the speaker knocking a few menus on the floor. This task involved a higher social power (+P), a greater social distance (+D) and a lower level of imposition (-R).

Except for intensively using the strategy of apology intensification, most participants (17 out of 21) in this task used the strategy of offering repair. For example,

S3: I am very sorry I will put them back for you...
(apology intensification) (offer of repair)

Moreover, slightly less than half of the learners (9 out of 21) tended to use the strategy of taking on responsibility and around one fourth of the learners (5 out of 21) used the strategy of explanation or account in their responses. For example,

S29: Sorry, that's all my fault... I am really sorry. I will pick them up, o.k.?
(taking on responsibility)

S13: I am very sorry, I will pick it up.... because I am too nervous.
(explanation or account)

The third situational task was selected less frequently; only four times, by the learners and it described one member of the bookstore's staff being required to take over his supervisor's morning shift but he arrived a few minutes late after noon. This task involved a lower social power (-P), a greater social distance (+D) and a higher level of imposition (+R).

Most learners (3 out of 4) used the strategy of taking on responsibility, the strategy of explanation or account, and all four learners used the strategy of promise of forbearance, for example,

S16: very very sorry, sir. I'm late... I forget the time because I was sleeping.....I
(taking on responsibility) (explanation or account)
won't not be late next time...very very sorry....
(promise of forbearance)

The fourth task was chosen by the learners 15 times and it described a staff member in a shop not being able to assist the customers waiting in the front door because she was making an important business call. This situational task involved a lower social power (-P), a greater social distance (+D) and a lower level of imposition (-R).

The strategy of offering repair was employed by most learners (12 out of 15) in their responses, for example,

S11: Very very sorry....please forgive me making you wait such a long time, I won't let you wait next time....mmm...I could give you some discount.
(offering repair)

Around three fifths of learners (9 out of 15) tended to use the strategy of taking on responsibility and the strategy of explanation or account, and promise of forbearance after using the strategy of apology intensification. For example, S6 responded:

S6: I am terrible sorry for making you wait such a long time.....because I was in an
(apology intensification) (take on responsibility) (explanation or account)
important call. I won't let you wait next time.
(promise of forbearance)

In summary, most learners used the strategy of apology intensification through the four tasks regardless of the relative power and social distance. The learners employed the strategies of explanation or account and taking on responsibility more frequently when the relative power was lower (-P) but regardless of the social distance (D). Moreover, the strategy of promise of forbearance was used when the social power was lower (-P). In addition, the learner used the strategy of offering repair when the situation involved a greater social distance (+D) and lower rank of imposition (-R)

The Speech Act of Request

Based on the coding scheme suggested by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989, P. 287-289), a request utterance could be segmented into three parts; alerter, a 'head act' of request, and adjuncts to the head act. Alerters are attention arousing, that is, they alter the

hearers' attention and come before the head act. A head act of request is the minimal unit which can realize a request. Adjuncts to the head act could be considered as external modifications and are also called supportive moves because they are used to support or aggravate the speech act.

Importantly, a head act is an obligatory unit of the sequence which might serve to realize a request independently. In other words, alerter, and internal modifiers operate in the head act, and adjuncts to the head act, that is, external modifications are not an essential part to facilitate realization of the request, however, they may come to function to show different degrees of politeness.

Firstly, 'alerter' is the function to alter the hearer's attention to the ensuing speech act (Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989, P. 287-289). Based on the findings in this study, the learners attempted to use 'alerter' more frequently as a term of address, such as a title or role in the first and fourth tasks. Both tasks involved a lower power (-P) and the learners attempted to utter 'landlord', 'manger' or 'sir' to draw the hearer's attention. Take the response of S18 and S26 as examples;

S18: Landlord, can you tell me about the apartment soon because I really have to know it as soon as possible?

Another example is from the response of the fourth task.

S26: Sir, I know you are very busy and the only schedule interview is in the afternoon from one to four o'clock. I really want to apply this job so...can you interview me in the morning? Thanks you!

Secondly and importantly, when making a request, there must be an essential head act to realize a request. According to the different request strategies, the head act of request is identified in three major levels of directness, namely direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect. In other words, the three levels of directness can be expected to be manifested universally by requesting strategies. Nine strategy types were proposed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989, P. 287-289) within these three levels of directness.

The direct request strategy includes five sub-strategies, namely, mood derivable, for example, clean up the kitchen; explicit performance, for example, I am asking you to clean the kitchen; hedge performance, for example, I must ask you to clean the kitchen; locution derivable, for example, you'll have to clean the kitchen; and want statements, for example, I want you to clean the kitchen. The conventionally indirect request strategy includes the sub-strategies of suggesting formula, for example, how about cleaning up the kitchen; and query preparatory, for example, could you clean the kitchen? Moreover, the non-conventionally indirect request strategy is the sub-strategy of strong hint and mild hint. These strategies were employed in this study to analyse the learners' speech productions.

By means of identifying the request strategies in the learners' speech data, the researcher found that the learners mainly used the strategies of query preparatory, imperative and want statements while responding to the tasks. The following sections present the learners use of these strategies when they encountered different social situational contexts.

The first tasks were selected by 16 participants. The situation was that a person requests a landlord to call him within next three days to inform whether he could move to the place he intended to. This task involved a lower social power (-P), a greater social distance (+D) and a higher rank of imposition (+R). Most learners (14 out of 16) intended to use the strategy of query preparatory in request performance by saying '*can you...?*', for example;

S2: I really like this place so can you let me know soon because I really need a place recently...thank you.

On the other hand, only two learners used the strategies in performing direct request. For example, the participants used mood derivable strategies (e.g. the prototypical form of this strategy is the imperative) or the strategy of want statement. The responses of S25 provide examples:

S25: I have to live in an apartment in the city please tell me in three days if I can live in, thank you.

A total of 20 learners selected the second situational task. This task described a president of a national book club requesting a phone number from his members. This

task involved a higher social power (+P), a smaller distance (-D) and a lower rank of imposition (-R). Less than half of the learners (8 out of 20) used the strategy of query preparatory, for example;

S2: Hi...do you have Sue's number...I need to call her...could you give me her phone number...thank you...

Slightly more than half of the learners (12 out of 20) used the strategy of imperative or want statement to perform direct request. Take S11 as an example:

S11: Excuse me, sir! I want to ask Sue Lee's number because I need to contact her, please help me. I will thank you for this. Thanks.

A total of 8 learners selected the third task. This task described a student requesting the loan officer to process his application as soon as possible in order to pay his tuition fee by the deadline. This task involved a higher social power (+P), a greater social distance (+D) and a higher rank of imposition (+R). Less than half of the learners (3 out of 8) used the strategy of query preparatory, for example;

S14: I forget applying my loan earlier...can you please look my application soon, o.k.?

On the other hand, the findings show that a bit more than half of responses (5 out of 8) to this task by using the strategy of imperative and want statement, for example,

S17: Hello! Please review my application form first because I do not want to miss the deadline for paying my tuition fees.

The last task was selected by 16 learners. This task described a person wanting to schedule an interview in the morning however the manager was very busy and only scheduled interviews in the afternoon. Therefore, he went into the office to see the manager. This task involves a lower power (-P), great social distance (+D) and higher rank of imposition (+R). More than half of the learners (10 out of 16) tended to use the strategy of query preparatory, for example;

S12: I really like this job and I am a great man. Can you schedule an interview in the morning for me, thanks?

Moreover, some learners (6 out of 16) used the strategy of imperative or of want statement, take the responses of S28 as examples;

S28: Hello, manager. I know you're very busy and the only your schedule interview in the afternoon but I have to work in the afternoon so I would like to have an interview in the morning. Thank you!

In addition, internal modifications operate within the head act and serve as a function to mitigate or strengthen the force of request. Even though it is not the obligatory part in the utterances, they can serve to manipulate the responses to be either mitigating downgraders or aggravating upgraders.

The findings suggest that one significant feature is that the learners tended to use the strategy of 'intensifier', which involves upgrading a request, therefore, functioning as an 'upgrader'. The function of upgraders is to increase the impact of the request. When modification is used to intensify time, it means that the learners strengthen the time of the request. In particular, the learners used this strategy while responding to the third task which involved a higher social power (+P), a greater social distance (+D) and a higher rank of imposition (+R). For example,

S1: Can you please to see my application form because in two weeks I have to pay my tuition fees... so please view my application form as soon as possible, Thank you.

S17: Hello! Please review my application form first because I do not want to miss the deadline for paying my tuition fees.

S22: Sir, I need... I need to loan some money for my tuition as soon as possible...because of the due. If I do not pay for my tuition I won't be able to go to school...I really need it to process immediately. Thank you!

Finally, after presenting the data concerning the 'alerters' and 'head act', it is useful to analyse the 'adjuncts to head act'. The adjuncts to head act allows the speakers to support or aggravate the speech act through external modification. Therefore, adjuncts to head act could be also termed supportive moves. They are external to the head act, occurring either before or after head act and they are optional and function as a mitigating or aggravating device for the Request (Zhang, 1995, p.56).

According to the learners' speech productions in this study, it is worth mentioning that the findings show that almost every participant in this study used the grounder, that is, the speaker indicates the reasons for the request. For example,

S4: I would like to join your company and I will work hard for your company. Could you change my interview time?

S8: Sorry...I need to pay my tuition fee soon because our school is going to start...so I have to pay my fees....can you look my application form first...thank you very much.

In conclusion, the findings present that learners tended to use the 'alerter' as a term of address when they were involved in a lower social power (-P) exchange. Importantly, the learners used the strategy of query preparatory to perform the level of conventionally indirect more frequently than they used the strategies of imperative and want statement to perform the level of directness. Moreover, the learners used the strategies of imperative and want statements more frequently in the tasks which involved in a higher social power (+P) exchange. Another significant feature of the findings is that the learners used the strategy of time intensifier when they responded to the third task which involved a higher social power (+P) exchange, a greater social distance (+D) and a higher rank of imposition (+R). In addition, with regards to the adjuncts to head act (the external modification), the findings also show that almost every learner used the grounder, that is, the speakers indicated reasons while responding to the tasks.

The Speech Act of Refusal

The third part of the second section relates to the learners' performance on the speech act of refusal. In this study, speech data were coded according to the taxonomy developed by Beebe *et al.* (1990). The main focus was on the learners' realization of the speech act of refusal by exploring the learners' performance on semantic formulas (*i.e.* strategy) and adjuncts to refusals in situational tasks.

Firstly, the refusal strategies were classified into two categories; direct or indirect strategies. The direct refusal strategies include performative (e.g. I refuse) and non-performative statements, which promotes the direct use of a denying lexical item 'No' or utterance showing 'Negative willingness/ability'. The indirect strategy involves several sub-categories such as expressing regret, giving excuses or reasons and the statement of alternatives. Based on the analysis of the learners' speech data, the researcher discovered that the learners mainly used four strategies while responding to the tasks; they are reason, direct refusal, regret and alternative course of action.

In the first task, 13 participants chose to respond; it described a situation where an employee who was working in a repair shop attempted to refuse to repair a valued customer's antique watch one day because the watch would take at least two weeks to fix. This task involved a lower social power (-P), a greater social distance (+D), and a higher rank of imposition (+R).

By observing the learners' responses, the findings show that most learners highly employed the strategies of reason (12 out of 13) and regard (10 out of 13), for example,

S15: Sorry I can't do this job in one day because it at least takes two weeks to finish
 (regret) (reason)
it.

Moreover, around half of the learners (7 out of 13) also used the strategy of direct refusal, and alternative course of action. For example,

S6: I'm so sorry I can't ready this for just one day... or maybe you go to the another
 (regret) (direct refusal) (alternative)
repair shop to see...if they could fix it by tomorrow.

In the second task, a total of 23 participants chose to respond to the task. The task described a teacher refusing to help his head teacher to announce a meeting because he had friends coming over to his house tonight. This task involves a lower social power (-P), and a smaller social distance (-D) and a lower rank of imposition (+R).

By analyzing the speech data, the findings show every learner used the strategy of reason and almost every learner (21 out of 23) used the strategy of regret. For example,

S3: I am sorry I can't because I have...I have friend to come my home to have dinner.
 (regret) (reason)

Moreover, the strategy of alternative was adopted by slightly more than half of the learners (14 out of 23) and direct refusal was used by slightly less than half of the learners (11 out of 23), for example,

S8: sorry...I really...I can't help you... because I have...I have a friends coming to my
 (direct refusal)
 house tonight...would you please find someone...other person to help you... sorry.
 (alternative)

The third task was only chosen by 10 learners and this situational task described a person in a department store refusing to watch a short demonstration because he was on his way to meet someone for lunch. This task involves a higher social power (+P), and a greater social distance (+D) and a lower rank of imposition (-R).

The strategy of reason was employed by every learner and the strategy of direct refusal and alternative was highly employed by around four fifths of learners (7 out of 10). As well as around half of the learners (5 out of 10) using the strategy of regret in their responses. For example,

S28: I'm sorry...but thank you for operating to show me your demonstration of your
 (regret)
 product. I couldn't watch your demonstration because I'm on my way to meet
 (direct refusal) (reason)
someone for lunch...so next time.
 (alternative)

The fourth task was selected by 14 participants and it described a situation where a tourist refused to accept coupons from a staff in the photo shop because he was leaving the city soon. This task involved a higher social power (+P), and a greater social distance (+D) and a lower rank of imposition (-R).

In this task, the strategy of reason was used by every learner and the strategies of direct refusal and alternative were employed by around four fifths of learners (11 out of 14). The strategy of regret was adopted by slightly less than half of the learners (6 out of 14). For example,

S12: sorry I don't need these coupons because I'm leaving this city today so you can
 (regret) (direct refusal) (reason) (alternative)
give it to other customers.

After discussion regarding the refusal strategies, the next focus will be given to the adjuncts of refusal. The adjuncts function is considered as external modifications to the main refusal head act for reinforcing or protecting the hearer's positive face. The main focus of adjuncts function in this study is positive opinion (e.g. that's a good opinion; I'd love to or I like).

By observing the four tasks, only few learners showed their positive opinion in their responses. For example,

S9: I really want to help but my friends are coming over to my house tonight, maybe
(positive opinion)
you should find other person.

S2: I really like this item but so sorry now I have to have lunch with my friend...so
(positive opinion)
next time...maybe I will buy this item for next time...so very sorry.

In addition, the researcher discovered that the learners only used the address term in the second task which involved in a lower social power (-P), for example,

S10: Sorry, head teacher! I can't do it, I know that it will take me hours and I have friends coming over my house tonight. I don't want my friends to wait for me too long outside my house, sorry about this.

To summarise, the learners frequently used the strategy of reason in their responses regardless of social status and relationship. They used the strategy of direct refusal more frequently when the social power was higher (+P). Moreover, the learners more frequently employed the strategy of regret when the situation involved a lower social power (-P) and the strategy of alternative was more frequently used when the social power was higher (+P).

In relation to the adjuncts of refusal, the strategies of positive opinion and appreciation were found in the learners' responses. However, only a few learners expressed their positive opinions while responding to the tasks. The learners only used the strategy of an addressing term more frequently when the tasks involved a lower social power (-P).

The next concern will focus on exploring the learners' performance on each task in order to understand in which situation they performed the best. The different social variables involved in each task against the average scores on each task will be examined in the following sections. The findings presented below intend to respond to research question 2.3.

5.2.3 The Affects of Social Variables on the Learners' Performance

This section reports the findings in relation to the third sub-question of research question two of this study: under what social situations do the learners perform better?

The final section of this communicative task based activity included twelve situational contexts that were associated with each different level of the social variables; which were relative power (P), social distance (D) and the absolute rank (R) of imposition presented in three sub-sections. Each sub-section was designed to investigate one of the three speech acts. Four situation scenarios (see Appendix II) were included in each sub-section. This activity allowed the learners to opt for six situation scenarios from the three sub-sections. Therefore, the participants were required to perform on a total of six task items in order to complete the section, that is, by responding to two task items in the speech acts of apologies, requests and refusals.

Based on the criteria suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995), the total score was 30 points. The scores awarded to the participants in their selected task items were initially computed and subsequently the scores were averaged in order to work out the performance of the learners in each task item. Secondly, the variables that were incorporated into the task items suggested by Hudson *et al.* (1995, p.49) were identified. Finally, the social variable that was incorporated into the task items was compared to the scores awarded by the native speaking assessors to examine why the learners performed better under some circumstances, in order to explore the extent to which they were influenced by their native language-based social variables.

The first sub-section was designed to investigate the speech act of apology within four scenarios (Task 1-1 to Task 1-4, see Appendix II) and was presented to incorporate the different social variables. All the social variables involved in each task are presented in the following cells of each table.

For example, task 1-1 requested that the learner express their apologies, as they were late home to discuss something concerning the house with their housemates. In this scenario, lower power (-P), smaller social distance (-D) and lower rank (-R) of the imposition were applied. More explicitly, the social status of the responder was lower and the social distance between the responder and the housemates was smaller.

Furthermore, the matter concerning the discussion of something to do with the house did not carry a great obligation, so the relative imposition was considered to be lower.

Table 5.7 below presents the task number, the degree of the three social variables and the average scores.

Table 5.7: The Social Variables involved in Subsection One of Task Two

Task	P	D	R	Average scores
1-1	–	–	–	17
1-2	+	+	–	18
1-3	–	+	+	19
1-4	–	+	–	20

The average scores in this subsection were 17, 18, 19 and 20 points. The findings suggest that the learners performed better in tasks 1-4, followed by tasks 1-3, 1-2 and 1-1. When comparing the average scores, the researcher found that the learners performed better when they were of a lower status (–P) and when the social distance was greater (+D). This was reflected in the tasks, as task 1-3 and task 1-4 involved the same levels of P and D, where the average scores of these two tasks were higher than the remaining tasks.

With respect to the rank (R) of imposition, three –R and one +R were involved in the four tasks in this subsection, as can be seen in Table 5.6. Two –R fell into the lower scores and only one –R fell within the highest score. Therefore, the findings seem not to suggest that the examinees performed better in either the higher or lower rank of imposition.

The second subsection assessed the ability of the learners to initiate requests in four different situational contexts (Task 2-1 to Task 2-4 see Appendix II). Table 5.8 below displays the social variables in subsection two of task two.

Table 5.8: The Social Variables involved in Subsection Two of Task Two

Task	P	D	R	Average scores
2-1	-	+	+	17
2-2	+	-	-	20
2-3	+	+	+	17
2-4	-	+	+	17

The average scores were 17 points in task 2-1, 20 points in task 2-2, 17 points in task 2-3 and 17 points in task 2-4. These findings illustrate that the learners performed at their best when their social distance was smaller (-D) and the imposition was lower (-R).

Similar to the first subsection, it is not clear to observe at which level of relative power the learners performed best. By examining Table 5.7 above, two +P and two -P were involved in the tasks, where one +P is against the highest score and the other +P is against the lowest score. Therefore, the findings seem not to suggest the level of relative power in expressing the requests.

Subsection three was designed to assess the ability of pragmatic competence in terms of refusals. Four scenarios (Task 3-1 to Task 3-4 see Appendix II) were presented in the test and Table 5.9 below presents the findings.

Table 5.9: The Social Variables involved in Subsection Three of Task Two

Task	P	D	R	Average scores
3-1	-	+	+	19
3-2	-	-	+	19
3-3	+	+	-	21
3-4	+	+	-	20

The average scores were 19 points in task 3-1, 19 points in task 3-2, 21 points in task 3-3 and 20 points in task 3-4 as can be seen in Table 5.8 above. The findings suggest that the learners performed better when they were in a higher status environment (+P) and the rank (-R) of the imposition was lower. The findings suggest that the learners made appropriate refusals in the given situational context when the power was higher and the imposition was lower. However, the findings seem not to suggest the level of social distance in expressing the refusals as one +D is against the lowest score and the other two +D is against the higher scores.

5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings in two parts. The first part presented the findings regarding the learners' compensatory strategy usage. The second part reports the results in relation to the learners' pragmatic performance while responding to different social situational tasks.

With respect to the use of the compensatory strategies, the findings suggest that the re-conceptualisation strategy was used more than the substitution strategy. The learners tended to use the strategy of super-ordinate and literal comparison more frequently than other subtypes of substitution strategy, and used the strategy of componential analysis more frequently than other subtypes of the re-conceptualisation strategy. However, the original and conventional strategies included in the substitution strategy and the emotion strategy included in the re-conceptualisation strategy was employed the least by the learners.

By examining the strategy usage in each task, the results showed that the learners attempted to combine some strategies for use in each task item. Moreover, further understanding can be gained as to how the learners operated each strategy; for example, the super-ordinate strategy was used throughout all of the tasks, and the literal comparison strategy was employed while describing only ointment and scarecrow.

There were no great differences between higher and lower scoring learners with the use of strategy. The findings show that the lower scoring learners greatly depended on the strategy of super-ordinate and componential analysis. In contrast, the higher scoring learners did not make frequent use of any particular strategy.

With regards to the learners' pragmatic competence, firstly the findings suggest that the learners did not perform well and the scores awarded by the assessors did not differ greatly across the speech acts of apology, request and refusal. Secondly, while analysing each task item, the findings display that the learners' discourse variances presented across different situational tasks, which involved different social power, distance and the rank of imposition. Moreover, by examining the social variables involving in the tasks against the average score, the findings also show that the learners

performed better under certain conditions, for example, the learners performed better while the power was lower and the social distance was greater in the speech act of apology.

After the presentation of the findings in this chapter, the following chapter will offer a discussion of this study based on these findings.

Chapter Six

Research Discussions

This chapter presents an overview of the performance of intermediate Taiwanese language learners of English in terms of communication strategy usage and pragmatic competence. Findings from this present study also give an indication of the extent to which intermediate Taiwanese language learners of English have developed their communicative competence after their reformed English Education. Therefore, this chapter consists of two sections to enable the researcher to draw upon the findings in order to address the two main research questions presented in the current study.

The first section concerns the performance of the participants in terms of the compensatory strategies. By examining the learners' speech production, the findings reveal that the learners used re-conceptualisation strategy more frequently than the substitution strategy. Moreover, the findings also reveal the way which the learners encoded the target item and operated strategies while responding to task items, as they believed that those strategy usages could contribute communicative effectiveness. Finally, the findings suggested that there were no great differences between higher and lower scoring learners on the strategy usage.

The second section pertains to the performance of the participants in terms of pragmatic competence. The findings showed that the learners did not perform with any great difference in the speech acts of apology, request and refusal. Moreover, the findings also suggested that there were systematic discourse variances found in the learners' speech production while they responded to the tasks. Finally, the findings revealed that the learners performed better under certain situations, which seemed to be influenced by the Chinese culture.

6.1 The Performance of the Learners in terms of Communication Strategies

Since the first section of this activity was designed with interactional tasks to investigate the learners' compensatory strategy usages; the participants had to complete the tasks with their interlocutors during the activity. The purpose of investigating the compensatory strategy usage is to learn how intermediate Taiwanese language learners of English cope with their English deficiency. In this section, three aspects will be discussed; the types of communication strategies employed to cope with their English deficiencies, how the learners operated communication strategies while responding to tasks, and the differences between the higher and lower scoring learners on the use of communication strategies.

6.1.1 Communication Strategies Employed by the Learners

According to the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993), compensatory strategies are identified as being one of three types: substitution, substitution plus and re-conceptualisation strategies. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, it was decided that only the substitution and re-conceptualisation strategies would be adopted into this study to classify the speech sample. Due to the differences between Chinese and English language systems, the substitution plus strategy might not appear in the learners' response. This issue was discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

Between these two compensatory strategies, the re-conceptualisation strategy was used more than twice as frequently as the substitution strategy. This implied that the learners' methods of identifying the objects tended to employ more re-conceptualisation, such as listing the intended lexical items one by one, selecting two lexical items from one lexicon which could be combined into one new word, or adding further information (Poulisse, 1993, p.118).

This finding could therefore be interpreted in terms of the participants favouring the use of the re-conceptualisation strategy based on their chosen methods, which were more inclined to encode the conceptual features through the analysis and manipulation of the intended concept.

This finding also supports the argument of Littlemore (2003). The learners tended to use the re-conceptualisation strategy because it involved being more direct and more related to the immediate perceptual world without involving ‘*a different level of abstraction*’ (Littlemore, 2003, p.339) when compared to the substitution strategy, which was less direct and more idiosyncratic. It is tempting to infer that the learner’s belief in using re-conceptualisation strategy could contribute to a higher level of comprehension of their interlocutors, where direct interpretation of the immediate perceptual word is easier to process, whereas substitution strategy engages a different level of abstraction.

An additional strategy was found in the learners’ speech data and was later identified by the researcher in this study. This additional strategy was different from the strategy that was identified in Tarone’s (1977) study. She proposed *Literal Translation* in the strategy of Conscious Transfer, this occurs ‘*when the learner translates word for word from the native language*’ (p.198). For example, a Mandarin speaker translates the equivalent Mandarin expression to English as: ‘*He invites him to drink*’ to describe two people toasting one another. This example was provided in the strategy of *Literal Translation*. However, the additional strategy was different from this because it was employed to translate the name of the target items from Chinese to English.

This study, moreover, is of importance in the light of the fact that it presents this additional strategy, which had not been proposed by either Poulisse (1993) or Littlemore (2003). It is probably the case that most research concerning communication strategies was carried out in western countries, such as Denmark or France, where the language systems are comparable to that of English. This offers the chance for the learners to transfer their L1 to English. For example, a cuffer (hairdresser, French: *coiffeur*) in Poulisse’s (1990, p.62) study.

Even though the findings show that only four participants employed the additional strategy into their responses and the percentage rate of the additional usage was only 0.8%, it was important to remain aware of every strategy adopted by the learners in order to overcome their English vocabulary deficiency. This additional strategy was only employed by the learners who basically attempted to request that their listeners indicated the target item by means of directly translating it from their L1 (Chinese) to

L2 (English). For example, in the study, S28 described the ‘*Jellyfish*’ by directly translating Chinese names of the target items to English and said ‘*two words in Chinese... water... water... the first word and the second word is mother*’.

The reason for the learners’ use of this additional strategy may be that both participants and their interlocutors speak the same language, that is, Chinese. This resulted in the participants attempting to translate the Chinese name of target objects into English words to their interlocutors and requesting them to assemble each word to guess the target items. However, when learners adopted this strategy too frequently, Chinese interlocutors may have been able to comprehend where English native assessors could not. In other words, even though the Chinese words have been directly translated into English, it is difficult to make the intended meaning comprehensible by native speakers. As a result, the learners who employed this additional strategy obtained a low level of comprehension to native speakers.

Moreover, as Littlemore (2001, p.244) argues, the learners may ‘*make more use of CSs which correspond to their particular cognitive style, as this will involve less mental effort*’. The investigation also revealed that the most frequently used of the subtypes of the substitution strategy was that of super-ordinate to identify the target items, in fact, more than half of the utterances were categorised in this strategy, and the strategy of literal comparison was the second most frequently used subtype (for subtypes of strategies see Chapter 2 Section 2.2.5). The findings suggest that the cognitive style of most learners inclined to refer target items to a higher position within a hierarchy of classification, followed by using the strategy of literal comparison that is, discussion of them through comparison with other objects that shared similarities, or their other strategies such as componential analysis which describe individual features. For example,

When S11 described Jellyfish and uttered,

S11: it’s animal urm... it’s like fish but it’s not fish. It’s under the sea and it’s soft.
(super-ordinate) (literal comparison)

If you were bitten by it, you will die.

S11: no...it’s soft...have many legs

S11: No...

S11: yes....it’s white. One kind of swimming...a kind of swimming

Or, when the S17 described Jellyfish and uttered,

S17: its an animal and its small... it look like...it has many legs and round head and
(super-ordinate) (componential analysis) (componential analysis)
it has different colour...and...you can see it in the water.

S17: no...it is a kind of fish...but it does not look like fish and it is can't be eaten.

The reason behind this type of strategy usage could be that the learners believed it was important to give their interlocutors a general viewpoint of the target items by informing them of the category that the target items belonged to. The advantage of doing so was that their listeners could remain focused on the same category as the learners were attempting to describe. In other words, by employing the super-ordinate strategy followed by literal comparison or other subtypes of re-conceptualisation strategies, the learners believed that they could avoid confusing their interlocutors through misconceiving the family of the target items.

The strategy of literal comparison was used second most frequently among the remaining subtypes of substitution strategy, and it was for the participants to compare the specific feature of their selected items with other objects. As was observed in the learners' speech production, the participants preferred to guide interlocutors towards guessing the target item by directly comparing with other objects in terms of their features without involving any metaphorical thinking. It was not only used followed by the strategy of super-ordinate but it also could be used at the beginning of their responses for comparing the target item with other objects. For example, S15 described 'binocular' and uttered,

S15: They are like glasses but not glasses. People use it to see things far away from
(literal comparison)
them.

Or when S11 described 'cactus' and uttered,

S11: urm...in the desert, there is a plant...urm...it has no leaves
(literal comparison)

S11: in fact, the leaves is like pin... very sharp...you will hurt if you touch it...

S11: yes, in the desert...

When the participants employed this strategy, it could be assumed that they believed this strategy provided more specific indication to the target item and contributed a higher level of comprehension. Unlike the metaphoric comparison, the

learners made less mental effort to encode the target items involving no metaphorical thinking.

The two other subtypes of the substitution strategy, that is, original metaphoric comparison and conventional metaphoric comparison, were used much less frequently (0.7% and 2% respectively). Original metaphoric comparison and conventional metaphoric comparison, as mentioned in Chapter Two, are similar strategies that use the metaphorical method. The findings suggest that the learners seemed not to be accustomed to using a metaphorical means to describe the target items, so these two strategies were adopted far less frequently than the others.

Littlemore and Low (2006) argue that *'being metaphoric' is more an aspect of personal style and as such, some speakers might actively reject it* (p.280). It is reasonable to speculate that the learners in this study did not make a habit of imprinting their own personal styles upon their utterances or become afraid that their metaphors would not be easily understood. Furthermore, they also indicate that creative utterances depend on complete innovation. That is, the learners needed to have creativity to be able to use metaphoric comparison to describe the objects. Therefore, the speakers also need to ensure the hearers were able to understand their metaphoric comparison.

For example, S9 described the roundabout and said, 'It is look like UFO'. By using the metaphoric comparison, his hearer needed to have a similar concept to connect the shape of 'roundabout' to the UFO. Otherwise, this strategy could be confusing to the hearers, and could then be rejected. Therefore, the speakers have to make sure their listeners could understand their metaphoric comparison before using it.

As Wu (2002, p.6) claims, almost every Chinese society neglects and/or discourages the curious exploration and independent thinking processes of students, and as a result learners lose their creativity through their learning. Currently, too much focus is placed upon pen-and-paper tests, where the teaching and learning styles incorporate memorisation and rehearsal strategies in order to respond to standard answers in Taiwan (Wu, 2002; Chiang, 2003). This could provide the reason behind the lack of use of a metaphorical means to describe the target items as it may imply that the learners' imagination was less creative due to the fact that less metaphorical thinking was

involved in their conversation.

It is tempting to speculate that the learners used those two strategies less as Littlemore (2003) suggests that the learners believed that the metaphoric comparison involved a personal concept concerning the target items, where sometimes a certain level of agreement is required, which is not easily transferred from person to person. Perhaps for this reason, the learners were afraid to use it as it may occasionally be treated by their hearers as an error or ambiguous expression.

Regarding the componential analysis strategy, namely, describing the individual parts of the target item, this was employed the most frequently compared to the other strategies (for subtypes of strategies see Chapter 2 Section 2.2.5) within the subtypes of the re-conceptualisation strategy. According to Poullisse (1993), the learners tried to be comprehensible, so the use of reconceptualisation strategy allows the listeners to increase their comprehension of the utterances, but the use of this strategy requires more effort.

Moreover, Littlemore (2003) also claims that the reason behind componential comparison being regarded as the most successful re-conceptualisation strategy is that it helps to minimise cross-cultural differences between two interlocutors, which may result from misunderstandings when describing physical components of items. Componential analysis offers direct information about communication, eliminating cultural differences.

Most learners were inclined to start by naming the family of the target items, followed by a description of the specific features of the target object. More specifically, the participants employed this strategy to describe the target items' colour (*it has different colour*), size (*its small*) and individual features (*it has many legs and round head*). Take S17's response on 'Jellyfish' as an example,

S17: its an animal and its small... it look like...it has many legs and round head and
(super-ordinate) (componential analysis) (componential analysis)
it has different colour...and...you can see it in the water.
(componential analysis)

The second most frequently used subtype of the re-conceptualisation strategy was place. The strategy of place allowed the participants to indicate where the target items can be found. This finding could assume that the participants attempted to refer to the place where the target items can be found to their listeners to allow them to connect the place and target item together. Once the hearers could make connections between the place and the target item, it would be much easier for the listeners to guess the target object. For example, some learners indicated ‘cactus’ and ‘mirage’ in the desert, ‘scarecrow’ in the farm, ‘dragonfly’ in the sky and ‘ostrich’ and ‘otter’ in the zoo.

In addition to this, the other two subtypes of the re-conceptualisation strategy, namely function and activity, show no great differences between them. These two strategies were based on describing the target objects’ functions, or their activities. Based on the viewpoint of this researcher, the slight contrasts in the percentages may be resultant from the various selected tasks. By observing the learners’ speech productions, it could be found that the participants employed the strategy of function when they described some task items such as binocular, ointment and roundabout and used the strategy of activity when they described some task items such as jellyfish, dragonfly and grasshopper. For example,

When S15 described the ‘binocular’ by using the strategy of function uttered,

S15: They are like glasses but not glasses. People use it to see things far away from them.
(function)

When S28 described the ‘ostrich’ by using the strategy of activity uttered,

S28: it’s a bird....big bird very big... and black...it can’t fly but it can run very fast.
(activity)

It could therefore, be concluded that the decision to choose either function or activity was based on their selection of the target items. For example, if the target items were creatures involving activity, the learners would easily have indicated this activity.

The strategy of extra information was employed at a similar percentage rate as the strategies of function and activity and this strategy allowed the participants to provide further relevant information. Originally, the strategy of extra information was not included in the subtype of re-conceptualisation strategy proposed by the typology of Littlemore (2003). Later it was named by this researcher as the strategy of extra

information because this strategy was used by the learners when they provided some further information rather than describing the activity or function of the target item, or the place where the target item can be found, or the emotion inspired by the target item. That is, such utterances were more appropriately classified into this category as they did not directly describe the features of the target items, but linked something else to the objects.

Based on the learners' speech productions, it was found that learners used the strategy of extra information to describe the target items, which could be identified into three categories. The first category provides some background knowledge of target item, the second provides an example or describing a situation concerning the target item, and the last provides some related information rather than directly describe the target item. The following examples illustrate the categories.

- (1.) Providing some background knowledge of the target item, for example,

When S9 described the target item 'roundabout', he said

S9: the water is...urm its body has many water almost 80% maybe.
(extra information)

- (2.) Providing an example or describing a situation concerning the target item, for example,

When S30 describe the target item 'ostrich' and said,

S30: this is an animal and look like a bird but it can't fly. It is very big. When something or someone or other animals are going to hurt them or kill them...they put their heads under the ground and they think they can't see that.
(extra information)

- (3.) Providing some related information rather than directly describing the target item, for example, S19 described the target item 'dragonfly', he said,

S19: it always appear after raining....near pond...and its baby lives in the pond...
(extra information)

When providing the background information, examples and some related information, the participants firstly had to evaluate the knowledge of their listeners and make sure as to whether or not their listeners obtained this knowledge or information. Also, this strategy involves certain levels of risk when their listeners did not obtain the required knowledge, resulting in ineffectual communication in their intended meaning not being conveyed effectively to their listeners.

Furthermore, the reasons behind the participants providing extra information could be that the participants had their own individual preferences not to describe the target items directly because this may have been too difficult. In addition to this, it may also imply that employing this strategy in their responses could be more effective than directly describing the target items.

Finally, the strategy of emotion, in particular, was employed at a very low percentage rate; in fact only 4%. This finding supports the viewpoint of Littlemore (2003, p.339); she argues that the emotion category is a rather subjective category and concerns personal points of view. Based on the Chinese culture, people tend to be more conservative and implicit in relation to their feelings in contrast to Western culture. Part of this reason could be that the emotions inspired by the target items could be down to individual feeling, and this feeling reflected on the speakers and listeners need to reach agreement. Therefore, based on the percentage rate of strategy usage, it could be assumed that this strategy was considered as a less used and ineffective strategy but requiring more mental effort than other subtypes.

According to the learners' speech data, the learners used this strategy only 14 times, and less than half of the participants employed this strategy while responding to task items. Mostly, the learners focused on describing four task items; which are jellyfish, cactus, ointment and mirage. The emotions inspired by those target items were limited and mostly only focused on the feeling of hurt. For example,

When S15 described the task item 'cactus', he uttered

S15: They are plants... they are lives in the hot place. If you touch their leaves, it will maybe let you feel hurts.
(emotion)

Further to the discussion of the compensatory strategy used by the learners, the next consideration will be to explore how the learners operated the strategies while responding to task items. The findings show that the strategies were employed by the participants based on the types of task items. Therefore, the following sections will be devoted to discussing the reasons why the learners intended to use those particular strategies in the task items in order to facilitate the comprehension of the interlocutors.

6.1.2 The Operation of the Compensatory Strategy

This communicative task based activity was designed as an interactional task so that the speakers and their interlocutors completed the tasks together, in comparison to other studies where the participants were requested to complete the tasks individually. Therefore, the utterances of the participants in this study might be shorter to provide a rough concept concerning the objects. It is reasonable to suggest that the learners may have expected their interlocutor to interact with them when completing the tasks so that they only provided shorter responses and encouraged their listeners to ask for more details. As a result, more communication strategies would be elicited during their interaction in comparison to the other studies, where interaction did not take place as they only required the learners to describe pictures individually. Obtaining rich data from more communication strategy usages of the participants would be beneficial to this researcher, to investigate how the learners operated their communication strategies in order to aid the comprehension of their interlocutors while interacting.

A total of 12 task items were presented in the first section of this activity and were divided into two types of task, namely Task type A and B. Both types involved six task items and each participant was required to select four out of six task items to complete this section. The decision made by the learners was dependent on the learners' interests and confidence on the task items so that some task items were selected more frequently than the others.

According to the findings, most participants inclined to use the strategy of super-ordinate while they responded to each task item involved in this study. As mentioned earlier, the participants considered to refer target items to a higher position within a hierarchy of classification, followed by other strategies such as literal comparison or componential analysis. The purpose of using this strategy could be that the speakers guided their hearers to remain on the family of target items and then waited for further information from the speakers.

Littlemore's (2003) finding indicates that the super-ordinate strategy does not contribute to the communicative effectiveness because the super-ordinate strategy tended to be obscure, as it did not sufficiently provide enough specific information. As the learners in this study tended to employ this strategy in almost every task item it

could be implied that the behaviour of the learners in describing the target items was always perceived as moving from the broader to a narrower scope. Moreover, it could be assumed that the learners considered the advantage of using this strategy was that this strategy allowed the speakers to prevent their hearers from leading themselves into the wrong category of target items by sticking to the same kind of category. For example,

When S19 described the dragonfly, he started using the strategy of super-ordinate, followed by the strategy of componential analysis. His utterances were as follows,

S19: this is an insect. It has four wings and its body is round and long.

(super-ordinate)

(componential analysis)

S19: it always appear after raining....near pond...and its baby lives in the pond...

Examining the learners' strategy usages in each task item, the findings suggest that the strategies of literal comparison and function were used by most participants when responding to the task items, 'ointment' and 'scarecrow'.

It could be seen that the participants were more focused on dealing with these two objects as a whole than comparing them with other objects to use the strategy of literal comparison. The task item 'ointment' was compared to 'the cream' and 'scarecrow' was compared to 'not real people'. Furthermore, most participants also considered these two task items from their functions; 'ointment' is the treatment for the cut in the skin and 'scarecrow' is for scaring the bird, therefore using the strategy of function to describe them.

As for the task item, 'binoculars', most participants particularly discuss its function as the learners considered the equipment by thinking of its function first. Similarly, the task item 'roundabout' was also concerned by most participants regarding its function.

In relation to the strategy of componential analysis, as mentioned earlier, this was also followed by the strategy of super-ordinate. It is evident that most participants used the strategies of componential analysis in such task items as 'jellyfish', 'cactus', 'otter', 'dragonfly', 'ostrich' and 'grasshopper' and those tasks were classified into three types; the plants, insects, and animals. The reason behind this could be that the learners

believed the creatures and plants were easily to be comprehensible by referring them to a hierarchy of classification and then analysing their individual parts.

In addition, when the participants described the creatures, the strategy of activity was also considered as effective. It is evident that the learners employed this strategy to describe the task items such as 'jellyfish', 'otter', 'dragonfly', 'ostrich', 'grasshopper' and 'squid'. Because every creature obtains its own special activity such as jumping and swimming, it was perhaps useful to employ this strategy while responding to the target items of this kind.

The hearers would also have benefited when the learners indicated the origin of target items by employing the strategy of place. This strategy could encourage the hearers to connect the target items with the places they belong to. The findings suggest that most participants employed this strategy, in particular, when they described the task items such as 'jellyfish', 'cactus', 'otter', 'dragonfly', 'mirage' and 'scarecrow'.

The reason behind this could be that the participants considered the place to be significant to the target items which they referred to. For example, the learners employed this strategy and responded to the task items such as 'mirage' and 'cactus' as in the desert as these target objects would not usually be seen in their life. They also used this strategy when responding to the task items such as 'otter' is in the zoo, and 'scarecrow' is in the field as this is the place they would usually be found. Therefore, they preferred to indicate the place of the target item to their listeners in these two circumstances.

Furthermore, when most participants, in particular, responded to the task items such as 'dragonfly' 'ostrich' and 'mirage', they preferred to use the strategy of extra information. There were two reasons for the learners employing this strategy into their responses. One is that they believed that the target items could not be explained well by only focusing on describing the target items themselves, for example, the description of 'dragonfly' and 'ostrich'. It could be assumed that the reason for using this strategy on these two target objects was that several creatures obtain the same figures, activities, or exist in the same place as the target items. Therefore, by providing extra information for these two target items could allow them to be distinguished from other objects. The

other reason is that the learners may have considered that the task items could be difficult to describe purely on its own feature, like the description of 'mirage'. As a result, providing extra information may be a more effective way to indicate the target items.

However, the risk of using this strategy was that the learners had to ensure that the hearers also obtained the same knowledge concerning the target items as they did; otherwise this strategy would fail to be used when conveying their intended meaning. For example, S13 described the dragonfly and provided some extra information. He said '*some children play with this kind of insect which made of bamboo*'. When the hearers had no idea about this kind of toy, which was made of bamboo and whose shape looks like a dragonfly, they would not understand what the speaker was attempting to indicate.

Finally, the strategies of original and conventional metaphoric comparison in the subtypes of substitution strategy were used less frequently by participants. The findings suggest that even though the participants used the strategies of metaphoric comparison less frequently and was only employed by few learners, they used this strategy in various types of task items such as 'jellyfish', 'dragonfly' and 'roundabout'.

For example, in this study, a learner, S9, spoke about a roundabout by saying '*it is look like UFO*'. Whether he could successfully achieve his communicative goal, depended on how the listener coped interpretively with his metaphor.

Similarly, the strategy of emotion was also less used by the participants and focus was on describing the task items which are 'jellyfish', 'ointment', 'cactus' and 'mirage'. In this study, 14 participants used this strategy where the emotions inspired by the task items promoted only two feelings, one is hurt and the other is tired and thirsty. The learners' feeling of hurt was encouraged by the task items, for example, jellyfish bites, touching the cactus and the treatment of ointment for a hand cut. The other feeling was tired and thirsty to describe mirage and these feelings were evoked to explain this phenomenon.

However, the personal feeling was abstract and it could be different from one person to another so that they only limitedly express their emotion towards to the target

items as they were also afraid of misleading their listeners. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Chinese culture is more conservative and the personal emotion was not easy to express. These reasons could explain the reason why the participants did not favour its use.

In conclusion, the learners attempted to operate communication strategies to allow them to achieve comprehension with little effort at the same time. Some strategies were used on most task items but others were not. The learners had their own reasons and decisions while employing strategies. In this study, most learners seemed to obtain the similar strategy usages on encoding the task items. As a result, this researcher could learn how learners operated the strategies on the task items and the reasons behind the strategies used by most participants on encoding the task items.

After discussion of the strategies employed by the learners in task items, the researcher is interested in further exploring the differences between high and low scoring learners in the strategy usages. These results will be discussed in the next section.

6.1.3 The Difference between Higher and Lower Scoring Learners on Using the Compensatory Strategy

The findings illustrated that both higher and lower scoring learners employed more re-conceptualisation strategy than substitution strategy and used the strategy of re-conceptualisation around twice as much as the strategy of substitution strategy. The findings also showed that both higher and lower scoring learners used similar strategies in responding to the task items. The only difference was that the lower scoring learners used the additional strategy, namely the speakers requested the interlocutors to translate English words into Chinese and assemble them to gain the Chinese name of target objects.

As for employing the additional strategy, it could be assumed that the learners did not obtain sufficient English ability to express themselves well. Instead, they required their interlocutors to translate English words into Chinese to guess the name of the target object. By using this strategy, two interlocutors needed to share the same or similar language systems. In this study, the participants speak the same language,

namely Chinese. As a result, it provided an opportunity for the lower scoring learners to use this strategy to solve their English deficiency. For example, S27 described 'jellyfish',

S27: they live in the sea....and...it seems to float everywhere.

S27: two words in Chinese....water...water the first word... and....and...the second word is mother.....

S27: you put two words together.....water mother....

When the lower scoring learners gave up describing the target items, they intended to use additional strategy. The above example showed that S27 attempted to describe the target item by using the strategy of place and activity first. However, later he found the difficulties in his language resources. Subsequently, he developed a plan to request that his interlocutor translate English words into Chinese and then to assemble those words in order to gain the name of the target item. More explicitly, the reasons behind this could be assumed to be that the lower scoring learners lacked in vocabulary and lost the confidence to express their intended meaning. Alternatively, they employed additional strategy to overcome their difficulty in expression and intended to achieve their communication goals.

However, the higher scoring learners had higher English proficiency, so they could understand how to convey the intended meaning effectively to facilitate their interlocutors through the choice of appropriate strategies. In other words, the higher scoring learners obtained rich English resources enable them to make communication smoothly and effectively to convey their intended meaning through the choice of appropriate strategy. Therefore, this could be the reason why the higher scoring learners did not use the additional strategy in their responses.

In relation to the subtypes of the substitution strategy, lower scoring learners inclined to use more the strategy of super-ordinate (22.7%) than the strategy of literal comparison (9.1%). It could be speculated that the strategy of literal comparison requires the learners to use more vocabulary and complex grammatical structures to compare the target items to others. By contrast, the strategy of super-ordinate, was used to refer to the target item to a higher position within a hierarchy of the classification so that the learners only needed to utter the name of family to which the target items

belongs, for example, 'it is a insect' or 'a kind of plant'. This did not require the learners to use higher level of vocabulary to describe the target objects. As the lower scoring learners did not obtain enough vocabulary ability in order to express themselves, it could be understandable the fact that they preferred to use the strategy of super-ordinate more frequently.

The percentages of the strategies of literal comparison (18.4%) and super-ordinate (14.9%) which were used by the higher scoring learners did not appear to be greatly different. Interestingly, the higher scoring learners more the literal comparison strategy than the strategy of super-ordinate. The reason behind this could be that the higher scoring learners obtained rich vocabulary and grammatical knowledge so that they did not need to greatly depend on any particular strategy. Because of their greater communicative potential, they were aware of their constraints on their target language resources and had the ability to predict the possible problems that may have arisen in their planning process, so a proper strategy could be chosen by the speakers whilst communication was taking place.

Moreover, by examining the tasks selected by the higher and lower scoring learners, it was found that the higher and lower scoring learners selected similar tasks to respond to. Slight differences in the choice of the tasks were that the higher scoring learners chose 'mirage' and 'jellyfish' more frequently while the lower scoring learners responded to 'grasshopper' more frequently. As for the rest of the task items, the higher and lower scoring learners responded to them in similar numbers.

Based on the findings, it could be a reasonable explanation that the higher scoring learners used the strategy of place more frequently as they selected the task items such as 'mirage' and 'jellyfish'. By contrast, the lower scoring learners selected the task items, 'grasshopper' more frequently; which could explain reason why they employed the strategy of activity more frequently.

Regarding the strategy of extra information, the higher scoring learners used it more frequently than the lower scoring learners. By providing further information concerning the target objects, the learners needed to produce more utterances. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that the higher scoring learners obtained higher English

ability which allowed them to explain themselves well by using this strategy.

This finding is accordance with the finding of Chen (1990), which showed that the higher English proficiency learners tended to use the strategy of circumlocution, which required the learners to use more language while the lower English proficiency learners preferred to use the strategy of code-switching, which is related to their first language. Therefore, this explained the reason why the lower scoring learners in this study did not favour the use of the strategy of extra information because they had limited English ability.

In addition to discussing the differences of strategy usage between the higher and the lower scoring learners, the researcher also intended to explore how the higher and lower scoring learners used the same strategy at the same task item based on the participants' responses.

By examining speech production data in this study, it was discovered that the lower scoring learners also employed various compensatory strategies during communication. When the lower scoring learners employed the same communication strategies as the high scoring learners, unfortunately the level of comprehension did not improve and resulted in their intended meaning not being explicit.

When considering the issue of the same strategy being adopted by both higher and lower proficiency learners, those low in proficiency could not perform in an equivalent way to the high scoring learners. That is, it is believed that even though the higher and lower scoring learners adopted the same strategy, the higher scoring learners could use it more effectively than the low proficiency learners. The reason for this does not concern the understanding of the use of the communication strategies, but rather the well expressed, grammatically accurate words within their speech.

When massive grammatical errors and inappropriate language use occurs within conversation, the information cannot be delivered properly and thus causes the communication to break down. This suggests that limited vocabulary, grammatical mistakes or inappropriate language usage could be the reason why the low scoring learners used the same strategy as the higher scoring learners but their communication

could not be effective.

There are some examples to illustrate this argument. The responses of the highest scoring learner (S14) and the lowest scoring learner (S3) can be used as examples in order to support this issue. Where the task required the learners to describe ‘binoculars’, S3 employed the strategy of function and said ‘*you see it to see...urm...people are very far*’, while S15 also adopted the same strategy but he said ‘*people use it to see things far away from them*’. These two responses account for the differences between the high scoring learners (S15) and the low scoring learners (S3), in using the same communication strategy and suggest that the high scoring learners make their communication more effective. Whereas, the low scoring learners held limited knowledge of the target language thus affecting their communicative effectiveness in terms of the level of comprehension, producing the potential to make massive grammatical errors by adopting inappropriate language usage. This may have resulted in their utterances becoming incomprehensible, and furthermore, providing insufficient information to their interlocutors.

Another example made by S2 and S8 describing ‘grasshopper’ by using the same strategies, namely super-ordinate and followed by componential analysis and activity. The lower scoring learner (S2) inclined to use short statement and a single word.

S2: it’s an animal...

S2: green body...

S2: green...

S2: very little...

S2: it can jump.

S2: no...no...little..

S2: animal...very little...

By contrast, the higher scoring learner (S8) was able to make longer utterances with comprehensive meaning.

S8: it’s a kind of insects...green and it can jump

S8: no...no...it’s an insect

As for the longer utterances with comprehensive meaning, the higher scoring learner (S28) described ‘scarecrow’ illustrating this situation with correct grammatical structure and provided more information.

S28: there is a man. He is made of dry grass and is in the farm. It's not the real people.
Farmer uses it to scare the birds.

This researcher agrees with the interpretation of Chen (1990) in relation to the issue of communication strategies used by lower proficiency learners. As Chen (1990) argues, the low proficiency learners have limitations in their target language which may have affected their surface realisation of the communication strategies, in terms of the grammatical accuracy and informative value. In this case, lower scoring learners would have made grammatical errors and provided insufficient information to their interlocutors. Therefore, Chen (1990) concludes that '*the communication strategies employed by high proficiency learners might have been more effective than the same communication strategies employed by low proficiency learners*' (p. 176).

After discussion of the results from the first section of the activity, the researcher will now discuss the findings from the activity investigating the learners' pragmatic competence in the following sections.

6.2 The Performance of the learners on Pragmatic Competence

The results shed light on the research question and offered an explanation by gaining an understanding of the level of pragmatic competence of the learners. In order to elicit the reasons for the lower scores of the learners in the three speech acts, the following discussion includes the discussion of the findings in relation to the way in which learners did not perform better in the three speech acts; the discussion of the findings on different levels of social variables resulting in the learners' discourse variances and the choice of the pragmatic strategies, and the discussion of the findings regarding how the learners performed better in some situations than the others.

According to the findings, it could be suggested that the differences were not distinct amongst the three speech acts performed. The learners did not perform well on the three speech acts (the average score of the three speech acts were 18.5, 17.75 and 19.75 points). It is therefore arguable that the pragmatic knowledge of the learners, in terms of the three speech acts, was at a similar level.

A reason for the poor performance across the three speech acts could be interpreted in terms of the learners' own cultural values, namely, the way in which the Chinese culture affected them when responding to the task items. More explicitly, due to the cultural differences that exist between western and eastern societies, politeness can be performed and interpreted in different ways, where sometimes it may be considered as inappropriate speech behaviour in one culture compared to another.

It may also be possible that the natural transfer of the pragmatic strategies takes place from the learners' native language, where such strategies are universal and appropriate when corresponding to their target language contexts. Language specific transfer, however, cannot always be applied to the target language context as it may result in a negative transfer; that is, pragmatic failure. Explicitly, negative transfer is associated with the learners' native language rules in order to converse in a second language. This can account for the speech data in this study that resulted in negative pragmatic transfer, which therefore did not lead to appropriateness and satisfaction by the native speaking assessors.

In this study, the researcher attempted to explore the extent of learners' pragmatic competence when they encountered different social situations. Based on the findings in this study, the learners' discourse variances revealed that the reasons why the participants did not perform better in the speech acts, it could be assumed that the learners were affected by the Chinese culture when they used the pragmatic strategy in responding to the tasks. The following sections will be divided into three parts; the discussion will commence with the speech act of apology, and then the speech act of request, and subsequently, the speech act of refusal.

6.2.1 The Speech Act of Apologies

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), apologising is primarily an example of negative politeness addressing hearer face needs. Chinese people consider the apology as a community-based face rather than an individual one. That is, when a Chinese person offends another, their '*ideal social identity*' is highly threatened, as opposed to a similar situation in an English speaking environment.

More explicitly, many Chinese scholars, such as Ho (1993), mention that the Chinese culture has a relational orientation, that is, the interpersonal relationship has a significant existence in Chinese society. Therefore, Chinese culture deems that the function of apology is on restoring the speaker's public image rather than on disarming a potential aggressive situation and restoring social harmony.

Therefore, they always denigrate themselves when committing an offence in order to bring about a sense of harmony. In other words, the focus of the respect and subordination to authorities is of main concern, and respect for others is often shown by means of denigrating oneself (Oliver, 1971).

Based on the code scheme of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) proposed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989, p.289-91), the finding in this study suggested that the Taiwanese learners of English tended to use apology intensification, which uses intensifying expression with the illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) such as to say sorry or apologize. Intensifiers of the apology can be accomplished by intensifying adverbials such as, '*I am very/terribly/so /really/awfully sorry*', double intensifier or repletion of intensifying adverbials such as, '*I'm really dreadfully sorry/I'm very, very sorry*', please such as '*please forgive me*', concern for the hearer such as '*I hope I didn't upset you*' or combinations of the above strategies (Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989, p.290-91). A typical example in this study was when the learner S6 responded to task 1-1 by saying;

'Urm...I am sorry, I am late today...mmm I've got something to do. So...may I say so so sorry...I am apologise...can I do something to...urm could you forgive me'

This finding is accordance with the study of Lee (2006) that investigated the apology realisation of advance EFL learners in Taiwan. Both studies suggest that the learners used a great number of intensification to admit the offences they committed and took responsibility for the given interactional violation. Moreover, the learners' non-native-like performance in intensification is also support the study of Cohen *et al.* (1986). He discovered that the use of intensifiers in performing apology was strikingly different between non-native learners and native speakers.

By making apology intensification, the learners attempted to use intensification to strengthen their apology, such responses in task 1-1 seemed to be regarded as inappropriate. This finding is in accordance with Lee's (2006) and Hou's (2006) studies, which suggest that the learners tended to use a great number of intensifications in the situations with a low severity of offence in order to express their apology. This seems to slightly deviate from an English native speaker's perspective and is therefore considered as an inappropriate response to the situation. Similarly, this was reflected in the findings of this study.

The study of Lee (2006) shows that the learners in her study used more intensification to strengthen the apology, and the use of intensifiers in the apology was different from the native speakers, and particularly, when the learners committed a mild offence, for example, bumping into a lady. Similar to the way in which the learners in this study adopted the apology intensification to express their deep regret in the situation such as knocking down the menu (task 1-2). The reason for this could be assumed that they tended to pursue the social harmony as most Chinese people do when they commit an offence. However, this intensifying expression did not facilitate the learners to be more polite in this situation; on the other hand, the hearers may have considered the responses to be inappropriate to the English social situational context.

These findings are also in line with the study by Hou (2006), which investigated the apology realisation of EFL learners on Chinese speakers. In her study, the findings revealed that the Chinese speakers make a grovelling apology while making apology and tend to apologise regardless of the rank of imposition by using intensification.

According to this apologetic and grovelling behaviour, the responses from the selected task 1-1 differed to native English speakers' behaviours. For example, a learner, S16, responded to the task 1-1 by saying, '*Urm...I am sorry, I am late today...mmm I've got something to do. so...may I say so so sorry...I am apologise...can I do something to.. urm could you forgive me*'.

According to Lazare (2004, p.1), the purpose of an apology is for reconciliation and the restoration of broken relationships. The strategy of taking on responsibility is a device to admit their offence in order to heal humiliations and resentments. Followed by

intensively using the strategy of apology intensification by most learners through the four tasks, this researcher also found that the learners employed the strategy of explaining the account or cause. That is, the learners explained the reasons and used the strategy of taking on responsibility when they committed an offence. In particular, they were in a lower social power (-P).

According to Chen's (2003) study, he explained that 'authority' exists in Chinese culture so that Chinese people considered that the superior speakers offended someone who is in an inferior social status, they do not necessarily apologize. This offers a plausible explanation that the learners in this study considered that it was necessary to provide the reason for their offences when they were in a lower social power.

Furthermore, Xiao (2005) claims that Chinese culture has a relational orientation. In other words, the social distance plays an essential role in Chinese culture whilst making an apology. In order to pursue the social harmony, Chinese people consider maintaining a good relationship with others as important. In addition to this, Lee (2006) indicates, Chinese speakers seldom deny their involvement in the offence and attempt to take responsibility for the given interactional violation. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that learners in this study used the strategy of explaining the reason and taking on responsibility together in order to be polite in order to gain forgiveness on the part of the offended parties.

Moreover, they also attempted to use the strategy of promise of forbearance when the learners were in a lower social power (-P). By using the strategy of promise of forbearance, it was another approach to admit their offence by promising not to commit the same offence in the future for pursuing the social harmony. Therefore, when the lower social status speakers (-P) beg forgiveness from their interlocutors, they tended to use the strategy of promise of forbearance.

For example, in the third task, the learner was required to apologize to his supervisor because he arrived at work late. In expressing their apology, admitting their offence and explaining the reason was not enough to beg forgiveness, however, when the learners make a commitment not to happen in the future, this could be considered by the hearers that the learners felt themselves commit serious offences and they intended

to improve their misbehaviour. This supports the viewpoint of Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989), ‘*whenever the speaker’s sense of guilt is strong enough, he or she may feel the need promise that the offensive act will never occur again*’ (p.293).

Moreover, the learners attempted to use the strategy of offering repair to someone who was not intimate to them, that is, social distance is greater (+D). This finding is in the line with the study of Kim (2001); the Korean culture belongs to the oriental culture where the social cultural norms are similar. In his study, the results showed that Korean EFL learners tended to use the strategy of offer of repairs more frequently in strangers in comparison to friends and acquaintances. In other words, the learners in the study of Kim (2001) obtained similar behaviours as Chinese people, as pursuing the social harmony and keeping a good relationship is important in Chinese society (Xiao, 2005). Therefore, they considered showing their apology by offering repair in order to compensate their offences, which is important to maintain a good relationship, in particular, when the social distance was greater (+D).

The learners in this study used the strategy of offering repair when the worker in the shop kept his customer waiting as he was on an important call. Therefore, to offer repair is essential in providing a good service to satisfy his customers according to the Chinese culture. Similarly, Kim (2001) argues that the waiter in Korean culture should provide the best manner for the waiter to use the offer of repair strategy to satisfy the customer in the restaurant.

In addition, the findings also suggested that the learners used the strategy of offering repair when the rank of imposition was lower (-R). It could be assumed that the learners might evaluate the imposition when they considered offering repair. Once the rank of imposition was higher, they might not be able to offer repair because the higher rank of imposition could be beyond their ability to fulfil their commitment. Therefore, it was reasonable to explain that the learner inclined to offer repair to compensate their offences when the rank of imposition was lower.

Moreover, based on the findings, the learners performed better when the power was lower (-P) and social distance was greater (+D).

Recent researchers such as Gu (1990, 1992) and Mao (1994) take similar viewpoints. As learners assumed their power was lower (-P) in most situations in which they performed better, this may explain that the Chinese tradition influences their choice of pragmatic strategy when expressing their apologies. Because of this, they attempted to use the strategies to take responsibility, explain the account or cause, and promise of forbearance to show their politeness manner.

The findings also suggest that when the social distance was greater (+D), the learners could cope with the situation more effectively. As mentioned earlier, Chinese culture is relation orientated and Chinese people believe that relationships are very important to Chinese society. Therefore, Chinese people need to keep good relationship with others in order to pursue the social harmony. This culture phenomena could help to explain why the learners attempted to maintain a good relationship by offering repair to compensate their offences, in particular, when the social distance was greater (+D).

Moreover, the learners were influenced by Chinese tradition while making apology, resulting in a poor performance. For example, *S11* response in the task 1-2, said, '*sorry, sorry, I just mess it up, I just a child so please forgive me...don't be so serious to me*'. Such a response illustrates that this learner intended to remind the hearer that he was a child so he did not need to take any responsibility and should be forgiven. Based on this response, the hearer might assume that the speaker did not want to admit his offence; alternatively, he intended to pretend that he was a child and whatever he had done should be forgiven.

This behaviour may follow the Chinese norm which teaches Chinese people to be kind to children and what they have done should be forgiven (Jin, 1993). This learner's performance could be interpreted as poor and inappropriate. In other words, this inappropriate response does not minimise the offence which was committed by the speaker, and further they fail on achieving politeness as the hearer might believe that the apology of the speaker was not sincere.

This response stemmed from the influence of the Chinese culture which always promotes that people should be friendly and kind to others, in particular, the child (Jin, 1993). The western culture may not follow the same rules in this instance, for example,

Xu (2001) claims that the Western parents treat their children differently to Chinese parents. She believes that the children in Western culture are treated as adults by taking responsibility for their behaviour. In contrast, Chinese parents have different attitude to their children by forgiving their mistakes to show their patience and tolerance. Therefore, she suggests that Chinese parents give their children a chance to be more responsible while making mistakes. Under these circumstances, the expression in this task could be accepted in the Chinese culture, the native English speaking assessors did not really agree that his expression was polite in manner.

Based on these discussions, it can be acknowledged that the learners used the apology strategies in many situations followed by Chinese culture and resulted in inappropriateness and impoliteness behaviour in English social contexts. In particular, the learners used apology intensification in all situations which was great differences between native and non-native English speakers while making apology.

6.2.1.2 The Speech Act of Requests

Requests can be defined as the speakers desire for their hearers to perform a specified action. Without making requests appropriately, the desired goal of the speakers may not be achieved and the hearers may feel embarrassed and the interpersonal relationship may therefore be damaged. In other words, the choice of strategies in making a request is regarded as an essential role in order to reach the intended goal.

The individualism rooted in the English culture is opposite to the Chinese culture, of collectivism. The English speaker qualifies the requests, as it serves to emphasise individuality and personal autonomy and abhors interfering in other's business (Wiersbicka, 1991), English speaking culture is influenced by negative politeness, which requires the speaker to emphasise tact and avoid redressing threats face. When the speaker uses negative politeness, by means of adopting indirect strategy in making a request, they leave the possibility of an option to the hearers, of declining their requests on one hand, and maximising their chance that the intended meaning will take effect on the other.

Yu (2004), by contrast, claims that much research reveals that native Chinese speakers' speech act behaviour is very different from the behaviour of the native English

speakers. Chinese culture is influenced by positive politeness, which requires the speaker to use more direct request strategy. As Cheng (2006) argues, Chinese speakers often directly express their requests based on the presumption of co-operation and intimacy. This is because Chinese speakers believe that the direct strategies serve to emphasise intimacy, informality, closeness, solidarity, and in-group relationships; therefore, Chinese speakers consider making requests as consistent with positive politeness orientation.

Similarly, a number of Chinese scholars such as Jia (1998) clarify how direct requests are much more widespread and accepted in a number of non-western languages as they focus on the harmony of the group and the hierarchical position within the group. However, this challenges the findings of Blum-Kulka (1989) which derived from the theory of Brown and Levinson (1978) and assumed that the more indirect the utterance, the more polite it becomes. Therefore, the Chinese request was that the notions of directness and politeness did not represent parallel dimensions.

After adopting the request strategy code scheme as proposed by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) to examine the learners' responses, firstly, the findings suggest that the learners attempted to use 'addresser' as terms of address such as title or role when the situation involved a lower social power (-P).

This result could be interpreted that the Chinese people preferred to add a title or a role to the hearers as a sign of respect. Particularly, when the relationship between two individuals was unequal; the inferior is supposed to initiate an address term or the use of an addressing term for most occupational titles in order to show their respect. For example, S18 and S28 used terms such as '*Landlord*' and '*Manager*' to draw the hearer's attention to the ensuing speech act. Similarly, according to Zhang (1995), by using address terms could create pleasing atmosphere which is more likely to increase the possibility of success in a request. It could be assumed that when the hearers felt more respected by being addressed by their titles or roles, they may have been more willing to satisfy the speakers' request.

If the inferior does not do so, this will be regarded as a challenge to the social position of the superior and be criticised for being impolite (Gu, 1990, p.251) in

Chinese culture. In contrast, in English culture it is believed that everyone is of an equal status; therefore a different manner is used to that in the Chinese culture.

Moreover, the researcher discovered that the strategies used by the learners were mostly conventionally indirect strategy, for instance, where utterances contained 'could you'. This finding is in line with that of Zhang's (1995) study and his results revealed that the conventionally indirect strategies and the direct strategy were two of the most commonly used in Chinese request strategies. Specifically, the conventionally indirect strategy was used more frequently than the direct strategy.

As the conventionally indirect strategy is the most frequently used strategy among Chinese people in Zhang's (1995) study, and throughout other research, such as the studies of Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Kasper and Dahl (1991), they also suggest that the conventionally indirect strategy is also favoured more by English speakers. Therefore, it is suggested that the Chinese request strategy may share a similarity to the English request strategy in terms of using conventionally indirectness by saying 'can you...?' in the utterances.

The reason behind this could be that the conventionally indirect strategy obtains its potential to achieve the speakers' intended goal. In order to save hearers' faces and the desire to give hearers a way out, speakers tend to use conventional indirectness. In doing so, the utterances go on record, and speakers express their intention indirectly. This also supports the claim that the form of conventional indirectness is universal as reported in Brown and Levinson (1987, p.132). Moreover, as Zhang (1995) claims '*conventional indirectness allows speakers to express their requestive intent unambiguously while being polite at the same time. Illocutionary, referential and relational goals can thus be achieved with maximum efficiency*' (p.47-48).

When discussing the biggest difference between Chinese and English requests it is important to highlight that Chinese people tend to frequently employ direct strategies as being the main linguistic device in alleviating the face-threatening force when making a request (Yu, 1999). They express their sincere and polite manner through considerable use of imperatives (e.g. 'please take it for me.'). consistent with the social image that Chinese people adhere to in mutual interaction. This is, Chinese people used the direct

strategy to emphasize intimacy and in-group relationship.

Comparing the two cultures on making requests provides evidence to suggest that the social cultural norms affect the learners' use of direct strategies, such as imperatives to make requests, as the learners intended to group the hearers into their social community. Therefore, Chinese requests are considered to be polite when adopting a direct strategy, such as imperatives and 'want' statements, to seek agreement and belongingness in order to develop the emotional bond between speakers and hearers (Zhang, 1995; Jia, 1998).

Politeness in Chinese has been introduced as the first to bring the notion of Li in the book of Li-Ji. It discusses moral lessons for interpersonal interaction with the view to secure harmony and hierarchy in society (Chang, 2001, p.10). For instance, the feudal hierarchical and order relationships in ancient times indicate the speakers must talk and behave according to the position or status.

This tradition reflects on the present study. The findings confirmed this phenomenon and presented that the learners used the strategies of imperative and want statements more frequently in the tasks which involved a higher social power (+P).

Similarly, Lee-Wong (1994) concluded that in Chinese tradition, people use the direct request strategy under three principles; the first is where the request is deemed to be easily carried out, the second is where both interactants are familiar or socially close, and the last is where the speaker is in a position of power of authority.

Being indirect can sometimes be regarded as inappropriate in English contexts whereas being direct (i.e. using imperatives) is polite in Chinese culture (Lee-Wong, 1994, p.509). For instance, if a manager asks his/her secretary to do something for him/her in terms of using conventional indirect instead of direct strategies, it may imply '*displeasure or irony or else something is amiss*' (Lee-Wong, 1994, p.504).

Therefore, the imperative in Chinese language can imply both command as well desire and wish (Cheng, 2006), but this behaviour seemed to challenge politeness in the western culture and be considered as impolite because English imperative requests are

more often used to express commands, instructions or offers.

Lee-Wong (1994) also claimed that the learners in his study had a strong preference for direct forms, such as '*take a picture for me*' combined with such lexical politeness markers as 'please'. Chinese imperative requests are frequently used and are acceptable, because the Chinese morphological system for making the imperative is more elaborate than the English.

The researcher also discovered that many learners used the directness strategy as want statement '*I would like...*' to make request. For example, S10 requested the bank manager to process his application and said that '*I would like my application to process as soon as possible in order to pay my tuition fee by the deadline. Please help me*'. Some learners also used '*I want...*' or '*I need...*' to make requests. Therefore, it can be concluded that direct strategies are perceived as socially acceptable by the Chinese hearers and so are extensively employed by the learners who are Chinese speakers.

When discussing the use of the strategy of the time intensifier, the findings also suggest that the learners, in particular, used the strategy of time intensifier when the situation involved a higher social power (+P), a greater social distance (+D) and a higher rank of imposition (+R).

Zhang (1995) claims that time intensifier are preferred over other types of upgraders. Upgraders occur most often when a speaker is authorized to demand compliance such that a request is turned into a command. Therefore, when the situation involved a higher social power (+P), a greater social distance (+D) and a higher rank of imposition (+R), it could be reasonable to assume that the learners make a command as a request in order to achieve their desires.

Based on the Chinese tradition which focuses on the feudal hierarchical and order relationships, it indicates the speakers must talk and behave according to the position or status. As a result, when the speakers obtain a higher social power (+P), it allows them to command the hearers who are in a lower social power to do their request as they believed they had a power to command their hearers to do what they request.

The study of Song Mei and Lee Wong (2000) found that the rank of the imposition was the most influential factor in strategy evaluation and politeness perception. The higher rank of imposition was sometimes considered as inappropriate to use with the strategy of time intensifier. This higher rank of imposition was the request which the speakers would like the hearers to carry out. The use of the direct strategy together with the time intensifier strategy could be interpreted as forcing the hearers to act upon the speakers' requests within a certain period. As a result, the frequent use of direct strategies, especially the strategy of imperative in the high rank of imposition, meant that the English speaking assessors felt that inappropriate responses were made in certain situations.

In addition, with regards to the adjuncts to head act (the external modification), the findings show that almost every learner used the grounder, that is the speakers indicate reasons while responding through those four tasks. This finding is in line with Jing's (2006) study. The findings of his study suggest that in both Japanese and Chinese groups, a grounder was found to be most often used in their both L1 and IL requests. In particular, he also argues that the Chinese group in his study was proved to be statistically significant by being influenced by their L1 while using the strategy of grounder.

As Japanese culture and Chinese culture belong to the Oriental Culture, such findings are similar to those in the study of Fukazawa and Sasaki (2004). In their study, the Japanese EFL learners also used grounders which were most used in the supportive moves in their requests in both L1 and L2. Based on the previous studies, it suggested that a grounder is a universal rule and free of cultural difference. Moreover, a grounder could be assumed to be an effective supportive move in order to make a successful request, and thus EFL learners used it widely and confidently in both L1 and their IL requests.

Finally, the findings suggested that the learners performed better when the social distance was small (-D) and the rank of imposition was low (-R). The findings confirmed that the learners in this study were affected by Chinese culture while making requests. Chinese is a group-oriented culture. Some researchers such as Mao (1994) mentioned that a Chinese individual has a strong sense of belonging to the groups and

concerns about carrying out the duties within the society. Therefore, people in the Chinese culture seek a relationship in order to communicate well; therefore, by making the relationship between the speaker and hearer closer allows requests to become more effective and the communicative goal more attainable.

Based on the findings, it is reasonable to assume that the learners performed better when the social distance was small (-D). However, when the social distance was greater (+D), the learners still attempted to adopt a direct strategy to shorten the social distance. This may have resulted in inappropriate responses in an English context. It is because imperatives and 'want' statements are perceived by English speakers as a comment to be direct and often impolite and are thus normally avoided in many situations (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989).

Furthermore, when making a request, one of the most important social factors is to evaluate the kind of favour they needed to ask from the hearers and the level of politeness they would have liked to have achieved. Based on the findings, it suggested that the learners performed better when the rank of imposition was lower (-R). This result confirmed by the study of Lee-Wong (1994). In his study, he suggests that Chinese culture request expressions in terms of direct strategies are socially acceptable and appropriate in the low imposition context where requests are easy to carry out by requestees. In other words, learners considered the lower rank of imposition to be easier in terms of requests in comparison to the higher rank.

These discussions can be concluded in that the learners' performance was affected by Chinese culture. This may address one of the reasons behind why the lowest scores were awarded in the speech act of request. Due to the frequent use of the direct strategies, using the strategy of time intensifier when involved in a higher rank of imposition and the inappropriate responses, the scores awarded by assessors in the speech act of request were the lowest, in comparison to the speech acts of apology and refusal.

6.2.1.3 The Speech Act of Refusals

The speech act of refusal is a function that allows speakers to deny the engagement of an action which is suggested by the hearers. Moreover, a refusal is also

regarded as having a potential negative impact on future interaction. As a result, it is necessary to consider how to mutually avoid face-to-face confrontation and use the strategy of face-saving in order to achieve a politeness goal.

It is prominent that the speech act of refusal involves the different face-concerns between Chinese and western culture. Refusal in western culture depends on positive and negative face being driven from an individual's 'face-wants' (Brown and Levinson, 1987). On the other hand, Chinese refusal mainly concerns maintaining 'miansi', that is, 'face-saving', as Chinese people perceive refusals as crucial to 'preserve face' for the hearers, and to 'leave oneself a way out' for the speakers (Chen *et al.*, 1995). In other words, to 'preserve face' is a fundamental principle for social interaction between interlocutors. The speakers prevent hurting the face of the hearers by refusing directly or immediately, and simultaneously gaining a return after having given face to the hearers. Therefore, the face of the speaker is preserved while the face of the hearers has been maintained.

Data in this study were coded according to the taxonomy developed by Beebe *et al.* (1990) in terms of semantic formulas (i.e. strategy) and adjuncts to refusals. The findings showed that the learners mainly used the strategies of direct refusal, reason, regret, and alternative proposals in their responses. In other words, this finding suggests that fewer types of refusal strategies were used by the learners in this study. This is in line with the study of Liao and Bresnahan (1996), who argue that Chinese were more economic at making excuses and used fewer types of strategies in comparison to that of Americans. They also explain that this '*economy of strategy use in the oriental countries may be due to their concern to end an awkward refusal situation as soon as possible*' (1996, p. 724). Similarly, the study of Chen and Chen (2007) also confirmed this result because the finding in their study suggested that Taiwanese EFL learners use less refusal strategies compared with those of Americans.

Another striking finding in this study was that almost every learner tended to use the strategy of reason to respond to the tasks. Liao and Bresnahan (1996) claim that Chinese people normally tend to apologize and then offer a reason. They also argue that using the strategy of reason for this economy of strategy use in the oriental world is attributed to their concern with ending an awkward exchange as soon as possible.

According to Zhang (1995), he states that the strategy of reason is the most frequently used refusal strategy in Chinese culture. More explicitly, he explains that the refusees provide the reason is to tell the refusers that the prior commitments or obligations are beyond their control but not state their deliberate preference for non-compliance. Therefore, providing a reason seems to be the best justification for refusal and prevents the speakers running the risk of losing or hurting 'mianzi' on either side.

Liao and Bresnahan (1996) also indicated the different behaviour between Chinese and Americans in making refusals. They argue that the Chinese normally say sorry before making their excuse and explanation, by contrast, the American say sorry after making excuses and explain or state their principle. In this study, the findings reflected on this argument. The learners in this study preferred to utter 'sorry' first and then followed by explaining their excuses. For example, S15 responded to the first task by saying '*Sorry I can't do this job in one day because it at least takes two weeks to finish it*'. Based on this finding, it could speculate that the learners' refusal behaviour follows the Chinese tradition.

In addition, it is worthy mentioning that the social hierarchy plays an important role in refusal strategy choice (Chen *et al.*, 1995, p.143). The learners in this study more frequently employed the strategy of regret, that is saying sorry, when the situation involved lower social power (-P). The learners expressed their grovelling apologies by saying 'sorry' at the beginning and repeating 'sorry' at the end of their responses. For example, S24 responded to the second task by saying '*Sorry if the job...sorry the job will spend me at least two weeks to finish it. I can't help you and I am very sorry*'.

By examining this speech data, another significant finding suggests that most learners highly adopted the strategy of alternative proposals in particular, and used this strategy more frequently in responding to a situation involving in a higher social power (+P). This is similar to the study of Chen *et al.* (1995). In their findings, it also indicated that the strategy of alternatives is the second most frequently used strategy in Chinese refusal, while the most frequent strategy usage is the strategy of providing a reason.

The function of alternative proposals is to compensate for refusals. This frequent use of alternatives by the learners in refusals represented the influence of the notion of 'respectfulness' and 'self-denigration' in Chinese politeness conceptions (Gu, 1990, 1992). The strategy of alternatives provides a way of avoiding a direct confrontation and softens the threatening power of refusals. Hsieh and Chen (2005) reflect on this viewpoint and argue that alternatives are a distinctive way of refusing in Chinese and the purpose of this strategy is to show goodwill.

Since offering alternative proposals or resolutions to interlocutors was another intention to attain the purpose of politeness by the speakers, this finding implied that the learners attempted to adopt this strategy in sustaining their interpersonal relationship to maintain their politeness and manners based on the Chinese tradition. The operation of alternative strategy can take two approaches; one is to turn a request into an offer and the other is to make a suggestion into an aid. These two kinds of operations can bring less imposition to the interlocutors and also coherence to the interpersonal harmony by nature.

For example, a learner, S6, responded to task 3-1 and said, '*...or maybe you go to another repair shop to see...if they could fix it by tomorrow*' and another learner, S5, responded to task 3-4 and said, '*...you can have the coupons and you can give to the next person if they want it...*'.

Moreover, the learners in the present study reveal the same refusal behaviour as the Taiwanese EFL learners in the study of Chen and Chen (2007). As the study of Chen and Chen (2007) suggest, they discovered that Americans had different strategy use in comparison with the Taiwanese EFL learners. Americans used more the strategy of alternative in refusing a superior's suggestion while the higher frequencies were found in the Taiwanese EFL learners on offering alternatives in refusing inferiors' suggestions. Both Chen and Chen's (2007) study and this present study showed that the Taiwanese EFL learners higher frequencies were found in offering alternatives when they were in a higher social power (+P) in refusing inferior's suggestion. The findings show that the learners in this study also were influenced by Chinese culture while using alternative strategies in making refusal.

In addition, Zhang (1995) states that the strategy of direct refusal is '*the most explicit, and thus a very effective refusal strategy*' (p.134), however, the frequent use of direct refusal may pose a serious threat to relationship because of its detrimental effect in the interlocutors' relationship (p.145-146). In other words, when a speaker wants to go on record to refuse directly, at the same time this speaker may have the risk of hurting hearer's face by refusing directly. Even though the use of direct refusal strategy could be violent to the convention to refuse the higher level of imposition, the learners might consider the direct refusal as being the most effective strategy and social acceptable while making refusals.

Gu (1990) and Ma (1996) argue that Chinese and westerners have different behaviour while refusing. The learners in this study used the direct refusal strategy more frequently when their social power was higher (+P). This result is similar to the study of Chen and Chen (2007). In their finding, it suggested that the Taiwanese EFL learners used more direct refusal than Americans. Moreover, it indicated that the Taiwanese EFL learners tended to use the direct refusal strategy when refusing someone with lower social status. They also claimed that the study of Beebe *et al.* (1990) had confirmed this refusal behaviour as their finding suggests that Japanese groups also had the same refusal behaviour to refuse someone with lower social status. As mentioned earlier, Japanese culture inherited Chinese culture so that Chinese politeness has affected Japanese society. As a result, it could be assumed that the learners in this study performed in the way according to the Chinese politeness norm.

In addition, the strategy of positive opinion is used as adjunction of refusals to modify the main refusal head act and reinforce or protect the interlocutor's positive face. Many researchers such as Liao and Bresnahan (1996) suggest that western speakers and Chinese EFL learners had a different manner on using it. In particular, Liao and Bresnahan's (1996) study discovered that normally when Chinese speakers decide to make refusals, they generally do not intend to express positive opinions. This is because they are afraid that once they express positive opinions, later they will be forced to comply with their utterances.

In contrast, the findings of Takahashi and Beebe (1986) showed that the American expression of politeness during a refusal, with the expression of a positive

opinion such as *'I would like to...'* was followed by one of the politeness markers of apology, providing reasons or excuses for refusal.

As these findings showed, most learners followed the Chinese tradition by not expressing positive opinions. The statement of positive opinion was a particular feature which was less used by the Chinese EFL learners. In this present study only few learners showed their positive opinion. This formula was also found in the learners' responses in this study. One typical response from S2 on responding to task 3-3 was *'I really like this item but so sorry now I have to have lunch with my friend...so next time...maybe I will buy this item for next time...so very sorry...'*. Another learner, S8, also used the American expression while making refusal; his response was *'I love to...but I think I can't because I have a friend to meet for lunch...so maybe I will see it next time...thanks'*.

Furthermore, the findings in this study suggested that the learners used the address term more frequently and used at the beginning of the structure when the social status of the speaker is lower (-P). Traditionally, the socially inferior tended to choose address terms which were more formal and used them as a means of showing respect (Gu, 1990, p.251). When a speaker is in an inferior social position to refuse a superior social position, they required to soften the force of refusing and addressed his/her title or role as an appropriate address term so as to show respectfulness.

For example, S10 responded to the second task which involved a lower social power (-P) and uttered *'Head teacher! I can't do it, I know that it will take me hours and I have friends coming over my house tonight. I don't want my friends to wait for me too long outside my house, sorry about this'*. As the learners acted as a classroom teacher refusing a head teacher's request, they were threatening this head teacher's positive and negative face. Because a head teacher was a senior teacher and is professionally prestigious, the use of address term was considered to be used as the learners were in an inferior social position (-P).

Similarly, Chen and Chen's (2007) study also suggested that EFL learners chose the strategy of addressing term as role/title when they responded to their interlocutors who were in a superior social status. This politeness manner of the EFL learners using

address terms when a speaker refuses a superior status, interlocutors considered as culture-specific in Chinese society and is different from the Americans as they did not use the address term in the same situation. Therefore, Gu (1990) concludes that using address term could '*help establish or maintain social bonds, strengthen solidarity, and control social distance*' (Gu, 1990, p. 249).

In addition, the findings showed that the learners performed better while the relative power was higher (+P) and the rank of imposition was lower (-R) in the speech act of refusals.

Based on the discussion in the previous sections, it could be acknowledged that the learners were influenced by Chinese tradition and followed Chinese refusal manners to respond to tasks. As a result, in some social situations, the use of the strategies was considered as inappropriate in the English speaking contexts. Some strategies such as direct refusal strategy used by the learners who involved in a lower social power were considered inappropriate, as the English speakers may not have the same manner coping with the same social situations.

In particular, when the learners were of a higher social power (+P), they provided the reasons and used the strategy of alternative to refused inferior for showing their goodwill. This could be assumed that the learners lower themselves to use those strategies. As a result, the learners considered as politeness manner and performed better when they were in a higher social power.

The findings also implied that the learners performed better when the rank of imposition was lower (-R). In Chinese culture, situations involving a refusal are concerned with 'preserving face' for the refuse, and with 'leaving oneself a way out' for the refuser (Chen *et al.*, 1995, p.122). As it stands, the Chinese believe that the speaker refuses the lower rank of imposition is much more easily than the higher, as they consider the refusal of a small favour is no a great deal. By contrast, when the speakers refused to help out with a big favour, their refusal may have been perceived as having a potentially negative impact on future interaction. Therefore, it was less easy to refuse when the rank of imposition was higher.

In addition, the reasons regarding the learners' poor performance have been considered to be influenced by Chinese tradition and the different use of the strategies by the learners while refusals in comparison to English speakers. Moreover, the learners also had a very different approach to express refusals with only a few learners stating their positive opinions to express their refusal.

6.3 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has shed light on the communicative competence of the Taiwanese learners of English. Two aspects of communicative competence; that is compensatory competence and pragmatic competence were aimed to be evaluated in order to gain more knowledge about the learners' ability to cope with their English deficiency and confronting the different social situational contexts.

Through the analysis of the learners' responses, some information has been acquired in order to achieve the goal of this study and intended to answer the research questions. The discussions of this chapter illustrate how the compensatory strategies were operated by learners to overcome their vocabulary deficiency. The goal of selecting the strategy to respond to the task item is that the learners expected to effectively use compensatory strategy to overcome the vocabulary deficiency by spending less effort to achieve more comprehension. The reasoning behind why some strategies were used more frequently than the others was the way the learners encoded the target items, and that they were also influenced by the Taiwanese education system and Chinese culture. Additionally, the vocabulary resources and grammatical knowledge also play an important role in how effective the strategy usage could be.

The outcomes of the learners' pragmatic competence showed that the learners were influenced by the Chinese culture and so employed Chinese pragmatic strategies into English situational contexts. Consequently, the responses of the learners were considered as inappropriate to the situations and were recognised as impolite to their interlocutors. Because of this, the scores of the learners awarded by the two assessors in the three speech acts were lower but had no salient differences among them.

In this chapter, the research has presented and discussed the results obtained in relation to the two research questions which guided this study. The final section follows a summary of this study and will consider important pedagogical implications; some of the limitations attributed to this study will also be mentioned. Finally, some suggestions concerning the possible direction for future research into relevance of improving learners' communicative competence will also be discussed.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions, Contributions, Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

This final chapter draws together all threads of the study and consists of four sections. The first section presents summary of the study; this includes the literature review, research design, data collection and findings. The following section presents the contributions and implications of this study; discussing the findings of this study in terms of their wider implications, suggestions for the teaching and learning contexts, and the English Education Policy in Taiwan. The third section emphasizes the limitations of this study, and the last section suggests possible directions and recommendations for future research.

7.1 Summary of the Study

The aim of this present study was to provide further insight into the Taiwanese senior high school learners' communication strategies and pragmatic competence. This researcher was interested in investigating this one specific area. Therefore, a case study approach was employed to allow the researcher to focus on studying the Taiwanese senior high school learners who had passed the intermediate level of GEPT. Further to this, this study attempted to expound issues raised by the research questions, relating to the learner's oral performances through the application of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

The study explored the issues of the learners' communicative competence in terms of communication strategy usage and pragmatic competence. Based on the review of the literature, the theoretical framework of Bachman (1990), communicative language ability in language was used so that the strategic competence and pragmatic competence could be identified.

Regarding strategic competence, this acts as mediation between knowledge structures, language competence and the real world. That is, the learners obtain this competence in order to assess what is said, planning utterance and successful execution to achieve the goals. In this current study, this researcher attempted to focus on investigating the strategic competence of the learners in terms of overcoming their deficiency in English language. As

a result, compensatory strategies were brought into the discussion. The framework of Poullisse (1993) was drawn upon to categorise the learners' compensatory strategies, and the elaboration of Littlemore (2003) was adopted to classify the subtypes of the compensatory strategies. Based on those two taxonomies, the researcher and her colleague classified the learners' speech productions. In order to investigate the learners' communicative effectiveness, levels of comprehension and English proficiency were adopted as two criteria to grade learners' speech productions.

With regards to pragmatic competence in Bachman's (1990) framework, two elements were included; the illocutionary competence and the sociolinguistic competence. Several notions have been introduced in order to reinforce the concepts of pragmatic competence. With regards to illocutionary competence, the notion of speech act theory (Searle, 1979) and the notion of the language function suggested by Halliday (1975) emphasize the illocutionary concept or purpose of the act. The notion of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) is related to enhancing, preserving and defending face between interlocutors. That is, the politeness focuses on how interpersonal relationships are maintained by means of appropriate language use in contexts. Additionally, Chinese politeness (Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994) was worth noting in considering the different perceptions of politeness.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions when performing language functions appropriately in a given context, therefore, the notion of register proposed by Bachman (1990) was highlighted and addressed. Halliday *et al.* (1964, p.90-94) defined three variables that determine register: field of discourse, mode of discourse and style/tenor of discourse. This is similar to the contextual factors proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). These contextual factors relative power (P), social distance (D) and the absolute ranking (R) of imposition, and they play an essential role in speech act behaviours when assessing the seriousness of an FTA.

In this study, the investigation of the learners' pragmatic competence employed six components proposed by Hudson *et al.* (1995) to judge learners' pragmatic competence. Based on these six criteria, the extent of the learners' realization on the speech acts of apology, request and refusal could be explored. Furthermore, the coding systems of pragmatic strategy suggested by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) on the speech acts of apology and request, and Beebe *et al.* (1990) on the speech act of refusal, were also used to identify learners' pragmatic strategy usage while responding to situational tasks. In coding the

learners' responses, the extent of learners' pragmatic competence could be acknowledged while encountering different social situations in the target language context. The extent to which learners were influenced by their native language and culture often resulted in a negative pragmatic transfer; that is pragmatic failure. In other words, when the learners were affected by their own culture values, they transferred their pragmatic knowledge to the target language contexts, but these perceptions and behaviours were deviations from the target language norm. Therefore the pragmatic failure presents as the speakers being impolite to their interlocutors in the target contexts.

The methodology of this study was a combined research method; that comprises a quantitative and a qualitative method. A quantitative research method was adopted to assess the learners' performances in terms of the compensatory strategy usage on overcoming vocabulary deficiency, and to evaluate their performance on six pragmatic aspects proposed by Hudson *et al.* (1995). A qualitative method was employed to investigate the learners' compensatory strategy usage on description of the target items and pragmatic strategy used in responding to the different social situations in the target language contexts.

A total of 30 participants involved in this research were from a prestigious private school in southern Taiwan. All of the students were at such a level that they had already passed at least the intermediate level of the GEPT, which is equivalent to the level of B1 Threshold, IELTS Band 4 and TOFEL-iBT 137, in order to take part in this study.

The activity consisted of two parts. The first part referred to the investigation of the learners' communication strategy and the second part was in relation to the exploration of the learners' pragmatic competence. As this activity was administrated via computers, all the responses of the participants were firstly saved as files in their own computers, and later collected from the main computer (e.g. teacher's computer) and transferred to the researchers' mobile disk for further analysis and scoring by the assessors. As a result, a primary means of collecting data was carried out by speech samples from the communicative tasks based activity within a computer mediated environment.

The data analysis of the activity comprised two stages; first was the quantitative data analysis and the second was qualitative data analysis. With respect to the activity exploring communication strategy, the participants' responses were scored by two native speaking assessors based on two criteria of communicative effectiveness; that is the level of

comprehension and English proficiency. Furthermore, based on the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) and Littlemore's (2003) elaboration, the compensatory strategy usage of the participants was coded by this researcher and her colleague. In relation to the activity exploring pragmatic competence, the participants' responses were based on the six components of pragmatic competence proposed by Hudson *et al.* (1995) in order to grade their performance on the speech acts of apology, request and refusal. The participants' responses in the second part of this activity were coded based on the coding systems of Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) and Beebe *et al.* (1990) in order to identify the participants' use of pragmatic strategies while encountering different social situations.

After obtaining these scores, the researcher utilised Excel to compute the data and illustrate the findings in pie charts, figures and tables in response to the research questions. Subsequent to coding and analysing the participants' responses, the findings presented the learners' compensatory strategy usage on description of the tasks, and the learners' use of pragmatic strategies in responding to situational tasks.

This study revealed two main findings in relation to the results of investigating the participants' compensatory strategy usage and their pragmatic competence.

(A) *The learners' compensatory strategy usage*

The Taiwanese learners of English employed the re-conceptualisation strategy more frequently than the substitution strategy in this study. This implies that the learners' behaviour when identifying the target items tended to involve listing the intended lexical items one by one, describing the characters of the items, or discussing further information.

An additional strategy was also discovered in this study. Even though this strategy did not facilitate the comprehension of the native speakers, it worked with other second language learners who shared the same or similar language with them. In particular, this strategy was only used by the lower scoring learners. This assumed that the lower scoring learners lacked enough English ability to choose the appropriate compensatory strategy; instead, they attempted to use this additional strategy which was associated with the learners' native language. By contrast, the reason behind the higher scoring learners not needing to use this additional strategy to overcome their vocabulary, is that they obtained sufficient language knowledge to enable the selection of an appropriate compensatory strategy, in order to achieve communicative goals. In addition, the other strategy usage

between the higher and lower scoring learners was very similar.

In this study, most learners seemed to obtain the similar strategy usage when encoding the task items. The approach of most learners on encoding the target items is that the learners preferred to adopt the super-ordinate, followed by either literal comparison or componential analysis. As the learners encoded the target items from their higher hierarchy of classification of the target items, the super-ordinate strategy was used in the beginning when responding to all the tasks. The decision of the learners to use either literal comparison or componential analysis followed by the strategy of super-ordinate was dependent on the features of objects. When the target items were difficult to analyse, the learners attempted to compare them with other objects.

Another consideration that is important to note here is that, due to a different education system and cultural influence, the learners less frequently used the strategies of original metaphoric and conventional metaphoric comparison because of Taiwanese education. The strategy of emotion was also used less frequently by the learners possibly because Chinese culture tends to be more conservative in expressing their emotions.

(B) The learners' pragmatic competence

It is reasonable to suggest that the learners did not perform as well on the three speech acts, as the scores obtained by the learners were lower and had no distinct differences between them. A possible reason for this is that Chinese culture seemed to influence the learners' performance in their responses to the tasks. Therefore, several expressions made by the learners were regarded as impolite in the English context, as they were made based on their Chinese-based pragmatics.

When examining the learners' responses, concerns arose over the semantic formula on each situational task. The results suggested that the learners tended to transfer the Chinese pragmatic strategy into English contexts, which then resulted in negative pragmatic transfer. As a result, the native speaking assessors considered most learners' responses to be inappropriate to the situations, which then resulted in lower scores throughout the three speech acts. Therefore the learners' scores on these three speech acts were relatively low.

Through further examination of each task involved in the different levels of social variables, the findings revealed that the Chinese social variables affected the learners'

choice of pragmatic strategy. Particular behaviours exist within the Chinese culture, for example, Chinese people denigrate themselves when committing an offence by using apology intensification in order to bring about a sense of harmony. The frequent use of the direct request strategy exists because Chinese speakers believe that direct strategies serve to emphasise intimacy, informality, closeness, solidarity and in-group relationships. By refusing others, Chinese people do not express their positive opinion, therefore, the statement of positive opinion was a particular feature that was used less by the Chinese, but employed mostly by English speaking people.

By comparing the social variables involved in the tasks to the learners' performance, the findings showed that the learners performed better when the strategies used were not in a culturally specific situation. Due to the influence of Chinese traditions, the learners evaluated the power, the social distance and the rank of imposition differently in comparison to the English native speakers. Based on the examination of the learners' responses, it could be assumed that Chinese social variables were the main reason for the learners' inappropriate utterances within the social situations in the target language contexts.

7.2 The Contributions made by this Study

The findings of this study suggest that the development of the learners' communicative competence should emphasise not only the linguistic competence, but also the learners' communication strategies and pragmatic competence. Furthermore, teachers can begin to help the students develop their speaking skills by means of encouraging the learners to use the language in the classroom. In doing so, the learners could use English to negotiate meaning with others and raise awareness of the learners' pragmatic knowledge in order to speak appropriately to the culturally situational contexts instead of treating English as a school subject to pass the examinations.

Based on the findings of this study, this section discusses its three key contributions. Firstly, it has provided additional pedagogic implications to improve language learners' communication strategies; secondly, it has led to the consideration of raising awareness of the learners' pragmatic knowledge and provides some implications on improving their pragmatic competence; and finally, the gap in the existing body of literature on the taxonomy of the communication strategy has been addressed.

7.2.1 Improving the Language Learners' Use of Communication Strategies

Since the Ministry of Education regards the development of language learners' communicative competence as the main goal of reformed English Education, the implementation of the communicative language teaching approach has been expected at all school levels; the English textbooks in Taiwan have also been revised to achieve this goal. However, this research has shown that the learners' cognitive styles concerning the choice of communication strategy and certain strategies were greatly employed by the learners to overcome their lack of language resources. Furthermore, the strategy usage employed by the higher and lower scoring learners is very similar, but resulted in diversity effects. This shows that grammatical accuracy and informative value were factors while using their communication strategy to express their intended meaning to achieve communicative goals. Some implications for further study will be made in relation to the results of this research in the following sections.

Firstly, language teachers should be aware that their teaching methods should be aimed at developing the learners' strategic competence. This would help to increase the opportunity for the learners to interact with each other by being able to use different strategies to overcome their deficiencies in their English language. That is, there is a necessity to develop their communicative competence through classroom interactions even though most language teachers complain about the restraints on instruction time for class activities. However, without interacting with each other, the learners do not have opportunities to effectively apply these communication strategies into their interaction to solve their communication problems.

Secondly, there is a need to bring learners' attention to these strategies and help them become more aware of all strategies available to them; in particular, such strategies include those that they may already make use of in the L1 when overcoming their English deficiency, resulting in communication breakdown. Many researchers such as Dörnyei (1995) and Chen (1990) suggest that providing training in how to appropriately use CS in L2, and providing opportunities for practice are essential as it can improve the effective use of the communication strategy.

During the instruction of learners' communication strategy usage, teachers should remind students of what they already do in their L1 and encourage them to do the same

in L2, so that instruction can aid strategic transfer by raising awareness of the communication strategy. During practice activities, teachers should not only encourage, but also push learners to use communication strategies. Generally speaking, the purpose of instructions should focus on helping learners develop and automate more effective strategies to achieve their communicative goals.

7.2.2 Raising Awareness of the Language Learners' Pragmatic Knowledge

This study revealed that the learners employed inappropriate pragmatic strategies to respond to the English social situational contexts. It was assumed that the learners in this study were significantly influenced by the Chinese culture in responding to the tasks, which resulted in unintentionally offending the native English speakers. It is evident that the learners did not notice the different use of the pragmatic strategy between the Chinese and English cultures.

Drawing on this finding, language teachers should raise learners' awareness of the cross-cultural pragmatic differences that exist, and also teach the learners to understand why certain speech conventions are appropriate while others are not. As it stands, the language learners are able to teach their learners to employ the appropriate pragmatic strategies to the English speaking contexts. As different pragmatic strategies exist, the learners must appropriately apply them according to the different social variables (e.g. the power, the social distance and the rank of imposition). Language functions are also important to language learners so that they can respond to the English contexts in an appropriate way to avoid misunderstandings and offending their native English speaking listeners.

The issue of developing learners' pragmatic awareness has been claimed as one of the main goals of instruction in pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor, 2003) since it is related to the concept of noticing (Schmidt, 1995, 2001). Through explicit and implicit instruction, the learners' awareness of their pragmatics could be raised. As well as awareness, it is also important to develop activities that elicit learners' production, namely output. In other words, creating opportunities for communicative practice are important in developing learners' pragmatic ability in the FL classroom, as obtaining the knowledge of such language functions are not always useful unless the learners can appropriately make use of them in the different socially situational contexts.

Drawing on previous studies related to the research methodology (Kasper, 2000; Kasper and Rose, 2002), there are many different types of tasks such as a rating assessment test, oral discourse completion tests and a written discourse completion tests used to elicit learners' speech data. In the classroom, the use of the DCT and role play has been widely employed in previous studies (Trosborg, 1995, 2003) and other productive activities, like those of simulation or drama (Kasper, 1997). By collecting the speech data through different types of task, it can help the language teachers to recognise the needs of their learners in order to improve their pragmatic knowledge and help themselves to prepare different classroom practice, exercises and tasks to achieve the teaching goals.

With regards to relevant input and output opportunities, providing feedback to the learners is considered as another important tool to promote FL learners' pragmatic competence. By implementing either explicit or implicit feedback, learners may also be made aware of their pragmatic failures and, thus be provided with opportunities to notice the appropriate pragmatic aspects of the target language.

Additionally, even though the school textbooks now include the use of language functions after the reformed education, still dissatisfaction exists with regards to the poor and awkward design of the dialogue contents, which has been raised by many language teachers in the high schools (Han, 2006, p.199). In particular, current textbooks with conversations are designed as models for students, yet they generally falling short of providing realistic input to learners. Therefore, English teachers and curriculum designers need to pay more attention to language functions such as, making an apology, request or refusal, when selecting or designing material based on the authentic situational contexts for language learners.

It can be concluded that the findings of this research attempt to provide insights into the communicative language ability of the learners through their performances on the tasks. The classroom activities will no longer drill the sentences from the textbooks. Language teachers need to improve their practical English instruction, and raise awareness of the educationists for the enhancement and development of Taiwanese language learners' communicative language ability. Furthermore, the design of the English curriculum should be more focused upon developing communicative language ability in terms of strategic and pragmatic competence in teaching and learning contexts. By doing so, it allows the learners to manipulate the language to overcome their English

deficiency and apply their pragmatic competence to communicate with native English speakers.

7.2.3 Addressing the Gap in the Literature

This study addresses the gap in the existing body of literature regarding the taxonomy of the communication strategy. As most empirical research such as Poulisse (1990, 1993) and Littlemore (2003) was conducted in European countries, for example in France, they developed their taxonomy of the communication strategy based on their speech data. Therefore, certain strategies such as *foreignising* and *morphological creativity* were included in the taxonomy of Poulisse (1993) within the substitution plus strategy; this was not seen to be used as a communication strategy by Chinese speakers.

Many linguistics, such as Kellerman (1977, 1991), indicate that the adoption of L1-based communication strategies for example, *foreignising*, depends on the typological relatedness between learners' L1 and L2. Ringbom (1983) also agrees with this and argues that it is necessary for L1-based communication strategies to concern formal similarities between the two languages. In other words, this can only be possible when two languages share certain similarities so that they have the chance to achieve their communication goal by using the strategy of '*foreignising*' and '*morphological creativity*'.

On the other hand, Chinese and English language systems differ greatly, so it is less possible to search for Chinese words that sound like English words, or even any Chinese words that can replace English words. Therefore, the learners in this study may find it less possible to apply '*the use of L2 rules of morphological derivation to create what the learners assume to be comprehensible L2 lexis*' (Bongaerts and Poulisse, 1989, p.255) into their strategy usage. Therefore, this researcher excluded the substitution plus strategy when identifying the speech data in this study.

The findings, surprisingly, discovered that there was an additional strategy used by the learners when applying a compensatory strategy. This additional strategy was not identified in the taxonomies of the previous research and is different to the literal translation strategy proposed by Tarone (1977). Tarone's study found that the Mandarin speakers translated the equivalent expression; however, the learners in this study attempted to translate the Chinese name of the target items to English (as discussed in Chapter Six). Even though English native speakers might not understand the adoption of this strategy, it has the potential for

use when learners and their hearers share the same or similar language by which to communicate. The percentage of use of this additional strategy was by four learners and only 0.8% (see Chapter Five); however it can be considered as a potential strategy for use by speakers to convey intended meaning.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

As with most research, the limitations derive from the intrinsic features of the research methods themselves. The current study's limitations should not be ignored. Some of the limitations were perceived prior to the start of the study, while others were discovered during the process of conducting it.

Owing to the fact that this was a single case study with a small number of samples situated in a particular context, the restrictions of the scope of the study could therefore be conceived. The possible defects arising from the limited number of participants were twofold.

Firstly, due to the time constraint on this doctoral study, it would have been difficult for a single researcher to examine thoroughly and compare a large number of samples. Therefore, the number of participants involved in this study was relatively small, meaning that generalisability becomes questionable. Moreover, data collected in this study were only adequate for describing the communicative language ability of the GEPT intermediate level of learners, and in particular, the participants involved in this study were high school students. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to generalise the results to learners in other contexts, such as those who passed the GEPT intermediate level but with different ages.

Secondly, the parameters of the performances of this activity might result from unfamiliarity of this activity because of the computer mediated environment. This activity did adopt the advantage of technology to allow the participants to have more control while they were taking it; however, these advantages sometimes turned to negative effects as the participants were not familiar with the format. Self control of the time and manipulation of the recording of their answers might put extra pressure on the participants because they did not have any experience of time manipulation when preparing and responding to the tasks. It is important to recognise that if the participants could spend more time learning and

practicing this new activity format, it could be assumed that the feeling of panic may be reduced and the learners may have been more motivated to become involved in the study.

7.4 Recommendation for Future Studies

The present study has succeeded in responding to the research questions, suggesting the need for Taiwanese learners of English to develop their communicative language ability in terms of communicative strategies and pragmatic competence. However, there are some perspectives that have not yet been fully explored, due to the issue of time constraints on this study. Questions have emerged during the process of this investigation, some of which this researcher has left open for further research. Details of these questions are discussed further below.

Firstly, it would be advisable to investigate the different ages of the learners who are at different levels of English proficiency in the GEPT. Their results may highlight differences in performance between young and adult participants and learners with different English proficiency in terms of their use of communication strategy and pragmatic competence. Such a topic was not researched in this investigation and so has been left unanswered and requires further examination.

The second recommendation relates to the communicative task based activity within the computer mediated environment. This study focussed on investigating the learners' communication strategy usage on overcoming their vocabulary deficiency. Due to computer technology, geographical restrictions can be eliminated when interaction takes place. Therefore, in future studies, it is recommended that the learners' use of communication strategy in a broader aspect could be examined, such as managing communication, but not only focusing on overcoming their language problems. This could allow future researchers to explore the communication strategy usage between learners from different locations or even nations during communication. Scope for further research therefore exists in order to explore these issues.

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Appendices

Appendix I:

The Equivalence of the GEPT, TOFEL iBT, TOEIC and IELTS

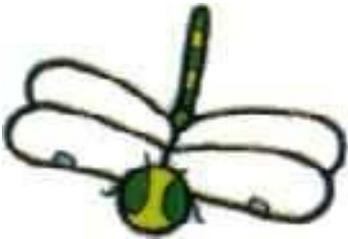
GEPT	CEFR	TOEFL iBT	TOEIC	IELTS
Elementary	A2 (Waystage)	90 or above	350 or above	3 or above
Intermediate	B1 (Threshold)	137 or above	550 or above	4 or above
High-intermediate	B2 (Vantage)	197 or above	750 or above	5.5 or above
Advanced	C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency)	220 or above	880 or above	6.5 or above
Superior	C2 (Mastery)	267 or above	950 or above	7.5 or above

Adopted from the Executive Yuan, Taiwan
(<http://www.ejob.gov.tw/official/english.htm>)

Appendix II:

Task One:

Type A

<p>(1) 水母 Jellyfish</p> 	<p>(2) 仙人掌 Cactus</p> 
<p>(3) 望遠鏡 Binoculars</p> 	<p>(4) 海獺 Otter</p> 
<p>(5) 蜻蜓 Dragonfly</p> 	<p>(6.) 圓環 Roundabout</p> 

Type B

(1.) 鸵鸟 Ostrich



(2.) 藥膏 Ointment



(3.) 蚱蜢 Grasshopper



(4.) 海市蜃樓 Mirage



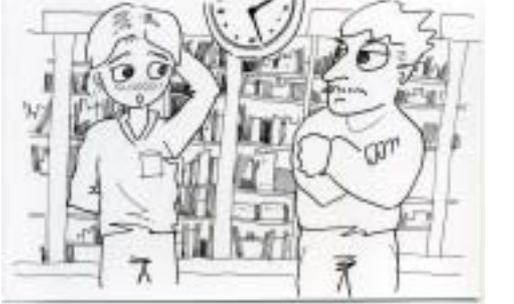
(5.) 烏賊 Squid



(6.) 稻草人 Scarecrow



Task two:

	<p>(1-1.) You live in a large house. You hold the lease to the house and rent out the other rooms. You and one of your housemates had planned to meet at 6:00 this evening to talk about something having to do with the house. However, you were late leaving work. It is a few minutes after 6:00 and as you enter the house you see your housemates waiting in the living room.</p> <p>You say:</p>
	<p>(1-2.) You are in a small family-owned restaurant. You go up to the counter to pay your bill. When you reach to hand your check to the restaurant worker you accidentally knock a few of the menus on the floor.</p> <p>You say:</p>
	<p>(1-3.) You work in a bookstore. You are scheduled to start work at noon today. You will take over for your supervisor who is working the morning shift. You go to work and arrive at the bookstore a few minutes after noon. You see your supervisor.</p> <p>You say:</p>
	<p>(1-4.) You work in a small shop. You are working in the back room when you hear the bell that tells you there is a customer in the front room. You are on the phone making an important business call. You finish call as quickly as you can and go out to help the waiting customers.</p> <p>You say:</p>



(2-1.) You have recently moved to a new city and are looking for an apartment to rent. You are looking at a place now. You like it a lot. The landlord explains that you seem like a good person for the apartment, but that there are a few more people who are interested. The landlord says that you will be called next week and told if you have the place. However, you need the landlord to tell you within the next three days.

You say:



(2-2.) You are the president of the local chapter of a national book club. The club reads and discusses a new book every month. You are at this month's meeting, talking with a member of the book club. You need to get the phone number of Sue Lee, another member of the club. You think this person has Sue's number.

You say:



(2-3.) You are applying for a student loan at a small bank. You are now meeting with the loan officer; The loan officer is the only person who reviews the applications at this bank. The loan officer tells you that there are many other applicants and that it should take two weeks to review your application. However, you want the loan to be processed as soon as possible in order to pay your tuition by the deadline.

You say:



(2-4.) You are applying for a new job in a small company and want to make an appointment for an interview. You know the manager is very busy and only schedules interviews in the afternoon from one to four o'clock. However, you currently work in the afternoon. You want to schedule an interview in the morning. You go into the office this morning to turn in your application form when you see the manager.

You say:



(3-1.) You work in a repair shop. One of your valued customers comes in with an antique that is to be a present for a fiftieth wedding anniversary. The customer asks that it be repaired for the party tomorrow. You look at the antique and realize that you cannot do the job in one day. It will take you at least two weeks to finish.

You say:



(3-2.) You are a teacher at a large school. You see the lead teacher on campus. The lead teacher asks you to call all of the other teachers tonight and tell them that there will be a meeting tomorrow. You cannot do it because you know that it will take hours and you have friends coming over to your house tonight.

You say:



(3-3.) You are shopping in a department store; You have selected an item and are waiting to pay for it. The sale clerk helps you and explains that there is a special offer on a new product and offers to show you a short demonstration. You cannot watch the demonstration because you are on your way to meet someone for lunch.

You say:



(3-4.) You are a tourist in a large city. You have taken your film to a photo shop. When you go into the shop to pick up the pictures, the salesperson asks if you would like some coupons for more film developing. You do not need the coupons because you are leaving the city today.

You say:

Appendix III:

The Speech Data (I)

Student No 1

(1.) 水母 (Jellyfish)

SI: A kind of fish and it doesn't look like fish...it's a kind of fish but it doesn't look like fish...and it has no eyes and long hands...and look like the ball and float around...

SI: no eyes...and you can....you can look through it...

(2.) 仙人掌 (Cactus)

SI: a kind of plants grow in the desert...

SI: do you know what is desert? You know sand..

SI: a place with there is only sand called desert... you know sand.

SI: desert with no plants no trees only sand

SI: yes..yes...and there is a kind of plants growing...

(3.) 望遠鏡 (Binocular)

SI: This is a thing...um...this is a stuff...you can um you can see the stuff from very very far away and you can whenever you want to see someone or you want to see something...but you hard to see or you want to like...to...and you can see from them you can see it very clear...clearly.

SI: you can really clear...like if you want to go to the mountain, you want to see the birds, you want to see some...

SI: yes...you use this stuff...

(4.) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

SI: a kind of bug...

SI: a kind of insect...you know what is insects

SI: cockroach is a kind of insect...and this kind of insects they fly and...yeh, they fly...look like butterfly...it quite like butterfly

SI: no no no...they don't have big wings they have long and small wings and they fly very fast...very fast...and they have a tail...and big have two.. urm...two kind of eyes

SI: No...no...something like... they fly quite fast and quite big.. its about 4-5 inches...no centre-meters... they fly around...

SI: no...bigger...bigger.. 5 or 6 centre-meters... they fly around

SI: it's green...

SI: urm...green and fly around...they got four wings...urm...and their wings are

small..

S1: five center-meters...the whole things is about five center-meters

S1: yes ...the body is like butterfly...but the wings are very small..

S1: no...bigger...

S1: 5 center-meter...that's big ...yes...that's big and wings...urm...and fly around...

S1: um.....oh yes, it like to fly close water....um touch and touch.....

Student No 2

(1.) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S2: it's an animal and the most bigger bird in the world

S2: birds...bigger...the most bigger bird in the world.

S2: bird...it can't fly.

(2.) 藥膏 (ointment)

S2: it is a kind of medicine...its not eat...

S2: no...no...it can't eat...

(3.) 蚱蜢 (grasshopper)

S2: it's an animal...

S2: green body...

S2: green...

S2: very little...

S2: it can jump.

S2: no...no...little..

S2: animal...very little...

(4.) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S1: a kind.....in the field it has rice...the things come to the rice...and the person...no...
a kind of figure...stand that in the...

S1: Yeh. stand... a kind of thing that stand in the field to scare.. urm ...and scare the
animals away...

S1: it's just the thing

S1: It's not alive... it's just a thing

Student No 3

(1.) 仙人掌 (Cactus)

S3: a plant grow in the.....hot weather..

S3: What's that word.....um...very hot and a lot of sand...

S3: oh yes, yes, in the desert, that tree grow there...but it not really tree...

(2.) 望遠鏡 (binocular)

S3: a thing you can see very far...

S3: no...you use it to see...urm...people are very far...

(3.) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S3: big eyes.....flying in the...sky... green colour

S3: no...big eyes and green

S3: it's animal...

S3: come on, it fly, not jump....

(4.) 圓環 (roundabout)

S3: we see...it a kind of ...mm... street road....its round and big...and all roads comes from it...

S3: all the roads..

S3: comes from it..

S3: no..no..we see urm...it's a traffic...traffic thing..

S3: no...um...its shape is round...circle..circle....it's circle...it's a circle ...big circle

S3: not...it's a traffic name.. traffic

S3: and all roads are come from it..

S3: circle...2 words in Chinese

S3: yes.. yes...circle...

Student No 4

(1.) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S4: it's like a nice bird but it can't fly...you can see it in the zoo...it is very tall...

S4: no...it is very tall...like a bird..

S4: the big bird....can't fly....and I think it run very fast...

(2.) 蚱蜢 (grasshopper)

S4: it is a urm insect...it is very small.....

S4: no..no...it can jump...insect..

S4: it is an insect...jump...and jump..

S4: Frog is not insect; you know fly....it's insect...

S4: on the grass and...mmm....it's green colour

(3.) 烏賊 (squid)

S4: it is a kind of animal and can be eaten...in the night market.

S4: people like to BBQ them in the stall in the night market.

S4: its colour is white and when it has dangerous, it will spread the black ink in the water to escape.

(4.) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S4: This is a kind of stuff...urm... look like people...it stand in the farm, I think....urmm when the farmer are going home....the birds come to eat some kind of the stuff in the field...and and...it wear farmer's clothe...and help farmer to get birds away...maybe...mmm that's it...

Student No 5

(1.) 水母 (Jellyfish)

S5: This a kind of fish and they're living in the sea...and they have a lot of legs and they're swimming very funny and slowly, whenever you got bite from them, I think you will hurt very...so badly and they came out whole bunch with...like glue and...erm...sometimes you hard to see them because...

S5: No...you hard to see them...

S5: they have big head, maybe....but they don't have eyes...I don't see the eyes..

S5: they doesn't look like fish...

S5: yes...its look like the thing you just say...

S5: uh um....

S5: Yeh..

S5: .No..no..no

S5: no.. they look like...urmm... their heads are round and a lot of legs...mmmm...

(2.) 仙人掌.(Cactus)

S5: This is one kind of...I think it's plant and they can...they are trees maybe.

Or...No...they are flowers...I don't know. o.k. they don't have leaves because they can living...mm...the place without...urm...the place without...urmm...the place its no many waters...over there...and they just need little of bit water and they can live long time...live very long time...they wouldn't have flower coming out...and but their leaves is very small and just like. .that...

(3) 望遠鏡 (binoculars)

S5: This is a kind of equipment for people to watch birds and look at the stars. When people use it, they can see things far away from them. It is convenient.

(4.) 圓環 (roundabout)

S5: it is a road

S5: it's a land on the road

S5: a round land and all cars just go there...

S5: for go to another way...turn different way around

S5: there is one near our school...you go there and then you turn... and then you go to your home

Student No 6

(1.) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S6: This is one kind of a bird... and it has a long neck and two legs.. and...run very fast. .

S6: yeh...a long neck...

S6: no...no..they are very really big and can't fly.

S6: No...they run very fast...

(2.) 藥膏 (ointment)

S6: When you have mosquito bite, and it's itchy, so you will want to put it on....

S6: and then you feel very comfortable...urm...but sometimes you will still continue rub your skin....

S6: yes... yes... kind of, kind of like cream can put on your skin.

(3) 蚱蜢 (grasshopper)

S6: it's an insect and green...it can jump..

S6: no...it can't fly...or...it can...I don't know...but most of time you see it jumps

S6: smaller than that one...

(4) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S6: in country...in country road...you can always see some...urm rice...is the plants, right? Always have a fake man...mm...just like...fake man...and wear a hat...

S6: urm?

S6: No...not a job.

S6: No...mm... it's just not real people

S6: fake fake....fake man...

Student No 7

(1) 仙人掌 (Cactus)

S7: This is a that kind of plant and grow in desert

mmm...desert...you know desert ...just only had this...the only plant is

S7: the plants are plants...the plants is mean that the tree and flowers...and ...so it's a plant...

S7: in desert...in desert

(2) 望遠鏡 (Binocular)

S7: mmm...its...this is a very useful things when you want to see the stars or moon you have to use it...and through...through this...

(3) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S7: this is an insect...it has four wings...and the eyes just like butterfly...

(4) 圓環 (roundabout)

S7: it's a road sign and...and...you need to follow to turn...

S7: not really a sign...like a space...in the middle of the road...

S7: urm...the car drives in...and...follow the circle...and then it turns another ways...

Student No 8

(1) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S8: it's a kind...urm...a kind of birds and it's quite big

S8: A big bird and can't fly. Oh...it is the biggest bird in the world...can you guess?

(2) 蚱蜢 (grasshopper)

S8: it's a kind of insects...green and it can jump

S8: no...no...it's an insect

S8: Yes....

(3) 海市蜃樓 (mirage)

S8: it's a kind of image and happening in the desert. When you feel very tired or thirsty and then you will see a city or a river not far away from you and then you will try to go there...when you arrive there....there is nothing....what is this?

S8: I say this is a kind of situation. When people walk in the desert and then they will see the city or some trees or fruits...and then when you go there....nothing there...understand?

(4) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S8: This is a thing...not a real man standing in the farm and wear farmer's clothes, when birds come, they think farm still there so they can't go near to eat the corns...

Student No 9

(1.) 水母 (Jellyfish)

S9: it's in the sea and it's animal...

S9: the water is...urm its body has many water almost 80% maybe

S9: it always float around...some people treat them as a pet

(2.) 仙人掌 (Cactus)

S9: It's a plant living in the desert. And it doesn't have any leaves.

S9: in fact, its leaves look like pin to save the water.

S9: the centre is like hole...urm...or I should say...thick stick....you know what I mean, right?

S9: yes, it is in the very hot place...you can see it in the desert.

(3.) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S9: It's the animal oh....no...it is an insect and look like fly.

S9: yes, it's very...it has four wings and very thin...it looks butterfly, too...

S9: No, it has a bigger eyes.

S9: two eyes

(4.) 圓環 (roundabout)

S9: It is using in a traffic, it's circle.....and urm.... it is near Tainan train station. it is near Tainan train station.

S9: It is look like UFO...

S9: yes

S9: to turn, driving the car and turn the... and turn the way...

S9: turn around

Student No 10

(1.) 藥膏 (ointment)

S10: This is the medicine in the hole and it seems like cream.

S10: This is the medicine and it fills in the hole and it's like...the medicine like cream.

S10: it is cream, like ice cream. it fills a hole...the hole is something you can fill like cream or....

S10: maybe one day you are bitted by the mosquito and you take this medicine. You know mosquito?

S10: you use this medicine and put it on your skin and....

(2.) 海市蜃樓 (mirage)

S10: This is a view, but it's not really it's fake. And because the water or...urm...you can see the desert or water fall...

S10: it's fake. it's fake, its not really, it's a fake view. It's a fake view

S10: the view... this view you can see in the hot day and you think maybe there is a building in maybe 20 miles but after you get in get drive 20 miles, there is there has no building. There is a fake view. fake view

S10: its like shadow, but not shadow but its fake

S10: view is what you can see is view.

S10: you saw such of view in the desert or in the hot road...because of the hot weather or another reason you will see this. It's a fake view and maybe you can see the waterfall or buildings....but actually there is no waterfall or buildings.

S10: this place has this view but not the answer.

S10: fake is not really....this is a view and you can see this in the desert or in hot day on the road, you will see waterfall and buildings maybe far far away...but there is no what you see actually.

(3.) 烏賊 (squid)

S10: This is an animal, this is an animal swimming under the water.

Sometimes...sometimes it will has something like an ink out of his body...ink...a black like your black pen. It has ink...like pen, it has ink. This animal can spill the ink.

S10: this is an animal and it swim under the water. He can swim very fast and he sometimes he will spill some black ink. Ink is what your pen has, your black pen has black ink. Your red pen has red ink.

S10: a kind of...

(4.) 稻草人(scarecrow)

S10: this is a fake people which...whose is in the field...farm...like a farmer but it's fake.

Student No 11

(1.) 水母 (Jellyfish)

S11: it's animal urm...it's like fish but it's not fish. It's under the sea and it's soft. If you were bitten by it, you will die.

S11: no...it's soft...have many legs

S11: No...

S11: yes....it's white. One kind of swimming...a kind of swimming

(2.) 仙人掌 (cactus)

S11: urm...in the desert, there is a plant...urm...it has no leaves

S11: in fact, the leaves is like pin... very sharp...you will hurt if you touch it...

S11: yes, in the desert...

(3.) 望遠鏡 (binoculars)

S11: if you need to see something far, you may need to use it. You can look star or climate...

S11: It's something to use to look something far

(4.) 海獺 (otter)

S11: that's an animal...it's looks like big mouse...it can swim...have a big big tail

S11: yes, it has a big tail...look like kangaroo or big mouse.

S11: it's colour is brown

S11: its colour is brown and it has a big tail and it can swim

S11: in the zoo but it is not in Taiwan.

S11: a bit like hippo....small than hippo...

Student No 12

(1.) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S12: biggest bird in the world and it can't ...can't fly and run very fast.

(2.) 藥膏 (ointment)

S12: a kind of medicine

S12: like Chinese... Chinese medicine...

S12: and high high...very tall very high in Chinese

S12: these two words

(3.) 海市蜃樓 (mirage)

S12: The first world is ocean in Chinese

S12: and then the city

S12: and how to say...something in your body if it is broken you will die

S12: you got it.

(4.) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S12: it's a not real people....um.... and put it in the farm to...scare the bird.

Student No 13

(1) 仙人掌 (cactus)

S13: this is a plant, it lives in the hot place and its leaves is very small like pin. If you touch it, you will get hurt.

(2) 望遠鏡 (binoculars)

S13: you can use it to watch the far place without walking over there.

(3) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S13: it looks like butterfly but it wasn't. It can fly in the sky.

S13: it has four wings and its body is longer.

S13: some children play with this kind of insect which made of bamboo.

(4) 圓環 (roundabout)

S13: It is the road like circle, its centre has a park.

S13: all cars drive there to change the direction to another roads.

S13: do you know "min sheng lu yuan" in Tainan? that is the one.

Student No 14

(1) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S14: its an animal look like a big bird...it can run very fast and its egg is the biggest in the world.

(2) 藥膏 (ointment)

S14: you can use it when you somewhere are not comfortable or somewhere hurt.

S14: not it...it's like cream.

(3) 海市蜃樓 (mirage)

S14: you only see it when the weather is very hot like desert

S14: No...urm...four words...it is not thing.

S14: no, it's like not real situation or image, not animals or things.

S14: you only see it in desert or very hot place.

S14: for example when people feel very thirsty and walk many days and then they will see a river not far from them. But when they go there, there will be nothing...

S14: four words in Chinese...

(4) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S14: you can see it in a farm. It doesn't a really person. A bird might think it is a really person.

S14: No...urm...the thing like people in the farm...

S14: it scared bird...like a person but not really a person...it's not a human, it a thing look like person... and it scared bird....and living in the F...A...R...M

Student No 15

(1.) 仙人掌 (cactus)

S15: They are plants... they are lives in the hot place. If you touch their leaves, it will maybe let you feel hurts.

S15: big plants

(2.) 望遠鏡 (binoculars)

S15: They are like glasses but not glasses. People use it to see things far away from them.

(3.) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S15: They are small animals and they have big eyes and they can fly

S15: No...Urm...

S15: No...

S15: They lives near pond.

(4.) 圓環 (roundabout)

S15: It is important traffic, if you look from sky, they look like circle.

S15: No, the cars and motorcycles will drive around there to go to another road.

Student No 16

(1.) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S16: you know this bird it can run very fast but it can't fly.

S16: you can see it in Australia or Africa, I think...

S16: this bird is very very big and its eggs are also the biggest in the world.

S16: yes.

(2.) 藥膏 (ointment)

S16: do you know that urm...that medicine you put on your cut or something...

S16: cut...a medicine...

S16: put on your cut

S16: No..a medicine

S16: No...medicine

S16: it's like cream...

(3.) 蚱蜢 (grasshopper)

S16: an insect which jumps on the grass

S16: grass....green grass

S16: yes...it has six legs.

(4.) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S16: I think it's stands in the farm that urm....

S16: yes, just like...not a real man...stand on the farm...not the real man...

S16: stand..

S16: stand on the farm... do you know on the farm...

Student No 17

(1.) 水母 (Jellyfish)

S17: its an animal and its small... it look like....it has many legs and round head and it has different colour...and...you can see it in the water.

S17: no...it is a kind of fish...but it does not look like fish and it is can't be eaten.

(2.) 仙人掌 (Cactus)

S17: this is a kind of plants which you can see in the desert. They don't need water and...you will see something like pine and... no leaves on them.

(3.) 望遠鏡 (binoculars)

S17: you can see them in the travel store.

S17: And it's like glasses but you can't wear it. When you want to see...the thing far away...and you can... you can use it to see.

S17: no...it has two round ...round ...hole... with glasses...

S17: something like this

(4.) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S17: it's an insect... and has four wings and long body. Some children like to catch them and it flies very slowly....

S17: you can see them near the pond and... it has many colours...green or red...

Student No 18

(1.) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S18: it has two...it is an animal and it has two foot...urm...his body shape is very big and you can see in the zoo

S18: yes...yes...it is still survive now...his body had hair and looks oily...

S18: yes...it has feather and its colour is black or brown...

(2.) 藥膏 (ointment)

S18: when you got hurt, you may use it

S18: No...if you feel no good and itch...it has different colour...different hurt to use different one...

S18: Yes... it's cream...

(3.) 蚱蜢 (grasshopper)

S18: he has six foot and it likes jump.

S18: green...green...

(4.) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S18: birds always scared by this kind of farmer...

S18: urm...this kind of farmer is not a real man and he... only wear farmer's clothes.

S18: scared the sparrow

Student No 19

(1.) 水母 (jellyfish)

S19: this is a sea animal. It contains more than 99% water in their body.

S19: Urm..it floats in the water and not very big...small one...has different colour...normally is white...

S19: no...it also has many legs and its head is like mushroom...

(2.) 仙人掌 (cactus)

S19: it is plant and it grows on the desert...

S19: it doesn't need water so it has no leaves.

(3.) 望遠鏡 (binoculars)

S19: this is equipment which we use to see the birds and stars in the sky. When we use it, we can see the birds, stars very closely and very clearly.

(4.) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S19: this is an insect. It has four wings and its body is round and long.

S19: it always appear after raining....near pond...and its baby lives in the pond...

Student No 20

(1.) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S20: it is a big animal. Basically, it is a bird and it is big and its body is round....like round rock. It got long neck and long feet. It can run very fast but it can't fly.

(2.) 藥膏 (ointment)

S20: when we get hurt, we use this to urm...to put on our skin..and...

S20: on....it is inside the first Aid box. This is what we put when we hurt and it's like cream...

S20: let me ask you, what you put when you hurt your knees?

S20: No...don't tell me the brand name, just tell me what is it? o.k. againwhat do we eat when we got sick?

S20: you got this word and then plus what you do on your skin.

S20: now you got it.

(3.) 烏賊 (squid)

S20: it is a sea animal and it allow people to eat it

S20: No....it's not a fish. It can spread black ink when it see the enemy.

(4.) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S20: farmers use this thing to scare the crow

S20: it made of the straw and it looks like a human but not a real man to scare the crow.

Student No 21

(1) 水母 (Jellyfish)

S21: It's an animal and it lives in the water...it has many colour...it is in the ocean...it is an animal and many colour...what is it?

(2) 仙人掌 (cactus)

S21: it's a plant...it grow in the desert...

S21: it only needs little water and it can still alive.

S21: it lives in the desert...you know...many deserts in Africa

S21: It's not an animal...it's a plant in desert... it doesn't need much water...

S21: it lives in desert...in the hot place...

(3) 望遠鏡 (binocular)

S21: this is the thing you can see far away...it's just like a glasses

S21: it can see far away...you can use it to look stars...something out of space...

S21: sometimes you can see this thing in the museum...

(4) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S21: it's an insect...and it has big eyes and...urm...it's like butterfly.

S21: it appear before raining...it's an insect

S21: it has big eyes... and it can fly...and its colour is red or green...

S21: its body is like pencil...and has four wings....I think...

Student No 22

(1) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S22: it is an animal and it has big body and long and soft neck...it has two long legs and it's like a turkey.

(2) 藥膏 (ointment)

S22: it always put on your skin when you hurt.

S22: right.... but it's like when you wash your teeth, you use.

(3) 蚱蜢 (grasshopper)

S22: It's a small...a very small animal. It's green...it has the same colour as leaves and it can jump high.

(4.) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S22: it's not the real person... It's always standing in the farm for...for...urm.. scare the birds coming to eat corns.

S22: in American movie, you can always see it in the farm.

Student No 23

(1.) 水母 (Jellyfish)

S23: it's a sea animal and live in the sea. It has many legs and his head look like mushroom. Urm...I think it has many different colours and...

S23: it is smaller....some people like to have them as pet...

S23: if it bits you, you will die...

(2.) 望遠鏡 (binoculars)

S23: if you use it to watch, you can watch. You can watch far... you can watch urm...further..

S23: the thing you can use it to see far away place.

(3.) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S23: it can fly in the air. It's an insect, not bird or animal.

S23: you can see in summer...it looks like butterfly but it isn't...it's...

S23: its colour is red or green one...it can fly...

S23: Not really....it can't really fly very high...sometimes you can see them at our school.

(4.) 圓環 (roundabout)

S23: many car can drive into one the circle road...

S23: a kind of walk...it's a kind of circle...car drive around it...and turn to the different road where they wish to go.

Student No 24

(1) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S24: it's a big bird...it can run very fast and its egg is the biggest in the world.

(2) 藥膏 (ointment)

S24: you can use it somewhere are not comfortable or somewhere hurt...you can use it to put on your skin.

S24: yes...but it is like cream...

(3) 海市蜃樓 (mirage)

S24: this is something happened in the desert. When people walk in the desert and feel thirsty, they suddenly will see something or water or trees or plants in front of them not far away. They always want to go to the place, but actually it is not there. They think they see it.

(4) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S24: you can see it in the farm...it doesn't a really person...the bird might think it's a really person..

S24: no...the thing look like people in the farm...to scare birds

S24: not a really a person, it's not a human, it's a thing...look like person and scare the bird.

Student No 25

(1) 水母 (jellyfish)

S25: It's an animal... animal living under the sea, it's soft sometimes it's big or very small and urm...you will get hurt if you touch it...or sometimes it will kill people when it bite you.

(2) 仙人掌 (cactus)

S25: It's plant and it live in the desert...uh...plants are like tree...you can't touch it, either. It's green and ...urm...it lives in the desert. It doesn't need much water.

S25: it is green

S25: you can or no...you can't touch it.

(3) 望遠鏡 (binocular)

S25: people can use it to see things far away...very far away...sometimes people use it to look at the stars or sky when they want. Some people use it to watch birds in the countryside.

(4) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S25: It is insect...with big eyes...it has long tails and its...it can fly very fast...it has wings...four long wings...

Student No 26

(1) 鸵鸟 (ostrich)

S26: It's the biggest bird in the world...it can't fly but it can run very fast.

(2) 蚱蜢 (grasshopper)

S26: it's an insect... it can jump very far.

(3) 海市蜃楼 (mirage)

S26: Sometimes in the desert, you will see something water or tree...if you walk to it, you will see there is nothing...it disappear...its not real...and you will see nothing there...

S26: It's not real things there in the desert...

S26: in the movie, you will see people walk in the desert and then feel happy because they find the water but when they go there...there is nothing....do you know how to call this situation?

(4) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S26: In the farm...urm...it is used to scare the bird...it's like man stand on the ground...

S26: farmers use it to scare the bird and it's like a man....

Student No 27

(1) 水母 (Jellyfish)

S27: they live in the sea....and...it seems to float everywhere.

S27: two words in Chinese....water...water the first word... and....and...the second word is mother.....

S27: you put two words together.....water mother....

(2) 仙人掌 (cactus)

S27: the colour of it is green and it is a kind of plant...and it lives in the desert.

(3) 海獺 (otter)

S27: they live in the river or ocean. They are big and they can't be seen in Taiwan. They can be seen in Australia.

S27: the colour is brown or black...it likes to eat fish...

S27: it can climb on the rock...it has long tails.... It likes to eat fish...

S27: no...listen...if you go to the zoo in Australia or America, the staff will ask them to play the game for the tourists and have a lot of fun.

(4) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S27: It is a kind of insect and it can fly... he has two pair of wings

S27: No...it has six legs...it has big eyes and it looks like airplane

S27: some child like to play the toy like to play toy just like this and it can fly in the sky.

Student No 28

(1) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S28: it's a bird....big bird very big... and black...it can't fly but it can run very fast.

(2) 藥膏 (ointment)

S28: it's a medicine and it's like water...

S28: No..no...it is not liquid...it is like cream. You can put on your hand first and then you put on your face or the place you got hurt...

(3) 烏賊 (squid)

S28: it's a kind of fish, in water it may make water become black when some other sea animals want to attack or kill it...

S28: not octopus ...but it's similar to octopus

(4) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S28: there is a man. He is made of dry grass and is in the farm. It's not the real people. Farmer uses it to scare the birds.

Student No 29

(1) 仙人掌 (cactus)

S29: It's a tree growing on a very hot place...urm...

S29: It's a plant. If you touch it you will get hurt. It has pin...

(2) 望遠鏡 (binocular)

S29: if you want to watch the view and it is far, you can use it

S29: It can be used to look very far and it also can look to other plant or stars

(3) 蜻蜓 (dragonfly)

S29: It's an insect...it can fly and also can be seen in our school...

S29: No... it's small and can fly

S29: Its baby is in the water...

S29: No...it's an insect...not an animal

S29: It's small...it usually appear after the rain.

(4) 圓環 (roundabout)

S29: It's like a circle. It's a road and car can drive there.

S29: No...it's a place for car to drive...like a circle... and...

S29: it's a road and it's a circle. There are many...there are many green lights...

Student No 30

(1.) 駝鳥 (ostrich)

S30: this is an animal... and look like a bird... but it can't fly. It is very big. When something or someone or other animals are going to hurt them or kill them...they put their heads under the ground and they think they can't see that.

(2) 藥膏 (ointment)

S30: if you touch hot water and then your skin got hurt. What kind of thing will you put on your skin?

S30: what kind of medicine will you put on your skin?

S30: No...tell me the thing...not the brand name...

(3.) 烏賊 (squid)

S30: this animal is under the sea. The colour is white. It can float. When something or some animals is going to hurt them, they make the water become black to avoid them.

(4.) 稻草人 (scarecrow)

S30: this is something the farmers use in the farm... because when they are not in the farm... maybe bird or other animals will go and eat their harvest.... and... urm...they put that thing there and...urm... the animal think that someone is in the farm and can not go near the place.

Appendix IV:

The Speech Data (II)

Part One

S1	(1-1) I am terrible sorry that I got late because... urm... some because of some work and... mmm ...so...forgive me I am late (1-4) I'm sorry to keep you waiting. How may I help you?
S2	(1-2) sorry...I am very sorry...I pick them up now ...sorry...I just come to pay... (1-4) Sorry I keep you waiting a long time.
S3	(1-1) I am sorry...I am late because of some...I...just....work late....sorry (1-2) I am sorry I will put them back for you...
S4	(1-1) sorry I work too late tonight. Sorry for all of you... (1-2) I am sorry...I just come here to pay...
S5	(1-2) I am sorry, I am not mean to do that and I'll pick up for you. (1-4) Excuse me. May I help you?
S6	(1-1) Urm...I am very sorry, I am late today...mmm I've got something to do. so...may I say so so sorry...I am apologize...can I do something to.. urm could you forgive me..this won't happen again... (1-4) So sorry for making you wait such a long time because I was on the important phone call. I won't let you wait next time.
S7	(1-1) I am so so sorry about this and...urm...urm...the reason I am late for arrival....arrive at our house....urm...because the traffic jam... and ..I am sure I will make up...next time...mmm I promise...urm... and hope you can understand... (1-3) I am so so sorry... and I won't do it next time....mmm and because I got some emergency ...urm...urm... thing to do...please understand it...I won't do it next time...
S8	(1-1) I am so sorry.....urm I don't want to be late too, but I leave work late...so very sorry for keep you wait so long...I won't do this again...sorry... (1-2) I am terrible sorry...I don't know why I knock the menu...I just come to pay my bill...sorry... I pick them up now.

S9	(1-1) Sorry, I am late. (1-2) Sorry, I will pick it up
S10	(1-1) I am very sorry that I'm late for our meeting because I got something to do on my way home. Sorry about this...and it won't happen again.... (1-4) I am very very sorry, I'm just on an important call...and I won't let you wait next time... May I have this pleasure to help you?
S11	(1-2) sorry, sorry I just mess it up, I'm just a child so please forgive me...don't be so serious to me. (1-4) Very very sorry...please forgive me making you wait such a long time, I won't let you wait next time....mmm...I could give you some discount.
S12	(1-1) I am very sorry.... I am late because I work late, please don't be angry at me. Next time I will be on time. (1-2) sorry, I'm so sorry I will pick them up for you, I just come here to pay the bill.
S13	(1-2) I am terrible sorry, I will pick it up because I am too nervous. Thank you forgiving me. (1-4) mm...so sorry...mmm...I am in an important phone call....did you wait for a long time? I won't let you wait this long next time....Is there anything I can help you?
S14	(1-1) I am sorry, please forgive me. (1-4) Oh...welcome. It's nice to meet you.
S15	(1-2) I am very sorry... I knocked the menus on the floor and I will pick it up right away. So...I think I feel very sorry. Can you forgive me? (1-3) sorry, I am late and I will work over time and can you calm down and receive my apologize. I will do something to show my heart..and next time I won't be late.
S16	(1-2) Oh, sorry I'm not....I will clean it...can you give me some time? (1-3) Very sorry, sir. I'm late... I forget the time because I was sleeping...I won't not be late next time...very very sorry....
S17	(1-1) very sorry I'm late and I won't be late next time because today I got some other extra things to do ... I'm sorry. (1-2) sorry I don't mean to be rude, I will pick them up.
S18	(1-1) I'm sorry I'm late, can you forgive me and let's start discussing. (1-2) I'm so so sorry I will pick it up right away.

S19	(1-1) so so sorry I'm late. Please forgive me, I won't do this again. (1-4) I am terrible sorry, keep you waiting because I was talking on the phone. I won't let you wait such a long time...May I help you?
S20	(1-1) sorry, my housemates...I...because I have a meeting with my colleagues and it and the end of the meeting is 6 o'clock so I go home...it takes some minutes so I am late. (1-2) I am verysorry, I knock a few of the menu on the floor and I will take it up for you. Don't be so angry. I am sorry to do that.
S21	(1-1) Hi...I am few minutes late for coming home, let's start discussing about cleaning our house. (1-3) sorry, sir, I am very sorry and I am late because the traffic is very bad and I stuck in the traffic jam. And I promise that I will leave my home earlier next time. I won't do this again sorry.
S22	(1-2) sorry I just knock a few of the menu on the floor I will pick them up after I pay the bill. Sorry.... so I will apologize for it, sorry. (1-4) I am so so sorry. May I help you?
S23	(1-1) very sorry I have urm...I just go...I just work too late and I am sorry I just have too much work to do today ...so I am late....sorry. I won't do that again. (1-2) I am so sorry, I can pick it up for you...I just...I will be careful next time sorry.
S24	(1-2) I am very sorry I will just pick up and give them for you. (1-4) I am terrible sorry, I was talking on the phone for a business. This won't happen next time. Is there anything I can help you?
S25	(1-1) Sorry I am late...I won't do it again next time, please forgive me. (1-2) sorry I will pick up by the way.

S26	<p>(1-1) I am very sorry... I am late because I am busy with my work and finish it 5 minutes after six o'clock. So I was thinking it doesn't keep me that long. I won't be late next time...sorry.</p> <p>(1-4) I am so so sorry about letting you wait me for a couple of minutes because I was talking on a business call. I promise this won't happen next time...very very sorry....What I can do for you?</p>
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S27	<p>(1-1) Hi, guys. I am sorry I am late. I just leaving for my work because I have to work late today, so I come home late than before. I am really sorry and I hope I won't be late for your schedule.</p> <p>(1-2) I want to pay my bill...oh...I am sorry I am no purpose to knock these menus on the floor. I will pick up for you. Sorry I feel very sorry.</p>
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S28	<p>(1-2) Oh..so so sorry I don't mean knocking on the menus, I am sorry I will pick them up. o.k?</p> <p>(1-4) I feel terribel sorry, there's a phone call from an important business friend, May I help you? I am so so sorry to keep you waiting...I won't let you wait next time...sorry..may I do anything for you now?</p>
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S29	<p>(1-2) very very sorry, that's all my fault...I am really sorry. I will pick them up, o.k.?</p> <p>(1-4) I am so sorry for keep you waiting so long because I was on an important phone call. Next time I won't let you wait so long...sorry..What can I do for you?</p>
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S30	<p>(1-1) I am terrible sorry, I don't mean to be late; I won't be late next time. Can you forgive me?</p> <p>(1-4) Letting you wait long...I feel very very sorry... may I serve you?</p>
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Part Two

S1	<p>(2-1) I really need the house and it would be good if you call me or email me in next three days otherwise I could find if there is other place I can move to. Thanks a lot.</p> <p>(2-3) Can you please to see my application form because in two weeks I have to pay my tuition fees... so please view my application form as soon as possible, Thank you.</p>
S2	<p>(2-1) I really like this place so can you let me know soon because I really need a place recently...thank you..</p> <p>(2-2) Hi...do you have Sue's number...I need to call her...could you give me her phone number....thank you...</p>
S3	<p>(2-1) I like this place...can you call me tomorrow because I need a place to stay.</p> <p>(2-2) please give me Sue's number, I want to call her.</p>
S4	<p>(2-2) do you have Sue Lee's number...if you have her number, can you give me?</p> <p>(2-4) I would like to join your company and I will work hard for your company...please change my interview.</p>
S5	<p>(2-1) I am sorry, you have to tell me in the next three days because I need to know if I can got the apartment...and...urm...if you can just...just...call give me a call in three days, please.</p> <p>(2-2) Hello...urm this is Michelle Ling...emm...if ...do you have Sue's number..?</p>
S6	<p>(2-3) Urm...I am sorry I have no time to apply this thing and it's going to.... the school is going to start so could you please let me apply this first.</p> <p>(2-4) I am so sorry I know you're also very busy but.. if you have free time can you read...just...umm...just scan my.. umm my introduction and information thank you.</p>
S7	<p>(2-2) Excuse me, can I ask you for urm...Sue's number because I am...this is very emergency because I have to contact with her... mm...thank you...thanks a lot</p> <p>(2-3) mmm this is really emergency I know that this is my businessbut I need to go back to study ...urm...with the whole my classmates and...this is really emergency to me ...I ...mmm... Please do it as soon as possible for... me...thanks a lot.</p>

S8	<p>(2-2) Hi....do you have Sue's telephone number...because I got something to tell her and it is emergency...so please give me her number...thanks a lot...</p> <p>(2-3) Sorry...I need to pay my tuition fee soon because our school is going to start...so I have to pay my fees....please look my application form first...thank you very much.</p>
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S9	<p>(2-1) Can you give...can you tell me about this matter in three days?</p> <p>(2-2) You have Sue's number, right? Please give it to me.</p>
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S10	<p>(2-1) Is it possible to tell me within next three days?...urm...If you can't rent me the apartment, I can find other place because...because my school is going to start.</p> <p>(2-3) I would like my application to process as soon as possible in order to pay my tuition fee by the deadline. Please help me!</p>
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S11	<p>(2-2) Excuse me, sir! I want to ask Sue Lee's number because I need to contact her, please help me. I will thank you for this. Thanks.</p> <p>(2-4) sorry sir, I need to change interview time because I am busy at that time and I know actually you are busy too. I am great man if you give me a chance to have interview. Please change time for me.</p>
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S12	<p>(2-2) Hi, how are you? I think you have something good today, I am looking for Sue's number; I think you have her number; please give me her number. I will be very thankful for you</p> <p>(2-4) I really like this job and I am a great man. Can you schedule an interview in the morning for me, thanks?</p>
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S13	<p>(2-1) I like the house very much, I think you can help me to live this apartment because this apartment is so beautiful and had good equipment. Can you tell me if I can get the apartment or not within next three days?</p> <p>(2-2) Hello, do you have Sue's phone number? Please give it to me...I need to phone her because I need to discuss with her about this month meeting. Thank you very much.</p>
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S14	<p>(2-3) I forget applying my loan earlier, can you please look my application soon, o.k.?</p> <p>(2-4) Sorry to disturb you. I'm applying for this job. Can you talk about this with me; however I know you're very busy. So I don't mean to disturb you and can you schedule my interview in the morning? Can you do it for me, thank you?</p>
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S15	<p>(2-2) Can you give me Sue Lee's phone number because I need to phone her right away? If you know, can you tell me?</p> <p>(2-4) I apply this job. I really want this job. Can you give me a chance to have interview because I have a child to raise... I will work hard for this work.</p>
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S16	<p>(2-1) Excuse me, can you tell this matter within next three days? I do not have time next week.</p> <p>(2-4) sir, can I change the time...I'm very busy in the afternoon...I want to change my time...in the morning...can you help me?</p>
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S17	<p>(2-2) sorry, excuse me! Can you give me Sue's phone number, I need to contact her?</p> <p>(2-3) Hello! Please review my application form first because I do not want to miss the deadline for paying my tuition fees.</p>
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S18	<p>(2-1) Landlord, can you tell me about the apartment soon because I really have to know it as soon as possible.</p> <p>(2-2) Do you have Sue Lee's number? I need to call her. Please give me her number!</p>
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S19	<p>(2-2) can you tell me what is Sue's number?</p> <p>(2-4) Hello, manager. I'm interested in this job.... and.... I will do my best in this work....Please schedule an interview for me in the morning...thank you.</p>
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S20	<p>(2-1) I want to rent an apartment and I like your apartment very much, can you tell me in three days?</p> <p>(2-4) I am sorry, manager, because I have to work in the afternoon, so I come to ask you let me have an interview in the morning and I know you are very busy and only schedule interview is in the afternoon one to four o'clock. But I really want to apply this job so let me change my interview's time.</p>
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S21	<p>(2-1) sorry sir, I need to...I really like this house, this has... it's just fabulous and officially [*sic]. I know there is another people like this house but I hope that you can let me get this house and I need to know this about 2 days, please.</p> <p>(2-2) Hi, there. Excuse me! Do you have Lee's number, I need to contact him...her...if you have her number, please tell me.</p>
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S22	<p>(2-2) Could you tell me Sue's number, if you know it? Thanks very much. Here's candy if you want.</p> <p>(2-3) Sir, I need... I need to loan some money for my tuition as soon as possible...because of the due. If I do not pay for my tuition I won't be able to go to school...I really need it immediately. Thank you!</p>
S23	<p>(2-1) can you tell me in next three days because I have to leave this city soon? Urm...and ... I won't be able to receive your call next week because I will be abroad for a week...so you can't talk to me. Can you just call me next Monday...next three day?...sorry!</p> <p>(2-4) I have to work in the afternoon and can I have an interview in the morning...because I really like this job but I need to work in the afternoon right now.</p>
S24	<p>(2-2) I think you have Sue's numbers, right? Please give it to me!</p> <p>(2-4) Excuse me! I don't have free time in the afternoon, so can I have job interview in the morning, thank you!</p>
S25	<p>(2-1) I have to live in an apartment in the city please tell me in three days if I can live in, thank you.</p> <p>(2-4) Excuse me! I know that you're very busy in the morning but I really have to be interview in this time because I have another job in the afternoon. I am so so sorry.</p>
S26	<p>(2-1) Excuse me! I really need an apartment...can you call me within three days...I really like this apartment very much.</p> <p>(2-4) Sir, I know you are very busy and the only schedule interview is in the afternoon from one to four o'clock. I really want to apply this job so... can you interview me in the morning? Thanks you!</p>
S27	<p>(2-1) Sorry, sir. You know I am a student and I need to rent my apartment within next three days so can you told me if I can rent the apartment within next three days, thank you.</p> <p>(2-2) Excuse me! Do you know Sue Lee's phone number? I want to contact her, please give me her number...thank you.</p>

S28	<p>(2-2) Hi, do you have the number of Sue Lee? I need to have her number to contact her or do you know who else has her phone number.</p> <p>(2-4) Hello, manager. I know you're very busy and the only your schedule interview in the afternoon but I have to work in the afternoon so I would like to have an interview in the morning. Thank you!</p>
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S29	<p>(2-2) Excuse me, do you know Sue Lee's number? If you have, please give it to me, I need it as soon as possible.</p> <p>(2-4) This is my resume, If you have anything want to ask me and I will do my best to do this work...could I have an interview now?</p>
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S30	<p>(2-1) I don't have much time...can you tell me in next three days. I won't be here next week so can you call me as soon as possible, please?</p> <p>(2-4) Excuse me! I want to be interviewed in the morning because I have to do something in the afternoon, so can you give me a chance? thank you!</p>
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Part Three

S1	<p>(3-1) this watch, I need to about...take about like 2 weeks to fix it, if you really need to have it tomorrow, I think you need to buy another one or else you can give it to me and then I can fix it within 2 weeks.</p> <p>(3-4) sorry...I am leaving today...so thanks for your coupon I don't need it. Thanks.</p>
S2	<p>(3-3) I really like this item but so sorry now I have to have lunch with my friend...so next time...maybe I will buy this item for next time...so very sorry..</p> <p>(3-4) No, I can't take it, very sorry, because I am leaving the city today.</p>
S3	<p>(3-2) I am sorry I can't because I have...I have friend to come my home to have dinner</p> <p>(3-3) I am sorry I have meeting for lunch.</p>
S4	<p>(3-1) I have to fix your wedding antique watch for...I need to this for...sorry...I can't do it...urm...just tomorrow...sorry.</p> <p>(3-3) I can't watch it because I have to be with someone for lunch...so next time.</p>
S5	<p>(3-3) I am sorry I can not stay here for seeing this demonstration, because...urm...I am waiting for someone.. erm.. I have to meet someone today for lunch and maybe next time I'll come over here to stay...to watch them.</p> <p>(3-4) Sorry, I don't need coupon...I'm leaving today..and...I just come here to travel here...and so you can leave...you can have the...you can have the coupons and you can give to the next person if they want it...</p>
S6	<p>(3-1) I'm so sorry I can't ready this for just one day...or maybe you go to the another repair shop to see...if they could fix it by tomorrow.</p> <p>(3-2) I am so sorry I have friends come to my house today... urm,...so can you tell other teachers to do it.... to tell them there is a meeting tomorrow, all right? Thank you!</p>

S7	<p>(3-1) I can't do it...I am so so sorry...urm...because you urm...be next time you have to tell me earlier at least I need to take...urm...at least 2 weeks to finish it. I am so so sorry, perhaps next time...sorry.</p> <p>(3-4) I don't need this mmm so...thanks a lot...mmm because I need to leave...the city today...perhaps next time, sorry.</p>
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S8	<p>(3-2) sorry...I really...I can't help you...because I have...I have a friends coming to my house tonight...would you please find someone...other person to help you...sorry.</p> <p>(3-3) I love to...but I think I can't because I have a friend to meet for lunch...so maybe I will see it next time...thanks.</p>
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S9	<p>(3-1) I can't fix it in one day, uh...maybe you should come and get it in two weeks later.</p> <p>(3-2) I really want to help but my friends are coming over to my house tonight, maybe you should find other person.</p>
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S10	<p>(3-1) Sorry I can't do the job in one day because it will take me at least 2 weeks to finish. I know you are one of our valued customer but I just can't finish it, sorry.</p> <p>(3-2) Sorry, head teacher! I can't do it, I know that it will take me hours and I have friends coming over my house tonight. I don't want my friends to wait for me too long outside my house, sorry about this.</p>
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S11	<p>(3-2) I have friends coming over to my house but I do not want to my friends to wait for me. I really want to do this favour for you but I'm busy tonight. I'm very sorry about this...sorry. Maybe I can help you next time.</p> <p>(3-4) Thanks, I don't need coupon because I'm going to leaving this country...city today then many thanks for these ... but I don't need so please give coupons to another person who really need and living in this country.</p>
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S12	<p>(3-2) sorry I can't help you because I have friend's meeting tonight because it will take me hours to do it. I think my friend will be angry at me so you can ask the other people to help you. Sorry I can't help you.</p> <p>(3-4) sorry I don't need these coupons because I'm leaving this city today so you can give it to other customers.</p>
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S13	<p>(3-2) I'm sorry, my friends will come to my house tonight, I think you can call the other teachers to help you.</p> <p>(3-4) Thanks, but I'm leaving city today so I think I don't need coupons...maybe you can give it to others.</p>
S14	<p>(3-1) sorry your watch can't be repaired in one day. It has need at least two weeks to finish. I am so sorry. I will repair it as soon as possible.</p> <p>(3-2) hello, excuse me, I can't tell the other teachers the meeting tomorrow. I can't do it because it will take many hours and I have friends coming over to my hours tonight so I am very sorry.</p>
S15	<p>(3-1) Sorry I can't do this job in one day because it at least takes two weeks to finish it.</p> <p>(3-4) Thank you, I don't need coupons because I'm leaving the city today. I just come here to be a tourist...please give it to other people.</p>
S16	<p>(3-2) Oh...head teacher...it takes me long time to do it and I have a date with my friends tonight...I am very sorry.</p> <p>(3-3) Thank you for your help, mate. I will come here next time again. Your products are very good but I have a date now. I should leaving now...thank you.</p>
S17	<p>(3-2) Very sorry ... what you ask, because my friends will be coming over to my house tonight, so I am so sorry.</p> <p>(3-3) sorry I can't see this demonstration because I have important thing with my friend now and I really need to go.</p>
S18	<p>(3-1) I am so so sorry. It is very difficult to fix so can you give me more time to fix it? And it take about two weeks to fix, is it o.k. with you?</p> <p>(3-2) sorry, head teacher, I have meeting with my friends in my house so can you ask other teacher to do it?</p>
S19	<p>(3-2) Sorry, I have friends coming over my house tonight...so I can't...do this for you...please find others to do it.</p> <p>(3-3) I don't have time for this because I need to meet my friend right away...so next time.</p>

S20	<p>(3-1) I am sorry, my customer, I can't finish it in one day because I still have other work to do, and your antique wedding watch needs more time to repair, so I can't help you to do this job. Can you wait for two weeks? If you can wait for two weeks, I will finish to repair it, sorry.</p> <p>(3-2) Sorry, head teacher, I can't do this tonight because I have friends coming over my house tonight. I am really happy to do it but it maybe cost me a lot of time, please ask other teachers to do it.</p>
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S21	<p>(3-2) sorry, I am afraid that I am not free to tell other teachers about this...there is a meeting tomorrow...I have something to do tonight, so maybe next time I can help you and you can get other people to help you.</p> <p>(3-4) coupon? I like but I am leaving this city today, so...you can give to others.</p>
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S22	<p>(3-1) Sorry, Sir. It takes me about 2 weeks to repair your watch, even though I do my best to repair it in 24 hours for your anniversary...because it's a very difficult job. So... please forgive me.</p> <p>(3-4) Sir, I do not need these coupons because I am a tourist and I am leaving now so give these coupons for...to someone who really needs it and I will be thank for this, thank you.</p>
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S23	<p>(3-1) You say that I have to do this job in one day...that's impossible.. can you just give me more days to repair it... this is ...this would take time at least 2 weeks to finish it...it really... can't do it in a day.</p> <p>(3-2) you say that we will have a meeting tomorrow and you want me to call every teacher tonight, but I have to do something else because my friends will go...come to my home tonight so I am very sorry.</p>
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S24	<p>(3-1) Sorry if the job...sorry the job will spend me at least two weeks to finish it. I can't help you and I am very sorry.</p> <p>(3-2) Dear teacher, I really don't have enough time, because my friends will come to my house. I really want to help you but I just can't. I'm very sorry.</p>
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S25	<p>(3-2) I am sorry I can't call other teachers tonight because I have to go with my friends tonight, sorry.</p> <p>(3-4) Sorry I do not need these because I have to leave this city tonight so I don't need these...you can give it to others...sorry.</p>
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S26	(3-2) Sorry, I have another plan, Can you ask another teachers to call...to do this? (3-4) Thank you, but I will leave this evening...give it to other people...
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S27	(3-2) I don't have time to do what you ask, because my friends will be coming over to my house tonight. So I am so sorry. (3-4) Thank you but I don't need these coupons because I'm leaving the city today so I won't be coming here anymore.
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S28	(3-2) I am terrible sorry because I have to meet my friends at my home tonight. So... maybe next time...I will do my best to help you. (3-3) I'm sorry...but thank you for operating to show me your demonstration of your product. I couldn't watch your demonstration because I'm on my way to meet someone for lunch...so next time...maybe...
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S29	(3-2) Excuse me, I have some friends coming over my house tonight. Can you find any other people to help you to call other teachers? Thank you, sir! (3-3) Can you show it to me next time, I can't watch it now because I have some business with, I would like to look it, but I'm really busy now. Maybe next time when I come here, I will have more time to watch it...thank you and goodbye!
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S30	(3-2) Sorry I have friends coming over my house tonight, I can't call all of other teachers tonight so you can...maybe you can call other teachers. (3-4) I have to leave the city...this place tonight. I can't use them tonight so you can give other customers if they need these.
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Appendix V: Training Manual

Assessment of Task one

Ease of Comprehension(Score from 1 to 5)

- 1: Very difficult
- 2: Quite difficult
- 3: Average
- 4: Quite easy
- 5: Very easy

Linguistic Proficiency (see the criteria of speaking assessment for details)

1: *Beginner* (learners have limited communicative skills so they are not able to express themselves and they can utter only some vocabulary or repeat words)

2: *Post-beginner* (learners make grammar errors and use language inappropriately so that their communication seems to cause some obstacles)

3: *Intermediate* (basically learners have some knowledge of basic grammatical structure, but because they have a limited vocabulary, some grammar mistakes and use language inappropriate, thus communicating insufficiently)

4: *Upper-intermediate* (Learners have no difficulty to express themselves well, even though they still make some grammar mistakes)

5: *Advance* (learners can express themselves well and they can speak fluently and clearly. Their sentences demonstrate variety even though there are still a few mistakes but which will not affect communication.)

The Interpretation of Scores of Intermediate Level Speaking Assessment

Level	Score	Description
5	100	Learners can express themselves well and they can speak fluently and clearly. Their sentences demonstrate variety even though there are still a few mistakes but which will not affect communication
4	80	Learners have no difficulty to express themselves well, even though they still make some grammar mistakes
3	60	Basically learners have some knowledge of basic grammatical structure, but because they have a limited vocabulary, some grammar mistakes and use language inappropriate, thus communicating insufficiently
2	40	Learners make grammar errors and use language inappropriately so that their communication seems to cause some obstacles
1	20	Learners have limited communicative skills so they are not able to express themselves and they can utter only some vocabulary or repeat words
0	0	No response

English proficiency (Score from 1 to 5)

Example One:

What is your favorite kind of music? Why?

- (1 point) I like pop-popular and rock music. Because it is very.....
- (2 points) I like the, mm, jazz, because that is very...very...wonderful, and uh...I like it.
- (3 points) I like pop music, because it is very wonderful music, and it is, uh, it is a very beautiful music.
- (4 points) classic, because it makes me feel relax.
- (5 points) My favorite kind of music is R-and-B, because I think it's not too fast and it's not too slow. It's easy for dancing, also good to listen.

English proficiency: Example two

(Score from 1 to 5)

How old were you began to learn English?

- (1 point) When I...When I thirteen years old, I beginning...to study English.
- (2 points) I learn English...in my...junior high school, and I since learn five years. I think English is very difficult.

- (3 points) When I was 12 years old, my mother give me, gave me learned English.
- (4 points) Eight years old.
- (5 points) I don't remember the exactly time, but I guess it's mm when I mm elementary school. About mm 14 years old...oh, no, 10 years old.

English proficiency: Example three

(Score from 1 to 5)

What are the advantages and disadvantages of fast food?

- (1 point) Hamburger, fried chicken
- (2 points) I eat xxx very much, it is very delicious and uh I like it. My mother is too, my family every night every dinner I will take take a lot of vede-"vedetablegen".
- (3 points) My advantage is fast food is fresh fries. My disadvantage is, disadvantage fast food is hamburger.
- (4 points) The advantage is it's fast and convenient, but the disadvantage is that it lack nutrition, and, too much oil.
- (5 points) I think the, advantage is, it's very fast, because it's fast food. And it's easy to order anything you want. But um the disadvantage I think is it won't be very healthy, because, like McDonalds, it always have some fired, fired food, something like that, it's not good for our health. That's....

Assessment of Task Two

EXPLANATIONS OF THE SIX ASPECTS

1. Ability to use the correct speech act

Each situation was designed to elicit a particular speech act. You are to consider and rate the degree to which each response captures what you consider to be the speech act the situation was intended to elicit. The question to answer is: How appropriate is this speech act for this situation?

Possible problems in rating: As you read the responses, it should become apparent that speech acts are not mutually exclusive. For example, a request might begin with an apology: "I'm sorry, but could you move your car?" This is still a "true" request. As long as the response includes the speech act within it, it should be considered "appropriate" and rated accordingly. It may also be the case that the response given is very indirect or is intended to introduce a topic without actually getting to the point. In these cases, you should still rate the given response on its appropriateness in the situation.

It is anticipated that ratings of speech acts will be extreme - either 5 or 1. However, you may use the other numbers on the scale if you think they are appropriate (as might be the case with the very indirect or introduction type responses).

2. Formulaic Expressions

This category includes use of typical speech, gambits, and so on. Non-typical speech might be due to the non-native speaker not knowing a particular American English phrase or due to some type of transfer. Use of non-typical expressions is not uncommon in these responses and it is anticipated that your native speaker intuitions will serve you well in rating them. The question to ask is: How appropriate is the wording/are the expressions?

Ungrammaticality, however, is not an issue for our purposes. For example, both NNS and NS responses contain errors in verb conjugation and article use. Do not let those errors influence your ratings.

Possible problems in rating: Although you might find identifying non-typical speech an easy task, assigning a numerical rating might prove difficult. Further complicating the decision is the fact that some responses contain more than one non-typical wording. As with all of the categories, you are judging the acceptability of the response as a whole. You might also be inclined to include ungrammatical responses in your rating of this

category. At times, it might be difficult to distinguish between ungrammatical wording and non-typical wording. When in doubt, follow your native speaker intuitions.

3. Amount of Speech Used and Information Given

Speakers of any language adjust the amount of speech in a given speech act to fit the particular situation. For example, sometimes speakers feel they want to supply a lengthy explanation when making a request. It has been hypothesized that when a non-native speaker uses more speech than the average native speaker, it is due to two possibilities; the non-native speaker might be of a lower proficiency and thus use circumlocution or other less direct strategies, or the non-native speaker might be of a higher proficiency and thus verbose. Of course, non-native speakers of lower proficiency might use very direct and thus shorter-than-the-average-NS utterances, communicating only the most essential information. For example, a refusal might begin with "I can't" without a reason or excuse because the NNS does not have the language to give such an explanation.

It is not implied, however, that all variation in utterance length is due to language proficiency. Of course, there is a degree of individual choice involved in how much one decides to say. The question here is: How appropriate is the amount of speech used/information given?

Possible problems in rating: Deciding how much speech and/or information is appropriate for a given situation might prove difficult, especially because some individual variation is normal. As a guideline, use your native speaker intuition to judge when a response seems particularly abrupt or seems to "ramble" and provide too much unnecessary information.

Degrees of Formality, Directness, and Politeness

These three distinct yet often overlapping elements of speech have caused a great deal of discussion and research (in addition to headaches!) in pragmatics. These elements are reviewed below. While rating each response, you should try to keep these three concepts as distinct in your mind as possible.

The question is: How appropriate are the levels of formality, directness, and politeness? Possible problems in rating: You might find it awkward or annoying to assign a rating to these three speech act elements because they are not 100 percent exclusive. Nonetheless, your ratings will give the researchers an indication of the role each of these elements plays in the data and will therefore help the researchers decide how they want to deal with these aspects in the future.

4. Formality: Formality can be expressed through word choice, phrasing, use of titles, and choice of verb forms. Use of colloquial speech can be appropriate in American English when the situation is informal and between friends, family, and co-workers. Yet here, too, a degree of appropriateness can apply. You are the judge.

5. Directness: Pragmatically defined, most speech is indirect. However, you are to rate the appropriateness of the level of directness found in the responses. Directness can be indicated by verb form or strategy choice. To illustrate, we offer the well-worn example of the couple sitting in the living room having difficulties with direct and indirect request strategies. Person A (stereotypically the wife) says to Person B, ‘Boy, it’s hot in here!’ (an indirect form) thinking that Person B will then get up and open the window. However, Person B replies, ‘Humm, yeah I guess so’ and remains seated. The indirect strategy is ineffective, so Person A gets annoyed and now says, ‘Hey, bozo, open the window!’ (direct form). At this point Person B gets annoyed and replies, ‘Why didn’t you just say so in the first place!’ Again, use your native speaker intuition to judge the appropriateness of the level of directness used.

6. Politeness: This concept has many dimensions and has been the topic of many discussions in speech act studies. Politeness includes the aspects of formality and directness, among other things such as politeness markers (“thanks you”, “please”, “if you don’t mind”, etc.). Due to its many elements, it is impossible to prescribe a formula of politeness for a given situation. For example, native speakers of English might use first names in a job situation, but it is not necessarily inappropriate to use Mr./Ms./Mrs. (surname) on the job. Furthermore, if one usually uses politeness markers in addition to first names in work situations, one might be seen by others as appropriately polite.

Criteria for Ratings

In all of your rating, you are to use native speaker intuitions and reactions. As someone with a great deal of experience with NNSs, you might be more accepting than other NSs. However, you are not to rate the responses as the all-accepting-and-culturally-sensitive-ESL-teacher. It is assumed that although you might be more accepting of a response than other more linguistically or culturally isolated NSs, you will still *notice* differences in some of the responses. Therefore, focus on what you notice and, using your native speaker intuitions, compare it to what you think the NS norm might be.

When relying on your ND intuitions, it is assumed that you will employ some type of “band of acceptability”. For example, you might find that two responses to the same situation have different degree of formality, but that both seem acceptable. In such a case, you should rate them as you feel is most appropriate.

Do not use what you think you might say as the sole criteria for your rating. For example, you might be someone who uses humor very often in interacting with strangers. With this in mind you should not rate other responses negatively just because they do not include the humor you would use in the given situation.

While rating, to the best of your ability, judge each response independently of the others. Try not to let the other responses influence your decision of the response in question. This might prove difficult. Try to clear your mind after each response, thus allowing your native speaker intuition a chance to interact with each response without bias from the last one.

Examples:

Situation: you live in a large apartment building. You are leaving to go to work. On your way out, you meet your next door neighbor, whom you haven't seen for a long time.

You might think you would say:

“Good morning, Bob. How have you been? We haven't talked for weeks!”

In this case you might circle 5

Or you might think you would say:

“Nice to meet you. Tell me where you are going. I am thinking you are having a good day today. How is your family?”

In this case you might circle 2 because there are some inappropriate expressions and too many expressions over all.