



TRABAJO FIN DE MÁSTER

OVERCOMING VOCABULARY DEFICIENCIES IN ORAL  
COMMUNICATION. TRAINING EFL STUDENTS IN THE USE OF  
CIRCUMLOCUTION



**How do you say...  
in English?**



TUTOR: VICTORIA ZENOTZ IRAGUI

STUDENT: SONIA BELANCHE ECHEVERRIA

## MASTER'S FINAL PROJECT

### Overcoming vocabulary deficiencies in oral communication. Training EFL students in the use of circumlocution

**Abstract:** The present article reports on a study carried out among Spanish students of English as a Foreign Language that made use of circumlocution and other compensatory strategies to overcome vocabulary deficiencies in oral communication. The study focuses on the role of foreign language classroom instruction and the effectiveness of an explicit teaching of circumlocution to improve learners' fluency and ability to face unknown lexical items when performing speaking activities. Besides, the types of circumlocutions, structures and alternative strategies are analyzed in order to gain a better understanding of the learning process of compensatory strategies. According to the results, this kind of strategies proved to be a useful and effective means of keeping the flow of conversation and coping with problematic vocabulary but short time and punctual training seems to have little effect on the quality of the circumlocutions produced or the avoidance of less desirable strategies such as abandonment or code-switching. From these findings, some pedagogical recommendations can be made with the aim of improving the teaching of compensatory strategies.

**Key words:** EFL, Strategic competence, Compensatory Strategies, Circumlocution, Lexicon

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of communication is to convey a certain meaning, in the most accurate way if possible. In any case, as stated by Brown and Yule (1983:13) "the message is the reason for speaking", that entails that the message must be finally understood by the receiver.

Lexical items are thought to be key elements for a successful communication due to the fact that they carry the weight of meaning within a given language. In the context of FL / L2 learning, facing vocabulary deficiencies is a most common situation and as Cohen (1991) claims, the problem arises when the number of unknown words outnumbers that of known items.

Negotiation of meaning is therefore required in order to overcome those lexical gaps, making use of a communicative competence known as strategic competence (Swain 1984: 189) that allows learners to "enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for breakdowns".

The concept of communicative competence was first mentioned by Canale (1983) and further developed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) who included the idea of strategic competence, defined as "an inventory of skills that allows a strategically competent speaker to negotiate messages and resolve problems or to compensate for deficiencies".

In the same vein, Faerch and Kasper (1983) acknowledged the existence of a subset of communication strategies known as compensatory strategies. These were defined by Poulisse (1990: 192-193) as processes that operated in the fields of conceptual and linguistic knowledge representations. The main goal of compensatory strategies was to create alternative means of expression due to the fact that "linguistic shortcomings make it impossible for language users to communicate their intended meaning in the preferred manner".

The concepts of strategic competence and compensatory strategies are directly linked to the idea of successful learners proposed by Stern (1975) and Rubin (1975) who claimed that this kind of learners have their own "special ways of doing it".

Nevertheless, achieving the goal of becoming a successful learner requires the participation of two actors. On the one hand, the learner that among other good learning attitudes pointed out by Rubin (1975) "should have a strong drive to communicate, be willing to make mistakes and focus on form by looking for patterns and analyzing". On the other hand, the role of the instructor could be extremely helpful to promote successful learning.

For this purpose, teachers should take into account Chamot (1987) and Oxford's (1990) division of language learning and use strategies that included cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies allow learners to control their own cognition "by coordinating the planning, organizing and evaluating of the learning process" as stated by Cohen (1996). Other authors such as Anderson (2002b) also acknowledge the importance of instruction in metacognitive strategies since "developing metacognitive awareness may lead to the development of stronger cognitive skills".

The acknowledgement of the importance of raising learners' awareness of their own learning processes regarding communication strategies lead to question whether training on strategies would considerably improve the learning of FL / L2 or not. A great amount of studies support the positive effects of learning strategies instruction. Chamot and Kupper (1989) and Chamot and O'Malley (1994) among others, suggest that this kind of instruction may be helpful for learners in three different ways; it can help students to become better learners, more independent and confident learners and also to raise their motivation by means of associating their use of strategies and their success in learning languages.

Further questions regarding learning strategy instruction led researchers to try to determine the most effective and successful way of developing such instruction in the real context of FL / L2 classes. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) found two different approaches. The first consisted of a direct training where "students are informed about the value and purpose of learning strategies". The other one, named embedded by the authors, occurs in the course of regular tasks, activities and use of materials but is "not explicitly defined to the learner as strategy instruction".

The use of an embedded approach has been criticized by the aforementioned O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and also by other researchers such as Wenden (1987) who believed that this kind of instruction has little effect on learners. Wenden (1987) claimed that learners who were not familiar with cognitive or socio-affective strategies that were available to them, could not use the metacognitive ones and as a result no transfer occurred.

According to these tenets, a direct approach for the instruction of learning strategies is recommended. In order to get a successful direct instruction this should meet certain requirements described by Oxford (1990) and that could be summarized as finding the most balanced integration of cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social learning and use strategies and also developing those strategies over a long period of time integrating them in regular class practices since isolated or short interventions are believed to be ineffective.

Regarding the typology of communication strategies available both for learners and instructors to be trained in the context of FL / L2, it may be helpful to follow Jordà's (1996) compendium of the taxonomies proposed by the main researches on this area (Váradi, 1973; Tarone, 1977; Paribakht, 1985). This taxonomy includes avoidance or reduction strategies (message abandonment and topic avoidance) and achievement or compensatory strategies (circumlocution, approximation, word-coinage, all-purpose words, nonlinguistic means of expression, foreignizing, code switching, appeal for help and use of fillers).

Focusing on the achievement or compensatory strategies gathered by Jordà, circumlocution could be highlighted as the most used and helpful strategy that pervades oral communication even in the context of native language. It is a powerful mean of overcoming lexical gaps, unknown or forgotten words, in order to achieve a successful communication.

Tarone (1983: 62) described the strategy of circumlocution as the description of characteristics or elements of the object or action. Other researchers gave even a typology of circumlocutions taking into account which characteristics of the object or action are highlighted by the speaker. That is the case of Paribakht (1985) who divided circumlocution into physical description, constituent features, locational and historical properties and functional descriptions among others.

It seems that training learners in the use of the strategy of circumlocution may be useful for them to avoid communication breakoffs. Masters and Marsal (1997) showed in a study focused on the use of circumlocutions that if learners are encouraged to centre on the salient features of lexical items, they are able to circumlocute in a better way. In the same vein, Salazar (2006) recommends the teaching of some general and basic vocabulary that may be a good resource when negotiation of meaning is needed, especially regarding technical or more specific words. She claims that this instruction in core vocabulary and structures required by circumlocution "may enhance their strategic competence by means of developing procedural before declarative knowledge".

## 2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Communication strategies have been widely researched in the fields of linguistics and second language acquisition. One of the most explored issues was that of lexical deficiencies because as Kellerman (1991) claims: "learners seem more able to reflect on lexical difficulties than those involving other types of linguistic element".

Wonsawang (2001) reports on a trend in communication strategies research derived from psycholinguistic perspective where the focus was placed on a speaker's utterances without an interlocutor's interactions. Many of those experiments (Poulisse, 1990; Bialystock, 1983; Tarone and Yule, 1989) consisted of concrete picture description tasks in which a L2 learner had to describe them for a native speaker. All those studies had in common the use of real-world objects for which the vocabulary was unknown to the participants, creating lexical gaps that had to be overcome by using communication strategies.

Salazar (2006) on her part mentions a number of studies focused on lexical items and acquisition of FL / L2 that produced contradictory findings. On the one hand, Loschky (1994) found positive effects of negotiation on vocabulary comprehension but not on acquisition. On the other hand, Ellis et al. (1994) and de la Fuente (2002) corroborated the fact that negotiation resulted in better comprehension and acquisition of new lexical items.

With the expansion of language learning strategy instruction research, the question to be answered was whether training on strategies would result in improvement in language learners. A large body of research supports the positive effects of training on strategies in language learning performance (Carrell, Pharis and Liberto, 1989; Carrell, 1998; Oxford 1990a, 1990b, 1996; Oxford et al., 1990).

A further step was the study of possible language learning strategy models. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) found the aforementioned two approaches: direct and embedded. Direct training was favoured by many researchers such as Wenden (1987), Oxford (1994) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Nevertheless, in a research carried out by Dörnyei (1995) and focused on the instruction of strategies –topic avoidance, circumlocution and fillers- the results in qualitative and quantitative aspects of strategy use of groups that received direct strategy training and groups that received embedded strategy training lacked of significant difference.

Among the possible reference studies, this research has been devised as a replication and widening of Salazar's (2006) study on the use of circumlocution. Salazar's first aim was to analyze how circumlocution was used by non-native speakers of English when facing the task of

explaining new lexical items. The second objective was the elaboration of a possible classification of circumlocution into different categories, according to its use. The findings of this reference study pointed to a broad use of circumlocution in the foreign language context and to a predominance of the categories of function and description as the most employed by learners, in keeping with other results such as Bialystok's (1989) or Yule and Tarone's (1990).

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main aim of the present study is to compare a direct training and an embedded training in the compensatory strategy of circumlocution for a short period of time and find out if it affects learners' performances in oral activities regarding the use of more precise vocabulary and more complex syntactic structures or the avoidance of breakoffs in communication (Varonis and Gass, 1991). Raising learners' awareness about the existence of circumlocution may enhance a better use of it and the avoidance of other kind of strategies such as foreignizing, code switching or abandonment.

At the same time, this research wants to establish a typology of circumlocution in order to get a more accurate perspective about the best way to help students get to master the use of this strategy that has been proved to be really helpful when negotiating meaning and overcoming vocabulary deficiencies.

Secondarily, the study aims to test which are learners' attitudes and habits of use regarding compensatory strategies and if training in circumlocution has some kind of effect on the acquisition of vocabulary.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 THE GROUP

In this study participated 24 EFL Spanish students of 1<sup>st</sup> of E.S.O (12 years old). None of them had visited any English speaking countries and their proficiency level could be labeled as A2, beginner level. The students were part of the bilingual section which means that three of their subjects were taught in English –English literacy, Music and Mathematics- amounting 6 hours per week.

It is worth mentioning that participants in the experiment were used to perform oral activities during regular EFL classes. The teacher's approach to communication strategy training was an embedded one. No explicit instruction was given, but both teacher and students' made continuous use of strategies such as circumlocution or approximation. Learners had also internalized the need to make themselves understood by any possible mean, what the teacher called "make your way".

Students were randomly assigned to two different groups: control group (CG) and experimental group (EG). Both groups had to perform the same tasks and activities, except for the EG that received an extra session for training in circumlocution.

### 4.2 PROCEDURE

The experiment was carried out in 5 sessions over a period of 2 months during English literacy or language assistant's regular classes.

In session 1, students of both groups CG and EG (24 students; 10 girls, 14 boys) had to complete a test ticking the words they already knew choosing from a list of 40 concrete items related to everyday life: stationary, kitchen utensils, computing, furniture, clothing... According to the results of this test, the researcher chose the words that would be present in the experiment: some lexical items completely unknown (e. g. bowtie, blender, mitten), some easily mistakable because of sharing common features (e. g. apron-mitten; jug-mug) and a few already known or easily inferable to avoid learners' frustration (e. g. keyboard, tambourine, stapler).



Session 2 consisted of a training instruction on circumlocution. Experimental group participants (12 students; 4 girls, 8 boys) received in Spanish information about the existence of several compensatory strategies that could be used to achieve successful communication. Students were asked to contribute with their own ideas. Then the researcher focused on circumlocution, its definition, uses and common vocabulary and structures. Participants were asked to describe different pictures (an oven, a syringe, a microwave...) involving unknown lexical items following the instructions and examples given by the researcher.

**Example:** proposed picture - Tuxedo

- *"It is a special piece of clothing used by mens"*
- *"You use it for elegant parties or bodas"*
- *"It is a type of jacket and trousers but elegant"* (See Apendixes)

Session 3 consisted of a picture recognizing task and was carried out by both EG (12 students; 4 girls, 8 boys) and CG (12 students; 6 girls, 6 boys) in different locations. Participants were given in Spanish the explanation about the activity and a piece of paper with 15 pictures of cooking utensils (jug, mug, beater, apron, rolling pin...) and their names, both appearing in a different order (See Apendixes). Researcher dictated the items in a certain order. The items' pictures appeared scrambled in students' sheets. Negotiation of meaning was allowed so after the researcher had named the item, students could ask for further information as many times as they consider it necessary. The researcher did not move to a new item until they all have chosen an item. The circumlocutions produced included target vocabulary and structures worked in the training session.

**Example:**

Researcher: *Number five is an apron*

Student: *What is apron?*

Researcher: *An apron is a piece of clothing that we use over our clothes to keep them clean while we are cooking.*

Student: *I don't know*

Researcher: *Ok. It is a piece of cloth, quite long, that covers the front part of our body. We use it to avoid getting dirty while cooking.* (See Apendixes)

In session 4 participants performed an oral activity in pairs. It was carried out by both EG (10 students; 4 girls, 6 boys) and CG (10 students; 6 girls, 4 boys) in different locations. Isolated from the group, each pair was given an explanation about the activity in Spanish and two pieces of paper containing pictures of unrelated but common items (bowtie, pram, cushion, dummy...) (See Apendixes).

StudentA's pictures were arranged in a different order than StudentB's pictures. Participants were recorded and allowed to negotiate the meaning; StudentA had to help StudentB to recognize and number every item of the list. Aside from that, learners were asked to communicate just orally and in the target language. Researcher's intervention was limited as much as possible.

**Example:**

Student A- *One, bowtie*

Student B- *What is bowtie?*

Student A- *Is a... accessory... mmm... that puts on the hair or around the neck... is like a mini, mini... bird... in Spanish... the name*

Researcher- *Did you get it? No? More things that you could say Irene...*

Student A- *Mmmm... Daisy*

The last session, number 5, involved both groups EG (7 students; 2 girls, 5 boys) and CG (5 students; 2 girls, 3 boys). It consisted of a test (See Apendixes) including all the items used in researcher's dictation and pair-work tasks devised to check the level of acquisition of vocabulary achieved. There was also a short questionnaire (See Apendixes) about students' use, knowledge and attitudes toward compensatory strategies.

#### 4.3 CODING AND DATA ANALYSIS

Categorization of features highlighted in circumlocution was based on Paribakht's (1985) typology and on Salazar's (2006) division but adding new categories to better analyze the students' productions: Function, Superordinate, Physical description, Location, Use, Cultural Reference and Linguistic Reference.

Categorization of strategies was made following Jordà's (1996) compendium of the main taxonomies on this field. Avoidance or reduction strategies (message abandonment and topic avoidance) and achievement or compensatory strategies (circumlocution, approximation, word-coinage, all-purpose words, nonlinguistic means of expression, foreignizing, code switching, appeal for help and use of fillers).

Analysis of core vocabulary and structures was made according to the most general ones that were explicitly taught during the training session. Ex: "It is a kind of...", "It is a tool that...", "It is made of...", "It is used for", "Is similar to...", "It is an instrument..."

Students' pair work and researcher's dictations were recorded.

## 5. RESULTS (See Appendixes)

### TYPOLOGY OF CIRCUMLOCUTIONS

**TOTAL CIRCUMLOCUTIONS – RESEARCHER & EXPERIMENTAL GROUP & CONTROL GROUP: 195**

FUNC	SUPER	DESCR	LOCAT	USE	CULT REF	LING REF
83 42'8%	33 17%	33 17%	19 9'8%	21 10'8%	4 2%	1 0'5%

TOTAL CIRCUMLOCUTIONS – RESEARCHER: 78

FUNC	SUPER	DESCR	USE
30 38'5%	17 21'8%	24 30'7%	7 9%

TOTAL CIRCUMLOCUTIONS – CONTROL GROUP: 63

FUNC	SUPER	DESCR	LOCAT	USE	CULT REF	LING REF
26 41'3%	9 14'3%	7 11%	11 17'5%	7 11%	3 4'8%	1 1'6%

TOTAL CIRCUMLOCUTIONS – EXPERIMENTAL GROUP: 54

FUNC	SUPER	DESCR	LOCAT	USE	CULT REF	LING REF
27 44'4%	7 13%	2 3'7%	8 15%	7 13%	1 1'8%	

#### Examples:

Function: "The nine is when you have the hair... a bad hair... you can use this to straight... it" / "Is the thing don't you put... when you put the baby and you can... eh... go with the baby".

Superordinate: "Is a rare chair... that... eh... buff..." / "It is one cloth that you put in the hair"

Description: "He is a ring... with things when you... es que... that... sound" / "Is soft, square... mmm... to the sofa"

Location: "Number four... in your home there are a lot... no no no, two or three like this eh... and in the living room in the sofa"

Use: "Number three is the rocking chair, is eh a chair that you can... where you can eh... sit down and go to the... to left and right"

Cultural reference: "Mmmm... Daisy" / "Tambourine. Is an instrument you play in Christmas"

Linguistic reference: "Is a... accessory... mmm... that puts on the hair or around the neck... is like a mini, mini... bird... in Spanish... the name"

## USE OF STRATEGIES

TOTAL STRATEGIES – CONTROL GROUP: 34

MIME	HELP	SWITCH	FOREIG	ALL-PURP	ABAND	BREAKOFF
2	2	3	4	23	2	

TOTAL STRATEGIES – EXPERIMENTAL GROUP: 39

MIME	HELP	SWITCH	FOREIG	ALL-PURP	ABAND	BREAKOFF
2	2	10	1	20	1	3

### Examples:

Mime: "The third it's like a chair but... it is... for the... that... mov... this chair it moves from... joder... from... (*moving back and forth*)"

Asking for help: "Is... mmmm... ¿cómo se dice blandito? (*whispering*)"

Code Switching: "The second one is... but in this object is the *esto*?"

Foreignizing: "The second is ashtray... is a recipe (he meant *recipiente*) eh... when you smoke eh... you put the... the... something to the... in this *recipain*"

All-purpose words: "eh... is like a thing with you put in the... in a smoking in the neck"

Abandonement: "And the ten is stapler. Is when you have a lot of... a lot of... mmmm... papers, you can... you *apret* and he... and they... bah!")

Breakoff: "The ashtray is the... an object that the... that puts the... the smoke... the smoke..."

## USE OF CORE VOCABULARY AND STRUCTURES

### CONTROL GROUP

Scarce use of specific vocabulary and complex structures

Resource to all-purpose words: *object, thing, put, have*

Highly dependent on personal proficiency and way of expressing. Influenced by listener's moves.

**Example 1**: more complex syntax and richness in vocabulary

A- *You need this eh... for chatting with your friends in the computer*

A- *The sixth, ah... when you are little... eh... when... eh... you... your parents eh... take you on this object and... it's yes.*

A- *Number seven... it's on the shops of the commercials.... Commercial centers... and they have clothes eh...*

R- *Yeah ok, she's got it, ok, yeah? The next one...*

A- *This is an instrument and if you shake it then you... you have a sound eh... likes... a little metallic*

**Example 2:** simpler syntax and more general vocabulary

A- *Cushion... is like... in the sofa... you put the... the head.*

B- *Ah!*

A- *The five is keyboard*

B- *What is this?*

A- *Eh... the... to write in the computer*

A- *The six is pram*

B- *What is this?*

A- *Is an object that you move a baby*

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Scarce use of specific vocabulary and complex structures

Resource to all-purpose words: *object, thing, put, have*

Highly dependent on personal proficiency and way of expressing. Highly influenced by listener's moves.

**Example 1:** more complex syntax and richness in vocabulary

A- *The next... the next is cushion... are in sofas and... no sé*

A- *The next is keyboard... **you need this** to the computer*

A- *The next is pram... is a **special chair** for babies*

A- *The next is dummy... in some shops there are clothes in this... in this eh... object*

A- *The next one is tambourine... is a instrum... is a instrumental... a **object instrumental**... that you play with the hand... you move the hand and they sound*

**Example 2:** simpler syntax and more general vocabulary

A- *Second, ashtray*

B- *Eh, what is it?*

A- *This is when you smoke...*

[...]

A- *Cushion. It is a object that **you put** in the sofa...*

[...]

A- *Eh... **pram**. Is a object that the families use to eh... **put** the babies... in here... in this*

## CORRECT RECOGNIZING OF ITEMS

### CONTROL GROUP

PAIR WORK TASK- correct picture recognizing: 48 / 50 – **96%** (12 participants)

RESEARCHER'S DICTATION- correct picture recognizing: 156 / 180 – **86'7%** (10 participants)

### EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

PAIR WORK TASK- correct picture recognizing: 50 / 50 – **100%** (12 participants)

RESEARCHER'S DICTATION- correct picture recognizing: 156 / 180 – **86'7%** (10 participants)

## VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

CONTROL GROUP FINAL TEST- names and pictures correctly matched: 66 / 125 - **52'8%** (5 participants)

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP FINAL TEST- names and pictures correctly matched: 75 / 175 – **42'8%** (7 participants)

## PERSONAL QUESTIONNAIRE (See Apendixes)

CONTROL GROUP & EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (12 participants)

**1- Make oneself understood by any means: 100%**

**2- Most used strategies:** Aproximación 25%; Inventar palabras 23%; Recursos tecnológicos 20,5%; Circunloquio 17,8%; Mímica 13,3%

**3- Alternative strategies:** Dibujos e imágenes, Uso de cognados, Ayuda en diferentes fuentes (diccionarios, internet), Inventar palabras

**5- Usefulness of learning strategies:** 100 % ("también hay que aprender cosas nuevas para expresarte mejor"; "nos ayudaría a comunicarnos si viajamos fuera"; "por si no te acuerdas de una palabra".

**6- Enhances self-confidence:** 100% ("para hacerse entender"; "para hablar con extranjeros"; "no hace falta saber todas las palabras".)

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The highest percentage of category use when circumlocuting belongs to the function of the object (83/195), followed by its physical description (33/195) and superordinate (33/195). The predominance of functional descriptions is reported in several studies such as Bialystok (1983) or Salazar (2006) and it could be due to the fact that the items involved in the tasks proposed were concrete objects. It is worth mentioning the production of circumlocutions based on linguistic reference (bowtie – "mini, mini bird... in Spanish") and cultural reference (tambourine – "Christmas"; bowtie – "Daisy"; rocking chair – "old men in films") which could be linked to WongSawang (2001) ideas about the importance of mutual knowledge and speaker and listener's common cultural background.

The analysis of communication strategies, leads us to highlight all-purpose words as the most recurrent resource at hand when there are no specific lexical items available. The majority of the circumlocutions produced by both groups were sustained by the use of those versatile, basic and general words, even though, and taking into account their beginner level, the strategy proved to be completely successful for the purpose of conveying the intended meaning. The rest of the strategies –mimicry, asking for help, abandonment or breakoff- were less frequently used.

Concerning the vocabulary and structures involved in students' circumlocutions, perhaps due to their low level of proficiency, they were quite simple, lacking complex syntax and constructed by means of basic and general vocabulary. These results could be explained by WongSawantg's (2001) hypothesis. He claims after analyzing a wide variety of studies researching on communication strategies that the use of strategies varies according to the type of tasks proposed and that the first variable influencing the choice is the familiarity of the referents to

the participants. Yule (1997) suggests that “the more familiar the entities to be identified, the more likely that the speakers will produce single-word labels or short phrases” and so it seems to be in the case of the present study. Nevertheless, more variables could have influenced the performance in the oral production tasks. As mentioned above, there was a high variation of quantity and quality of circumlocutions depending on personal characteristics of the participants – their learning styles, language proficiency, shyness, motivation, environmental conditions...- and also depending on the listener’s signs of understanding or misunderstanding.

Further analyzing the results, the use of a compensatory strategy in order to overcome the lexical gaps proposed in the tasks has proved to be utterly effective. Both groups recognized the great majority of the items with a slightly lower percentage in the case of researcher’s dictation. Therefore, in the same vein as Loschky (1994), Ellis et al. (1994) and de la Fuente (2002) it can be claimed the positive effects of negotiating meaning on the comprehension of vocabulary.

The role of negotiation of meaning in the acquisition of vocabulary remains uncertain since researchers report contradictory findings. The rates of retrieval of the lexical items proposed in the two main tasks of the study were similar for both groups and the vocabulary was not the newest but the same items recognized as known or familiar in the first test aimed to provide data for the researcher to choose the most suitable vocabulary.

Regarding the personal questionnaires answered by the participants, students seemed to be aware of the existence of strategies available for them to overcome vocabulary deficiencies and communicate effectively in the target language. They acknowledged the usefulness of communication strategies in order to become better and more confident users of FL and seem prone to learn and use them.

Taking up again the comparison between direct and embedded communication strategies training, a closer analysis of control group and experimental group’s results is required. As stated before, there are no significant differences between them in any of the issues proposed even if control group performed slightly better in certain aspects: they produced more circumlocutions, avoided breakoffs, resorted less to code-switching and matched correctly more names and pictures in the final test.



The findings of the present study seem to corroborate Dörnyei's (1995) results that pointed out to a lack of significant difference between one of the groups of participants that was given conversational training without any focus on specific strategies and another group that was provided with specific strategy and content training. The author assumed that communication activities, that were carried out by the group not specifically trained in strategies, included information-gap elements and that can be considered as an indirect practice. Wongsawang (2001) points out the fact that the author focused on the surface structures of the language and that seems in Bialystok's (1990) view, "unlikely to enhance strategy use".

The non significant differences between the control group and the experimental group participating in this study may be the outcome of factors as the ones just pointed out in the case of Dörnyei's (1995) research. Nevertheless, other relevant aspects such as the short and isolated sessions of training could be regarded as highly influential in the final results. These would be in keeping with Oxford's (1994) requirements for the teachers to achieve a successful learning strategy instruction, two of them particularly relevant in this case: training should be integrated into regular activities over a long period of time rather than taught as a separate, short intervention and it should be somewhat adapted to individual needs and requirements.

## 6.1 LIMITATIONS

The experiment was originally devised to be carried out in 7 sessions, during 5 consecutive weeks. Finally, the training of the EG was reduced to just one session –instead of the 3 sessions intended- and in some cases more than a week elapsed between a session and the next one due to external reasons impossible to be controlled by the researcher. More sessions would have been needed to test the task repetition effect.

The number of students that participated in this research reached a total amount of 24, but not all of them were present in all the activities and finally just 10 could be recorded, also due to external reasons. In any case, larger samples of subjects would be required to get a more realistic perspective on the topic studied.

Aside from those limitations, background conditions were not the same for both groups and that may affect students' responses to the tasks proposed. That is directly linked to affective determinants such as students' interest or motivation, variables that were not taken into account due to the difficulty of its measurement.

Some scholars have pointed out the importance of previous fluency and proficiency level when analyzing the results of studies focused on communication strategies. It would have been highly recommended to carry out a pre-test to check those factors.

Regarding the devising of this research many flaws can be acknowledged. Among others and following Oxford (1994), this study does not meet the requirements to achieve a successful and helpful learning strategy instruction; it was not integrated into regular L2 activities for a long period of time but consisted of a separate, short intervention, it was not relevant, varied and did not involve authentic materials; and finally it was not somewhat individualized.

The type of task –picture description and dictation- and the vocabulary involved in it – concrete words- may also condition the outcomes of the research as suggested by WongSawang (2001) when he linked familiarity of the referent and simple syntax or as stated by Paribakht (1985) regarding the different categories of description given by participants in tasks related to concrete or abstract nouns.

## 6.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Learning strategies do not operate by themselves, they are, according to Brown (1991) directly linked to the learner's learning styles and other personality variables. It would be extremely helpful for both teachers and students to throw light upon this area of research in order to get Oxford's (1994) "somewhat individualized learning strategy instruction".

Other interesting issue to be further explored is the connection between compensatory strategies and vocabulary acquisition. As stated by Cohen (1996), the use of a certain compensatory strategy is not oriented at learning new lexical items but at keeping the flow of the conversation. Even so, different studies show contradictory findings; Lochsky (1994) found no positive effect of negotiation of meaning in the acquisition of vocabulary whereas Ellis et al. (1994) and de la Fuente (2002) corroborated its effectiveness.

The possible relation between learner's proficiency level and the use of communication strategies remains uncertain, defended by authors such as Paribakht (1985) but discarded by others like Poulisse and Schils (1989). Comparing the performance of groups having a varied range of proficiency levels may produce findings very valuable for FL / L2 teachers in order to instruct students in the most beneficial way according to their level.

## 6.3 PEDAGOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A successful teaching of learning strategies should be integrated in regular FL / L2 routines and developed over a long period of time; short interventions have apparently no positive effect. The integration of cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies seems to be necessary to help students become better and more motivated learners. Awareness about personal learning processes is recommended by many authors as a means to enhance language acquisition.

Successful learners have been defined as strategically competent. The development of this strategic competence requires teacher's attention since the teaching of linguistic competence –grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation- is not enough, according to Alcon (2004). Whether direct instruction is a better approach than embedded instruction regarding learning strategies

has not been firmly corroborated although many researchers position themselves strongly in favor of a direct approach.

What seems to be clearly beneficial for learners' acquisition of a language is the use of classroom activities and tasks oriented to the development of a wide range of skills using realistic situations and materials. Bialystok (1990) claims that "any instruction that helps students to master part of the language or to become more comfortable using it is to be commended and not criticized".

As circumlocution has been proved to be a helpful resource when coping with vocabulary deficiencies and learners seem prone to use it in a spontaneous way, teachers can provide their students with basic tools to operate with circumlocution: core vocabulary and simple structures necessary for general descriptions. Learning and teaching these basic sets of lexical items could improve the quality and accuracy of meanings conveyed by students through circumlocution. These sets of words would not be closed and fixed, but open-ended and chosen by the teacher according to learners needs, learning styles and proficiency levels.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to deeply thank:

Victoria Zenotz and Amparo Lázaro for her kind guidance and support.

Hector Fernández (my tutor at IES Basoko) and Henry Patterson (language assistant at IES Basoko) who let me borrow their precious teaching time to carry out this research and were always willing to offer their kind help.

All the students in the 1<sup>st</sup> AB of ESO class at IES Basoko that took part in this research.

All the teachers and classmates in the Master from whom I have learnt so much in many different ways during these last months.

This work would not have been possible without them.

## 8. REFERENCES

### MAIN REFERENCE STUDIES

Cohen, A.D. (1996). "Second Language Learning and Use Strategies: Clarifying the Issues". *CARLA Working Paper Series*, 3.

Jordà, M. P. (1996). "Some Comments on the Existing Typologies of Communication Strategies: Its Effect on the Interpretation of Empirical Findings". Universitat Jaume I.

Salazar, P. (2006). "The use of circumlocution in the foreign language context", in *Porta Linguarum*, 5: 7-15.

Ranjbar, R. & Rashek, Z. E. (2003) *Metacognitive Strategy Training for Vocabulary Learning* – TESL-EJ. 7; N° 2.

Wongsawang, P. (2001). "Culture-specific notions in L2 communication strategies". *Second Language Studies*, 19(2), 111-135.

### OTHER REFERENCES FOUND IN THOSE STUDIES

Alcón, E. (1997b). Integrating research on the study of miscommunication in non-native discourse. *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata*.

Alcón, E. (2004). "Research on language and learning: Implications for language teaching", in *International Journal of English Studies*, 4: 173-196.

Anderson, N.J. (2002b). *Using Telescopes, Microscopes, and Kaleidoscopes to Put Metacognition into Perspective*. *TESOL Matters*, 12 (4), 2002.

Bialystok, E. (1983). "Some factors in the selection and implementation of communication strategies"

Bialystok, E. (1990). *Communication Strategies*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Brown, G. and Yule, G. (1983). *Teaching the Spoken Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Canale, M. (1983). "From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy", in J. C. Richards and R. Schmidt (eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 2-28). New York: Longman.

Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z. & Thurrell, S. (1995). "Communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications", in *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 6: 5-35.

Chamot, A.U. (1987) The learning strategies of ESL students. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.). *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Prentice-Hall. 71-84.

Chamot, A.U. & Kupper, L. (1989). "Learning strategies in foreign language instruction", in *Foreign Language Annals*, 22/1, 13-21.

Chamot, A.U. & O'Malley, J.M. (1994). *The CALLA Handbook: Implementing the Cognitive Language Learning Approach*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

Cohen, A. (1991). "Strategies in second language learning: Insights from research", in R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. Sharwood Smith, and M. Swain (eds.), *Foreign/second language pedagogy research*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 107-119.

De la Fuente, M<sup>a</sup>. J. (2002). "Negotiation and oral acquisition of L2 vocabulary", in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24: 81-112.

Dörnyei, Z. (1995). On the teachability of communication strategies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, (1), 55-85.

Ellis, R., Tanaka, Y. and Yamazaki, A. (1994). "Classroom interaction, comprehension and L2 vocabulary acquisition", in *Language Learning*, 44: 449-491.

Faerch, C. & Kasper, G. (1983). *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London: Longman.

Gass, S.M., & Varonis, E.M.(1991). "Miscommunication in non-native speaker discourse", in N. Coupland, H.Giles, & J.M. Wiemann (Eds.), *'Miscommunication' and problem talk* (pp. 121-45). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kellerman, E. (1991). "Compensatory strategies in second language research: A critique, a revision, and some (non-)implications for the classroom", in R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. Sharwood Smith, and M. Swain (eds.), *Foreign/second language pedagogy research*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 142-161.

Loschky, L. (1994). "Comprehensible input and second language acquisition. What is the relationship?", in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16: 303-323.

Masters, A. & Marsal, F. (1997). "How to avoid language breakdown? Circumlocution!", in *Foreign Language Annals*, 30: 473-484.

O'Malley, J.M. & Chamot, A.U. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 229-230). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House/Harper Collins.

Oxford, R.L. (1990a). Language learning strategies and beyond: a look at strategies in the context of styles. In S. S. Magnan (Ed.). *Shifting the Instructional Focus to the Learner*. Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. 35-55.

Oxford, R.L. (1990b). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Newbury House.

Oxford, R.L. (1990c). Styles, strategies, and aptitude: important connections for language learners. In T.S. Parry & C.W. Stansfield (Eds.), *Language Aptitude Reconsidered*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. 67-125.

Oxford, R.L., Crookall, D., Cohen, A. Lavine, R., Nyikos, M. & Sutter, W. (1990). Strategy training for language learners: six situational case studies and a training model. *Foreign Language Annals* 22/3, 197-216.

Paribakht, T. (1985). Strategic competence and language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, 6:132-146.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the 'good learner' can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly* 9:41-51.

Stern, H.H. (1975). What can we learn from the good language learner? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 31, 304-18.

Tarone,E. (1977). Concious communication strategies in interlanguage: a progress report. *On TESOL 1977*. Washington, D.C:TESOL.

Tarone, E. (1983). On the variability of interlanguage systems. *Applied Linguistics*, 4, 143-163.

Váradi,T. (1973). Strategies of target langage learner communication:message adjustment. Paper presented at the *sixth conference of the Romanian-English Linguistics Project* in Timisoara.

Wenden, A. (1987) Incorporating Learner Training in the Classroom. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.). *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Prentice-Hall. 159-178.

## 9. APPENDIXES

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

#### RESEARCHER

FUNC	SUPER	DESCR	USE
30	17	24	7
38'5%	21'8%	30'7%	9%

Total Circumlocutions: 78

#### CONTROL GROUP

FUNC	SUPER	DESCR	LOCAT	USE	CULT REF	LING REF
26	9	7	11	7	3	1
41'3%	14'3%	11%	17'5%	11%	4'8%	1'6%

Total Circumlocutions: 63

MIME	HELP	SWITCH	FOREIG	ALL-PURP	ABAND	BREAKOFF
2	2	3	2	23	2	

Total Strategies: 34

TEST SCRAMBLED ITEMS: 48 / 50 – 96% (12 participants)

TEST KITCHEN UTENSILS: 156 / 180 – 86'7% (10 participants)

FINAL TEST: 66 / 125 - 52'8% (5 participants)

USE OF CORE VOCABULARY, STRUCTURES

#### EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

FUNC	SUPER	DESCR	LOCAT	USE	CULT REF	LING REF
27	7	2	8	7	1	
44'4%	13%	3'7%	15%	13%	1'8%	

Total Circumlocution: 54

MIME	HELP	SWITCH	FOREIG	ALL-PURP	ABAND	BREAKOFF
2	2	10	1	20	1	3

Total Strategies: 39

TEST SCRAMBLED ITEMS: 50 / 50 – 100% (12 participants)

TEST KITCHEN UTENSILS: 156 / 180 – 86'7% (10 participants)

FINAL TEST: 75 / 175 – 42'8% (7 participants)

USE OF CORE VOCABULARY, STRUCTURES



## TOTAL RESULTS CIRCUMLOCUTIONS

FUNC	SUPER	DESCR	LOCAT	USE	CULT REF	LING REF
83 42'8%	33 17%	33 17%	19 9'8%	21 10'8%	4 2%	1 0'5%

Total Circumlocutions: 195

TOTAL RESULTS TEST KITCHEN UTENSILS: 312 / 360 – 86'7% (24 participants)

TOTAL RESULTS FINAL TEST: 141 / 300 – 47% (12 participants)

## TEST ABOUT COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES – (12 participants both groups)

### Question 1

100% try to make themselves understood by other means.

### Question 2

Aproximación 25%; Inventar palabras 23%; Recursos tecnológicos 20,5%; Circunloquio 17,8%; Mímica 13,3%

### Question 3

Hacer un dibujo, usar una imagen (A1, A3, A4, A5, A11) / Usar cognados (A4) (code-switching?) / Buscar ayuda, diccionarios (A7, A9) (asking for help) / Describir, explicar (A8) / Inventar palabras (A10) / No sé, otras no válidas (A1, A2, A6, A12)

### Question 4

Ninguna (A1, A3, A4, A6, A10, A11, A12) / Aproximación y circunloquio, explicar o describir (A2, A5) / Buscar ayuda diferentes medios, internet, diccionarios (A6, A8, A9) / Dibujar (A8) / Mímica (A8) / Inventar palabras (A8) /

### Question 5

100 % Yes – A2: también hay que aprender cosas nuevas para expresarte mejor; A4: nos ayudaría a comunicarnos si viajamos al extranjero; A10: por si no te acuerdas de una palabra.

### Question 6

100% Yes – A2, A12: para hacerse entender; A3: para hablar con extranjeros; A8, A12: no hace falta saber todas las palabras.

## **TEST – LIST OF ITEMS (10')**

Participants: 24 students (10 girls, 14 boys)

Students had to tick the words they already knew choosing from a list of 40 concrete words related to everyday life: stationary, kitchen utensils, computing, furniture, clothing...

Lexical items: Stapler / Screen / Tambourine / Piping bag / Cart / Backpack / Beater / Cushion / Raccoon / Seatbelt / Hair straightener / Mixer / Laptop / Pram / Loudspeaker / Grinder / Dummy / Jug / Cloth / Apron / Rocking chair / Bowtie / Tuxedo / Mug / Hotplate / Armchair / Blender / Mitten / Syringe / Teapot / Grater / Keyboard / Saw / Corkscrew / Sailboat / Rolling pin / Ashtray / Lid / Castanets / Tie / Pot

### Known

(Between 90-60 %) Stapler / Tambourine / Keyboard / Laptop / Loudspeaker / Tie / Sailboat / Castanets / Raccoon

(Between 50-30%) Armchair / Corkscrew / Teapot / Backpack / Seatbelt / Screen / Cushion / Rocking chair / Hair straightener

(Between 20-0%) Cloth / Mixer / Rolling pin / Beater / Ashtray / Hotplate

Criteria for choosing lexical items:

- Generally unknown words to test their ability at describing or recognizing new items: Grinder, Bowtie, Dummy, Piping bag, Blender, Jug, Cushion, Mitten...
- A few known or easily inferable words to avoid frustration: Keyboard, Tambourine, Corkscrew, Teapot, Rocking chair, Stapler...
- Some easily mistakable words to test their ability to differentiate between items that share certain characteristics: Apron-Mitten, Mixer-Blender, Jug-Mug, Rocking chair-Pram

## **SESSION 1 – EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (50')**

Participants: 12 students (4 girls, 8 boys)

The session was carried out in Spanish.

No recording.

## Teaching "tricks" to use circumlocution in a better way

1- Warming up – raising their awareness about communication problems due to a lack of vocabulary.

- Discussion: Have you ever been abroad? Have you ever spoken with a native speaker? What is the main problem that you face when you want to speak in a foreign language? What do you do when you don't know how to say something in another language? Is that a serious problem or you can use different strategies to come out of that situation?

2- Compensatory strategies – collaborative typology of possible strategies to avoid communication breakoffs.

- Mime, body language, gestures.
- Invented words (Word coinage). E.g.: balloon - "airball"; pram - "baby car"; eyeshadow - "eyecolour";
- Words in Spanish or other languages (Code-switch). E.g.: "Como hay muchas palabras que se parecen, igual lo dices en español o en francés y te entienden" "Comfortable, idea, piano..."
- Internet, mobile phones, dictionaries...
- Pictures or drawings
- Use a different word (Approximation). E.g.: "Si queremos decir que comimos merluza y no sabemos cómo se dice, pues decimos fish"
- Asking for help. E.g.: teacher, friends, dictionaries...
- Asking for a repetition or further information (Negotiation of meaning). E.g.: "I don't know what you talk. Can you repeat?" "I don't understand. Can you explain it?"
- Description of the item (Circumlocution or Paraphrase). E.g.: Toothbrush – "a thing you need to have your mouth clean",

3- Circumlocution – How to describe any object using just a basic set of words – collaborative activity

<b>SHAPE</b>	Round, Squared, Long, Flat, Sharp, Cone, Pyramid, Sphere, Stick, Box...
<b>MATERIAL</b>	Wood, Plastic, Cloth, Pottery, Metal, Glass...  It is made of...
<b>OTHER FEATURES</b>	It has a handle, a lid, long sleeves, buttons... It has four sides... It is Manual, Electric...

	It is Similar to... It Looks like... It is Like a...
<b>SIZE &amp; COLOUR</b>	Big, Huge, Small, Tiny, Medium size... Dark / light, Bright, Dull, half black-half white, Spotted, Strapped, Checked...
<b>TPOLOGY</b>	It is a Piece of furniture, pottery, clothing... It is a Kind of... It is a Type of... It is an Object that... It is a Device that... It is a Tool... It is an Electric Appliance... It is a special Kind of...
<b>USE</b>	You have to move the... You have to press the button... You put sthg inside and..
<b>FUNCTION</b>	It is Used for... You Need this to... It is very Useful to... It is Used By doctors, plumbers, teachers... You use it When you need to... You Wear it in summer...
<b>LOCATION</b>	It is normally Found in hospitals, schools, gardens... You can Buy it in a supermarket,... It is Typical of/in...

4- Circumlocution – Training – collaborative description of unknown lexical items by looking at some pictures.



#### Syringe

- *"You can find it in hospitals"*
- *"It is used by doctors or nurses"*
- *"It is made of plastic and has a long part of metal"*
- *"It has liquid and when you are ill they put you this"*

#### Microwave

- *"Is in the kitchen"*
- *"It is electric and you cook things inside"*

- *"It has a door and buttons"*
- *"You use it for the milk or water, usually"*

### Tuxedo

- *"It is a special piece of clothing used by mens"*
- *"You use it for elegant parties or bodas"*
- *"It is a type of jacket and trousers but elegant"*

### Oven

- *"You can find it in the kitchen"*
- *"It is similar to a microwave but bigger"*
- *"You use it to cook chicken or big food inside"*

### Sailboat

- *"It is a kind of boat"*
- *"It has a long piece of cloth"*
- *"You need wind to move this boat"*

## **SESSION 2 – EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (35')**

Participants: 12 students (4 girls, 8 boys)

Explanation about the activity in Spanish.

Researcher's dictation of 15 items in a certain order. The items' pictures appeared scrambled in students' sheets.

Negotiation of meaning allowed.

After the researcher had named the item, students could ask for further information as many times as they consider it necessary. The researcher did not move to a new item until they all have chosen an item.

No recording of the activity.

Items: Cooking Utensils

Piping bag / Jug / Beater / Teapot / Grinder / Grater / Blender / Corkscrew / Mitten / Pot / Hotplate / Apron / Mug / Rolling pin / Mixer

*Results: 156/180 – 86.7%*

Student 1EG: (15/15)

Student 2EG: just matched correctly Corkscrew, Mug, Grinder, Grater and Jug (5/15)

Student 3EG: (13/15) – missed Grater and Teapot

Student 4EG: (15/15)

Student 5EG: (15/15)

Student 6EG: (11/15) – missed Corkscrew, Blender, Grinder and Mixer

Student 7EG: (12/15) – missed Mitten and mixed up Grinder and Corkscrew

Student 8EG: (12/15) – missed Teapot, Jug and Apron

Student 9EG: (15/15)

Student 10EG: (13/15) – mistook Mitten for Apron

Student 11EG: (15/15)

Student 12EG: (15/15)

### **Comments:**

Items such as Mitten and Apron can be easily confused.

Items such as Mixer and Blender can be easily confused.

Items such as Teapot or Jug can be easily confused.

Participants: if they just pay attention to keywords or they do not understand some basic words involved in the description of an item... this can lead to confusion.

## **SESSION 1 – CONTROL GROUP (35')**

Participants: 12 students (6 girls, 6 boys)

Explanation about the activity in Spanish.

No recording of the activity.

Researcher's dictation of 15 items in a certain order. The items' pictures appeared in a different order in students' sheets.

Negotiation of meaning was allowed.

After the researcher had named the item, students could ask for further information as many times as they considered necessary. The researcher did not move to a new item until they all had chosen the previous one.

Cooking Utensils

Piping bag / Jug / Beater / Teapot / Grinder / Grater / Blender / Corkscrew / Mitten / Pot / Hotplate / Apron / Mug / Rolling pin / Mixer

Results: 156 / 180 – 86'7%

Student 1CG: (13/15) – mixed up Mixer and Blender

Student 2CG: (15/15)

Student 3CG: (15/15)

Student 4CG: (5/15) – missed Rolling Pin, Grinder, Teapot, Grater, Mitten, Jug and mistook Mixer (for Grinder), Beater (for Grater), Jug (for Mug), Piping bag (for Jug)

Student 5CG: (12/15) – mistook Rolling pin (for Mixer), Mixer (for Pot), Pot (for Rolling pin) (?)

Student 6CG: (12/15) – mistook Rolling pin (for Mixer), Mixer (for Pot), Pot (for Rolling pin) (?)

Student 7CG: (13/15) – missed Rolling pin and Mixer

Student 8CG: (15/15)

Student 9CG: (15/15)

Student 10CG: (15/15)

Student 11CG: (13/15) – mistook Jug for Mug

Students 12CG: (13/15) – mistook Teapot for Mixer

Comments:

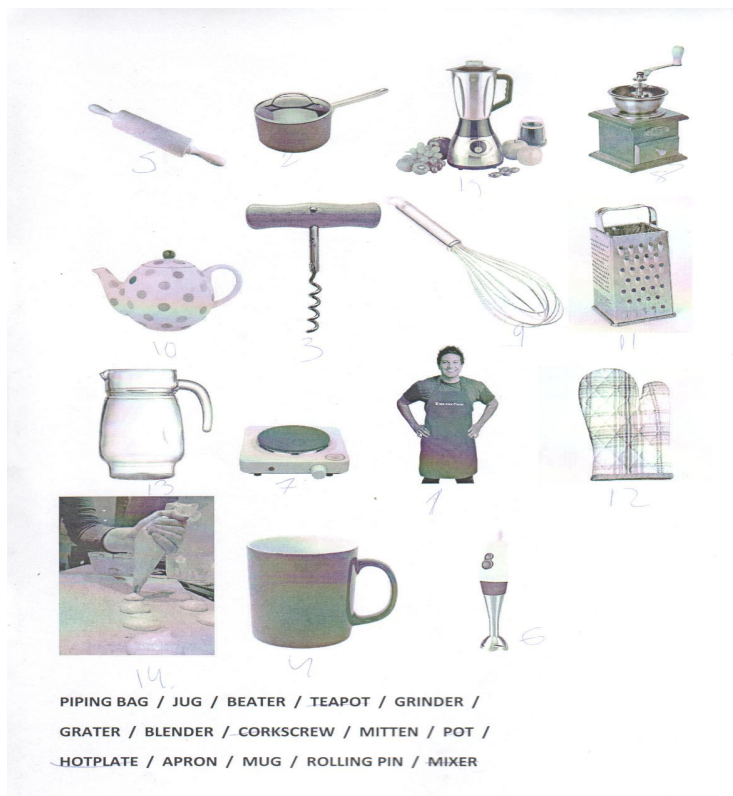
Student4CG – possibly got lost

Student6CG and Student 7CG – possibly cheated, both had the same mistakes

Items such as Rolling pin and Mixer in which description are involved words that children may not be familiar with.

Items such as Mixer and Blender are easily mistaken; the words involved in their description, especially those regarding their function could have misled participants.

Items such as Jug or Mug are easily mistaken; similar words appear in their description.





## **CIRCUMLOCUTIONS PRODUCED BY THE RESEARCHER (SESSION 1 - CONTROL GROUP / SESSION 2 - EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)**

S = Superordinate F = Function C = Combination D = Description L = Location (Time or Space)  
W = How it works

### 1- APRON

It is a piece of clothing that we use over our clothes to keep them clean while we are cooking. (S) (F)

It is a piece of cloth, quite long, that covers the front part of our body. We use it in order to avoid getting dirty while cooking. (D) (F)

### 2- POT

It is a kitchen utensil made of metal, similar to a sauce pan, it can have a long handle and we usually boil water or milk in it. (D) (F)

It is like a pan; it can have one or two handles. It is made of metal and the one in the picture has a long handle. It is used for boiling water, milk, eggs. (D) (F)

### 3- CORKSCREW

It is a kitchen tool that we use to open bottles, to remove the cork of the bottles. (F)

It is a kitchen tool, a hand tool, it usually has a handle made of wood and metal and it is used to open bottles. (D) (F)

### 4- MUG

It is similar to a cup or glass. It is usually bigger and made of pottery. It has a handle and we can drink coffee or soup in it. (S) (D) (F)

It is a type of glass; it is like a cup but bigger and made of pottery. It has a handle and we can drink coffee or soup in it. Many people use it for having their breakfast; chocolate milk, cereals... (S) (D) (F)

### 5- ROLLING PIN

It is a hand tool made of wood; it has two handles, one at each side and we use it to stretch pizza dough, for example. (D) (F)

It is a kitchen utensil, usually made of wood and with two handles, one at each side. It is a long roll, a long stick of wood that is used to prepare pizza dough. (D) (F)

### 6- BLENDER

It is a type of kitchen electric appliance; it is like a long stick, we hold it with one hand and we use it for preparing sauces, mayonnaise, purée... (S) (D) (W) (F)

It is an electric appliance, similar to a mixer but we usually use it for preparing sauces, purée... It is like a long metallic or plastic stick that we hold with one hand. (S) (F) (D) (W)

#### 7- HOTPLATE

It is a squared object, with a round metallic piece that is used for cooking or heating food. (D) (F)

It is an electric appliance, it is used for cooking or heating food. It has a metallic piece and some buttons to control the heat. (S) (F) (D)

#### 8- GRINDER

It is a device, electric or manual, that has a long handle and is used for smashing coffee grains. It looks like a box with a handle on the top. (S) (D) (F)

It is an electric or manual appliance, used for smashing coffee grains into powder. It has a long handle on top of it; we turn the handle to smash the grains. (S) (F) (D) (W)

#### 9- BEATER

It is a kitchen hand tool that we use to mix the eggs when we want to make an omelet. (F)

It is a hand tool of metal; we use it to mix the eggs when we want to prepare an omelet. (F)

#### 10- TEAPOT

It is a piece of pottery, we put tea inside and then we can serve it easily. It has a handle on the back side and another long piece on the front side, the liquid goes inside out through this long piece. (S) (W) (F) (D)

It is a special container for tea, usually a piece of pottery. It keeps tea warm before it is served. (S) (F)

#### 11- GRATER

It looks like a metallic box; it has four sides with holes of different sizes on each side. We use it when we need small pieces of cheese, carrots, garlic, onion.... (D) (F)

It is a kitchen hand tool, made of metal, with holes of different sizes on each side. It is used to get small pieces of cheese or vegetables. (D) (F)

#### 12- MITTEN

It is a special type of glove that is very useful when we have to take some hot food out of the oven. (S) (F)

It is a piece of cloth; it has the shape of a glove but is thicker. We use it to protect our hands when we take something out of the oven. (S) (D) (F)

#### 13- JUG

It is a type of container made of glass, usually for serving water. It is quite large and has a handle on its back side. (S) (D) (F)

It is a large container made of glass. We can put water, juice, tea or other liquids inside. It has a handle so we can serve drinks easily. (S) (W) (F) (D)

#### 14- PIPING BAG

It is a hand tool made of plastic; it looks like a cone where we put the dough or the cream when we want to make cakes. (D) (F)

It is a plastic cone, like a bag that is used when making or decorating cakes. (D) (F)

#### 15- MIXER

It is an electric appliance, like a big glass, made of plastic or glass. We put inside fruits and we press a button in order to get a milk shake or a juice, for instance. (S) (D) (W) (F)

It is an electric appliance, it has a big container made of glass or plastic where we put pieces of fruit, or different ingredients and we get them liquid, like in a juice. (S) (D) (W) (F)

RESULTS: 78 circumlocutions – describing 30 items (15 items x 2 sessions)

- FUNCT – 3
- SUPER + FUNCT – 3
- DESCR + FUNCT – 11
- SUPER + DESCR + FUNCT – 5
- SUPER + FUNCT + DESCR – 1
- SUPER + DESCR + WORK + FUNCT – 3
- SUPER + WORK + FUNCT + DESCR – 2
- SUPER + FUNCT + DESCR + WORK – 2

Total FUNCTION: 30 – 38'5%

Total DESCRIPTION: 24 – 30'7%

Total SUPERORDINATE: 17 – 21'8%

Total WORKING: 7 – 9%

Comments:

The *Combination* category has not been considered. As the aim was that all the participants in each group got the right answer several explanations about a single item were needed.

The *Location* category has not been considered; all the items could be obviously found in a kitchen.

As was stated in the criteria for choosing the vocabulary, some words were more problematic than others especially confusing pairs such as Mug-Jug, Mixer-Blender or less familiar items such as Grinder. These words required more complex circumlocutions than the rest in order to facilitate identification and disambiguation.

## **SESSION 2 CONTROL GROUP - TRANSCRIPTION (30')**

Participants: 10 students working in pairs (6 girls, 4 boys)

Student A dictates Student B 10 items in a certain order.

Items: Ashtray / Bowtie / Keyboard / Pram / Stapler / Rocking Chair / Tambourine /  
Cushion / Hair straightener / Dummy

Negotiation of meaning is allowed.

Conversations were recorded.

Results: 96%

Pair 1: 100%

Pair 2: 100%

Pair 3: 100%

Pair 4: 80% - mistook Rocking chair for Pram

Pair 5: 100%

**A = Student A B= Student B R = Researcher**

### **Pair 1CG – 3' 05"**

A- One, bowtie

B- What is bowtie?

A- Is a... **accessory**... mmm... **that puts on** the hair or around the neck... is like a mini, mini... bird... in Spanish... the name (S) (W) (LR – Linguistic Reference)

R- Did you get it? No? More things that you could say Irene...

A- Mmmm... Daisy (CR – Cultural Reference)

B- Ah, vale!

[...]

A- ... ashtray

B- Ah, what is ashtray?

A- Is like, o sea, when you *smuk*, no, o sea, no smoke the re... (F)

B- Vale!

A- Rocking chair

B- What is rocking chair?

A- To sit eh... comfortable (F)

A- Cushion

R- Number four, yeah?

A- Is... mmmm... ¿cómo se dice blandito? (*whispering*) (Asking for help)

R- Is soft, for example...

A- Is soft, **square**... mmm... to the sofa (D) (L)

A- Keyboard

R- Ok, you know that one, very well!

A- Pram, to the babies, to carry eh... pram (F)

A- Dummy, seven...

A- Eh... to... in... in the shops they carry the clothes to show them the people (L) (F)

A- Tambourine

R- You know that one, very well!

A- Hair straightener

A- And stapler... to the papers. (F)

RESULTS: 12 circumlocutions (8 items)

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS – 1 (put)

ASKING HELP – 1 (Cushion: “¿cómo se dice blandito?”)

LING. REF – 1 (Bowtie: “...is like a mini, mini bird... in Spanish... the name”)

(CR) CULT.REF – 1 (Bowtie: “Daisy”)

FUNCT – 4 (Stapler, Pram, Rocking chair, Ashtray)

DESCR + LOCAT – 1 (Cushion)

LOCAT + FUNCT – 1 (Dummy)

SUPER + WORK + LING.REF – 1 (Bowtie)

Total ALL PURPOSE WORD: 1

Total FUNCTION: 5

Total SUPERORDINATE: 1

Total LOCATION: 2

Total LINGUISTIC REFERENCE: 1

Total DESCRIPTION: 1

Total CULTURAL REFERENCE: 1

Total WORKING: 1

Total ASKING FOR HELP: 1

## Pair 2CG– 3' 20"

A- **This object**, this object... mmm... **you can put in** your neck and **is for** going to a chic party... and go very well. (W) (F)

[...]

A- The second one is... but in this object is the *esto*...? (Asking for Help, Code Switch)

R-(whispering) No, is the place

A- Ah, vale! The object when you are in a *coffee* and you are smoking you **put** the *ciguareit*, cigarette eh... when you finish you **put** the cigarette there. (L) (F)

A- The third **it's like a** chair but... it is... for the... that... mov... this chair it moves from... joder... from... (moving back and forth) (S) (D) (Resort to Mime)

[...]

A- The fourth, eh... in... there... this object **is in** our sofas and it's from... it's for... eh... que... eh... be comfort when you are.... (L) (F)

R- sitting... very well! Ok, number five.

A- **You need this eh... for** chatting with your friends in the computer (F)

A- The sixth, ah... **when you** are little... eh... when... eh... you... your parents eh... **take** you on this object and... it's yes. (F)

A- Number seven... it's on the shops of the commercials.... Commercial centers... and they **have** clothes eh... (L) (D)

R- Yeah ok, she's got it, ok, yeah? The next one...

A- This is **an instrument** and **if you** shake it then you... you have a sound eh... likes... a little metallic (S) (W) (F)

R- Ok, very well, you're great at describing things!

A- The nine is **when you have** the hair... a bad hair... **you can use this** to straight... it. (F)

A- The ten, the last one **is... for** join two papers eh... in one. (F)

RESULTS: 17 circumlocutions (10 items)

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 6 (put, take, have)

ASKING FOR HELP: 1 (Ashtray: "But in this object is the esto...?")

CODE SWITCH: 1 (Ashtray: "But in this object is the esto...?")

MIME: 1 (Rocking chair: "This chair moves from... from...")

FUNCTION – 4 (Stapler, Hair Straightener, Pram, Keyboard)

LOCATION + DESCRIPTION – 1 (Dummy)

LOCATION + FUNCTION – 2 (Cushion, Ashtray)

SUPERORDINATE + DESCRIPTION – 1 (Rocking chair)

WORKING + FUNCTION – 1 (Bowtie)

SUPERORDINATE + WORKING + FUNCTION – 1 (Tambourine)

Total FUNCTION: 8

Total ASKING FOR HELP: 1

Total LOCATION: 3

Total CODE SWITCH: 1

Total DESCRIPTION: 2

Total MIME: 1

Total SUPERORDINATE: 2

Total ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 6

Total WORKING: 2

### Pair 3CG- 2' 50"

A- The first one **is a cloth** that **you put when** you have a party, for example or... the waiters also **puts**.  
(S) (F)

A- The second is ashtray... is a recipe (he meant *recipiente*) eh... when you smoke eh... you **put** the...  
the... something to the... in this *recipain* (S) (F) (something: All-purpose Word, recipe-recipain:  
Foreignizing)

A- Number three is the rocking chair, is eh a chair that you can... where you can eh... sit down and go to  
the... to left and right. (S) (W)

A- Number four... in your home **there are** a lot... no no no, two or three **like this** eh... and in the living  
room in the sofa. (L)

B- Is the cushion?

A- The number five is keyboard... **is an instrument of** the computer... (F)

A- The six pram eh... eh... you... you... **put** your son, your baby in this chair or... (F)

A- Dummy. Are... they are... persons but not really that are in the sho... in the shops... of the clothes  
shops with clothes. (D) (L)

A- Tambourine. Is an instrument you play in Christmas. (S) (CR – Cultural Reference)

A- Hair straightener. Is a instrument to... o sea, yes, an instrument to **put** your hair straight. (F)

A- And the last is stapler eh... if you have eh... a lot of sheets eh... you, and you want to put all all of them  
in a group you use this. (F)



RESULTS: 15 circumlocutions (10 items)

ALL-PURPOSE WORD: 7 (Ashtray: "when you smoke eh... you put the... the... something to the... in this *recipain*")

FOREIGNIZING: 2 (Recipe, Recipain)

FUNCTION: 4 (Stapler, Hair straightener, Pram, Keyboard)

LOCATION: 1 (Cushion)

SUPERORDINATE + CULTURAL REFERENCE: 1 (Tambourine)

DESCRIPTION + LOCATION: 1 (Dummy)

SUPERORDINATE + FUNCTION: 2 (Ashtray, Bowtie)

SUPERORDINATE + WORKING: 1 (Rocking chair)

Total CULTURAL REFERENCE: 1

Total DESCRIPTION: 1

Total FUNCTION: 6

Total WORKING: 1

Total LOCATION: 2

Total ALL-PURPOSE WORD: 1

Total SUPERORDINATE: 4

Total FOREIGNIZING: 2

### Pair 4CG- 3' 26"

A- The first one is... eh... bowtie?

B- What is bowtie?

A- Is a... is a... is like eh... **is like a** thing with **you put** in the... in a smoking in the neck. (L) (thing: All-purpose word)

A- Number two...ashtray

B- What is ashtray?

A- Is... **when you are** smoking... when you **put**... when you put the ash... the... (F)

B- Can you repeat?

A- Eh? When you are smoking when you **put** the ash

A- The third is rocking chair. Is a... is the chair with the... when the... the old man in film pu.. eh... balance (CR)

B- Ok!

[...]

A- The fourth is cushion, is when you sleep or in a sofa... you put the hair, head (L) (F)

A- The five is keyboard... well is a keyboard, don't need...

R- Ok, that one you know it...

A- Is obviously

R- Is very easy

A- Eh... the six is pram

A- Is the thing don't you put... when you **put** the baby and you can... eh... go with the baby. (F) (Thing: All-Purpose word)

A- The seven is dummy.

A- Is a... human sculpture... when you can try dresses on it (D) (F)

[...]

A- The eight is tambourine

A- He is a ring... with things when you... es que... that... sound (D) (things: All-purpose word) (es que: Code Switch)

A- The nine is hair stranger, o como se diga (Code-Switch)

A- Is like a *planch* you *put* in the hair and he... ah... eh... thing... you... ah! (D) (planch: Word Coinage; thing: All-purpose word; ah, Abandonment)

A- And the ten is stapler. Is when you have a lot of... a lot of... mmmm... papers, you can... you *apret* and he... and they... bah! (apret: Word Coinage; bah!: Abandonment) (W)

RESULTS: 10 circumlocutions (9 items)

ABANDONMENT: 2 (Stapler: "And the ten is stapler. Is when you have a lot of... a lot of... mmmm... papers, you can... you *apret* and he... and they... bah!") (Hair Straightener: "Is like a *planch* you put in the hair and he... ah... eh... thing... you... ah!")

ALL-PURPOSE WORD: 4 (Hair straightener: "Is like a *planch* you put in the hair and he... ah... eh... thing... you... ah!") (Bowtie: "Is a... is a... is like eh... is like a thing with you put in the... in a smoking in the neck") (Tambourine: "He is a ring... with things when you... es que... that... sound") (Pram: "Is don't you put... where you put...")

CODE-SWITCH: 2 (Hair straightener: "The nine is hair stranger, o como se diga") (Tambourine: "He is a ring... with things when you... es que... that... sound")

FOREIGNIZING: 2 (Hair Straightener: "Is like a *planch* you put in the hair and he... ah... eh... thing... you... ah!") (Stapler: "And the ten is stapler. Is when you have a lot of... a lot of... mmmm... papers, you can... you *apret* and he... and they... bah!")

CULTURAL REFERENCE: 1 (Rocking chair: "Is a... is the chair with the... when the... the old man pu... eh... balance")

FUNCTION – 2 (Ashtray, Pram)

DESCRIPTION – 2 (Hair straightener, Tambourine)

LOCATION – 1 (Bowtie)

WORKING - 1 (Stapler)

LOCATION + FUNCTION – 1 (Cushion)

DESCRIPTION + FUNCTION – 1 (Dummy)

Total CULTURAL REFERENCE: 1

Total ABANDONMENT: 2

Total FUNCTION: 4

Total CODE SWITCH: 2

Total DESCRIPTION: 3

Total ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 4

Total LOCATION: 2

Total FOREIGNIZING: 2

Total WORKING: 1

## Pair 5CG– 2' 30"

A- The first one is a bowtie.

A- A bowtie is a... a... (Mime)

R- No miming ok? Sin signos, solo de palabra.

A- A bowtie is a... a... **object** that you **put** in the neck ... (W)

B- Ahhh!!

A- The second is ashtray

B- What is this?

A- **Like a bin** that you **put** the cigarettes (S) (F)

B- Ah! Ok!

A- The third rocking chair

B- Ok!

R- You knew that one! Very well!

A- The fourth is cushion

B- What is this?

A- Cushion... is like... in the sofa... you **put** the... the head. (L) (W)

B- Ah!

A- The five is keyboard

B- What is this?

A- Eh... the... to write in the computer (F)

A- The six is pram

B- What is this?

A- Is an object that you move a baby (F)

B- Ok!

A- The seven is dummy!

B- Dummy? What is this?

A- In the shop the... (L)

B- Ah! Ok!

A- the people... bueno!

A- The eight is tambourine

B- Ah! Music instrument! (S)

A- The nine is hair straightener... and the ten stapler.

B- Ok!

[...]

RESULTS: 9 circumlocutions (7 items)

MIME: 1 (Bowtie: "A bowtie is a... a...")

SUPERORDINATE: 1 (Tambourine)

LOCATION: 1 (Dummy)

FUNCTION: 2 (Pram, Keyboard)

WORKING: 1 (Bowtie)

SUPERORDINATE + FUNCTION: 1 (Ashtray)

LOCATION + WORKING: 1 (Cushion)

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 3 (put)

Total SUPERORDINATE: 2

Total WORKING: 2

Total LOCATION: 2

Total MIME: 1

Total FUNCTION: 3

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 3

## SESSION 3 EXPERIMENTAL GROUP – TRANSCRIPTION (30')

Participants: 10 students (4 girls, 6 boys)

Student A dictates Student B 10 items in a certain order.

Items: Ashtray / Bowtie / Keyboard / Pram / Stapler / Rocking Chair / Tambourine / Cushion / Hair Straightener / Dummy

Negotiation of meaning is allowed.

Conversations were recorded.

Results: 100%

Pair 1: 100%

Pair 2: 100%

Pair 3: 100%

Pair 4: 100%

Pair 5: 100%

**A = Student A B = Student B R = Researcher**

### **Pair 1EG- 2' 30"**

A- The first one is bowtie

B- Bowtie... ah... what is this?

A- **Is a object** that **you put** in the... in the... jacket for some **special** eh... party (W) (F)

B- Dress?

A- Yes, is a **dress** (S)

A- The second is ashtray

B- What is this?

A- It is a object that... you **put** the... cigarette when you finish (F)

B- Ok!

A- The third is rocking chair

R- Did you know that one? Or did you guess it?

B- Yes!

A- The fourth is cushion

B- What is it?

A- Is a object that you **put** the head... to sleep or to sit down or in the sofa (W) (F) (L)

A- The five is keyboard

[...]

A- The six is pram

B- What is this?

A- Is a... **a chair for** the childrens that don't know to... to walk (S) (F)

A- The seven is dummy

B- What is dummy?

A- **Is like a person** of the... shops... that you **put** clothes in it (D) (L) (F)

A- The eight is tambourine

A- The nine is hair straightener

A- Is for the hair to *alis* the hair and... (F) (Alis: Foreignizing)

A- And the ten is stlaper... to put in the sheets for, you know, for *unir*... and that's all. (F) (unir: Code-switch)

RESULTS: 14 circumlocutions (8 items)

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 4 (put)

CODE SWITCH: 1 (Stapler: "And the ten is stlaper... to put in the sheets for, you know, for *unir*... and that's all")

FOREIGNIZING: 1 (Hair Straightener: "Is for the hair to *alis* the hair and...")

FUNCTION: 3 (Stapler, Hair Straightener, Ashtray)

SUPERORDINATE: 1 (Bowtie)

SUPERORDINATE + FUNCTION: 1 (Pram)

WORKING + FUNCTION: 1 (Bowtie)

DESCRIPTION + LOCATION + FUNCTION: 1 (Dummy)

WORKING + FUNCTION + LOCATION: 1 (Cushion)

Total FUNCTION: 7

Total LOCATION: 2

Total SUPERODINATE: 2

Total CODE-SWITCH: 1

Total DESCRIPTION: 1

Total FOREIGNIZING: 1

Total WORKING: 2

Total ALL-PURPOSE: 4

### Pair 2EG – 3' 30"

A- The first one is bowtie

B- What is bowtie?

A- **Is a type of cloth** that the mens eh... **put** with the... with the smoking... usually (S) (F)

B- Ok!

A- The second one is ashtray

B- And what is ashtray?

A- The ashtray is the... **an object** that the... that **puts** the... the smoke... the smoke... (Breakoff)

R- More things? Do you need more information for the second one?

A- Eh... a ver... put eh... in this object **put** the... the person that smoking (W) (a ver: Code switch)

B- Ok!

A- The third one is the rocking chair?

B- What is the rocking chair?



A- **Is a rare chair**... that... eh... buff... (S) (Breakoff)

[...]

A- How do you say *balancea*? (*balancea*: Code-Switch; Asking for help)

[...]

B- Ah! Ok!

A- The four one is the cushion

B- What is the cushion?

A- Cushion is the... an object... more or less... that is in your sofa (L)

B- Ah! Ok!

A- And you **put** your head when you... *tumbarse* (W) (*tumbarse*: Code-Switch)

A- The five is the keyboard

B- ¡Ya!

A- The six is pram

B- What is pram?

A- A pram is an... **is where put** the babies (F)

A- The seven is dummy

B- I don't know what is dummy

A- The the the... clothes shop eh... have this to...to... dress (L)

A- The eight is the tambourine

B- Ya me la sé

A- The nine is the hair straightener

A- This is the nine... and the ten is stapler

B- What is stapler?

A- Is an object that *sujet*... eh... the papers, more or less (F) (*sujet*: Code-Switch French)

B- Ok!

RESULTS. 9 circumlocutions (8 items)

BREAKOFF: 1 (Ashtray: "The ashtray is the... an object that the... that puts the... the smoke... the smoke...") (Rocking chair: "Is a rare chair... that... eh... buff...")

CODE-SWITCH: 4 (Rocking chair: "How do you say *balancea*?") (Stapler: "Is an object that *sujet*... eh... the papers, more or less" French accent) –(Cushion: "And you put your head when you... *tumbarse*")(*a ver*)

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 5 (put)

ASKING FOR HELP: 1 (Rocking chair: "How do you say *balancea*?")

LOCATION: 2 (Dummy, Cushion)

FUNCTION: 2 (Pram, Stapler)

WORKING: 2 (Cushion, Ashtray)

SUPERORDINATE: 1 (Rocking chair)

SUPERORDINATE + FUNCTION: 1 (Bowtie)

Total LOCATION: 2

Total ASKING FOR HELP: 1

Total FUNCTION: 3

Total CODE-SWITCH: 4

Total WORKING: 2

Total ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 5

Total SUPERORDINATE: 2

Total BREAKOFF: 2

### Pair 3EG – 2' 50"

A- The first one is *butie*, bowtie!

R- Do you know what a bowtie is? No? Can you explain it?

A- **It is one cloth** that you **put** in the hair... the girls... is one cloth that the girls **put** in their hair... or men here (pointing to his neck) (S) (W) (Mime)

B- Ah!

A- The second one is ashtray and is... no lo veo bien qué es... (Code-Switch, Asking for help)

[...]

A- When you do this... (signs) (Mime)

R- No signs, please. Just words.

A- When you smoke... (F)

A- The third one is rocking chair. This one **is in house**... in their house... and you sit there and is very cómodo... (L) (F) (D) (cómodo: Code-Switch)

A- The four one is cushion

R- You know what a cushion is, so next one!

A- The five is keyboard... for the computer (F)

A- The six is pram... is when the baby... (F)

B- Ah!

A- The seven is dummy

B- No

A- and is pers... is... es que no sé ni cómo se dice esto, cómo explicar... in the shops... (L) (Code Switch, Breakoff)

B- Yes

A- The eight, tambourine

B- Yes I know it

A- The nine is hair straightener. Is for the girls... to have beautiful hair (F)

A- And ten stapler

B- Yes

RESULTS: 10 circumlocutions (7 items)

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 2 (put)

BREAKOFF: 1 (Dummy: "and is pers... is... es que no sé ni cómo se dice esto, cómo explicar... in the shops...")

CODE-SWITCH: 3 (Dummy: "and is pers... is... es que no sé ni cómo se dice esto, cómo explicar... in the shops...") (Rocking chair: "The third one is rocking chair. This one is in house... in their house... and you sit there and is very *cómodo*...") (Ashtray: "The second one is ashtray and is... no lo veo bien qué es...")

ASKING FOR HELP: 1 (Ashtray: "The second one is ashtray and is... no lo veo bien qué es...")

MIME: 2 (Bowtie: "is one cloth that the girls put in their hair... or men here") (Ashtray: "When you do this...")

FUNCTION: 4 (Hair straightener, Keyboard, Ashtray, Pram)

LOCATION: 1 (Dummy)

SUPERORDINATE + WORKING: 1 (Bowtie)

LOCATION + FUNCTION + DESCRIPTION: 1 (Cushion)

Total FUNCTION: 5

Total MIME: 2

Total LOCATION: 2

Total ASKING FOR HELP: 1

Total SUPERORDINATE: 1

Total CODE SWITCH: 3

Total WORKING: 1

Total BREAKOFF: 1

Total DESCRIPTION: 1

Total ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 2

### Pair 4EG – 2' 30"

A- The first is bowtie... you **put** in parties... bodies...eh... in the neck (W) (F)

B- OK!

A- The second is ashtray... **when you** smoke you **put** the cigarette in this object (F)

B- Yes

A- The neck, the next is rocking chair... you **put** the... the grandmothers eh... put in this... in this chair... (CR)

A- The next... the next is cushion... are in sofas and... no sé (L) (Abandonment)

A- The next is keyboard... **you need this** to the computer (F)

A- The next is pram... is a **special chair** for babies (S) (F)

A- The next is dummy... in some shops there are clothes in this... in this eh... object (L) (F)

A- The next one is tambourine... is a instrum... is a instrumental... **a object instrumental**... that you play with the hand... you move the hand and they sound (S) (W)

A- The next is hair straight... you eh... need this to **put** eh... your hair eh... long and... a ver (F)

A- The next is stapler... you use this to group... to **put** in groups some papers (F)

RESULTS: 13 circumlocutions (10 items)

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 5 (put)

ABANDONMENT: 1 (Cushion: "The next... the next is cushion... are in sofas and... no sé")

CODE-SWITCH: 1 (Cushion: "The next... the next is cushion... are in sofas and... no sé")

CULTURAL REFERENCE: 1 (Rocking chair: "the grandmothers eh... put in this... in this chair...")

FUNCTION: 4 (Stapler, Hair straightener, Keyboard, Ashtray)

LOCATION: 1 (Cushion)

SUPERORDINATE + WORKING: 1 (Tambourine)

LOCATION + FUNCTION: 1 (Dummy)

SUPERORDINATE + FUNCTION: 1 (Pram)

WORKING + FUNCTION: 1 (Bowtie)

Total CULTURAL REFERENCE: 1

Total WORKING: 2

Total FUNCTION: 7

Total CODE SWITCH: 1

Total LOCATION: 2

Total ABANDONMENT: 1

Total SUPERORDINATE: 2

Total ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 5

**Pair 5EG – 1' 30"**

A- Ok! First bowtie

B- What is it?

A- **It is a object** that **mens put in** her t-shirts to be more beautiful (W) (F)

B- Yes

A- Second, ashtray

B- Eh, what is it?

A- This is when you smoke... (F)

B- Ah! Ya

A- Third, rocking chair

B- I know that one

A- Cushion

A- It is a object that **you put** in the sofa... (L)

B- Eh... colchón, o sea, sillón, no... lo blandito... (Code Switch)

[...]

A- Keyboard

B- Teclado (Code Switch)

A- Eh... pram

A- Is a object that the families use to eh... **put** the babies... in here... in this (F)

A- Dummy

B- I don't know

A- In shops of clothes... (L)

B- Yes

A- Tambourine.... to play music. (F)

B- Ok!

A- Hair straightener...

B- I know

A- And stapler... is a object **to put** the papers together. (F)

RESULTS: 8 circumlocutions (8 items)

ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 4 (put)

CODE SWITCH: 2 (Cushion: "Eh... colchón, o sea, sillón, no... lo blandito...") (Keyboard: "Teclado")

FUNCTION: 4 (Stapler, Tambourine, Pram, Ashtray)

LOCATION: 2 (Cushion, Dummy)

WORKING + FUNCTION: 1 (Bowtie)

Total FUNCTION: 5

Total CODE-SWITCH: 1

Total LOCATION: 2

Total ALL-PURPOSE WORDS: 4

Total WORKING: 1

Comments:

Students in experimental group carried out the activity under different conditions compared to control group: the activity took place in their classroom with the rest of their classmates present, most of the teachers –including the English teacher- and students were on strike so the atmosphere was very relaxed... all these factors may have affected participants' performances.

On the other hand, economy and effectiveness: just with keywords.

Attention to their partners' answers: once member B of the pair had shown signs of having identified the item, member A stopped the description.

Parçija 4-A Control group

Correct Order:  
 1- BOWTIE // 2- ASHTRAY // 3- ROCKING CHAIR // 4- CUSHION // 5- KEYBOARD // 6- PRAM // 7- DUMMY //  
 8- TAMBOURINE // 9- HAIR STRAIGHTENER // 10- STAPLER

Parçija 4-B Control group

Correct Order:  
 1- BOWTIE // 2- ASHTRAY // 3- ROCKING CHAIR // 4- CUSHION // 5- KEYBOARD // 6- PRAM // 7- DUMMY //  
 8- TAMBOURINE // 9- HAIR STRAIGHTENER // 10- STAPLER

## FINAL TEST (SESSION 3 CONTROL GROUP / SESSION 4 EXPERIMENTAL GROUP) (15')

### Control group

Participants: 5 students (2 girls, 3 boys)

Students had to match the names of the items with their corresponding pictures

All the items: Cooking Utensils & Scrambled Items

Piping bag / Jug / Beater / Teapot / Grinder / Grater / Blender / Corkscrew / Mitten / Pot / Hotplate / Apron / Mug / Rolling pin / Mixer

Ashtray / Bowtie / Keyboard / Pram / Stapler / Rocking Chair / Tambourine / Cushion / Hair Straightener / Dummy

Results: 66 / 125 – 52'8%

Subject 1CG: (11/25) Keyboard, Rocking Chair, Tambourine, Hair Straightener, Dummy (5/10) // Grinder, Hotplate, Piping Bag, Teapot, Rolling pin, Beater (6/15)

Subject 2CG: (14/25) Bowtie, Rocking chair, Tambourine, Hair straightener, Stapler, Keyboard (6/10) // Jug, Beater, Teapot, Grinder, Mixer, Corkscrew, Hotplate, Rolling pin (8/15)



Subject 3CG: (14/25) Ashtray, Rocking chair, Tambourine, Dummy, Hair Straightener, Stapler, Keyboard. (7/10) // Piping bag, Teapot, Mixer, Corkscrew, Hotplate, Apron, Rolling pin (7/15)

Subject 4CG: (16/25) Bowtie, Ashtray, Rocking chair, Tambourine, Dummy, Hair Straightener, Keyboard (7/10) // Jug, Beater, Teapot, Grater, Mixer, Corkscrew, Pot, Hotplate, Rolling pin (9/15)

Subject 5CG: (11/25) Bowtie, Tambourine, Hair straightener, Stapler, Keyboard (5/10) // Piping bag, Teapot, Mixer, Corkscrew, Hotplate, Rolling pin (6/15)

## **Experimental group**

Participants: 7 students (2 girls, 5 boys)

Students had to match the names of the items with their pictures

All the items: Cooking Utensils & Scrambled Items

Piping bag / Jug / Beater / Teapot / Grinder / Grater / Blender /  
Corkscrew / Mitten / Pot / Hotplate / Apron / Mug / Rolling pin / Mixer

Ashtray / Bowtie / Keyboard / Pram / Stapler / Rocking Chair /  
Tambourine / Cushion / Hair Straightener / Dummy

*RESULTS: 75 / 175 – 42,8 %*

Subject 1EG: (14/25) Bowtie, Ashtray, Rocking chair, Cushion, Tambourine, Dummy, Hair straightener, Stapler, Pram, Keyboard (10/10) // Rolling pin, Hotplate, Mixer, Teapot (4/15)

Subject 2EG: (11/25) Ashtray, Bowtie, Keyboard, Stapler, Tambourine, Cushion, Hair straightener (7/10) // Mixer, Hotplate, Beater, Teapot, (4/15)

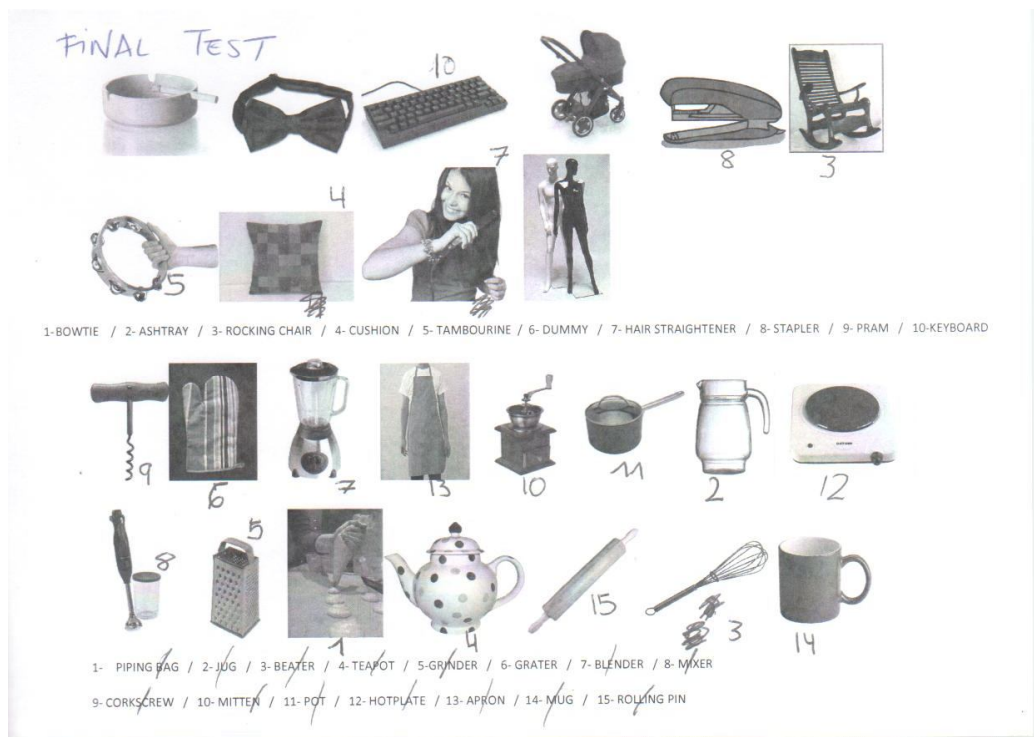
Subject 3EG: (18/25) Rocking chair, Cushion, Tambourine, Hair straightener, Stapler, Keyboard (6/10) // Piping bag, Jug, Beater, Teapot, Blender, Mixer, Corkscrew, Pot, Hotplate, Apron, Mug, Rolling pin. (12/15)

Subject 4EG: (7/25) Rocking chair, Cushion, Tambourine, Hair Straightener, Stapler, Keyboard (6/10) // Mixer (1/15)

Subject 5EG: (9/25) Bowtie, Cushion, Tambourine, Dummy, Stapler, Keyboard (6/10) // Teapot, Hotplate, Mixer (3/15)

Subject 6EG: (10/25) Cushion, Tambourine, Dummy, Hair straightener, Stapler, Keyboard (6/10) // Piping bag, Teapot, Pot, Hotplate (4/15)

Subject 7EG: (6/25) Cushion, Tambourine, Hair straightener, Stapler, Keyboard (5/10) // Mixer (1/15)



## TEST ABOUT COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES (SESSION 3 CONTROL GROUP // SESSION 4 EXPERIMENTAL GROUP) (15')

Participants: 12 children (4 girls, 8 boys)

Students had to answer a questionnaire –in Spanish- about their use of compensatory strategies when facing vocabulary deficiencies.

### TEST

Llegar a dominar un idioma extranjero es muy difícil. Incluso en nuestro idioma materno a veces nos resulta complicado comunicarnos, sobre todo porque no nos sabemos el nombre de todas las cosas a las que querríamos referirnos. Pero lo más importante es poder expresarnos y hacernos entender, sobre todo cuando el problema es que no conocemos una palabra concreta. No pasa nada, porque podemos aplicar otras estrategias o trucos para que la persona con la que estamos hablando pueda llegar a entendernos.

**1- Cuando te falta una palabra en inglés (o en otros idiomas, si los hablas) ¿qué haces, te paras y dejas de hablar o intentas hacerte entender de otra manera?**

Answer 1: Intento hacerme entender de otra manera, por ejemplo, describo lo que quiero decir o cambio por otra palabra.

Answer 2: Intento hacerme entender de otra manera

Answer 3: Intento con signos o dibujos

Answer 4: Intento hacerme entender de otra manera

Answer 5: De otra manera

Answer 6: Intento hacerme entender de otra manera

Answer 7: Intento hacer que me entiendan de otra manera

Answer 8: Intento que me entiendan con otras palabras

Answer 9: Intento hacerme entender de otra manera

Answer 10: Yo intento decir lo mismo de otra manera

Answer 11: Intento describir lo que quiero decir

Answer 12: Intento hacerme entender de otra manera

RESULTS: 100%

**2- Aquí tienes algunas estrategias que seguramente conozcas y hayas usado. Ordénalas según las que más utilices o utilizarías llegado el caso:**

MÍMICA 4 / 5 / 4 / 2 / 5 / 4 / 4 / 2 / 5 / 3 / 5 / 5 – 48

RECURSOS TECNOLÓGICOS 2 / 3 / 3 / 3 / 1 / 3 / 5 / 1 / 1 / 5 / 4 / 4 – 35

INVENTAR PALABRAS 1 / 4 / 2 / 5 / 4 / 1 / 3 / 3 / 3 / 2 / 1 / 1 – 30

APROXIMACIÓN 5 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 2 / 2 / 1 / 4 / 2 / 4 / 2 / 2 – 27

CIRCUNLOQUIO 3 / 2 / 5 / 4 / 3 / 5 / 2 / 5 / 4 / 1 / 3 / 3 – 40

*RESULTS: Aproximación 25%; Inventar palabras 23%; Recursos tecnológicos 20,5%; Circunloquio 17,8%; Mímica 13,3%*

Comment:

Circumlocution would be a final step, the most conscious and complex elaboration of previous steps, in some way automated.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Approximation: ascribing the object to a certain category.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Word-Coinage: selecting the most relevant features or keywords in a kind of feature-category construction.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Circumlocution: explaining those relevant features in a broader way.

### **3- ¿Qué otras podrías utilizar?**

A1: No sé, un dibujo

A2: No sé

A3: Hacer un dibujo

A4: Inventar palabras parecidas al español / imágenes en el móvil

A5: Draw the think

A6: Repetir muchas veces la palabra para aprenderla

A7: Recursos literarios (diccionarios, enciclopedia)

A8: Podría explicar o describir

A9: Llevar un diccionario a todas partes

A10: Inventar alguna palabra

A11: Dibujándolo

A12: No sé, utilizaría esas.

RESULTS: Hacer un dibujo, usar una imagen (A1, A3, A4, A5, A11) / Usar cognados (A4) (code-switching?) / Buscar ayuda, diccionarios (A7, A9) (asking for help) / Describir, explicar (A8) / Inventar palabras (A10) / No sé, otras no válidas (A1, A2, A6, A12)

**4- ¿Cuáles de esas otras estrategias utilizas?**

A1: -

A2: La aproximación y el circunloquio

A3: -

A4: -

A5: Esa, sólo esa (explicar o describir)

A6: La utilizo cuando estoy en casa (recursos literarios)

A7: La de antes (repetir muchas veces la palabra para aprenderla)

A8: Draw, mimic, internet, invent words

A9: Imágenes en el móvil

A10: Ninguna

A11: No utilizo ninguna más

A12: No sé, alguna

**5- ¿Crees que sería útil trabajar esos trucos en clase?**

A1: Sí, me parece.

A2: Sí que sería útil trabajar esos trucos en clase. Sí es importante aprender el vocabulario básico pero también hay que aprender cosas nuevas para expresarte mejor.

A3: Sí, creo que sería muy útil.

A4: Sí, porque nos ayudaría a comunicarnos si viajamos al extranjero.

A5: Yes

A6: Sí

A7: Sí, sería útil.

A8: Sí, es importante; podría ir a alguna academia a la tarde.

A9: Sí

A10: Sí, por si no te acuerdas de una palabra.

A11: Sí, sería muy útil, sí, es muy importante.

A12: Sí, sería muy bueno para algunas personas.

RESULTS: 100 % Yes – A2: también hay que aprender cosas nuevas para expresarte mejor; A4: nos ayudaría a comunicarnos si viajamos al extranjero; A10: por si no te acuerdas de una palabra.

**6. Si aprendieras este tipo de estrategias ¿te sentirías más seguro y más tranquilo a la hora de hablar en clase, hacer un examen oral, hablar con personas extranjeras o nativas o si tuvieras que viajar a otro país?**

A1: Sí

A2: Sí, porque podría hacerme entender.

A3: Sí, al hablar con personas extranjeras.

A4: Sí

A5: Yes

A6: Sí, me sentiría más seguro y más tranquilo.

A7: Sí, para todo eso.

A8: Sí, no hace falta saberlo todo.

A9: Sí

A10: Sí, me sentiría más seguro y tranquilo.

A11: Sí

A12: Sí, para que me entiendan aunque no sepa la palabra.

RESULTS: 100% Yes – A2, A12: para hacerse entender; A3: para hablar con extranjeros; A8, A12: no hace falta saber todas las palabras.

## TEACHER'S APPROACH TO COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES

The teacher is aware of the existence of theories regarding the teaching of compensatory strategies. He prefers an embedded method; students are not explicitly taught this kind of *"tricks"* but they are encouraged to make themselves understood and to avoid *breakoffs* within a communicative approach.

Students' talking time is quite high, around a third of each session. Priority is given to fluency and even weaker students are used to regularly producing comprehensible output –and receiving input- in the foreign language. Even if the importance of lexical accuracy is obviously recognized, the teacher systematically works with the students on sets of basic vocabulary.

Circumlocution is constantly used by the teacher as a means to avoid resorting to translating every unknown lexical item into Spanish. Even if these kinds of explanations or descriptions are usually spontaneous, he tries to highlight the most relevant features of the item, using basic vocabulary. These descriptions are not always related to physical or functional characteristics of the object but they are linked to social and cultural factors; to students' real experiences and lives.

The teacher explains that after an embedded process of training during the course of the year, students are used to *"make their way"* (accompanied by a hand gesture often repeated by students). In other words, they know that they have to make an effort to make themselves understood by any possible means. According to the teacher, strategies more frequently used among students are approximation, foreignizing, circumlocution and mimicry.