

Lexical Relations and the Use of Communication Strategies: A Competence Analysis Study

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Abstract

In order to be active and independent, language learners, specially those who are not described as good language learners, need training in using the different types of language learning strategies. Among them communication strategies which are used in most cases to deal with lexical gaps , that is the lack of a lexical item .

The study forwards the analysis and the study of the individual aspects of communicative competence separately instead of studying communicative competence as one whole unit. Being very important for both processes communication and language learner , the study focuses on one of the linguistic aspects of communicative competence , lexical competence . It refers to learner's knowledge of lexical items and the lexical relations that exist between them. The study investigates its nature , its analysis , and its development . A test is constructed to diagnose areas of strength and weakness in learner's lexical competence and it concludes that developing learners lexical competence involves providing learner's with knowledge of lexical relations in a way that helps them to overcome their weaknesses as well as providing them with instructions on how to select and use the appropriat vocabulary learning strategies.

1. Language learning strategies

In recent studies the term "language learning strategies" LLSs has become very much interrelated with the characteristics of "Good language learners" as well as "learners autonomy" referring to the concept of "learner – centeredness" in language

teaching which sees the learner as the initiator of the act of learning (Scimonelli ; 2002 :3) . Over the last twenty years there has been a prominent shift within the field of language learning and teaching with greater emphasis being put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching . How learners process new information and what kinds of strategies they employ to understand , learn or remember the information has been the primary concern of researchers dealing with the area of foreign language learning (Hismanogl : 2002) , (Lessard Clouston , 1997) . Highly successful learners are autonomous , they do not depend much on teachers , they , themselves decide how to study and they do not constantly depend on teachers feed back (Davies and pearse , 2000 : 196)

The term strategies "has come to be the conscious moves made by second – language speakers intended to be useful in either learning or using the second language" (Cohen , 1999 : 1) . LLSs are defined by Oxford (1990 : 166) as "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition , storage , retrieval and use of information , specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier , faster , more enjoyable , more self – directed , more effective and more transferable to new situations . Rubin (1978 : 22) similarly proposes that LLSs "are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly". Cited in Lessard-Clouston (1997:2) .

LLSs have been discussed and analyzed within the context of describing the qualities of where they . Freeman (2003:186) outlines that in keeping with the perception of seeing learners more actively responsible for their own learning the qualities of good language learners are investigated by many researchers , good language learners are described in relation to the knids of LLSs they employ inside and even outside the classroom and the way in which they are employed . Stern (1991 : 401-411) hypothesizes four basic sets of strategies that good language learners are likely to employ while less efficient learners employ

them only weakly , fail to maintain them concurrently , or fail to develop them altogether . According to Stern the following features should be observed in the behaviour of good language learners :

- 1- Good learning involves first of all an active planning strategy . Good language learners will select goals and subgoals , recognize stages and developmental sequences and actively participate in the learning process.
- 2- The good language learner employs , secondly , an "academic" (explicit) learning strategy. Language learning is to some extent , a perceptual and cognitive task , and good learners are prepared to study and practise . That is they face up language as a formal system with rules and regular relationships between forms and meanings .
- 3- Good language learners are likely to employ a social learning strategy . They recognize the inevitably dependent status in early learning and accept the infantilization and satellization involved . Good learners will tend to develop and use "Communication" strategies.
- 4- Finally , good language learners use an affective strategy . That is they cope effectively with emotional and motivational problems of language learning .

Learners use different LLSs in performing the tasks and processing the new input they face since they are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during language learning (Hismanoglu , 2002) . In this position one might have the interest to know the characteristics of LLSs . Lessard-clouson (1997) suggests a number of characteristics in the generally accepted view of LLSs as follows:

- 1- LLSs are learner generated , they are steps taken by language learners.
- 2- LLSs enhance language learning and help developing language competence , as reflected in the learner's skills in listening , speaking , reading , or writing the foreign language .

3- LLSs may be visible (behaviours , steps , techniques ...etc) or unseen (thoughts, mental processes) .

4- LLSs involve information and memory (vocabulary knowledge , grammar rules ...etc)

Cohen (1999:1) says that strategies can be very different in nature . The nature of different LLSs is to be presented in the following section.

1.1 classification of language learning strategies

In attempting to know the types LLSs , the works of many researchers who are mainly concerned with "learning strategies have been reviewed. A number taxonomies and classification systems have been studied and analyzed including Rubin's (1987) Omalley's (1985) ; Oxfords (1990) ; and Stern's (1992) taxonomies by both Hismanoglu (2002 : 2-6) and Al-kattan (2003 : 58-83) . The latter expresses that most of these taxonomies "reflect more or less the same categories" . Thus , it is useful to present Oxford's classification , described by AL-Kattan (2003:58 –83) as comprehensive , detailed , and systematic in linking individual strategies as well as strategy groups , with each of the four language skills .

Language learning strategies are of the two main types according to Oxford (1990) , direct and indirect .

Direct strategies include the following .

A/ Memory strategies , they help learners to store in memory and retrieve important things they hear or read in the foreign language , thus enlarging their knowledge base . Memory strategies include:

- 1- Creating mental linkage.
- 2- Applying images and sounds.
- 3- Reviewing well.
- 4- Employing action.

B/ Cognitive strategies , Cognitive strategies are practical for learning . They are typically found to be the most popular strategies with language learners. Their function is the

manipulation or transformation of the foreign language by the learner , they fall into four sets :

- 1- Practicing
- 2- Receiving and sending messages
- 3- Analyzing and reasoning
- 4- Creating structure for input and output

C/ Compensation Strategies , they help learners overcome knowledge limitations in all four skills . They are divided into two sets :

- 1- Guessing intelligently
- 2- Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.

Indirect strategies , they are called indirect because they provide indirect support for language learning through focusing planning , evaluating , seeking opportunities and other means . They work best when used in combination with direct strategies . They include the following sets :

A/ Met cognitive strategies , they help learners arrange and plan their language learning in an efficient and effective way .

They include :

- 1- Centering your learning .
- 2- Arranging and planning your learning .
- 3- Evaluating your learning .

B/ Affective strategies , this type of indirect strategies refers to emotions , attitudes , motivation and values . Three main sets of affective strategies exist:

- 1- Lowering your anxiety .
- 2- Encouraging yourself
- 3- Taking your emotional temperature .

C/ Social strategies , these strategies are important because language is a form of social behaviour in which communication occurs between and among people . They include :

- 1- Asking questions
- 2- Cooperating with others
- 3- Empathizing with others

2. Strategy Training

Efficient use of LLSs is an essential task for good language learners. This emphasizes the importance of learner's awareness of themselves , and how to overcome their weaknesses . Davies and Pearse (2000 : 196) indicate that overcoming weaknesses usually means adopting strategies used by successful learners , which requires a lot of efforts from both teachers and learners . Thus the concept of "strategy training" emerges.

Cohen (2003 : 1) outlines the importance of strategy training by referring to it as the process of making students aware of the range of strategies from which they can choose during language learning and use by which learning will be facilitated . He also describes strategy training as the explicit instruction in how to apply language learning strategies (Ibid.) Freeman (2003 :159) explains that language learners specially not among good learners – need training in learning strategies in order to maximize learners potential and make them contribute to their autonomy .

Giving the students explicit instructions on how to use LLSs efficiently is not an easy job for the teacher who should be very careful in applying any strategy training programme. It does not mean teaching all the strategies to all students . Scimonelli (2001:8) specifies the act of strategy training as helping each student find out what strategies work best for him or her . Good language learners often do not limit themselves to using one or a definite group of strategies , but they select the most appropriate strategies according to the learning situation , the type of task and their personal goals . He also adds that implementing a strategy training program should be integrated into regular classroom activities over a long period of time rather than taught separately and that learners should be provided with LLSs that can be transferred to other disciplines (Ibid:9)

The goal of strategy traing is to make students select the strategies . This can be influenced by many factors related to the

learner , the teacher and the teaching situation. Cohen (2003:10) conveys that in any strategy training program , selecting appropriate strategies is affected by the student's needs , the available resources (time , money ,materials , availability of teacher trainers) and feasibility of providing this kind of instruction .

3. Communication strategies

Having imperfect competence , language learners always face communication problems related to the different aspects of communicative competence , in this specific position arises the importance of strategic competence. Strategic competence "is the way we manipulate language in order to meet communicative goals . (Brown , 1987 :200) Mariani (1994:1) sees it as the ability to solve communication problems despite an inadequate command of the linguistic and sociocultural code . Ellis (2004:76) views it as the competence required to make effective use of one's linguistic and pragmatic resources , considering communication strategies as an important part of it . Canale and Swain (1980) , Bell (1993:41) describe strategic competence as the knowledge of communicative strategies when the latter refers to strategies that second language learners intend to make use of in order to get meaning across in spite of their imperfect command of the language . Such strategies could be paraphrasing , avoidance of difficulties simplifications , coping techniques , and so on .

It is the communication of an idea and the lack of knowledge that have been focused upon in most of the definitions of communication strategies . For example Stern (1991 : 411) defines them as "techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language" . Johnson and Johnson (1999 : 195) refer to communication strategies within similar context but in relation to conversation . They define them as "techniques for maintaining or repairing a dialogue with an interlocutor when it is in danger of

breaking down" For example , if a L2 learner does not know the expression for 'ironing board' and yet wishes to ask for such an object , she or he may resort to paraphrase ('table for doing the ironing on') or risk using the L1 express in the hope that it may sound like the L2 item , or revert to mime . Then they refer to these strategies in relation to communication in saying that "such strategies have a good probability of ensuring successful communication.

Hismanoglu (2002 :20) highlights the same idea in saying that the focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning a cross or clarifying what the speaker intends . They are used by speakers when faced with some difficulty due to the fact that their communication ends out run their communication means or when confronted with misunderstandings by a co-speaker . Cohen and Dornyei (2002 : 179) see communication strategies as devices that enable learners to stay active partners in communication even when things do not go well . Learners may for example , use communication strategies to steer the conversation a way from problematic areas , to express their meaning in creative ways , for example , by paraphrasing a word or concept , to create more time for them to think and negotiate the difficult parts of their conversation partener until every thing is clear .

Communication strategies can also be described as compensatory strategies. kasper and kellerman (1997:2) cited in Ellis (2004:74) define them as , a form of self help that did not have to engage the interlocutor's support for resolution . Ellis (2004:74) addes that speakers employ them when they have to communicate meanings for which they lack or cannot access the requisite linguistic knowledge therefore , they are seen as compensatory in nature .

One of the characteristic of 'Good language learners' is the ability to develop and use 'communication strategies' inspite of their limitations. Since 'Good language learners' seek communicative contact with target language users and target

language community either in person or through writing (stern , 1991 : 41). They allow learners to remain in the conversation by guessing intelligently and over coming limitations in speech and writing . This can be done through the use of synonyms , simple sentences , semantic contiguities , gestures and minimal prefabricated conversation patterns like opening and closings . And by recognizing when one's production has not been correctly interpreted, for example , by speaking a word writing down a word , repeating utterances ...etc . (Scimonelli (2001:6) .

Inspit of their importance , some researchrs do not consider communication strategies as learning strategies . They do not even mention them when listing sets of learning strategies . Rubin (1988) for example , considers them as less directly related to language learning since their focuse is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended .Cited in Al-Kattan (2003 : 60) , Cohen (1999) asserts that communication strategies are intended only for language use , not for language learning , and that such strategies should , therefor , not be considered as language learning strategies .Cohen and Dornyei (2002 : 178) include communication strategies as one of four sub-sets of language use strategies describing them as strategies used to convey a message that is both meaningful and informative for the listener or reader .

Others on the other hand consider them as a type of learning strategies , among them Oxford (1990) who classifies them under direct learning strategies that help learners overcome knowledge limitations in all four skills . cited in Al-Kattan (2003:72)

Mariani (2001 : 17) views them as indirect learning strategies that help learners to remain in a conversation and so provide them with more input , more opportunities for checking and validating their hypotheses . Johnson and Johnson (1999:195) discuss communication strategies from different sides they indicate that in principle , learning strategies should be

distinguished from another kind of strategy : communication strategies , but in practice it is not always easy to distinguish learning strategies from communication strategies . If a second language speaker hears a word that he or she does not know and asks the interlocutor for an explanation , is this a strategy to make sure the communication is successful , or is it a learning strategy because as the result of adopting it the learner learns a new word?

Depending on his experience in the study of language learning strategies , Al-kattan (2003:61) concludes that the argument that communication strategies cannot also be learning strategies is inaccurate . It is often impossible to determine whether the learner intends to use a given strategy to communicate or to learn ; often the motivations are mixed , besides , learning often results in even if communication is the main goal . After all learners either learn the language to use it or use the language to learn it (Richards, and Rodgers , 2001 : 155) also communicative language teaching looks at language learning as learning to communicate (Ibid : 156) .

Lessard-Clouston (1997:3) states that language learning strategies contribute to the development of communicative competence of the students . Being a broad concept , they refer to all strategies foreign language learners use in learning the target language and communication strategies are one type of language learning strategies.

`A good language learner' is associated with one's ability to use language learning strategies . Thus , it is necessary to provide the students with clear instructions about how to select and use the appropriate strategies. Strategy instruction may help students to become better learners , to be independent and confident learners and also they become more motivated as they begin to understand the relationship between their use of strategies and success in learning language (Chamot and Kupper ,1989) . It is very important to give student explicate instructions inside the classroom about language learning strategies . Can this also be applied to training learners to use communication

strategies believing that they represent one type of learning strategies ?

Bialystok (1990) cites Kellerman's (1991) distinction between strong and moderate positions regarding the teaching of communication strategies . According to the strong view , there is benefit to the direct teaching of specific strategies. But according to Bialystok (1990:142) "training studies have frequently been unsuccessful where training was based on specific techniques rather than on general operating solutions" . The moderate view is that one can draw attention to communication strategies : "what instruction can hope to achieve is to enhance the processing skills that are responsible for the effective use of strategies" (Ibid:145) .

Mariani (1994:7) suggests that describing the use of communication strategies can not mean producing a set of rules for their correct or appropriate use . She emphasizes this saying "If we wish to identify and describe communication strategies , therefore , we must give up the idea of being prescriptive and giving rules , and limit ourselves to a descriptive approach" In other words , one must treat these as probable , frequent behaviours in a given context , not as fixed , abstract norms .

In this regard she depends on how different students handle a simple information gap exercise depending on their individual interactional patterns especially when the choice of a strategy is often unconscious and unintentional , and depends very much on :

The nature of the task ,

The nature of the problem

And the level of language proficiency .

From all what preceded , one can say that training the students to use communication strategies is possible only with flexibility , it can not be applied in a restricted way in which students are obliged to use a specific strategy when faced with a particular communicative problem . Yule (1996 :197) emphasizes that

"flexibility in L2 use is a key element in communicative success".

4. Taxonomy of communication strategies

Bialystok (1990) and Mariani (1994) suggest that communication strategies should be distinguished according to the learner's decision . He/she either changes the content of the message or keeps it changing the means of expression .

Communication strategies are either 'knowledge – based' or 'control-based' . The former involves the speaker adjusting the content of a message by exploiting knowledge of a concept , for example , by providing a definition or paraphrase . The latter involve maintaining the original content of the message and manipulating the means of expression by going outside the L2 , for example , by using the L1 or mime .

Mariani (1994:3-5) argues that meeting a communicative problem , the learner can either use a reduction strategy or an achievement strategy.

Reduction strategies can be described as meeting a problem and avoiding it by keeping the message within the learner's communicative resources . In this , the communicative goal is changed .

Reduction strategies can affect :

- Content
- Topic avoidance
- Message abandonment
- Meaning replacement
- Modality
- Speech acts

Achievement strategies at a word / sentence level include :

- Borrowing (code switching)
- Foreignizing
- Literal translation
- Inter language – based

- Generalization
- Paraphrase
- Restructuring (self – repair)

Communication strategies are classified differently by a number of researchers according to the way each one views them. They are either viewed as strategies of social interaction (Tarone , 1980) or as psychological problem-solving (Faerch and Kasper , 1984) or as compensatory strategies (Poullisse , 1990) Cited in (Cook , 2001 : 106-112) .

4.1 Communication Strategies as Strategies of Social Interaction

Tarone (1980) views communication strategies as mutual attempts to solve L2 communication problems by participants . She emphasizes social aspects of communication . Both participants are trying to overcome their lack of shared meaning . Tarone gives three main types of communication strategies .

1. Paraphrase / to paraphrase what you want to say including:
 - Approximation / using a word that means approximately the same
 - Word coinage / is to make up a word to substitute for unknown word.
 - Circumlocution / L2 learners talk their way round the word.
2. Transfer / is to fall back on the first language . This includes :
 - Translation from the L1
 - Language switch
 - Appeal for assistance
 - Mime what you need
3. Avoidance / learners do not talk about things they know are difficult in L2 , whether whole topics or individual words

4.2 Communication strategies as psychological problem – solving

In this case communication strategies are viewed as individual solutions to psychological problems of L2 processing (Faerch and Kasper , 1984) . they fall into two main types :

1. Achievement strategies
 - Cooperative / similar to Traron's list .
 - Non-Cooperative / where the learner tries to solve the problem without recourse to others
2. Avoidance strategies / they are divided by Faerch and Kasper into two types .
 - Formal avoidance / the speaker avoids a particular linguistic form , whether in pronunciation , in morphemes or in syntax .
 - Function avoidance / the speaker avoids different types of function .

4.3 Compensatory Strategies

According to this view communication strategies exist to plug gaps in the learner's vocabulary by allowing them to refer to things for which they do not know the L2 words . They are considered as compensatory strategies because L2 learners are always having to compensate for the limited vocabulary at their disposal (Poullisse (1990) . Compensatory strategies are divided into two main types , each with two sub-divisions.

- 1- Conceptual Archistrategy / Solving the problem by thinking of the meaning of the word and attempting to convey it in another way . They are sub-divided into :
 - Analytic strategy / the learner tries to break the meaning of the word into parts and then to convey the parts separately .
 - Holistic strategy / the learner thinks of the meaning of the word as whole and tries to use a

word that is the closest approximation.

2- Linguistic Archistrategy / here the students fall back in the language resources inside their head such as :

- Morphological creativity / one possibility to make up a word using proper endings and hop that it works.
- L1 transfer / it is possible for the students to transfer a word form the first to the second language , hoping that it is going to exist in the new language

5. Competence Analysis .

By competence analysis , the researcher means communicative competence analysis . Communicative competence" is the knowledge which enables someone to use language effectively and their ability actually to use this knowledge for communication." . The term is most usually attributed to Dell Hymes's paper "On communicative Competence" (Johnson and Johnson ,1999 : 62) . Or it is the ability to use language in a variety of settings , taking into account relationships between speakers and differences in situations (Lightbown and Spada , 1999 : 172) . It can also be defined as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting , that is in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adopt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic , of one or more interlocutors (Savignon , 1972 :8)

Four different components , have been identified by Canale and Swain (1980) to make up the construct of communicative competence : grammatical competence , sociolinguistic competence , discourse competence and strategic competence .

Grammatical competence (linguistic competence) , it is the domain of grammatical and lexical capacity . This includes the knowledge of lexical items , phonology , morphology , syntax , and semantics . Sociolinguistic competence refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place , including role relationships , the shared information of the participants and the communicative purpose for their interaction . Discourse competence refers to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text . Strategic competence refers to the coping strategies that communicators employ to initiate , terminate , maintain , repair , and redirect communication .

Communicative language teaching is based on the premise that successful language learning involves not only a knowledge of the structure and form of a language but also the functions and purposes that a language serves in different communicative settings . This approach to teaching emphasizes the communication of meaning over the practice and manipulation of grammatical forms (Lightbown and Spada , 1999 : 172)

It becomes clear then that communicative competence is the goal to be achieved by learners in this approach. Freeman (2003:121) supports this view in providing an evidence that suggests that communicative language teaching aims broadly to apply the theoretical perspective of the communicative approach by making communicative competence its main goal . Richards and Rodgers (2001 : 155) .

Stern (1991 : 341) and Mariani (1994:1) explain the fact that any person who is not a mother – tongue speaker or a true bilingual must necessarily rely on some incomplete and imperfect competence . This corresponds to the present stage of any learner's interlanguage system . A learner could be placed somewhere between the two extremes of an ideal zero competence and an ideal native speaker competence . During the

process of language learning learners are gradually approaching a native speaker competence by successive approximation.

In order to help learners in their progress and movement to native speaker's or native like competence the researcher suggests the process of competence analysis . This includes the study of the different aspects of communicative competence separately (independently) rather than studying it as one whole unite . In the present study the researcher focuses on vocabulary aspect of communicative competence or as it is sometimes called lexical competence .

5.1 Aspects of Communicative Competence

Aspects of communicative competence are grouped into two groups as follows :

Linguistic Aspects / linguistic aspects of communicative competence are those that have to do with achieving an internalized functional knowledge of the elements and structures of the language . They include :

- Phonology
- Grammar
- Vocabulary (lexical competence)
- Discourse

Pragmatic Aspects / pragmatic aspects of communicative competence are those that have to do with how language is used in communication situations to achieve the speaker's purposes . They include :

- Functions
- Variations (sociolinguistic competence)
- Interactional skills
- Cltural framework.

(Orwig , 1999)

6. Lexical Competence

Lexical competence is one of the elements of the linguistic aspect of communicative competence . It can be defined as the ability to recognize and use words in a language in the way that

speakers of the language use them . It includes understanding the different relationships among families of words and the common collocation of words . For example , learners learning English need to be able to recognize the concept of 'chair' and what makes it different from a 'stool' , a 'sofa' or 'bench' . They also need to know that a 'chair' is a piece of furniture , and that there are various kinds of chairs , including 'easy chairs' , 'deck chairs' , 'office chairs' and so on . As well as understanding how 'chair' is used in an extended sense for what used to be termed a 'chirman' , especially when referring to a woman (Ibid). Cook (2001:71) emphasizes the importance of the learners knowledge of a word (vocabulary item) in addition to its relation to other words in a language. He says "L2 learning of vocabulary is not just learning a word once and for all but learning the range of information that goes with it."

The researcher focuses on lexical competence rather than other aspects of communicative competence because of its importance to language teaching in general and also to communication process . Segler , Pain and Sorace(1) state that lexical acquisition is clearly central for second language acquisition and that vocabulary is basic to communication. It is often seen as the greatest source of problems by second language learners . This view is also supported by Kellerman , Bongaerts and Poulisse (1987) , who claim that communicating in a second language , it is the words that one struggles for , rather than grammar or pronunciation .

Second language learners have to deal with not knowing a word in a second language . It is the lack of vocabulary that is crucial . Thus, most of learning strategies exist to plug gaps in the learner's vocabulary allowing them to refer to things for which they do not know the L2 words (Ibid) . Ghazal (2007:2) believes that learners lexical competence is far more than the ability to define a given number of words and covers a wide range of knowledge which in turn requires a variety of strategies to gain the knowledge . Learners then , may use various

strategies to acquire the target word knowledge . Description of vocabulary learning techniques and strategies aims to enhance understanding of the acquisition processes that take place in the learner's mind. Therefore , a description of vocabulary learning strategies can be used as a guideline to help learners in their lexical acquisition (Ellis , 1995 : 409) .

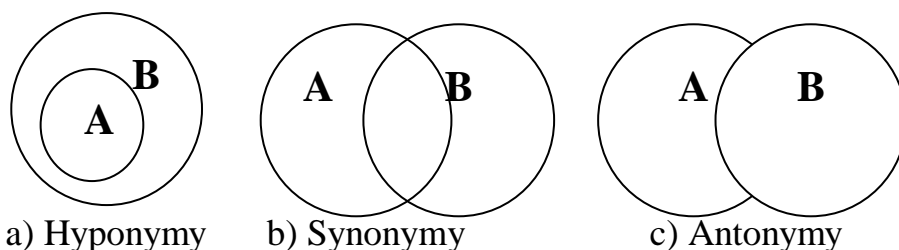
For learner's lexical competence to be developed , two essential components need to be available, first , knowledge of vocabulary items and the lexical relationships of different types that exist between them. Second , explicit instructions on how to select and use vocabulary learning strategies , which can be done in relation to the first element , that is knowledge of lexical relations .

7. Lexical Relations

Knowledge of vocabulary items is not enough for the development of learners lexical competence . It also requires understanding of the different relations between words . Trask (1999 :53) likewise puts a general statement , that the meaning of a word is related to the meaning of other word in ways that may be simple or complex . The word young , for example is more closely related to old than it is to lazy . Also rose is related in one way to flower , in another way to lilac, and in a third way to red . The meaning of a word could be characterized not in terms of its component features , but in terms of its relationship to other words , in other words according to its lexical relations (Yule , 1996 :118)

Generally speaking , the relationships of similarity and difference between concepts (and words that express them) can be expressed in terms of key notions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' . The first focuses on what concepts have in common , the second on what distinguishes them. Three key types of relationships between concept and concept (and , therefore , between word and word) can be isolated . At one end of the scale inclusion (hyponymy) is placed and at the other exclusion (antonymy) .

Between the two there is the feature of overlap-partial inclusion and partial exclusion known as synonymy. These relations are illustrated as follows : (Bell , 1993 : 91-92)



7.1 Hyponymy

Hyponymy is defined by Finch (2005:158), Yule (1996:119) as a hierarchical sense relation that exists between two terms in which the sense of one is included in the other . Terms such as daisy , daffodil , and rose all contain the meaning of flower , they are the overall hyponyms of flower. It involves total inclusion , concept (or the meaning of one word) is included in another for example , animal includes tiger (Bell, 1993:92)

Hyponymy refers to a word that contains the meaning of a more general word , known as the , 'superordinate' . For example oak is a 'hyponym' of the superordinate tree . In other words a hyponym is a word whose meaning contains all the same feature values of another word , plus some additional feature values . For example the meaning of the word sow has exactly the same feature values as the word pig (e.g [-human] plus some additional ones (e.g [+adult] [-male]) see (Parker and Riley , 2005 : 35) , (Finch , 2005 : 158) . This relation is a relation between words that results form a relation between their meaning and leads to a relation between their denotations : the meaning of the hyponym contains "the meaning of the hyponym , and the denotation of the hyponym is a sub-category of the denotation of the hyperonym (Lobner : 2002 : 85) .

Finch (2005 : 158) says that much of English vocabulary is linked by such a system of inclusion . This relation is a vertical relationship that is fundamental to the way in which we classify

things . For example , red is a hyonym of clour , flute of musical instrument and hammer of tool.

Crystal (2003:222) , (Larson , 1984 : 66) consider hyponymy as a relationship between specific and general lexical items . Crystal maintains that hyponymy is a sense relation which obtains between specific and general lexical items , such that the former includes the latter , or a hyponym of the latter . He provides examples : cat is a hyponymy of animal and chair is a hyponymy of furniture . Larson on the other hand talks about generic specific relations of lexical items . He gives the word 'sheep' as an example . The meaning sheep is also found in the words lamb , ram , and ewe . This is true because the word sheep is a generic word which includes the more specific words ram , ewe , and lamb . Every language has whole areas of vocabulary with this kind of relationship between the words.

In speaking of generic vocabulary , he refers to the manner in which certain words are grouped together in a language and given a class name . The more generic word which includes all of a set of words. This generic term is a class word the meaning of which is also found in two or more different words which are more specific. More specific words have additional components of meaning as well as the meaning of the generic term. For example , a dog is more specific than animal because the word animal is used to define a dog ; that a dog is an animal which has certain specific characteristics (Ibid:67) .

7.2 *Synonymy*

An in between notion that involves overlap rather than total inclusion or exclusion (Bell , 1993 : 92) . It is a sense relation that exists between words which have a similar meaning or sense . For example, drunk and intoxicated Finch (2005 :174) . Crystal (2003 :450) defines synonymy , as a sense relation between lexical items which have the same meanings , such items are termed synonyms. Larson (1984:74) suggests that symonyms are words which are very similar in meaning.

Kuiper and Allan (1996:164) assert that when "expressions share the same meaning they are 'synonymous' . If two words are synonymous then this allows speakers to make certain inference . For example , if car and automobile are synonyms , then it follows from this fact that 'I am driving an automobile' , 'I am driving a car' , and conversely that if 'I am driving a car' then 'I am driving an automobile' , that is , if one is true then the other will be true and vice versa . The relationship where if one sentence is true , then the other is true is termed entailment (Ibid :165)

Parker and Riley (2005 :35) discuss that two words are synonyms if they have the same sense , if they have the same values for all of their semantic features . For example , the pairs conceal and hid , stubborn and obstinate , big and large seem to be synonymous in English . The meaning of each pair consists of the same set of features marked for the same values.

Parker and Riley and other researchers who study lexical relations like Crystal (2003 : 450) , Bell (1993 : 92) , and Trask (1999:54) conclude that in all likelihood , there are no absolute (exact) synonyms in any language , that is words that mean exactly the same thing in all contexts . For example , even though big and large are (near) synonyms , the phrases, my big sister ' and ' my large sister certainly do not have the same meaning .

Crystal (2003 : 540) presents the idea of total synonymy as an unlikely possibility . That is, if items are close enough in their meaning to allow a choice to be made between them in some contexts , without there being any difference for the meaning of the sentence as whole . Thus , linguistic studies have emphasized the importance of context in deciding whether a set of lexical items is synonymous . Finch (2005:174) indicates that many synonyms differ in their collectional range , that is the words with which they can co-occur .For example powerful , mighty , and strong look interchangeable but they won't all occur with tea , ocean and language and where they do occur the meaning

is likely to be different in each case . Powerful language , for example has a different meaning from strong language .

7.3 Antonymy

The term "antonymy" is used in semantics as part of the study of oppositeness of meaning (Crystal , 2003 : 27) . Antonymy concerns exclusion rather than inclusion (Bell , 1993 : 92) . Yule (1996 : 118) suggests that two forms with opposite meanings are called antonyms . while Lobner (2002 :88) views two expressions as antonyms if they denote two opposite extremes out of a range of possibilities. Parker and Riley (2005:37) indicate that two words are antonyms if their meanings differ only in the value for a single semantic feature , for example dead and alive , hot and cold , above and below . The meanings of members of each pair are presumably identical ,except for opposite value of some semantic features . The meanings of dead and alive , for instance , are identical except that dead is marked [-living] and alive is marked [+living].

Different terms are used in the distinction of the different types of antonymy . Finch (2000:151) , for example , distinguishes three types of antonymy termed : gradable , complementary and relational antonymy . Gradable antonyms are terms in which the degree of opposition is said to be gradable , for example wide and narrow , old and young , tall and short . In each of these pairs the opposition is not absolute . There are degrees of width , age and height , so that to say a road is not narrow does not mean it is wide and vice versa . Also the definition of wide , old and tall will vary according to the referent . A tall man is shorter than a tall building.

The second type is complementary antonyms . Complementary antonyms are different from gradable in that the opposition between the terms is absolute (nongradable) . Alive and dead , married and single . have an either or relationship . To say someone is not alive means he is dead , and vice versa . Unlike

gradable antonyms there aren't degrees in between . And finally , Finch distinguishes relational antonyms . Relational antonyms are different from gradable ones in that they are not susceptible to degrees of opposition and from complementary ones in that they are not either / or in character . One could say, for example, that husband is the opposite of wife , but not to be a wife does not mean you are a husband . Similar Pairs are above and below , lend and borrow.

Parker and Riley (2005:37) , however , distinguish antonyms as gradable , binary antonyms (complementary) and converse antonyms . By converse antonyms they mean pairs that describe the relationship between two items from opposite perspective ,above and below are examples . Kuper and Allan (1996:168-169) used the terms gradable , complementary and converse senses .

There are other cases in which two terms are opposite to each other , reciprocal words , for example . They include sets of words which are the reciprocal of one another . The words give and receive have a reciprocal relationship to one another . One can say "John gave Mary a book" or "Mary received a book from John" . The meaning is the same since the two actions are reciprocal actions . Also one can say "John taught Bill" or "Bill learned from John." Teach and learn are reciprocal actions (Larson , 1984 :74) .

Other types of opposites are : directional opposites and heteronyms (Lobner , 2002 : 90-91) . Directional opposites are pairs such as in front of and behind , left and right , above and below . They have much in common with antonyms . For each such pair there is a point of reference from which one looks in opposite direction on a certain axis . They represent opposite direction on a common axis.

Heteronyms , on the other hand involve more than two expressions . Typical examples are the set of terms for the days of the week , the set of basic colour terms or terms of kind of animals , plants , vehicles , etc. A set of heteronymous terms

jointly covers a wider range of possibilities . Two heteronyms are contraries : if x is Sunday , it cannot be Monday , if x is a dog it cannot be a duck , etc. But , unlike antonymy , heteronymy is not related to scales ; heteronyms are not opposite extremes , but just members of a set of different expressions.

8. Strategies of Developing Learner's Lexical knowledge

Training language learners to select and use strategies when facing new vocabulary items and trying to remember them again is necessary in one way or another . First , this is considered as one of the elements of developing learner's lexical competence . Second , such strategies participate in developing learner's independence . They can be used inside and outside the classroom , during or after the end of courses . Graves (2006:91) indicates that training the students to use such strategies is tremendously important . With tens of thousands of words to learn , "anything we can do to help students become more proficient , independent word learners is an absolute necessity."

Thus , some related issues are discussed . For example , the basic factors that influence the use of vocabulary learning strategies VLS , as well as the best strategies that learners should employ to learn the meaning of new words .

According to Gu(2003:1) , three main elements are essential in the choice , use , and effectiveness of VLS : the task , the learner and the learning context . First , he asserts that different types of task materials , task purposes , and tasks at various difficulty levels demand different learning strategies . Learning words in a word list , for example , is different from learning some words in a passage . And that remembering a word meaning is different from learning to use the same word in real life situations .

Factors related to the learner are also influential in selecting and using VLS. GU outlines the most widely reported learner factors including learner's age , sex , language aptitude , intelligence , prior knowledge , motivation , self concept ,

personality and cognitive and learning style . In referring to the context , he distinguishes two types of context : learning context which refers to the leaning environment . It is the "Socio-culturo-political" environment when learning takes place . Its elements are , the teacher , the peers , classroom climate , the family support , the social , cultural tradition of learning , the curriculum , and the availability of input and output opportunities . Language context , on the other hand , is more specifically important to the application of a number of VLS. It refers to the textual or discorsal place in which a particular word or structure can be found . It is the way learners approach learning tasks(Ibid:2).

Before discussing strategies that learners might employ to know the meaning of new words .P a taxonomy of these strategies is important . Many researchers including (Ghazal , 2007 : 3) and (Kudo , 1999 : 6) believe that Schmitt's (1997) work is one of the most comprehensive inventories of VLS.

In his inventory of VLS , Schmitt distinguishes two main groups . The ones used to determine the meaning of new words when encountered for the first time , and the ones to consolidate meaning when encountered again . The former contains determination and social Strategies . And the latter contains Cognitive , metacognitive , memory and Social Strategies . Schmitt includes Social Strategies in both Categories since they can be used for both purposes.

Determination strategies are those used when "learners are faced with discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's experience." Learners try to discover the meaning of a new word by guessing it with the help of context , structural knowledge of language , and reference materials . Other strategies used to discover a new meaning are known as social strategies in which the learner asks someone for help with the unknown words.

Beside the initial discovery of a word learners need to employ a variety of strategies to practice and retain vocabulary .

They use the following strategies to consolidate their vocabulary knowledge .

Social strategies are strategies of cooperative group learning through which learners study and practice the meaning of new words in group .

Memory strategies (mnemonics) involve relating the word with some previously learned knowledge by using some forms of imagery or grouping .

Cognitive strategies are similar to memory strategies but are not focused on manipulative mental processing . They include repetition and using mechanical means such as word lists , flash cards , and vocabulary notebooks to study words.

This group includes metacognitive strategies which are used by learners to control and evaluate their own learning by having an overview of the learning process in general . For example , testing oneself is a metacognitive strategy which provides "input to the effectiveness of one's choice of learning strategies"(Ibid. :216) .

According to the variety of factors that affect the selection and use of VLS , a large number of strategies is suggested by researchers. Nation and Meara (2002: 44) provide learners with a set of powerful and widely applicable strategies . It includes four major strategies that learners can employ to learn the meaning of unknown words and make words stay in memory . Training learners in these strategies is a better choice for teachers than spending classroom time teaching thousands of words , particularly low-frequency words these strategies are :

8.1 Guessing Form Context Clues .

Guessing from context clues is the most useful of all the strategies according to them. Graves (2006:91) expresses the same view , he thinks that most words are learned from context and that increasing students proficiency in learning from context will greatly increase the number of words students learn . Application of this strategy requires a lot of time and effort on

the part of both teachers and learners . To learn words using this strategy , learners need to know 95%-98% of the token in a text , that is the unknown word to be guessed has to have plenty of comprehensible supporting context .

It is also dependent on good listening and reading skills . Thus training learners in guessing from the context needs to be part of the general development of these skills (Nation and Meara , 2002 : 44) .

8.2 Learning From Word Cards

This refers to the use of 'key word technique' which typically gives results about 25 per cent higher than ordinary rote learning . This technique helps to link the form of a word to its meaning and so can be brought into play once the learner has access to the meaning of the word . First the learner thinks of a first language word that sounds like the foreign word to be learned (keyword) , then the meaning of the keyword is combined in an image with the meaning of the foreign word.

8.3 Using Word Parts

This strategy includes the use of word parts to remember the meaning of a word . The learner meets the word apposition meaning , occurring alongside each other . He needs to find familiar parts in the word that work like keywords , the analysis of the word into parts is like the first step of the key word technique . The second step is to relate the meaning of the parts to the meaning of the whole which is a simple procedure for apposition . This is done by restating the meaning of the word including the meaning of the parts in the definition "placed next to each other" (Ibid : 45) .

8.4 Dictionary Use

With adequate training , dictionaries can be an invaluable tool for learners , giving them independence from the teacher . As well as understanding meaning students are able to check

pronunciation , the grammar of a the word (e.g. verb patterns , verb forms , plurality , comparatives , etc) , different spelling (American versus British) , style and register , as well as examples that illustrate usage . Thus , students should start using dictionaries as early as possible , from intermediate level up words . (Mora and Sao , 2001 : 4) . Dictionaries are either used 'receptively' to support reading and listening or 'productively' to support writing and speaking (Nation and Meara , 2002 : 46) .

9. Procedure

One specific aspect is emphasized in the study , vocabulary or "lexical Competence" . Competence analysis means analyzing learners' weakness in this aspect thus , a test is constructed .

9.1 The significance of the test

Discussion of lexical competence sheds the light on two main elements in the learner's lexical knowledge . Namely , knowledge of lexical relations and knowledge of VLS. Both are related to the test and depend on its results . First knowledge of lexical relations is measured and evaluated in the test . Second , having an idea about learner's proficiency level of lexical relations is important in identifying the types of VLS that learners should use and apply in dealing with lexical gaps.

9.2 Description of the Test

A diagnostic test is constructed to identify areas of strength and weakness in the learners lexical competence . The test aims at measuring the following :

- 1.Learner's knowledge of vocabulary items in both ordinary sentences and conversational contexts
- 2.Learners knowledge of synonymy , antonymy and hyponymy .

The sample of the test (the study) consists of 40 third year university students (male and female) at the department of

English , college of Education , university of Al-Qadisiya. They are selected randomly from a population about 100 students. Lewis (1973:97) suggests that "a random sample results when every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected" in a way that the selection of any member in no way influences that of another.

The test included 45 items arranged in five questions A , B, C, D, and E . The first two questions measure learners knowledge of vocabulary items in ordinary sentences and in conversational (communicative) contexts. Questions three, four, and five measure learner's knowledge of synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy respectively. Items of the test are based upon a number of sources : McCarthy and O'Dell's (2002) book entitled English Vocabulary in Use, Some of the exercises available on the same sources in which lexical relations are discussed and a number of conversations on the internet Every day English in conversation . Focusenglish.com /1999-2007 by liang , J. and Rice , S.

The researcher explains the way students are supposed to answer the questions after giving them the question lists. Items of the test are marked either correct or incorrect , each students answered 45 items and the following results are observed .

The total number of correct items is 631 items with a percentage of 35.05 per cent , the total number of in correct items is 1169 with a percentage of 64.94 per cent. Questions A and B are answered with 55 correct items , their percentage is 13.75% and 345 incorrect items , their percentage is 86.25% .

Question C is answered with better numbers and percentages . The students answered 122 items correctly which means 61% of the items and 78 items incorrectly which means 39% of the items . In question D the observed correct answers are 250 in a percentage of 39.6% while the observed incorrect answers are 390 in a percentage of 60.93% . Finally the results of answering question E are 204 correct items with a percentage of 36.42% and 356 incorrect items with a percentage 63.57% Table (1) shows numbers and percentages of correct and incorrect items

.

Table (1)
The numbers and percentages of correct and incorrect items

Question(s)	Correct items		incorrect items	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
A , B	55	13.75%	345	86.25%
C	122	61%	78	39%
D	250	39.6%	390	60.93%
E	204	36.42%	356	63.57%
Total	631	35.05%	1169	64.94%

The mentioned above results indicate that third year university students at the department of English , college of Education , university of Al-Qadisiya have clear weakness in the number of vocabulary items they know . Yet they have a rather better knowledge in synonymy . While more training and explanation in the other two relations is needed.

Conclusion

Communication strategies are used by learners when facing a communication problem caused by the limited resources of their imperfect interlanguage system . Greate deal of communication strategies are used due to the lack of vocabulary items to the extent that they are described as compensatory strategies . Therefore , learner's lexical competence is studied and emphasized as one of the aspects of communicative competence which are suggested by the researcher to be studied separately (individually) . In this regard the following points are concluded :

- 1- Knowledge of lexical relations is an essential element in the development of learner's lexical competence .
- 2- The presentation (explanation) of the different types of lexical relations including hyponymy , synonymy and antonymy should be done after diagnosing areas of strength and weakness in the learner's knowledge of these relations .

- 3- The development of learner's lexical competence requires providing learners with instructions on how select and use the different types of vocabulary learning strategies . Providing learners with such instructions should be based on learner's knowledge of lexical relations and works on overcoming learner's weakness connected with mastering such relations .

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الخلاصة

لكي يكون متعلمو اللغة العربية ايجابيين ومستقلين ، خاصة هؤلاء الذين لا يوصفون بأنهم متعلمون متمكنون من اللغة ويحتاجون الى التدريب على استعمال عدة انواع من الاستراتيجيات من بينها استراتيجيات المخاطبة التي تستعمل في معظم الحالات للتعامل مع مشكلة معجمية ، أي عدم معرفة مفردة معجمية معينة .

اقترحت الدراسة تحليل ودراسة العوامل المنفصلة للكفاية التواصلية (Communicative Competence) بصورة منفصلة بدلاً من دراسة الكفاية التواصلية كوحدة واحدة . ونظراً لأهميتها في كل من عمليتي المخاطبة وتعلم اللغة تركّز الدراسة على احدى العوامل اللغوية للكفاية التواصلية ، وهي الكفاية المعجمية (Lexical competence) التي تعنى معرفة المتعلم لمعاني المفردات المعجمية ، وكذلك العلاقات المعجمية الموجودة بين تلك المفردات . وقد تم مناقشة طبيعتها وتحليلها وتنميتها . وقد تم اجراء اختبار لتشخيص مكامن القوة والضعف في الكفاية المعجمية للمتعلمين ، لقد توصلت الدراسة الى ان تنمية الكفاية المعجمية تتطلب تزويد المتعلمين بمعرفة العلاقات المختلفة بين المفردات المعجمية بما يساعد على تلافي نقاط الضعف ، كذلك تزويدهم بتعليمات حول كيفية إختيار وإستعمال الاستراتيجيات المناسبة لتعلم المفردات .