FREQUENCY AND CHANGE IN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY USE: A STUDY OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CORE FRENCH STUDENTS AT THE INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR HIGH LEVELS IN THREE UPPER TRINITY SOUTH SCHOOLS

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by

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I wish to dedicate this study to the memory of my father

Cecil S. Goulding

who spent but a short time with me, but left a lasting mark,

and my mother

Winnifred Goulding

who began my education at home.

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to examine communication strategy use by second language learners in grades seven, nine, and eleven of a core French Program. The investigation attempted to ascertain which strategies were employed most frequently by students at each of the three levels, and determine whether or not strategy use was related to the learners' linguistic competence in French.

To achieve this goal, a total of eighteen of the most successful core French students, from grades seven, nine, and eleven, were chosen from three schools in the Upper Trinity South School System. By means of an interview format elicitation task, each subject was interviewed by his present French teacher for ten minutes, with the speech samples being recorded on audio cassette.

The speech samples were then analyzed using a typology of communication strategies, based on the typologies developed by Tarone (1983) and Willems (1987). The information obtained from the samples was then converted into tables showing individual strategy use. Strategies were categorized as Reduction and Achievement types, with the latter being further subdivided as Interlingual and Intralingual. This information was then presented in graphic form, making use of descriptive statistics.

The results of this study showed that intermediate and senior high students use communication strategies that adults, in previous studies, were found to have used. We found that the Interlingual Strategies were used more frequently than Intralingual Strategies in the three grades, with Borrowing being the most-frequently-used strategy. Grade eleven students tended to employ more strategies in their interlanguage communication than the subjects in grades seven and nine. These subjects also used Retrieval Strategies more

frequently than the other two groups.

In this study students at each grade level demonstrated a preference for use of Interlingual strategies. While, theoretically, one might have anticipated that the grade eleven students, with a presumed higher level of linguistic competence, would have used a higher percentage of Intralingual strategy types, this was not the case. All three grades, however, tended to choose Achievement Strategies over Reduction Strategies in their communication.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Rationale for the Study

During the past decade, the focus in second language acquisition has shifted from an emphasis on formal aspects of language to functionally-oriented syllabi, with the overall teaching goal being communicative competence. In the tradition of the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods, the linguistic code was of prime importance, not the learner. More recent theories, however, have viewed second language acquisition as the result of interaction between the learner and the linguistic environment. The research of this period has concentrated more on the learner and how she learns a second language (L2). The acquisition/learning concept introduced by Krashen (1976), along with Bialystok's (1978) model of second language learning, and Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence, have all helped to direct attention towards the importance of communicative language teaching, the individuality of learners and their learning styles.

Communication strategies (CS) research can be traced back to Selinker's (1972) work on interlanguage, in which he accounts for CS as a by-product of the learners' attempts to express meaning in spontaneous speech with their limited target language system. While most of the research in this area has centred around the identification and classification of the learners' CS, some have examined the relationship between communication strategy use and the learner's level of language development.

The current emphasis in second language acquisition is communicative competence, and learners in this student-centred approach are necessarily engaged in their own learning. Communication strategy use, which facilitates communicative competence, has, in recent

years, been the focus of many studies. Faerch and Kasper (1983) suggest that students should not only be made aware of their CS, but they should also be taught how to compensate for their insufficient linguistic resources creatively and appropriately. The more successful communicators use strategies that the poorer language learners fail to use (O'Malley 1985). Some researchers, such as Tarone (1978) and Labarca and Khanji (1987), have suggested that strategies can be taught, thereby enabling the poorer language learner to become a better L2 communicator. The effects of learner training in strategy use has also been investigated by several researchers (Oxford, Lavine and Crookall 1989, Paribakht 1985, Bialystok 1979). Concern has been expressed that only linguistic code training is being addressed in the second language classroom, while training in strategy use, which has been shown to increase communicative competence (Paribakht 1985), is being greatly neglected. Paribakht (1985) has suggested that study of children's strategic competence development would be useful in shedding light on the relationship between cognition and strategy use, as well as on the developmental stages of strategic competence. Studies in young adolescents' L2 strategy use have so far not been conducted. Hence, the need exists for a study of this kind to add to the ongoing research in the area of L2 strategy use by studying junior and high school, rather than adult, L2 learners.

Purpose of the Study

While many researchers have investigated adult learners' communication strategy use, relatively few have examined the strategy types employed by students at the intermediate and high school levels. Recently, however, Marrie (1989) has done a comparative study of the communication strategies used by effective and less effective oral language learners in the third grade of an early French immersion program.

This present study proposes to investigate the use of CS by six of the most successful core French students in each of the levels seven, nine, and eleven (level II of the Newfoundland high school program) in three schools.

The purpose of this study will be firstly, to determine the frequency and types of CS used by second language learners at each of these three levels, based on a typology of CS developed by Tarone (1978), and further refined by Willems (1987). (See Appendix A for "Proposed Typology of Communication Strategies", developed by researcher). Secondly, we will observe whether or not adolescent learners' strategy use varies as a function of their proficiency in the target language. Such a study could determine if young L2 learners use the same CS as those already found with adults. Since communicative competence is a goal of many L2 programs, discovering the communication strategies used most frequently by the more successful adolescent L2 learners could be instrumental in the formulating of a language training syllabus to enable the less successful L2 learner to experience a greater degree of success in her second language learning. This study could also indicate a relationship between the linguistic competence of adolescent learners and CS use.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes information to the developing area of research in CS use.

1. The information gathered in this study could contribute to the research being done in a specific area of L2 learning, namely, that of strategic competence.
2. Knowledge of the CS used by the successful L2 adolescent learners, could be useful for the second language teacher as a means of helping the less effective learners become more efficient communicators in the target language.

3. Information about the teaching of communication strategies would be of practical use to this province's core French teachers by sensitizing them to this recently-recognized important component of L2 learning.

Definition of Terms

It is felt that definitions of certain terms might be necessary for further clarification of their use in this study.

'Most successful' L2 learners: For the purpose of this study, 'most successful' L2 learners refers to those students from the core French program in each of the levels seven, nine, and eleven, who most efficiently integrated the linguistic, discourse and strategic competencies in the communication of that language.

Interlanguage: The knowledge of the L2 that a language learner has that approximates the knowledge of adult native speakers of the language; a language system in transition.

Change over time: Observable change in strategy use by grade seven and grade eleven students, as the level of proficiency in the L2 increases.

L1: A symbol used to refer to native language; mother tongue or primary language.

L2: A symbol used to refer to a language learned after the basics of the L1 has been acquired; foreign language; target language.

CS: An abbreviation for 'Communication Strategies'.

TL: An abbreviation for 'Target Language'; the L2 being learned.

Interlingual Strategies: Types of strategies in which the learner makes use of the L1 in communication.

Intralingual Strategies: Types of strategies in which the learner makes use of the L2 in communication.

Organization of the Thesis

This study will be organized as follows:

1. Chapter Two will review the current literature in the area of strategic competence.
2. Chapter Three will discuss the sample, the instrument, the procedure for the collection and analysis of data, the questions investigated, and some limitations of the study.
3. Chapter Four will present the results of the study in a descriptive and graphic format.
4. Chapter Five will include a brief summary of the study, interpretation of the results, some implications of the findings, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Current approaches to L2 learning and teaching tend to focus on the development of the learners' communication skills. Historically, however, various theories have provided the underpinnings of differing approaches whose goal is to develop competence in the target language. Beginning with the grammar-translation approach, this chapter will initially survey the development of a number of approaches to second language learning and teaching. The remainder of the chapter will explore more closely the communicative approach, communicative competence, communication, communication strategies, and finally, research already conducted in the field of communication strategies.

The Grammar-Translation Approach reached its zenith at the end of the nineteenth century in Germany and came to dominate second language teaching in the whole Western World (Hammerly 1982). Its aim was to prepare students to read and appreciate great literature and philosophy, mainly by translation from and into the target language, with emphasis on second language grammar.

Much reaction against the Grammar-Translation Method resulted in a radical change in second language teaching. The Direct Method represented a shift from literary language to the spoken everyday language as the object of early instruction, a goal that was totally lacking in grammar-translation (Stern 1983). According to Hammerly (1982), the Direct Method was based on three assumption: (1) that language is primarily oral, (2) that the main purpose of second language study is communication, and (3) that the process of second language learning must be like that of native language acquisition, inductive and

monolingual. Mackey (1969) notes that in countries where this method was adopted, there were few teachers trained to use it, and many drifted back to some form of grammar-translation approach. This method also presented major problems in conveying meaning without translating, and safeguarding against misunderstanding without reference to the first language (Stern 1983).

The Coleman Report of 1929 suggested that, since most American students studied a foreign language for a period of two years, the only objective which could be considered attainable in such a short timeframe was the development of reading ability (Rivers 1968). Subsequently, the Reading Method became popular until the late forties. While not banning the use of the mother tongue in second language instruction, this method was characterized by: (1) training in reading comprehension, (2) vocabulary-controlled reading texts, and (3) a distinction between intensive reading for detailed study and extensive rapid reading of graded 'readers' for general comprehension (Stern 1983). According to Rivers (1968), the Reading Method produced students who were unable to comprehend and speak the language beyond the very simplest of exchanges. World War II and the increasingly closer contact between nations made it apparent that the reading skill alone was not sufficient as the final outcome of a foreign language course.

Subsequently, communication came to be viewed as the objective of foreign language teaching, leading to what has been called the Audio-Lingual Method. Early audio-lingual proponents were strongly influenced by Skinner's operant conditioning theories (Stern 1983), which suggested that habits are established when reward or reinforcement immediately follows the occurrence of an act. The application of behaviourism in audio-lingual techniques took the form of mimicry-memorization and patterned learning. This

method, which aimed at developing listening and speaking skills first, as the foundation on which to build the skills of reading and writing, proposed the development of target language skills without reference to the student's mother tongue. Stern (1983) summarizes the principle features of this method as: (1) separation of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and the primacy of the audio-lingual over the graphic skills, (2) use of dialogue as the chief means of presenting the language, (3) emphasis on certain practice techniques (mimicry, memorization, and pattern drills), (4) use of the language laboratory, and (5) establishment of a linguistic and psychological theory for the teaching method. While this method did enjoy a period of popularity, new research and theory on language learning, in conjunction with the dissatisfaction of teachers and students, resulted in a call for changes.

As an alternative to the audio-lingual method, the Cognitive Approach became prominent in the mid-60's. Carroll (1966: 101) characterizes the techniques of this approach as follows: "... learning a language is a process of acquiring conscious control of the phonological, grammatical, and lexical patterns of the second language, largely through study and analysis of these patterns as a body of knowledge." This approach emphasizes rule learning, meaningful practice, and creativity. In describing this approach, Hammerly (1982) states that: (1) all four skills are given the same emphasis, although communication is a major goal, (2) teaching of accurate pronunciation is de-emphasized, (3) grammar is taught deductively, (4) vocabulary is emphasized from the beginning, (5) mechanical activities are avoided, and (6) the native language is used more. In recent years, this approach has been overshadowed by the increasing shift of interest to more communicative approaches.

During the 1970's, there was a definite shift in emphasis from form to function in second language teaching. Educators had realized the failure of previous methods and approaches to foster 'real' communication skills in learners. According to Allen (1984: 43), "It has been commonplace observation that many students can perform quite well in a controlled classroom environment but are unable to transfer this ability to situations which require spontaneous, real-life communication." During the past decade, the focus in second language acquisition has shifted from an emphasis on formal aspects of language to functionally-oriented syllabuses, with the overall teaching goal being communication.

The Communicative Approach

In order to understand the communicative approach more fully, the term, 'communication', as it is applied to L2 learning and teaching, needs to be defined. Larsen-Freeman (1986) states that communication is a process where students have to apply the knowledge of target language forms, meanings, and functions in negotiating meaning. It is through the interaction between speaker and listener (or reader and writer) that meaning becomes clear. Savignon (1983) defines communication as a continuous process of expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons belonging to a speech community or between one person and a written or oral text. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) define communication as an exchange or transmittal of messages between two or more parties. They further elaborate on four different kinds of communication:

(1) one-way communication (A communication situation in which the learner listens to or reads the target language but does not respond in any way),

(2) restricted two-way communication (An exchange in which messages directed to the learner are in the target language, but the learner responds in his or her first language, or with gestures),

(3) full two-way communication (A verbal exchange in which the learner listens to someone speaking the target language and responds in the target language), and

(4) natural communication (A communication situation in which people focus on the ideas being discussed rather than on their grammatical structure).

Finally, Breen and Candlin (1980) point out that communication:

(1) is a form of social interaction, and is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction;

(2) involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message;

(3) takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretation of utterances;

(4) is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions, such as memory constraints, fatigue and distractions;

(5) always has a purpose;

(6) involves authentic, as opposed to textbook-contrived language; and

(7) is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes.

Knowledge about the nature of communication provides theoretical underpinnings for communicative language teaching.

The Communicative Approach is a learner-centred approach which attempts to develop in learners an ability to receive and give messages accurately and fluently in the second language. It reduces structure to a secondary role and organizes learning activities

according to communicative acts (Hammerly 1982). Oxford et al (1989) summarize the 'ingredients' of the communicative approach as four underlying and interrelated principles:

(1) the attainment of communicative competence as the main goal;

(2) dealing communicatively with forms and errors;

(3) an orientation which integrates the four language skills; and

(4) a focus on meaning, context, and authentic language

Since this approach aims to develop the learner's ability to communicate in the L2, most classroom activities have a communicative intent. In the communicative approach, linguistic competence is viewed as one component, not a terminal goal, of L2 learning. Instead, learners acquire the L2 by actively engaging in the giving and receiving of messages even when their knowledge of the target language is incomplete. They learn to communicate by communicating. Allen and Howard (1981: 78) give a comprehensive summary of what the communicative approach entails:

> Until recently, there was a tendency to think of the learner's task mainly in terms of mastering a repertoire of grammatical patterns. The new type of curriculum, however, defines that task more comprehensively as learning how to communicate as a member of a particular sociocultural group. Language is no longer viewed as an object, codified in a textbook, but as an integral part of the learner's personal and social development. The aim is not so much to accumulate separate elements of grammar in an ordered progression, but rather to encourage the student to use all the resources of the language that are available to him to meet the demands of a particular situation. Instead of being subdivided into a series of discrete linguistic items, a typical communicative curriculum is organized in terms of 'units of activity' designed to engage the student's abilities in an integrated and realistic way.

According to Stern (1983), the communicative approach has so profoundly influenced current thought and practice on language teaching strategies, that it is hardly possible today to imagine a language pedagogy which does not make some allowance at all levels of teaching for a non-analytical communicative component.

Communicative Competence

The term, 'communicative competence', was first used by Hymes (1972), in deliberate contrast to Chomsky's (1965) 'linguistic competence' of the 'ideal speaker-listener'. Hymes looked at the 'real speaker-listener' in social interaction and focused on language in actual performance. Communicative competence, for Hymes, implies linguistic competence, but its main focus is the intuitive grasp of social and cultural rules and meanings that are carried by an utterance. It is intuitive knowledge of social, functional and contextual features that Hymes referred to as communicative competence.

Allen (1984) uses the term communicative competence to refer to the use of language for real purposes. Germain and Leblanc (1987: 97) elaborate:

> Pour communiquer, même linguistiquement, il n'est pas suffisant, par exemple, de connaître toutes les règles grammaticales, morphologiques, ou phonologiques d'une langue. Il est nécessaire de posséder, en plus, une connaissance des règles sociales, psychologiques et culturelles qui en gouvernent l'usage. A la connaissance d'un savoir (le code de la langue) il faut ajouter la connaissance d'un savoir-faire (ses règles d'emploi). C'est cette double compétence que nous appelons, à la suite d'autres auteurs, la 'compétence de communication'.

Spolsky (1978) states that communicative competence refers not just to the fact that someone knows language, but that he knows how to use it. The full range of communicative competence involves not just the semantics, grammar and phonology of linguistic competence, but sets of rules governing the appropriateness of various forms according to topics, setting, and audience.

According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence comprises four main components: grammatical competence (the knowledge of the grammatical rules of a target language), sociolinguistic competence (the knowledge of the social adequacy of rules of language use), discourse competence (the connection of a series of sentences or

utterances to form a meaningful whole), and strategic competence (the knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies). Together these four components suggest a model of communicative competence as a basis for curriculum design and classroom practice.

Savignon (1983), while endorsing Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence, further elaborates on the interaction of those components as the learner's level of communicative competence increases. Strategic competence is present at all levels of proficiency although its importance in relation to the other components diminishes as knowledge of grammatical, sociolinguistic and discourse rules increases. She concludes that the whole of communicative competence is always something other than the simple sum of its parts.

Stern (1983) has further summarized communicative competence in a second language as:

(1) the intuitive mastery of the forms of the language;

(2) the intuitive mastery of the linguistic, cognitive, affective and sociocultural meanings, expressed by the language forms;

(3) the capacity to use the language with maximum attention to communication and minimum attention to form; and

(4) the creativity of language use.

With the inclusion of strategic competence in a general model of communicative competence, some researchers have focused attention on the nature of communication strategies and their use. The result has been the development of a growing body of research in this area (Varadi 1973; Tarone 1978, 1979; Galvan and Campbell 1978; Faerch

and Kasper 1980; Labarca and Khanji 1986; Paribakht 1985; Willems 1987).

Communication Strategies

Notion of Strategy

The definitions of 'strategy' vary in the recent research on communication strategies, yet they share certain common features. Rubin (1975) defined strategies as techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire second language knowledge. Much of the literature on strategies refers to them as 'language learning behaviours' (O'Malley 1985), 'steps, routines, procedures' (Wenden 1986), 'conscious enterprises' (Reiss 1985), 'potentially conscious plans' (Tarone 1977, Varadi 1980), 'tactics, cognitive abilities and learning skills' (Rubin 1975). Stern (1983: 405) views strategies as "... general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner." Savignon (1983) defines a strategy as a particular method of approaching a problem or task; a mode of operation for achieving a particular goal, while Reiss (1985) views strategies as conscious approaches used by an individual to facilitate learning.

Bialystok (1984), in dealing with the notion of strategy, identifies three consistent features in all the definitions of 'strategy' which are explicitly or implicitly incorporated. These features are:

(1) problematicity — strategies are adapted when problems in either learning or production are perceived.

(2) consciousness — refers either to the learner's awareness that a strategy is being employed for a particular purpose, or the awareness of how that strategy might achieve its intended effect.

(3) intentionality — the learner's control over those strategies so that particular ones may be selected from the range of options and deliberately applied to achieve certain affects.

Two of these are identified by Faerch and Kasper (1983) to be criterial to the notion of

strategy; the third is implied by their description and by the description of others.

The concept of strategy in second language learning and communication, then, seems consistently to refer to the use of devices to solve problems by learners who are in control of the selection of these devices and at least somewhat conscious of their applications and effects (Bialystok 1984).

Definitions of Communication Strategies

Interest in CS used by second language learners has grown since an early study by Selinker (1972), who referred to CS as a by-product of the learner's attempt to express meaning in spontaneous speech with a limited second language control. Tarone (1981) proposed that CS are descriptive of the learners' use of what they know as they try to communicate with speakers of the target language.

While definitions of CS vary slightly, they all support the notion that CS are used to compensate for some deficiency in the learner's linguistic system. Brown (1980) defines CS as the conscious employment of verbal or non-verbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when precise linguistic structures are for some reason not readily available to the learner at a point in communication. Corder, as cited in Faerch and Kasper (1983), defines communication strategy as a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty. According to Tarone (1983), a communication strategy is a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared, where 'meaning structures' includes both linguistic and sociolinguistic structures. Wenden (1986) defines CS as production and comprehension techniques which learners employ when there is a gap between their knowledge of the language and the communicative intent.

Purpose of Strategies

Writers such as Bialystok, Frohlich and Howard (1979), Palmer (1977), Stern (1978), Swain (1977), Tarone (1977, 1980), and Terrell (1977) also agree that communication strategies focus on exploring alternate ways of using what one does know for the transmission of a message. Corder (1983) proposes that CS deal with relationships between means and ends.

Whenever a second language learner attempts to express himself or interact with another speaker of the target language, difficulties may arise which could be surmounted if s/he had available a repertoire of strategies. When faced with communication difficulties, the second language learner may use communication strategies to increase his ability to convey a message.

CS can function to facilitate both comprehension and production in an act of communication. Tarone (1984: 130) has identified the following criteria as characteristic of CS:

"(1) A speaker desires to communicate meaning 'X' to listener.

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

(3) The speaker chooses to do one of the following:
(a) avoid, that is, not attempt to communicate meaning 'X'; or
(b) attempt alternative means to communicate meaning 'X'."

The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning.

Typologies of Communication Strategies

Tarone (1978) has developed a typology of CS which the language learner can use to compensate for a limited linguistic repertoire. These strategies are as follows:

(1) Paraphrase: This strategy type is composed of three sub-categories:

(a) Approximation -- the learner uses a single target-language vocabulary or structure, which s/he knows is not correct but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker.

(b) Word Coinage -- the learner constructs a new word in order to communicate a desired message.

(c) Circumlocution -- the learner describes the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate language item or structure.

(2) Transfer: This strategy type includes two sub-categories:

(a) Literal Translation -- the learner translates word for word from the target language.

(b) Language Switch -- the learner uses the native language term without bothering to translate.

(3) Appeal for Assistance: This strategy includes asking for the correct item.

(4) Mimes: The learner's use of non-verbal strategies in place of a lexical item or action.

(5) Avoidance: This strategy type includes two sub-categories:

(a) Topic Avoidance -- the learner simply tries not to talk about a concept for which the target language item or structure is not known.

(b) Message Abandonment -- the learner begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue and stops in mid-utterance (Tarone 1978: 286).

Corder (1978) states that when an interlocutor finds himself faced with a situation where his linguistic knowledge is not sufficient to convey his message, he can use either 'message adjustment strategies' ('risk avoidance strategies'), that is, tailor his message to the resources he has available, or 'resource expansion strategies' ('risk-running strategies'), that is, attempt to increase his resources in order to realize his communicative intentions.

Faerch and Kasper (1980) categorize CS in a similar manner, but further sub-categorize them as 'reduction strategies' and 'achievement strategies'. Those strategies that reduce the communicative task, so that the learner can more easily handle it, and are governed by avoidance behaviour, they term 'reduction strategies'. Those which aggressively address the communicative problem at hand and are governed by achievement behaviour, they call 'achievement strategies'. Their overview is as follows:

Formal Reduction Strategies	Subtypes
Learner communicates by means of a 'reduced' system in order to avoid producing a non-fluent or incorrect utterance by realizing insufficiently automatized or hypothetical rules/items.	Phonological Morphological Syntactic Lexical
Functional Reduction Strategies	
Learner reduces his communicative goal in order to avoid a problem.	Actional Reduction Modal Reduction Reduction of the Propositional Content: Topic Avoidance, Message Abandonment,

Meaning Replacement

Achievement Strategies

Learner attempts to solve communicative problem by expanding his communicative resources.

Subtypes

Compensatory Strategies:

(a) Code Switching

(b) Interlingual Transfer

(c) Inter/Intralingual Transfer

(d) IL-based strategies

(i) generalization

(ii) paraphrase

(iii) word coinage

(iv) restructuring

(e) Cooperative Strategies

(f) Non-Linguistic Strategies

Retrieval Strategies

Bialystok's (1978) model of second language learning, while similar to the preceding, distinguished between formal and functional CS. According to this model, learners employ 'inferencing', a functional communication strategy, to arrive at particular linguistic information which was previously unknown. Inferencing is represented by the exploitation of information from the use of Other Knowledge (the language learner's knowledge of the subject matter, cues in the environment, gestures, knowledge of other languages, etc.), and Implicit Knowledge (intuitively known items in the new language). Inferencing, in this model, is primarily a comprehension strategy but the outcome of employing this strategy is

that new information is now represented in Explicit Knowledge, increasing that source.

Willems (1987), with slight modification, has adapted the typology of Tarone (1978) and Faerch and Kasper (1980). He further divides Achievement Strategies into Interlingual Strategies, where the L1 is used, and Intralingual Strategies, where the L2 is employed in communication.

Research in Communication Strategies

Recent interest in the strategic component of communicative competence has resulted in the development of a body of research in the area of CS. This research has suggested that speakers' choice of CS and their levels of target language proficiency may be related (Tarone 1977, Corder 1978, Paribakht 1985). Bachman and Palmer (1981) claim that learners have different strategic abilities. Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) have reported some interaction between learners' level of target language knowledge and their strategy use in terms of, for example, their sensitivity to the variety of CS. In addition, Paribakht (1985) found that adult learner's use of CS has specific characteristics at different developmental stages of their interlanguages, that is, learners seem to modify strategy use as their linguistic competence changes. Learner behaviour in terms of strategy use seems, therefore, to be transitional.

Labarca and Khanji (1986) found that instruction in strategic interaction (SI) helped adult learners become more effective in their conversation with interviewers and gave them greater communicative confidence.

O'Malley et al (1985) report on a project which trained high school students in the use of strategies on three academic tasks: listening to a lecture, learning vocabulary, and making a brief oral presentation to other students. The results indicated that strategy

training can be effective, particularly for integrative language tasks, and that the use of particular strategies may vary depending on the learner's level of linguistic competence.

Bialystok (1983) found that the effective use of communication strategies is unambiguously related to formal proficiency, and in spite of efforts to disentangle formal from communicative uses of language, the evidence from her study placed formal mastery firmly within the construct of communicative competence.

Studies conducted by Paribakht (1985) also conclude that strategic competence appears to develop in the speaker's L1 with the individual's increasing language experience, and to be freely transferable to L2 learning situations. S/he has suggested that study of children's strategic competence development would be useful in shedding light on the relationship between cognition and strategy use, as well as on the developmental stages of strategic competence.

Marrie (1989) discovered that grade three early French immersion (EFI) students, with the exception of Foreignizing, used all the strategies that have previously been identified by older language learners. She also found that the effective EFI students used a greater proportion of achievement rather than reduction strategies, while the less effective EFI students used achievement strategies to approximately the same degree as reduction strategies.

Studies in young adolescents' L2 strategy use in the core French Program have so far not been conducted. Hence, we recognize the need for the proposed study to add our findings to the ongoing research and study in the area of L2 strategy use by high school students, rather than adult L2 learners.

CHAPTER THREE

PROCEDURE FOR THE STUDY

This chapter includes a discussion of the sample, the instrument, and procedures for the collection and analysis of data. The questions being investigated and some limitations of the study will also be presented.

The Sample

The Second Language Setting

The sample for this study was part of a core French population that had received formal instruction in French since the beginning of grade four. To the end of the present school year, students in grade seven would have been exposed to French for approximately 379 hours, those in grade nine, 544 hours and those in grade eleven, 725 hours. (These numbers are based on French being taught for 160 minutes a week for 34 weeks a year.) At the time of this study, French was taught for four forty minute periods per week in grades seven and nine; grade elevens received five forty minute periods of instructional time per week. While the communicative approach was emphasized in these three grades, the subjects had no exposure to strategy instruction before the study.

The teachers involved have all specialized in the teaching of French as a second language. Their methods of teaching reflected the current emphasis of using the language for a communication purpose. All three teachers have a minimum of five years' experience in the teaching of French.

Sample Selection

Initially, French teachers in three separate schools from the Upper Trinity South School System were asked to identify a total of twenty-four most successful core French

students in grades seven, nine and eleven, as potential participants for this study. Eight students were selected from each grade as being most successful by the current French teacher in each school. Selection criteria were:

(a) the students' academic achievement record in French for the year, including both formative and summative testing of the four language skills. The data collection occurred in May, therefore, most of the evaluation information was available for the 1988-89 school year.

(b) a general observation by the teacher of the students' willingness to communicate in class, their interaction with others, and their attitude towards French.

A week prior to the collection of speech samples, the twenty-four subjects chosen by the classroom teachers met to discuss why they were selected. During the week, students were acclimatized to the interview format so that they would be at ease during the actual recordings. They were encouraged to communicate in whatever way they could in order to get their message across.

Subsequently, two judges, all involved in the field of second language teaching and learning listened to taped speech samples of each of the twenty-four subjects, in grades seven, nine, and eleven, further identifying the six most successful students in each of the three grades. The speech samples of the eight students in each grade were assessed for overall oral proficiency in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The samples were then rated according to the criteria contained in Newfoundland and Labrador's Manual for Oral Testing in French 3200 (1986), with each student given a numerical grade from 1* to 5*. The complete rating criteria are described in Appendix C. The judges' ratings were compared and, subsequently, the six most successful students were selected. Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 show the judges' individual ratings for each grade.

Table 3.1

Rank Order Ratings for Grade Seven Students from Highest to Lowest

Subject	Rating (Judge #2)	Rating (Judge #3)
4	$1^{+}/2^{-}$	$1^{+}/2^{-}$
3	$1^{+}/2^{-}$	1^{+}
8	1^{+}	1^{+}
5	1	1^{+}
2	1	1
6	1	1
*1	1^{-}	1^{-}
*7	1^{-}	1

*Since the speech samples from subjects 1 and 7 received the lowest ratings, they were excluded from the study.

Table 3.2

Rank Order Ratings for Grade Nine Students from Highest to Lowest

Subject	Rating (Judge #1)	Rating (Judge #2)
4	3⁻/3	3
7	3⁻	2⁺/2
1	2⁺	2⁺
6	2	2⁻/1⁺
2	2⁻	2
3	2⁻	1⁺/2⁻
*8	1⁺	1
*5	1⁻/1	1⁻/1

*Since the speech samples from subjects 8 and 5 received the lowest ratings they were excluded from the study.

Table 3.3

Rank Order Ratings for Grade Eleven Students from Highest to Lowest

Subject	Rating (Judge #1)	Rating (Judge #3)
6	5^{+}	5
5	5	3^{+}
3	$4^{+}/5^{-}$	4
7	$4/4^{+}$	$3^{+}/4^{-}$
2	$4/4^{+}$	3
4	4	4^{-}
*8	4^{-}	4^{-}
*1	$3^{+}/4^{-}$	3^{-}

*Since the speech samples from subjects 8 and 1 received the lowest ratings they were excluded from the study.

Procedure for the Collection and Analysis of Data

Data Collection Instrument

The speech samples obtained for analysis in this study were elicited by means of an interview format requiring at least ten minutes of speech. The elicitation task (Appendix D) required students to talk about a familiar topic, La Famille. The interview focused on three aspects of the family: (i) les personnes dans la famille, (ii) la maison, and (iii) les activités de la famille. The questions attempted to reflect the level of the grade being interviewed. While grade sevens can work only with le présent, grade elevens should be capable of handling le présent, le passé composé, le futur, l'imparfait and le conditionnel.

Two weeks before the final recording sessions, the instrument was tested in these grades at another school in the system, to verify its appropriateness. This pre-testing provided useful information for the final sample recordings, by drawing attention to the use of prompting by the interviewer. Before the final recording, interviewers were again reminded that the subject was to be given assistance only when s/he specifically asked for it.

Collection of Data

Several weeks before the actual recordings, a meeting with the interviewers was arranged to discuss the expectations of this study. At that time, Willems' (1987) communication strategies and research already done in this field were discussed. Each interviewer was given a copy of the instrument and further information concerning the interview procedure, the timeframe for data collection, and the time of day for recordings.

During the final recording sessions, the students were interviewed by their present French teacher. The samples were recorded on audio cassette for subsequent analysis.

All the data collection was done in one week during the morning sessions. Each subject was individually interviewed randomly in an area outside the classroom, for approximately ten minutes using the interview instrument, 'La Famille'.

Prior to the interview, each subject was reminded, in English, of the purpose of the recording and once again encouraged to try and answer the questions asked in whatever way s/he could. The interview began with simple warm-up questions, such as "Bonjour", "Ca va?", which were meant to put the subject at ease and give him confidence in his ability to comprehend and respond in French. Subsequently, the interviewer, making use of the instrument, continued ... "Aujourd'hui on va parler de ta famille." During the data collection process the interviewer did not prompt the student unless s/he asked directly for assistance.

Analysis of Data

The taped speech samples were analyzed for communication strategy use by utilizing an adaptation of Willems (1987) typology. (See Appendix B). The procedure followed to analyze the speech samples was:

(1) listening to each interview several times to determine strategy use

(2) making a transcript of all strategies used by each subject;

(3) constructing a profile of each student's strategy use.

Subsequently, the following information on communication strategy use was displayed in graph form. This information consisted of:

(1) the frequency of strategy use for each subject;

(2) the total number of strategies used by each student;

(3) the total number of strategies employed by subjects at each grade level;

(4) the proportion of strategies used as a percentage of total strategies for individual subjects;

(5) the proportion of strategies used as a percentage of total strategies for each grade level;

(6) a comparison of strategy use by subjects in grades seven, nine, and eleven.

Questions Investigated

This study attempted to answer two questions:

(1) At each level, what is the frequency of communication strategies used by the most successful L2 learners?

(2) Is the overall pattern of communication strategy use by successful adolescent L2 learners related to their linguistic competence? If so, how?

Limitations of the Study

Like many studies of human behaviour, the present one had certain temporal, methodological and structural limitations. In order to provide appropriate interpretation of our results, we must be aware of these confines.

An awareness of the following limitations is essential for a proper interpretation of the findings:

(1) The subjects for the present study were chosen from grades seven, nine and eleven, and conclusions from the observations cannot be generalized to any other grade levels.

(2) The present researcher developed this elicitation task and similar results may not be realized by a different instrument.

(3) Separate French teachers conducted interviews at each grade level and results may have been different had speech samples been collected by one individual.

(4) The present study considers only verbal communication strategies, and cannot be generalized to include all possible communication strategies, such as paralinguistic ones.

(5) The number of subjects also limits generalizability of results.

(6) Since the context does not always clearly identify the intent of the strategy use, a different rater might have classified certain strategies differently.

We will now report, in the following chapter, the analysis of the data in graphic form, along with a description of individual and class strategy use.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the data gathered for this study. The chapter is divided into two parts. Part One deals with a description of individual speech samples, while Part Two focuses on a description of strategies used by students in the three grades from which the results were compiled.

Individual Speech Samples

This section presents our analysis of the speech samples from all the subjects in this study. The samples are presented by grades, beginning with grade seven, followed by grade nine and grade eleven respectively. Each speech sample will be discussed in terms of the total number of strategies used by each subject, the frequency of strategies used and the proportion of each strategy used as a percentage of the total number used by individual students. This information will be shown graphically by means of a bar and pie graph following the description of each subject's strategy use. Some examples of strategies are also included in the description. Other information on individual subjects, pertinent to the results of this study, will also be presented.

Grade Seven Speech Samples

Below is a detailed description of communication strategy use contained in the individual grade seven speech samples. Speech samples are discussed in the order in which they appear in Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

Speech Sample: Subject Four

Subject four used a total of fifteen communication strategies, all of which may be categorized as Achievement. (See Figure 4.1)

This subject employed two interlingual strategies (Borrowing and Literal Translation), two intralingual strategies (Word Coinage and Approximation), and one retrieval strategy (Appeal for Assistance). Borrowing was chosen six times by this subject in communicating. Examples include "manager des maisons", for her mother's occupation; "mon père's girlfriend", where she could not retrieve "la bonne amie" or "la blonde". This strategy could be termed Literal Translation as well, with the use of the 's instead of "la blonde de mon père". Literal Translation was used three times. When asked: "Quel âge a ton frère?" she replied: "Il est quatre ans." When asked for a further description of her brother she said: "Il a blonds cheveux." In answer to the question: "Où est-ce que ta mère habite?" she answered: "Elle est habite ..." Word Coinage was a strategy this subject used four times in her sample. When asked: "Où est-ce que ton père travaille?" she responded: "Il travaille dans le poisson de plant," for "fish plant". She later used: "l'auto de poisson" for "fish truck", and "table de pool" was also coined for "un billard". Approximation and Appeals for Assistance were used once each.

As Figure 4.2 shows, of the strategies employed, Borrowing and Literal Translation, interlingual strategies, were used 60 percent of the time. The intralingual strategies, Word Coinage and Approximation were used a total of 34 percent, with Appeals for Assistance being used 7 percent.

This student used the most strategies of all the grade seven subjects.

Figure 4.1

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 4, Grade 7

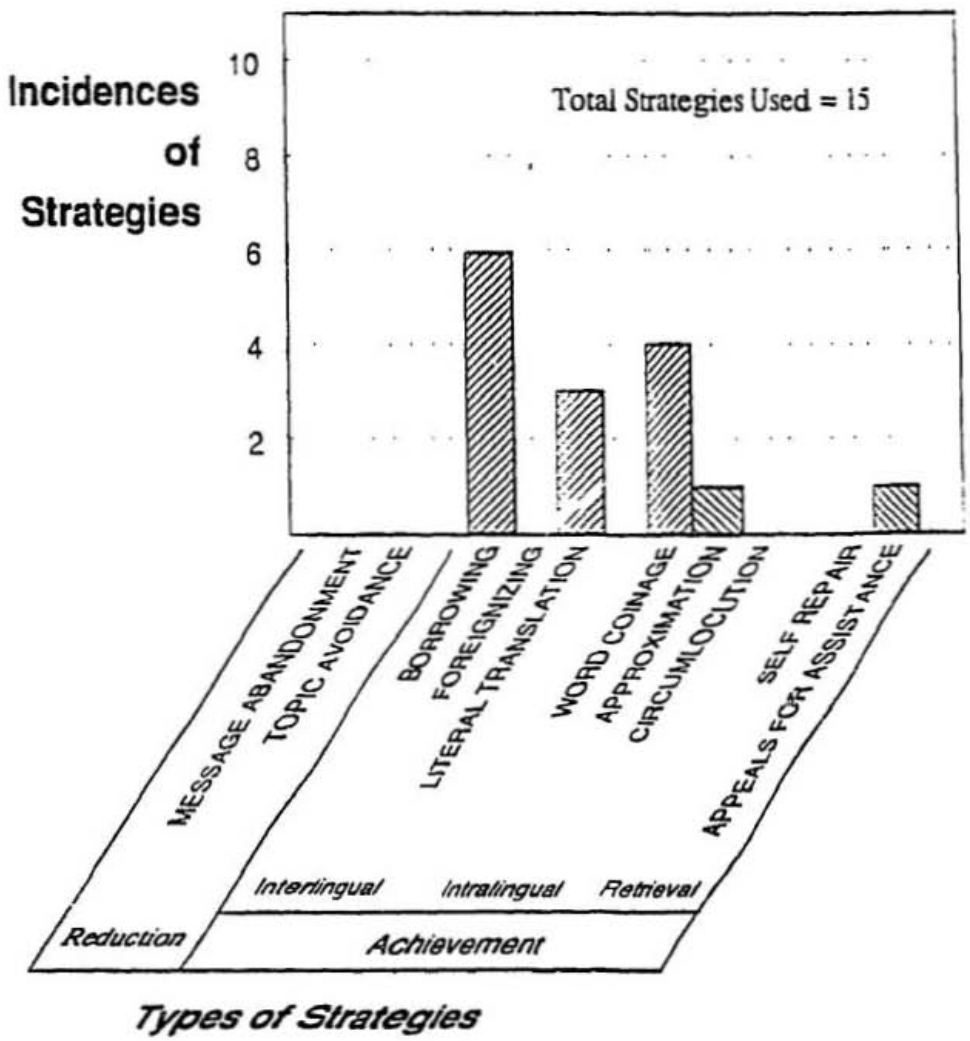
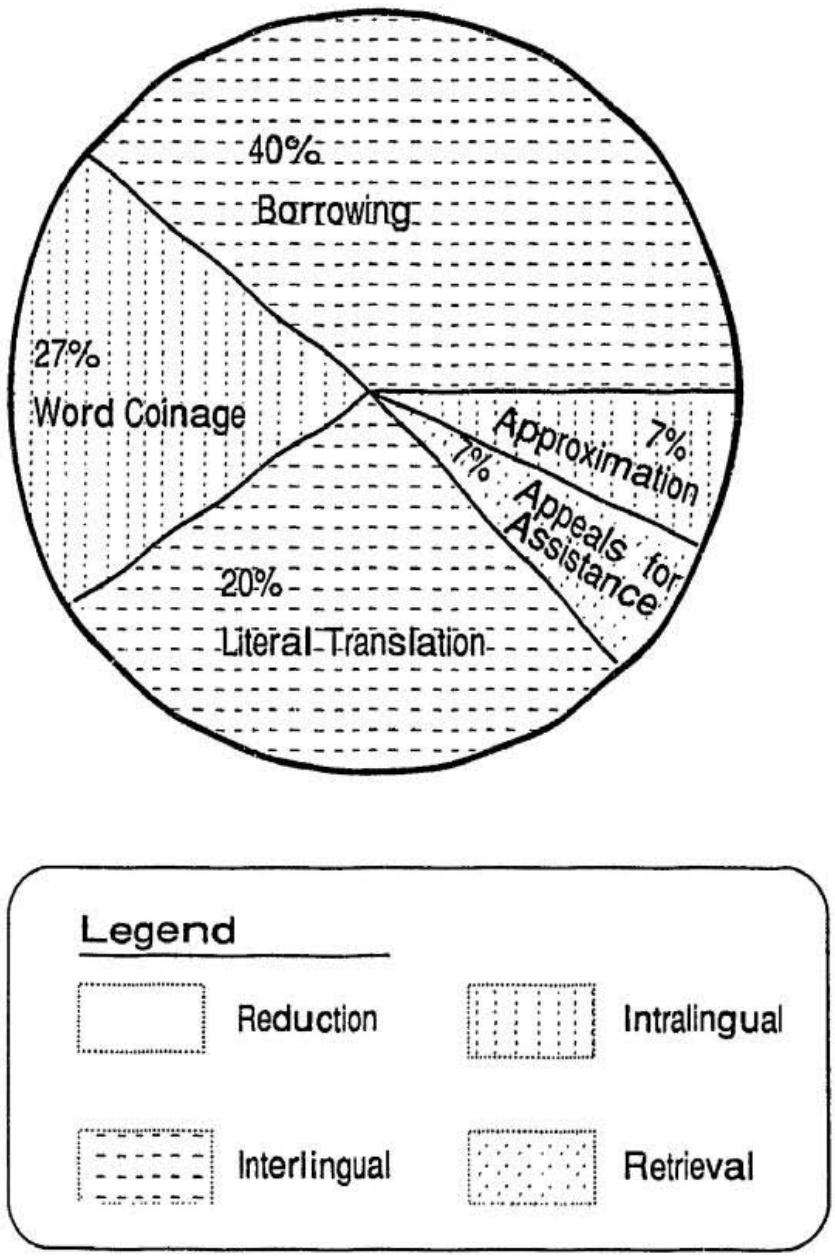


Figure 4.2

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 4, Grade 7 as a Percentage of the Total



Speech Sample: Subject Three

As Figure 4.3 shows, Subject Three used a total of six strategies. The subject employed Topic Avoidance, a reduction strategy type, on one occasion, when he refused to answer a question by saying: "Je ne sais pas." From the achievement strategy category he used two interlingual strategy types, namely Borrowing when he noted, with reference to his father, "Il travaille à Bellevue today" and Literal Translation when he described his brother as having "les bleus yeux." He used Self-Repair, a retrieval strategy type in the answer: "Elle a les cheveux jaunes ... eh ... blonds." Approximation, an intralingual strategy type, was also used twice by this subject. He tried to describe what his mother did at home by: "Elle a travaille dans le lit" for "making the bed".

Topic Avoidance, Borrowing, Literal Translation, and Self-Repair each represented 17 percent of the total number of strategies used, while Approximation was used 33 percent. (See Figure 4.4)

This student used the least number of strategies of all grade seven students. The strategy used most frequently was Approximation, an intralingual strategy.

Speech Sample: Subject Eight

Subject Eight used a total of thirteen strategies in her interview, none of which were Retrieval or Interlingual strategies.

This subject used one type of reduction strategy, namely Topic Avoidance which was used five times. "Je ne sais pas" was a common response when she felt she could not respond to the questions asked.

As Figure 4.5 shows, most of the strategies used by this subject were intralingual. She used Word Coinage once, Approximation six times and Circumlocution once.

Figure 4.3

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 3, Grade 7

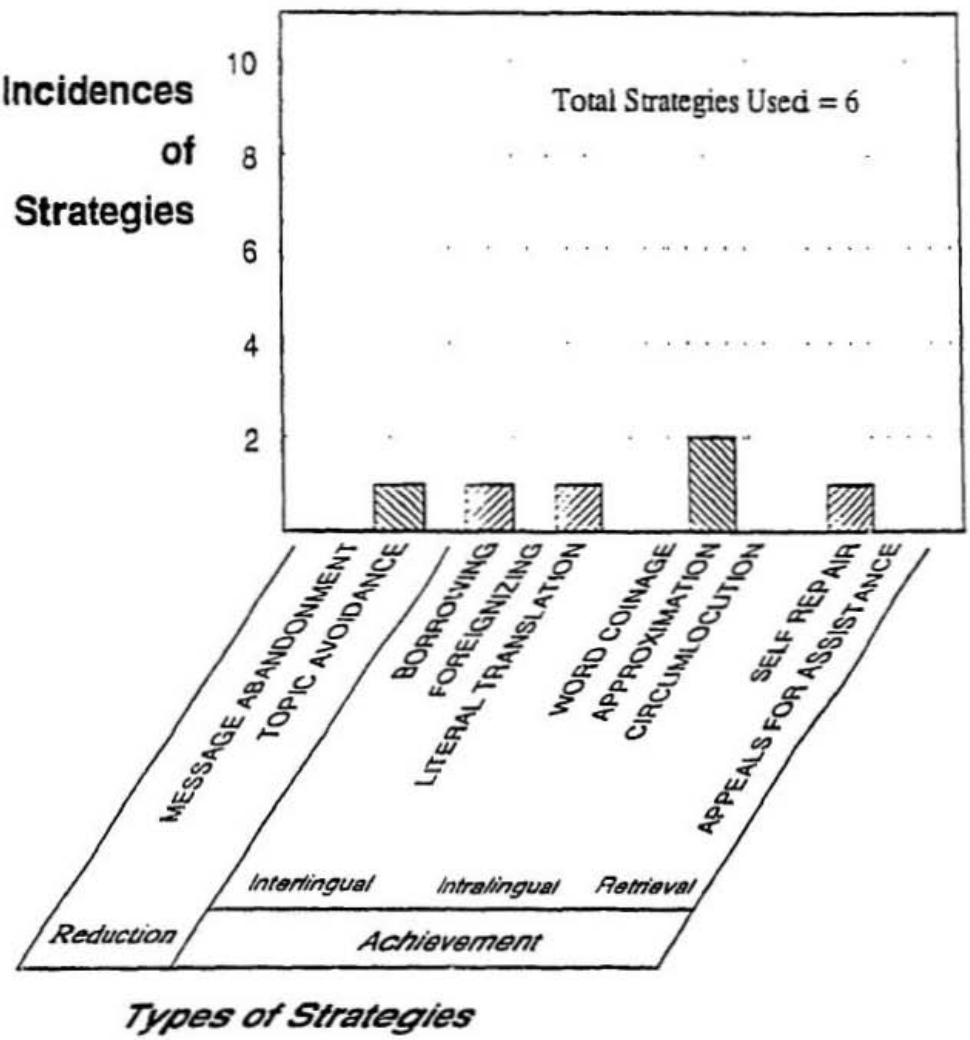


Figure 4.4

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 3, Grade 7 as a Percentage of the Total

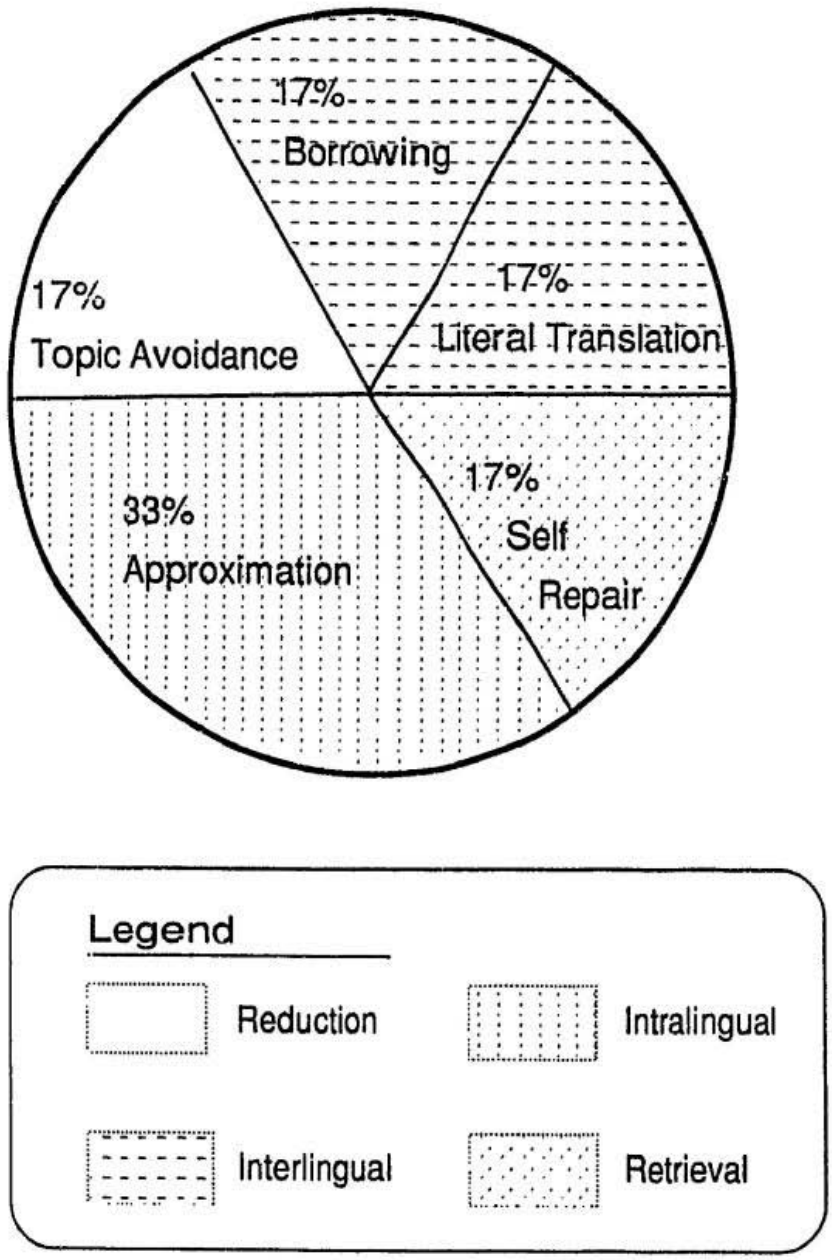
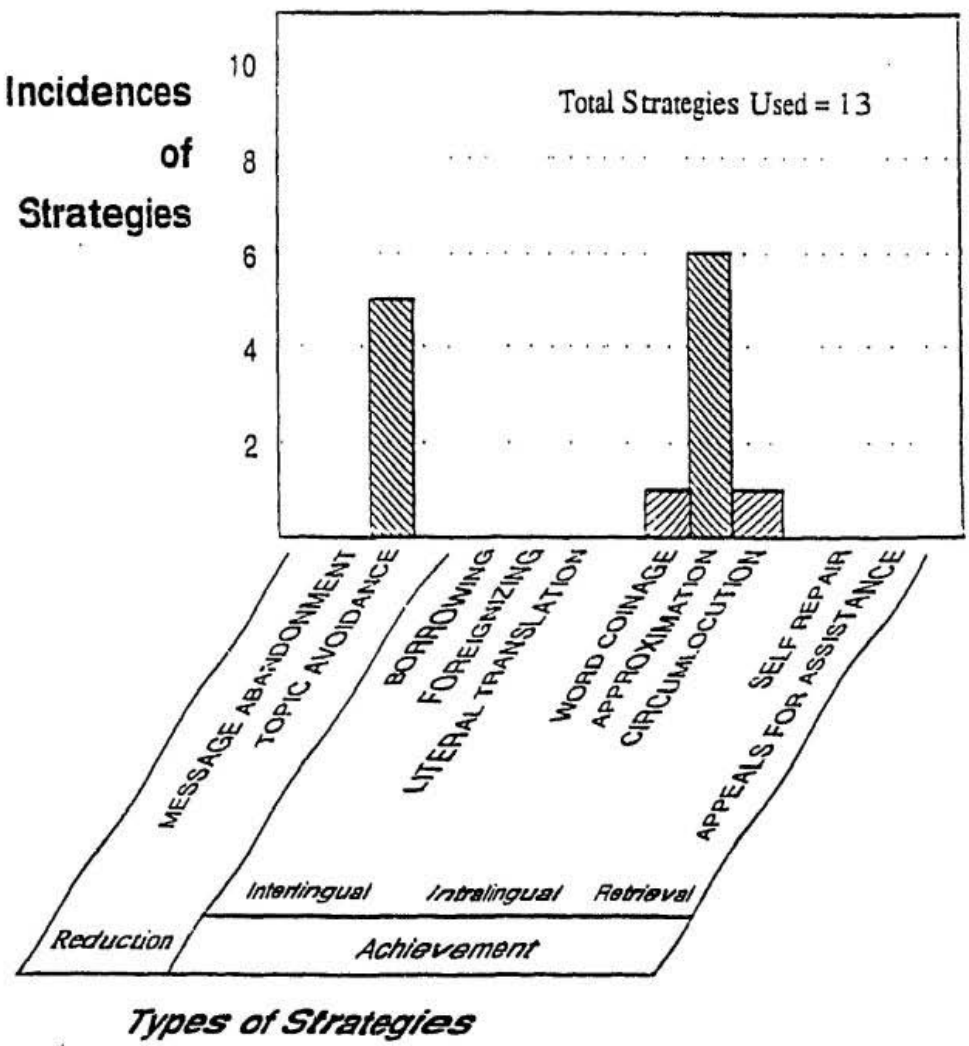


Figure 4.5

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 8, Grade 7



This student used the reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance 38 percent of the total strategies used; the other 62 percent were intralingual strategies. (See Figure 4.6)

The use of intralingual strategies at the grade seven level is unusual when compared with other samples of the three grades. It should be noted here that subject eight was a student with few inhibitions; she was very vocal and an obvious risk taker. Her personality could be a factor in her willingness to take risks in using so many of the Intralingual strategies.

Speech Sample: Subject Five

Subject Five used communication strategies from each category, for a total of seven.

The reduction strategy type, Topic Avoidance (Je ne sais pas") was used twice. She used only one interlingual strategy type, namely, Borrowing; when asked what she did on Sunday, she replied: "Je vais à la church". Subject Five's speech sample also contained two examples of the intralingual strategy of Approximation, as illustrated by "Il a petite." when referring to her younger brother. This subject also demonstrated use of both retrieval strategy types. When asked about her father's work, she replied: "Il travaille dans un ... eh ... il travaille dans une maison", a Self-Repair strategy. Appeal for Assistance was shown when she was trying to describe her family's Sunday activities, by asking: "What's ride in French?" (See Figure 4.7)

Subject five's communication strategy use, as depicted in Figure 4.8, shows the reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance being used 28.5 percent of the total. Borrowing, an interlingual strategy, was used 14 percent; Approximation, an intralingual strategy, 28.5 percent, and the retrieval strategies of Self-Repair and Appeals for Assistance each used 14 percent.

Figure 4.6

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 8, Grade 7 as a Percentage of Total

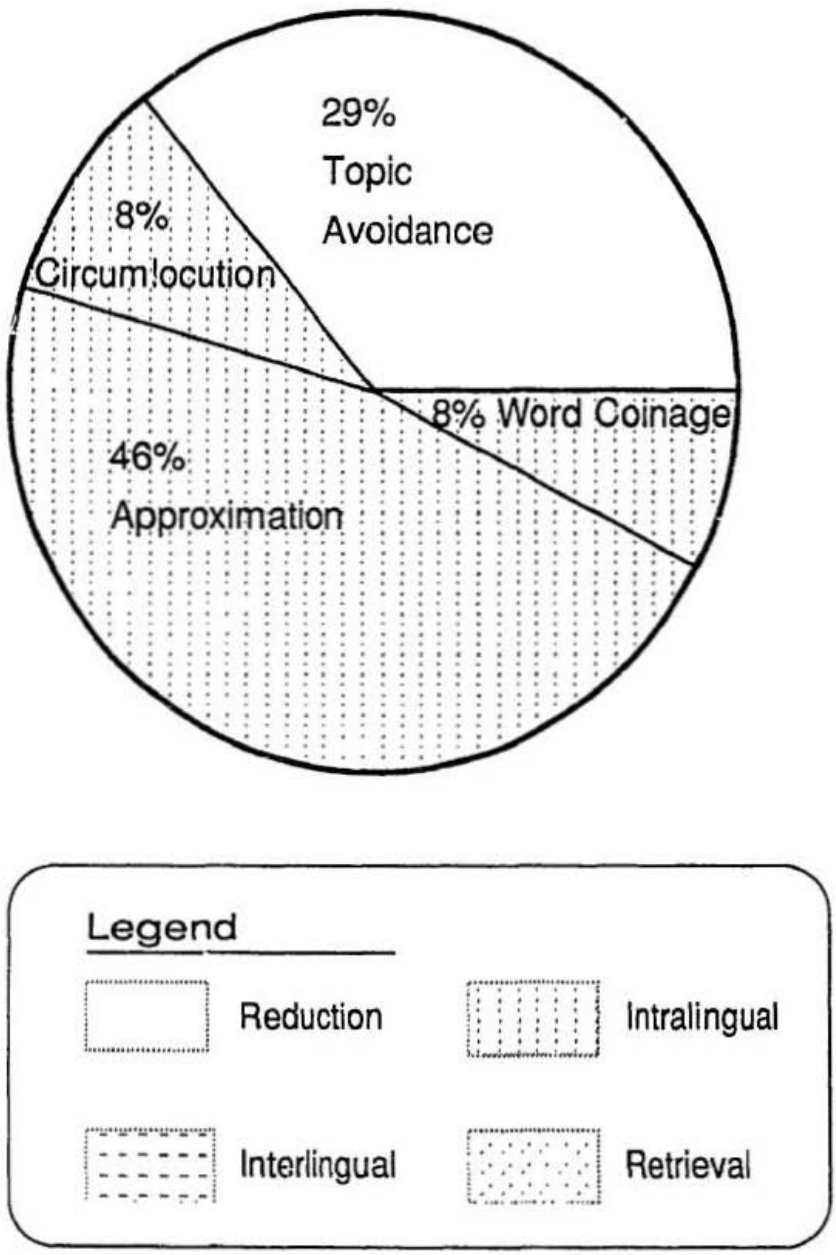
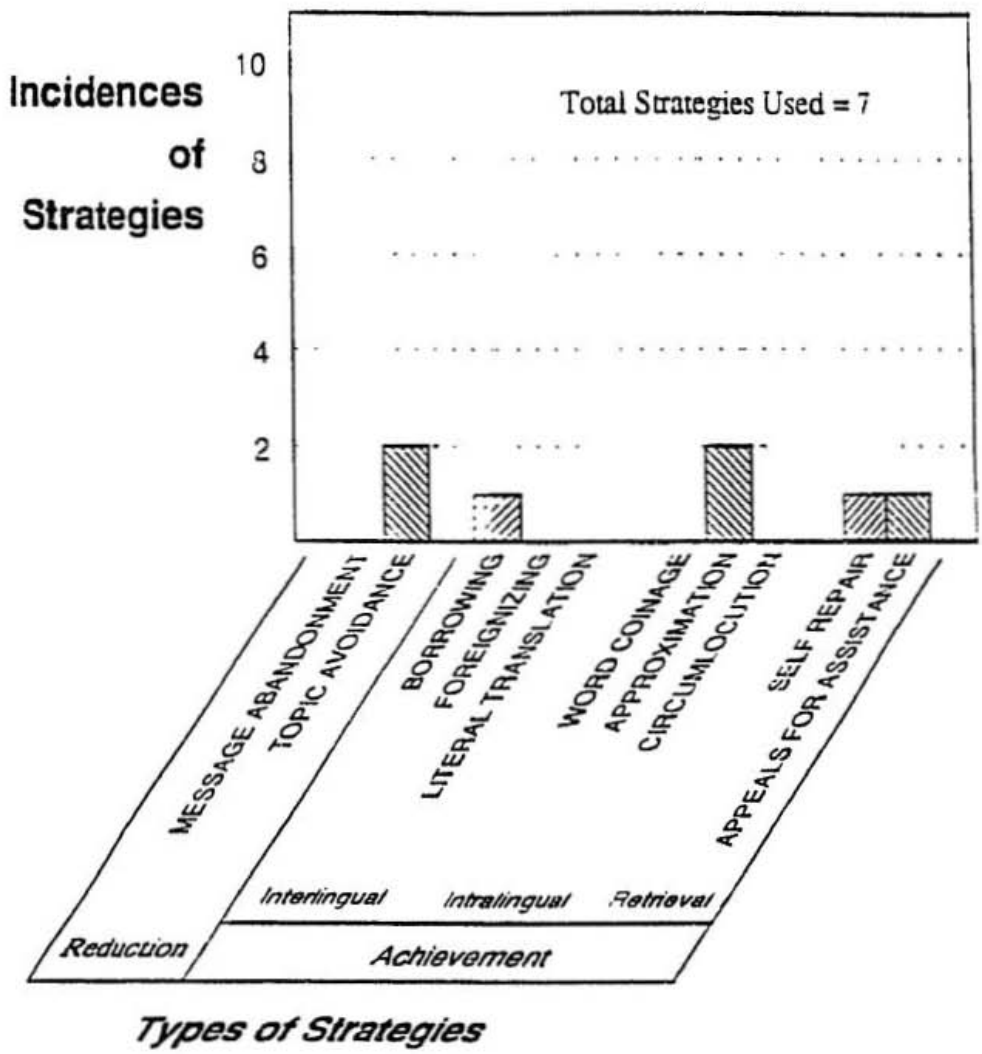


Figure 4.7

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 5, Grade 7



Speech Sample: Subject Two

Subject Two used strategies from all four types for a total of fourteen.

The reduction strategy, Topic Avoidance, was used three times. When the student did not feel she could answer the question posed, she replied: "Je ne sais pas". The subject also employed two interlingual strategy types on one occasion - Borrowing, and Foreignizing. The latter occurred when describing her bedroom, where she used: "Un bureàu" for "dresser". (Because of the emphasis on the last syllable of bureàu, this is illustrative of a Foreignizing strategy.) Five examples of Literal Translation were used by this subject. A description of her brother included: "Il a bruns cheveux", "Il a bruns yeux", "Il est douze ans". When asked: "Est-ce que tu regardes les films?" she replied: "Un petit". Of the retrieval strategy type this subject used two Self-Repairs in her interview. When asked: "Où est-ce que tu habites?" she replied: "Tu habites ... j'habite à Blaketown". When talking about rooms in her house, she said: "C'est une cousine ... non, une cuisine". She also used Appeal for Assistance once. Figure 4.9 depicts this information.

As seen in Figure 4.10, this subject used reduction strategies in the form of Topic Avoidance 21 percent of the total number of strategies used. The interlingual types of Borrowing, Foreignizing, and Literal Translation were employed 50 percent, while the intralingual strategy of Approximation was used 7 percent. The Retrieval strategies of Self-Repair and Appeals for Assistance were used 14 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Subject two used the interlingual strategy of Literal Translation most frequently.

Figure 4.8

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 5, Grade 7 as a Percentage of the Total

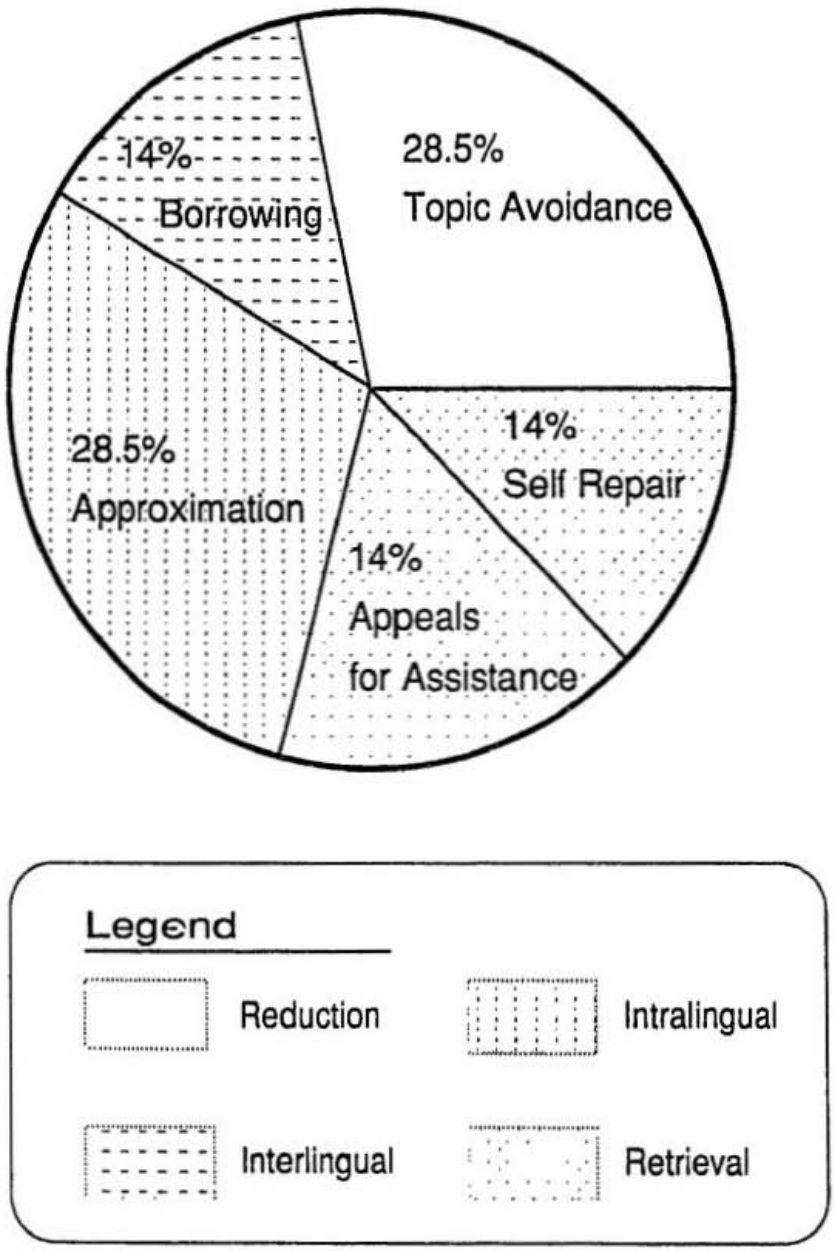


Figure 4.9

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 2, Grade 7

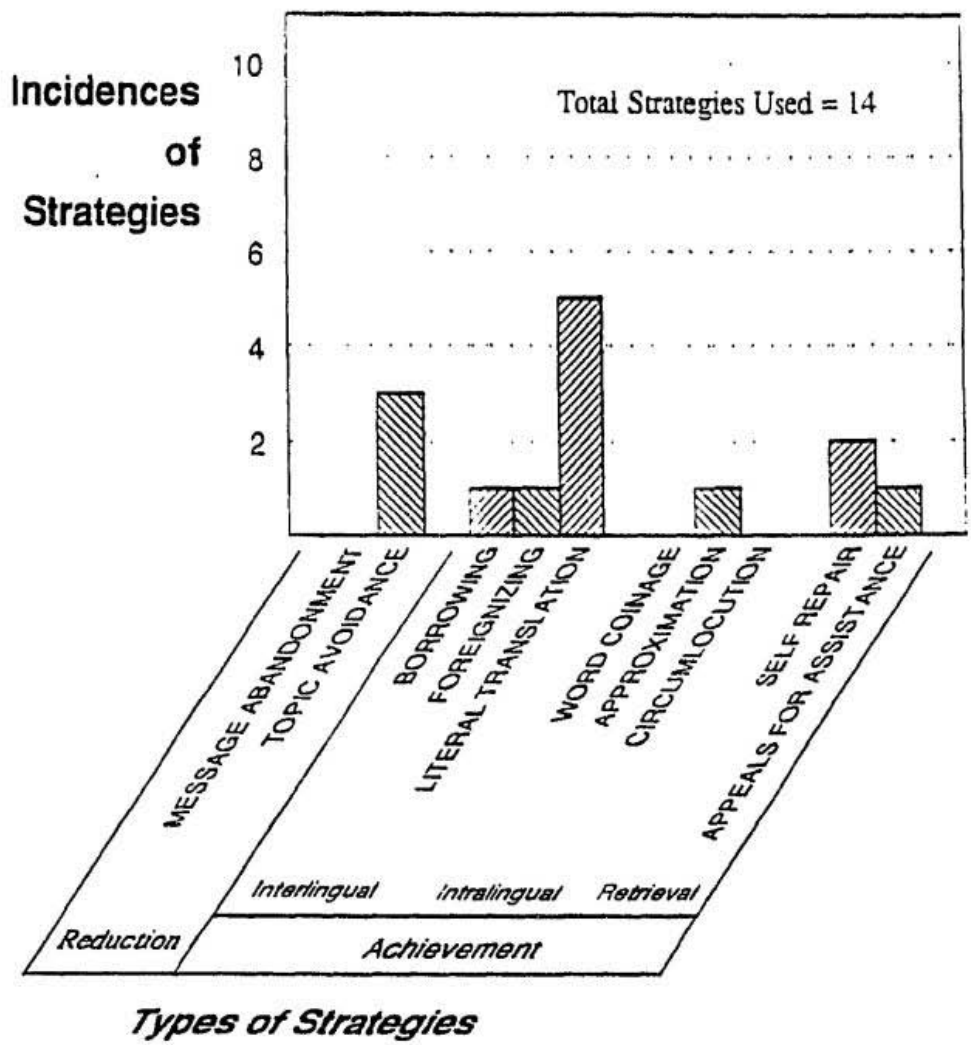
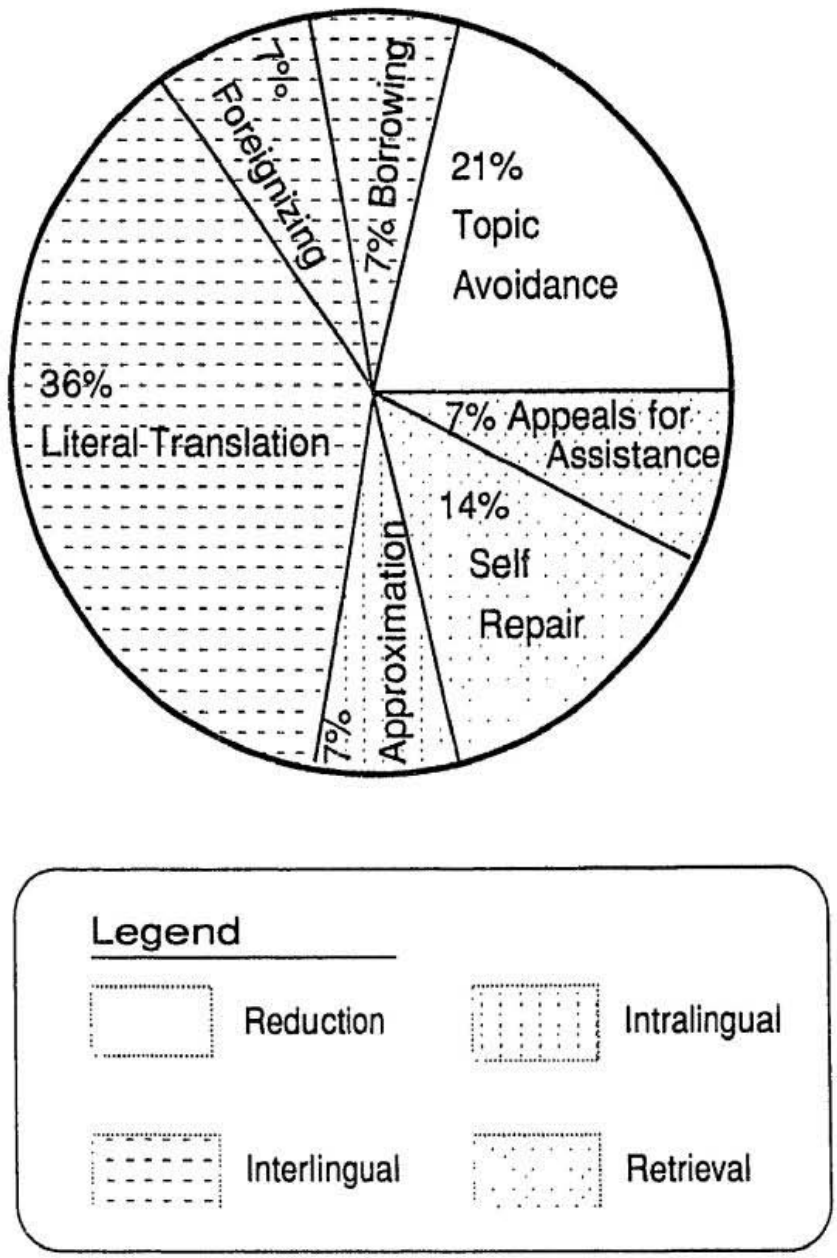


Figure 4.10

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 2, Grade 7 as a Percentage of Total



Speech Sample: Subject Six

Subject Six used four different strategy types, for a total of fourteen.

This subject employed the reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance on four occasions. The speech samples also contained six occurrences of interlingual strategy types. Three Borrowing strategies were evidenced in the following examples: "a bit grande", when talking about her house; when trying to describe her mother's work, she replied: "elle prints". Three examples of Literal Translation were used when describing members of her family: "bruns cheveux", "bruns yeux", "les blonds cheveux". Two examples of the intralingual strategy, Approximation, were noted. While describing her house, she used: "une récréation", for "salle de récréation", and "nous habite Dildo" for "Nous habitons à Dildo". The retrieval strategy type of Appeals for Assistance was noted twice. When asked: "Qu'est-ce que ta mère fait?" she hesitated and asked: "Does that mean 'What does she work at'?" When asked again: "Où ... c'est quoi?" (See Figure 4.11)

As seen in Figure 4.12, the reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance was used twenty-nine percent of the time by subject six. The interlingual strategies of Borrowing and Literal Translation were each used twenty-one percent, while the intralingual strategy of Approximation was used fourteen percent of the total number. The occurrences of the retrieval strategy, Appeals for Assistance, represented fourteen percent of the total number of strategies used by Subject Six.

Figure 4.11

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 6, Grade 7

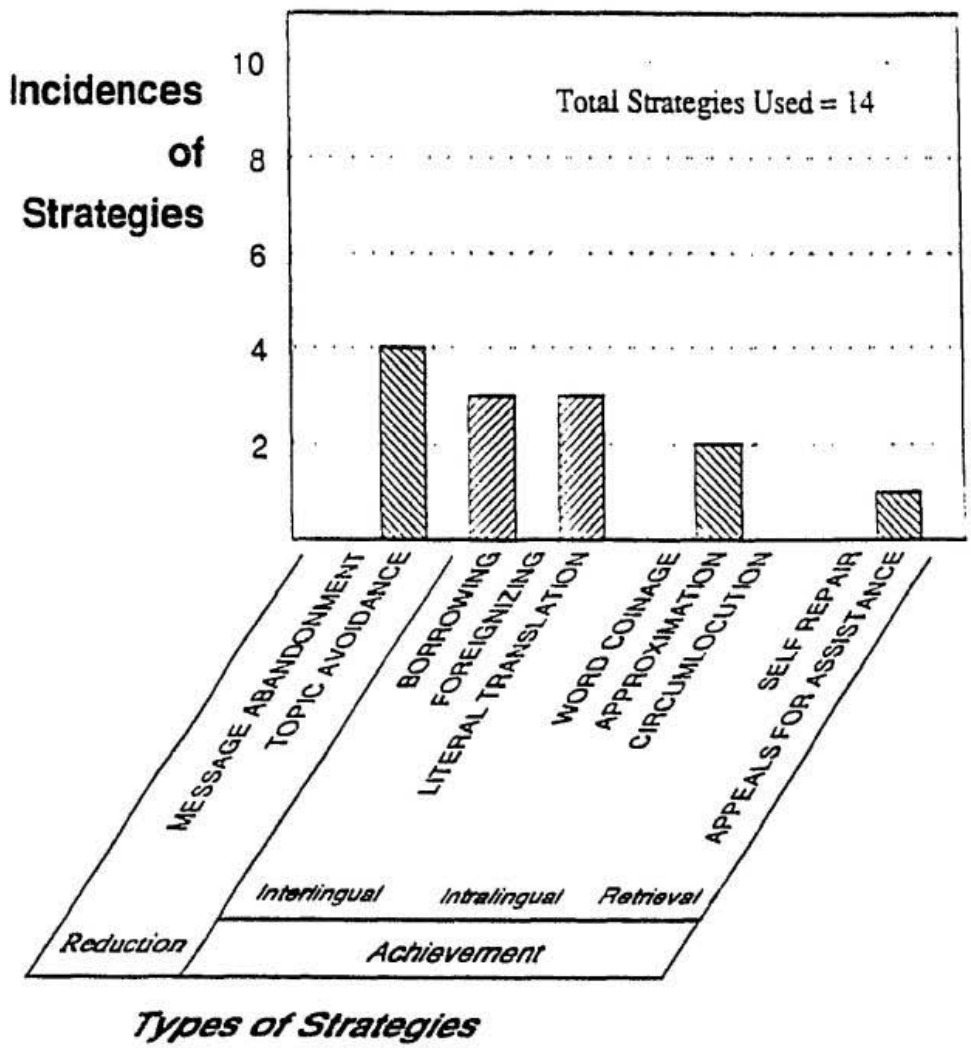
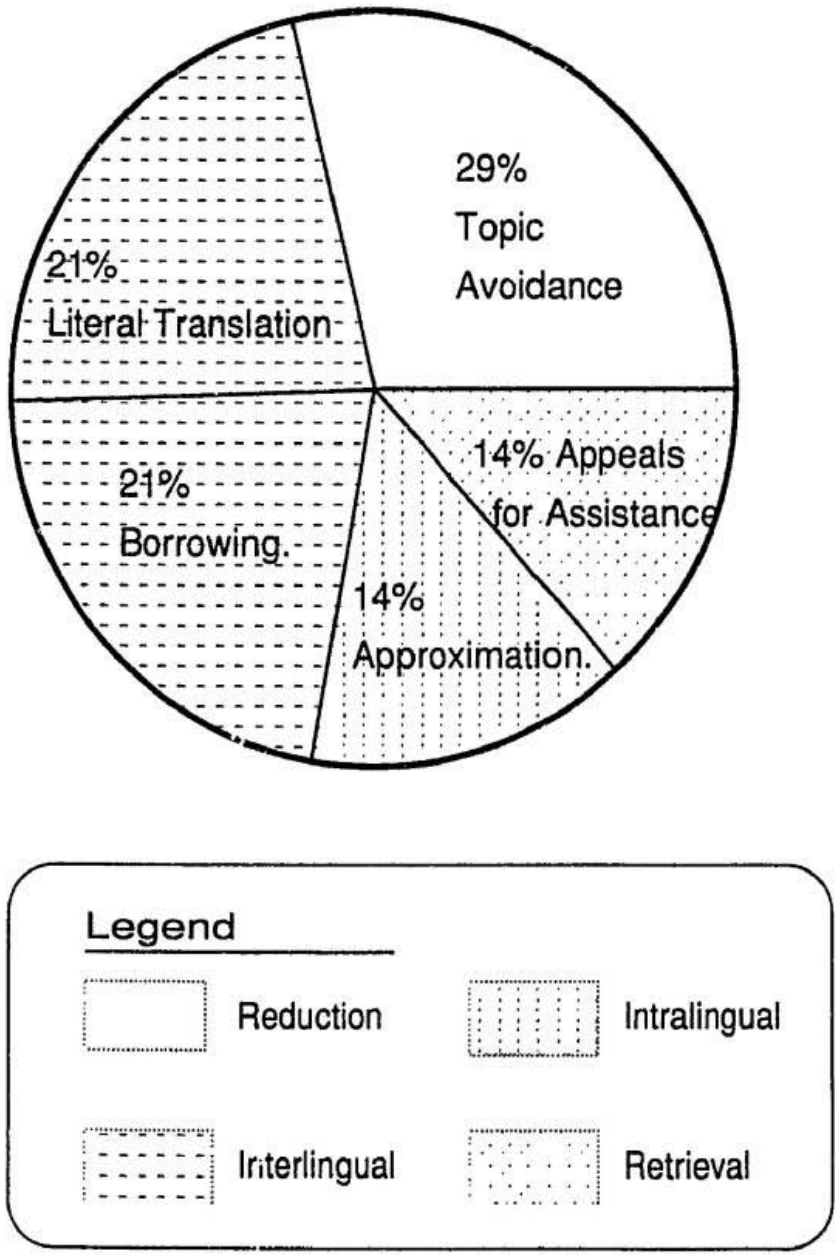


Figure 4.12

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 6, Grade 7 as a Percentage of the Total



Grade Nine Speech Samples

Below is a detailed description of individual grade nine speech samples. These subjects are presented from highest to lowest by their rank order as determined by the criteria found in the Manual for Oral Testing in French 3200 (1986). (See Appendix C for further description.)

Speech Sample: Subject Four

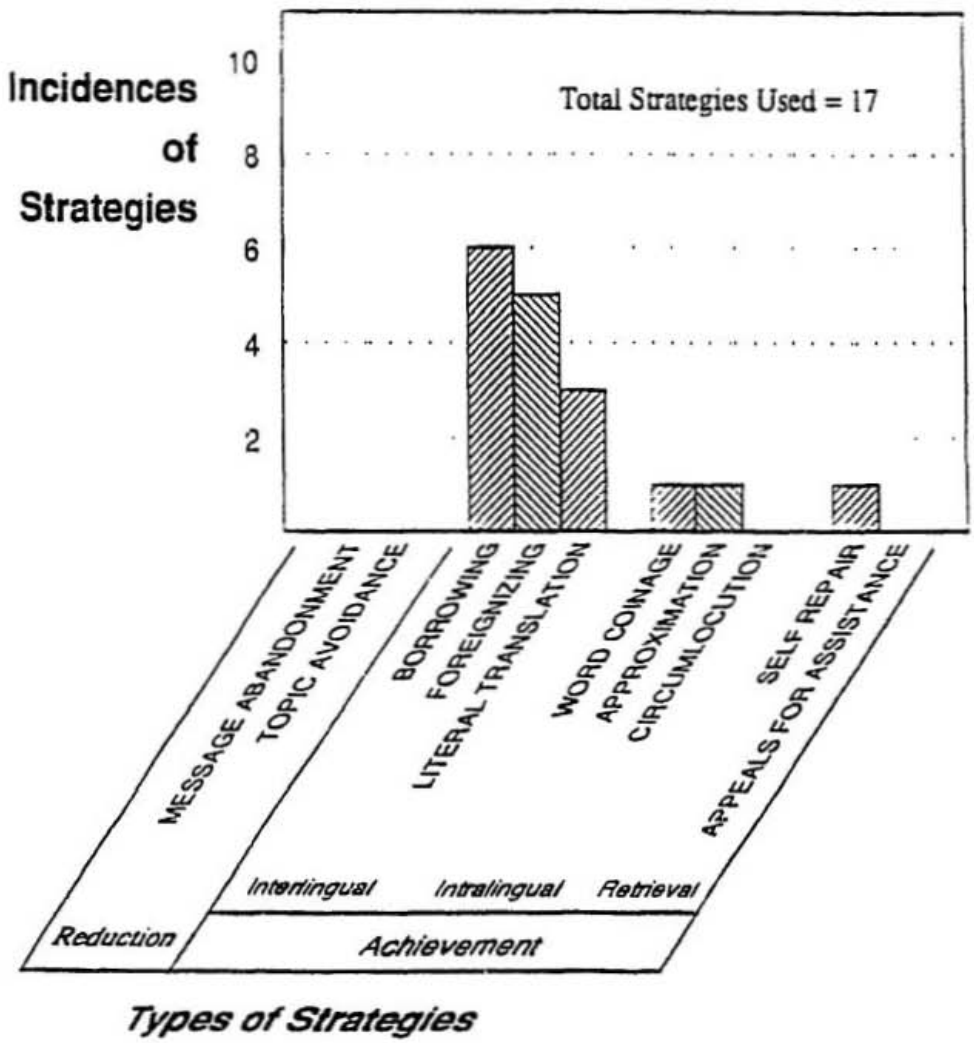
Subject Four, used a total of seventeen strategies in his interview, none of which were of the reduction strategy type.

As indicated in Figure 4.13 this subject utilized six types of achievement strategies. Of the seventeen strategies identified in the speech sample, fourteen were classified as interlingual. The subject employed the Borrowing strategy six times, as, for example, when asked: "Où est-ce que tu habites?" he replied: "J'habite dans la rue Main". When talking about his sister, he said: "Elle est un nurse". Foreignizing was used on five occasions. When conversing about his sister, he responded: "Elle aide les patients". His description of his house included "un basement". He described his bedroom as having "un computér" along with "le printér". Three examples of Literal Translation were also noted: "Michelle est dans St. John's", his description of the family car included "un FM radio" and "une grise voiture". The speech sample contained only two occurrences of intralingual strategy types, one each of Word Coinage and Approximation. While describing his house, an example of the retrieval strategy type, Self-Repair, was noted. When talking about he rooms in his house, he said: "Il y a un dining-room ... eh ... eh, non, une salle de manger".

Eighty-two percent of the strategies used by this subject were of the interlingual type: Borrowing (35%), Foreignizing (29%), and Literal Translation (18%). The intralingual

Figure 4.13

Communication Strategies used by Subject 4, Grade 9



strategies of Word Coinage and Approximation were each used 6%. The Retrieval strategy of Self-Repair was also used 6%. (See Figure 4.14)

This subject used interlingual strategies most frequently.

Speech Sample: Subject Seven

Subject Seven used a total of seventeen strategies. As shown in Figure 4.15, she used strategy types from all four categories, with interlingual ones being used the most frequently.

The speech sample included examples of both types of reduction strategies. Message Abandonment was used once by this subject; when talking about her sister, she was asked: "Est-ce qu'elle est une peste?" and replied: "Oui, elle est très ...!!" leaving the response unfinished. She also employed Topic Avoidance twice, using: "Je ne sais pas", "I don't know" in response to two questions. The interlingual strategy of Borrowing was used three times: "tidy ma maison", "rouge peppers", and "elle a le make-up". The subject used Foreignizing on two occasions. When talking about what she did in her leisure time, she responded: "Je practise le piano." and when describing what ingredients go in a pizza, she used: "mushroòms". This subject employed the Literal Translation strategy five times; for example, when describing her sisters and brothers, she said: "Une est cinq ans", "l'autre est un an", "il a longs bruns cheveux", and when talking about the family's car, she noted" "elle est maman's voiture". Subject seven used only one intralingual strategy, Approximation. When trying to explain how her father delivered milk, she used: "il fait du lait". (The writer considered this an Approximation, rather than a Literal Translation strategy, because her father did not work in a processing plant, but rather delivered milk to grocery stores.) This subject also used the retrieval strategy type,

Figure 4.14

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 4, Grade 9 as a Percentage of the Total

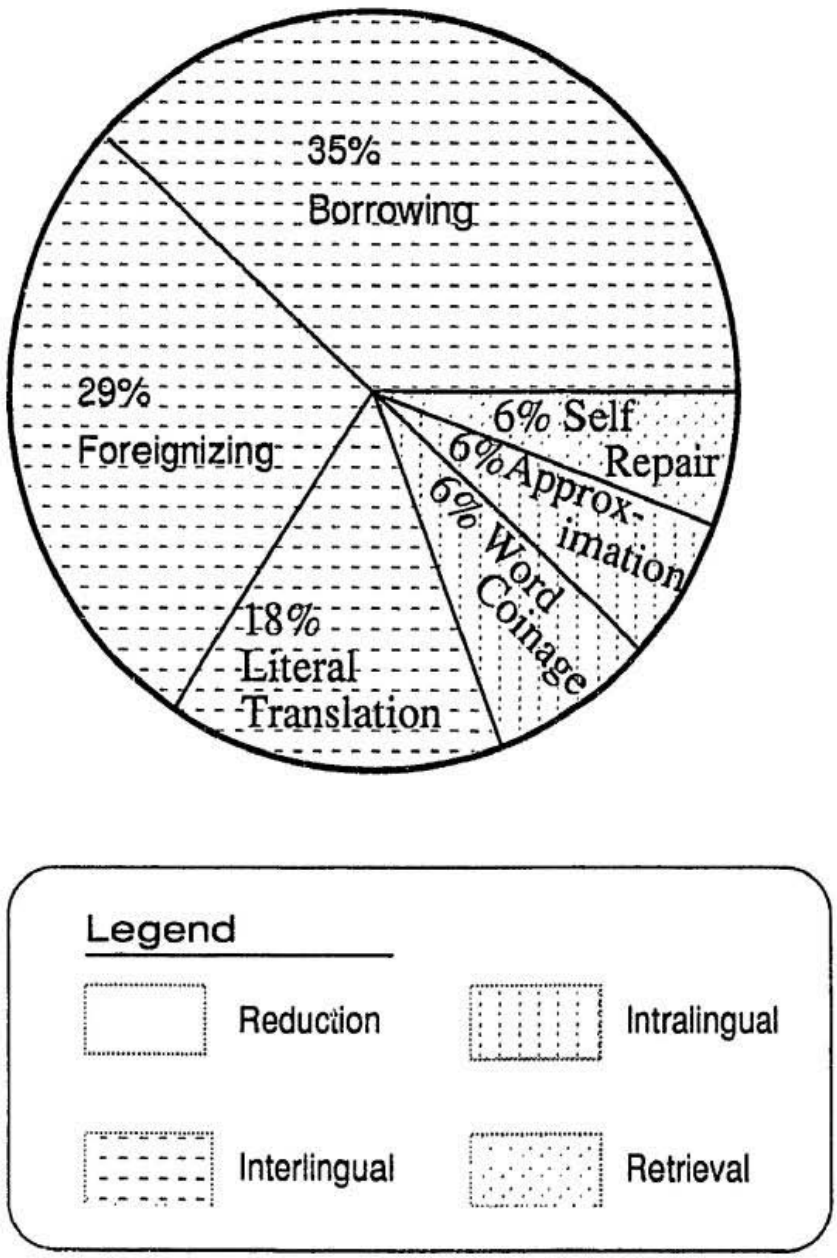
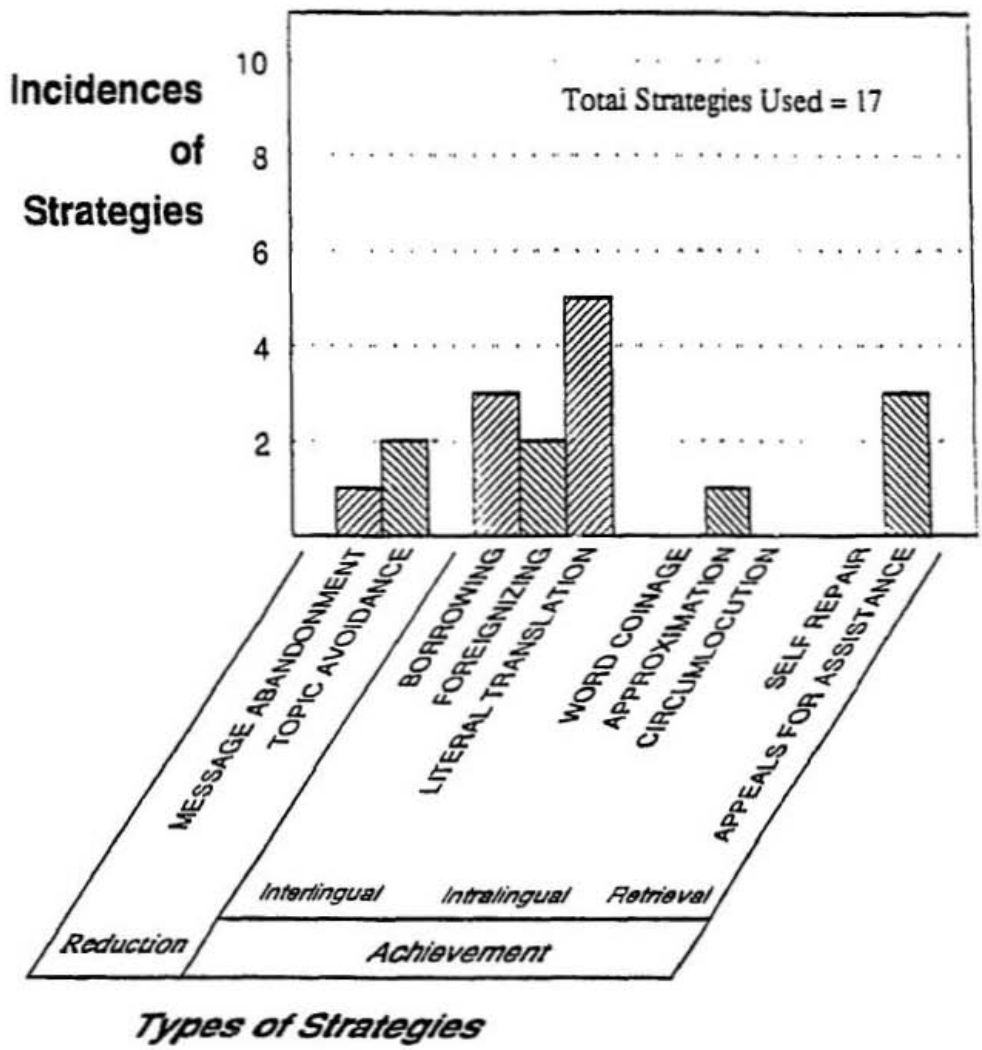


Figure 4.15

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 7, Grade 9



Appeals for Assistance, three times. When trying to describe her bedroom, she asked: "How do you say 'messy' in French?" Another time she asked: "Automatic, ... c'est quoi?"

Reduction strategies accounted for eighteen percent of the total number of strategies used by this subject. Fifty-eight percent of the strategies used were of the interlingual type, while six percent were intralingual. The other seventeen percent were Retrieval strategies. (See Figure 4.16)

This subject used the interlingual strategy Literal Translation most frequently.

Speech Sample: Subject One

Subject One used strategies from all four strategy categories, for a total of nineteen strategy occurrences. This was the greatest number of strategies used by an individual in grade nine. (See Figure 4.17)

The speech sample contained only one occurrence of a reduction strategy type, namely, Topic Avoidance. When asked: "Qu'est-ce que tu préfères, la télé ou la radio?" she responded: "Je ne sais pas". She used two of the interlingual strategy types - Borrowing and Foreignizing - a total of nine times. Examples of the Borrowing strategy were: when talking about her sister, she stated: "Elle a de bons marks"; she said her father "travaille dans un nursery" and "il a des customers". Foreignizing, which was employed three times, was evident in the description of her bedroom: "Elle est bleue avec des closèts", and in the description of her father's job: "Il ordèr ses employés". From the intralingual strategy types, she used Word Coinage once (when talking about her travels to Europe: "J'ai visité le Suisserland") and Approximation three times. (For example, she described her father's work by saying: "Il donne l'eau à les fleurs".) Subject One used

Figure 4.16

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 7, Grade 9 as a Percentage of the Total

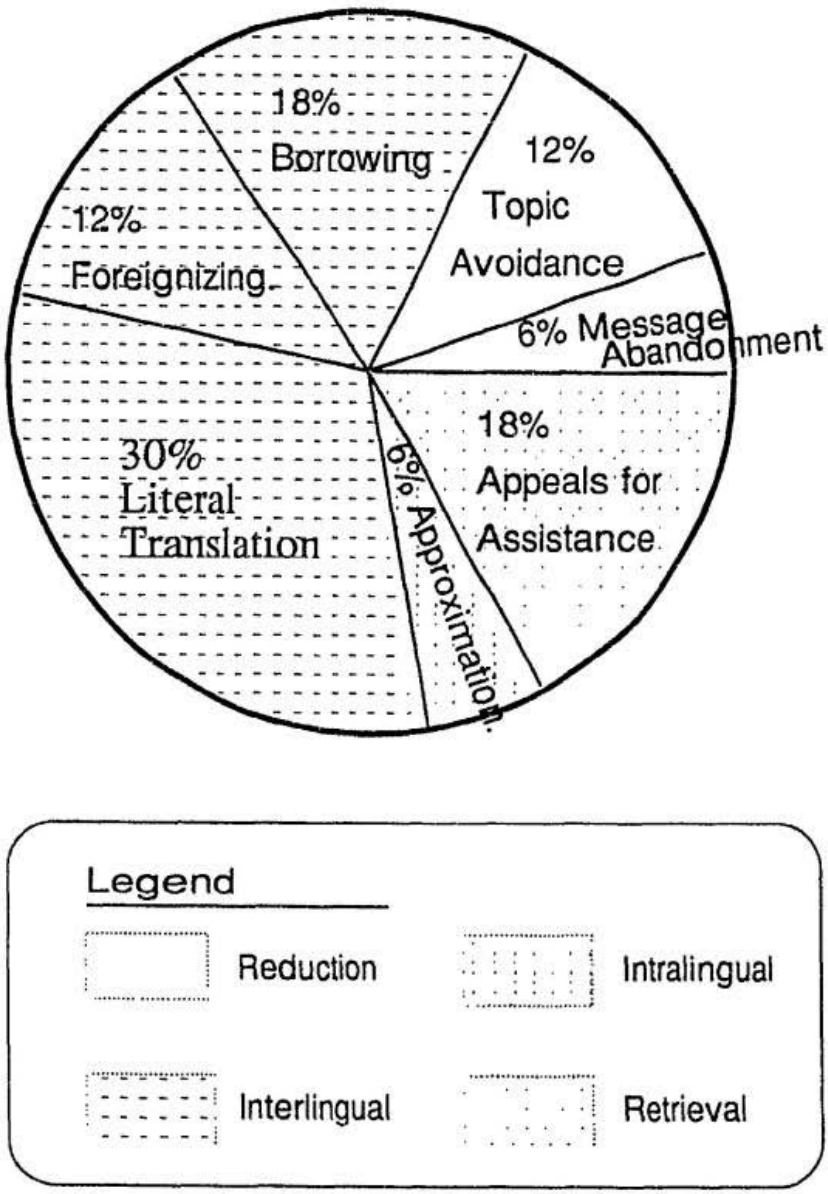
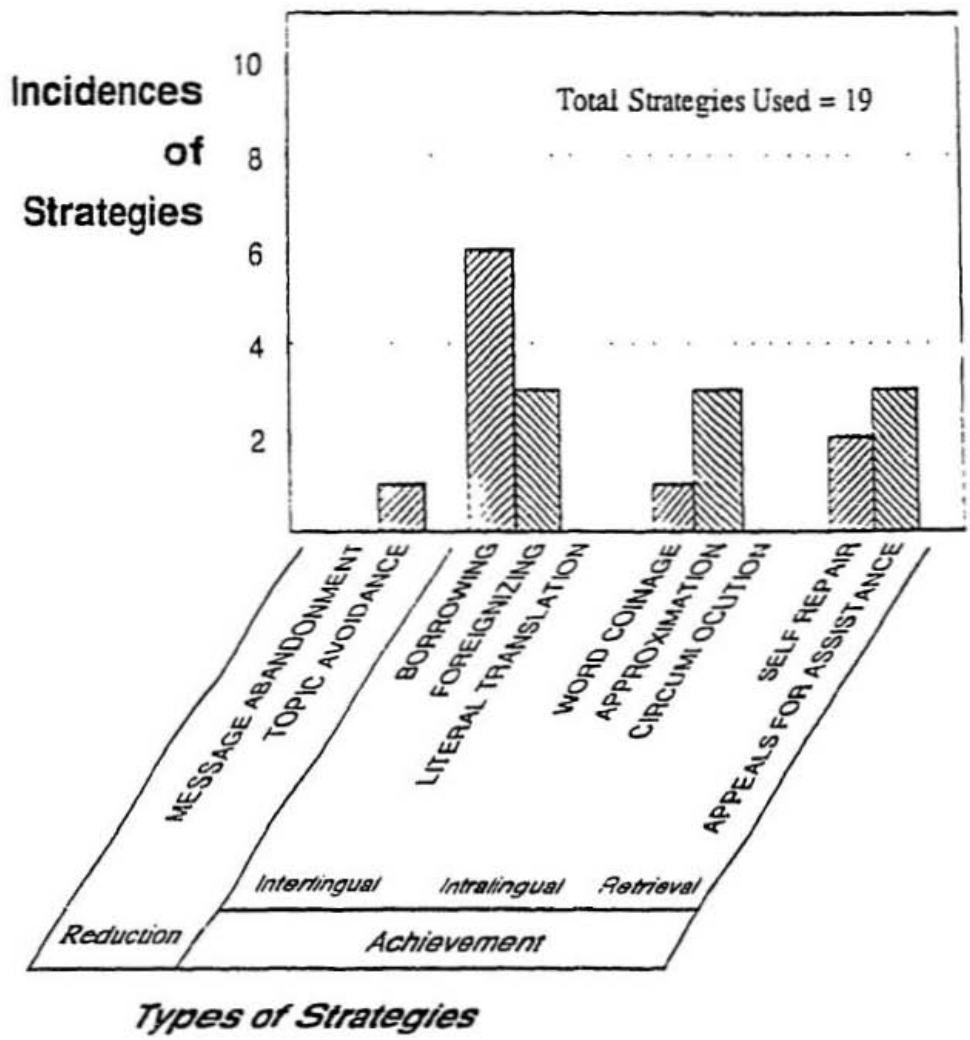


Figure 4.17

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 1, Grade 9



two examples of Self-Repair, a retrieval strategy type. In the description of her house, she said: "Ma soeur chambre ... eh ... la chambre de ma soeur". When she told about Europe, she said: "J'ai fait un trip .. un voyage à ..." Appeals for Assistance was evident in: "Elle a ... eh ... what's 'many'?" When asked about her sister ("Quel age a-t-elle?"), she responded: "Pardon? Ma soeur?" When she wanted to confirm what she thought she heard, she asked: "Un desk ... c'est ça?"

As Figure 4.18 shows, the reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance was used five percent of the total by this student. Borrowing and Foreignizing (interlingual strategies) were used a total of forty-seven percent of the time, Word Coinage and Approximation (intralingual strategies) were used a total of twenty-one percent, and Self-Repair and Appeals for Assistance (retrieval strategies) twenty-seven percent of the total.

The interlingual strategies were used most frequently by Subject One.

Speech Sample: Subject Six

Subject Six employed strategies from two strategy categories, namely, interlingual and retrieval. The total number of strategies used was six; the smallest number used individually in grade nine.

Of the interlingual types, he used two Borrowing and two Foreignizing strategies. He used the former when talking about his sister ("Elle est un nurse") and a certain store where his brother worked ("It's un magasin"). Foreignizing occurred when he described his sister's work as: "Elle travaille au hospitàl." and used "computèr" for "ordinateur". Two examples of Self-Repair appeared in his description of his house: "Il y a quatre jambes ... eh ... non, chambres", and when talking about his brother, he explained: "Il vend la billet ... eh ... la bière". (See Figure 4.19)

Figure 4.18

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 1, Grade 9 as a Percentage of the Total

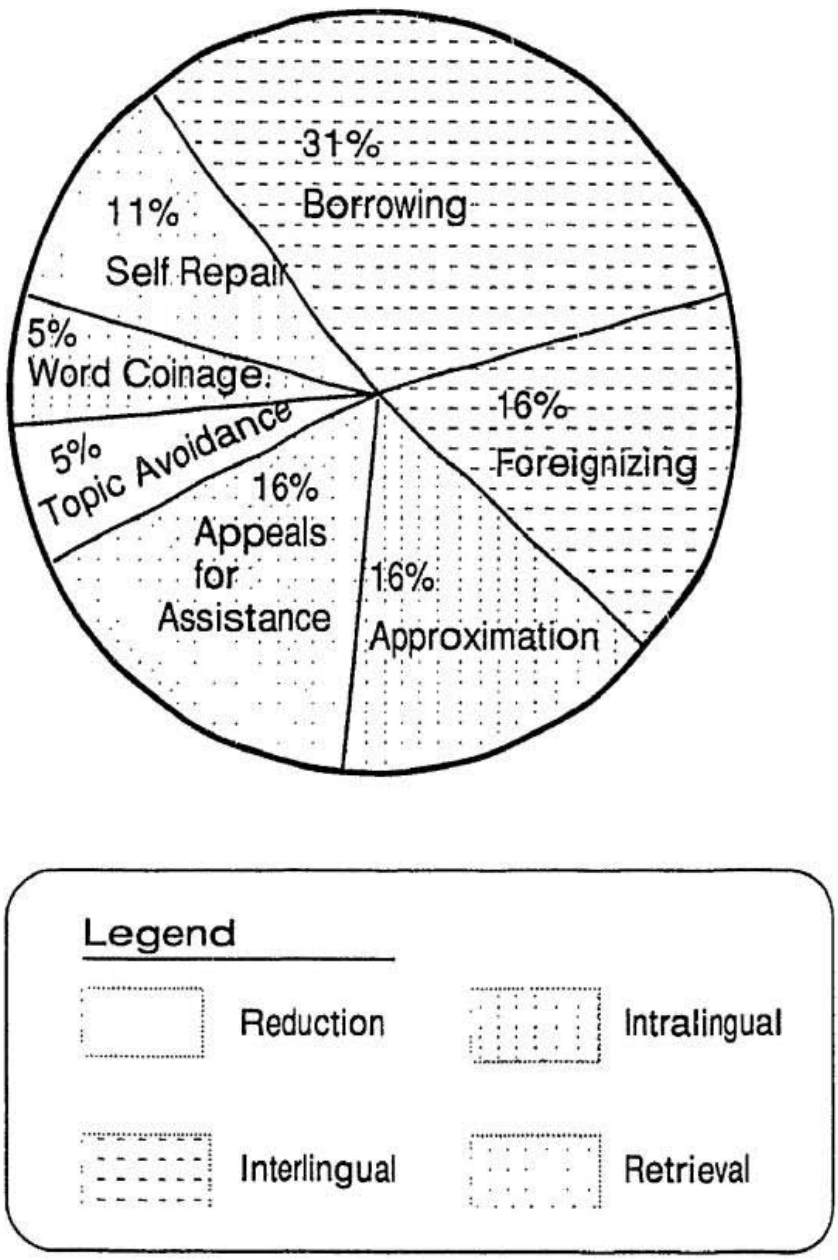
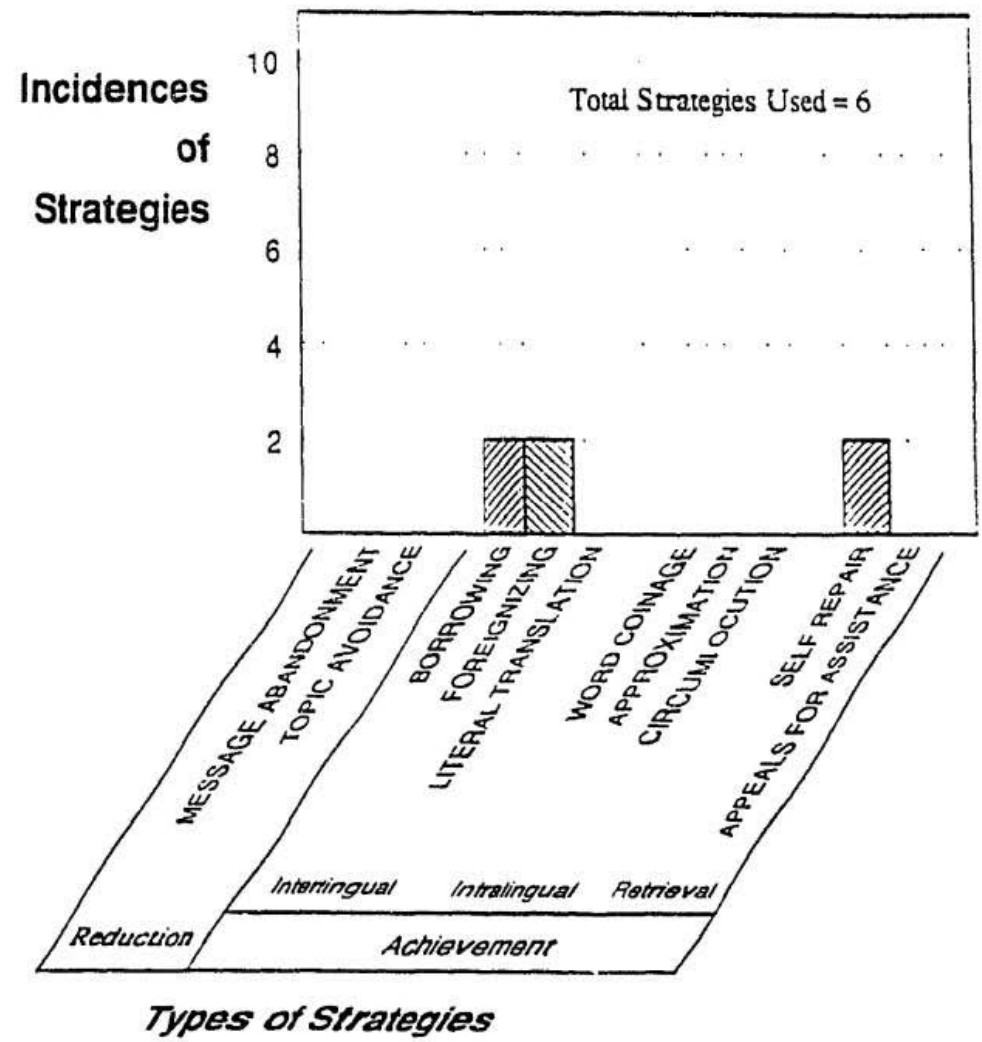


Figure 4.19

Communication Strategies used by Subject 6, Grade 9



As depicted in Figure 4.20, sixty-seven percent of all strategies employed by this subject were the interlingual strategies of Borrowing and Foreignizing. The retrieval strategy of Self-Repair made up the other thirty-three percent.

The Interlingual strategies were used most frequently by this student.

Speech Sample: Subject Three

Subject Three used strategies from all four types, for a total of eleven.

Figure 4.21 indicates that of the reduction strategy, Topic Avoidance was used twice by this student. When he could not respond to what was asked, he would reply: "Je ne sais pas". The speech sample contained one interlingual strategy, Borrowing, which was used four times. As an example, when asked about her weekend, she responded: "Je vais à la church", and when describing her friend, she said: "____ est silly". The subject employed each of two intralingual strategies on one occasion, namely, Word Coinage, which was noted in her description of the rooms in her house ("... trois salles de lit") and Approximation. This student attempted to clarify what was being asked of her three times in Appeals for Assistance. She did not, apparently, understand what 'combien' meant when asked by the interviewer. She responded with: "Combien? ... how well?" She also asked for repetition of questions twice, with: "Pardon?"

Of the total number of strategies employed by Subject Three, the Reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance was used eighteen percent of the time, the interlingual strategy of Borrowing thirty-six percent, the intralingual strategies, Word Coinage and Approximation nine percent each, and the Retrieval strategy of Appeals for Assistance, twenty-seven percent. (See Figure 4.22)

This subject used interlingual strategies more frequently than the other strategy types.

Figure 4.20

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 6, Grade 9 as a Percentage of the Total

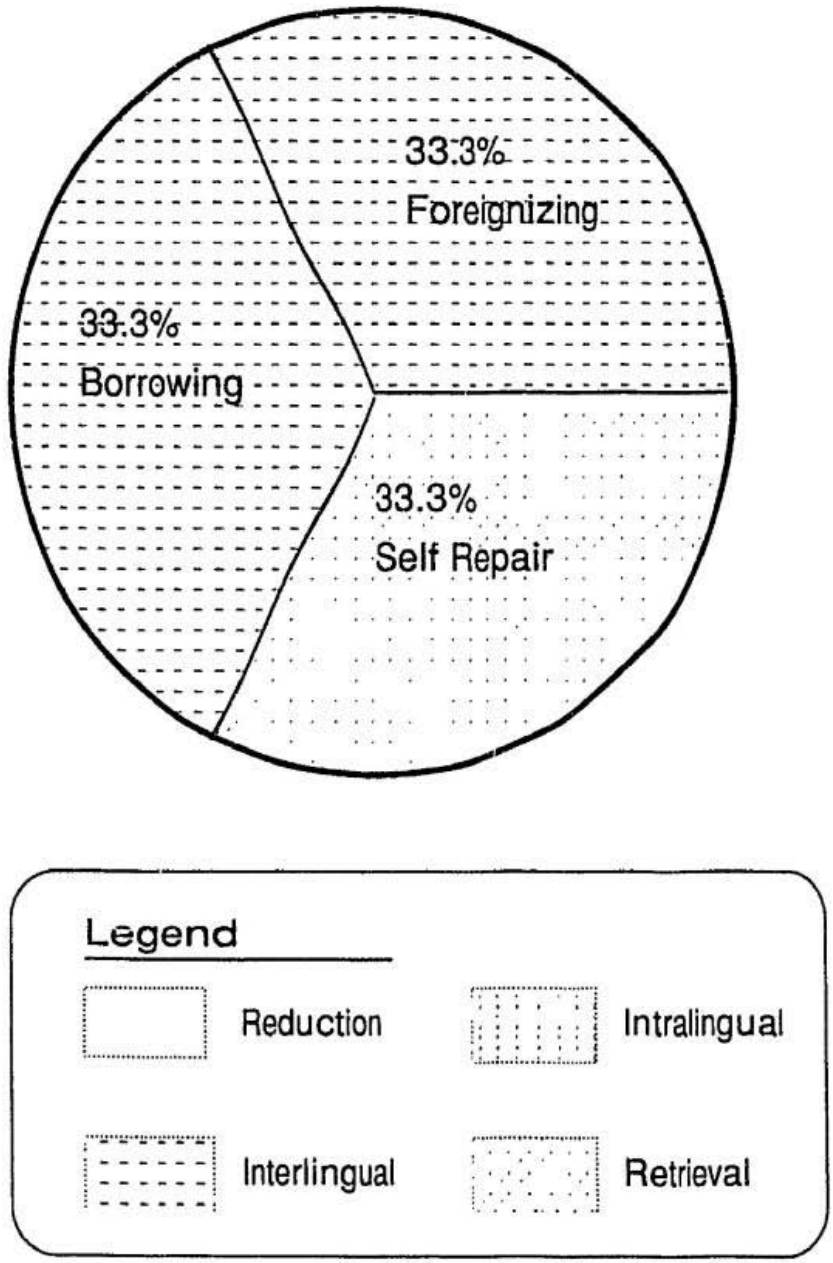


Figure 4.21

Communication Strategies used by Subject 3, Grade 9

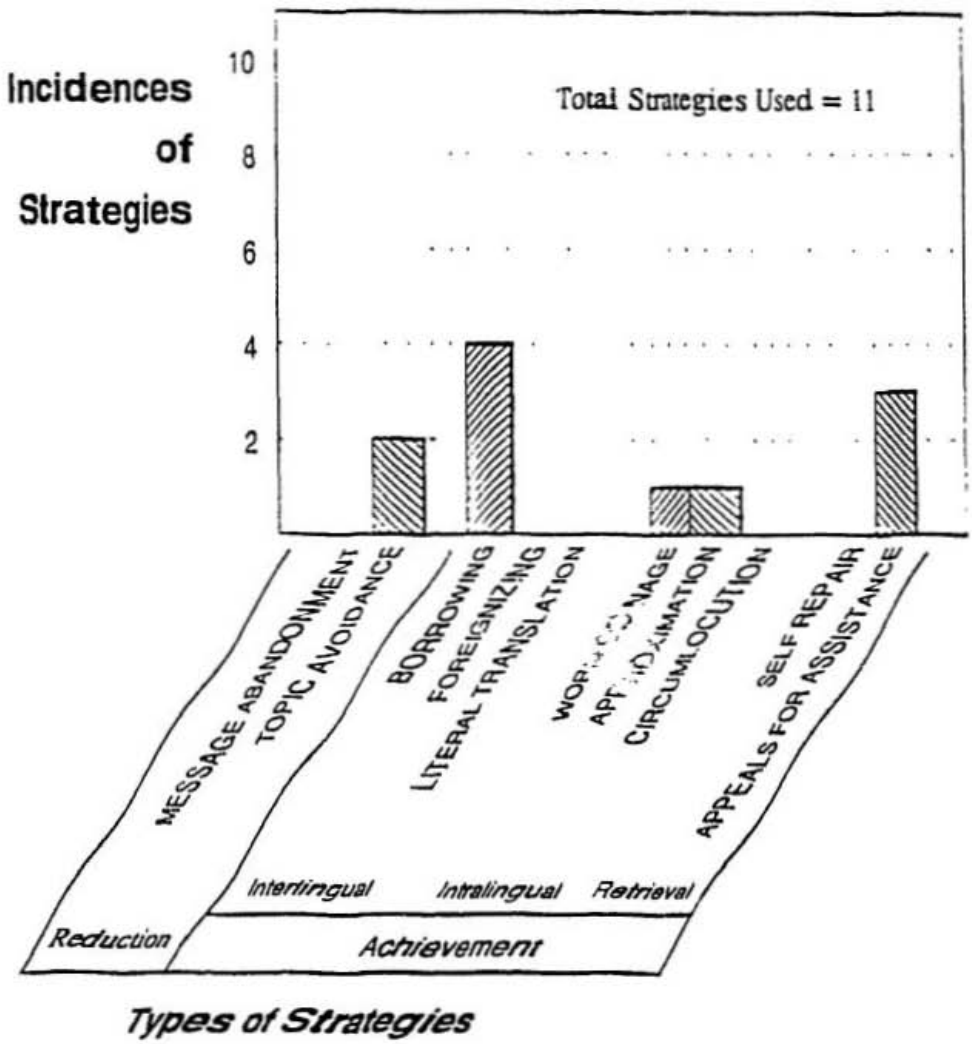
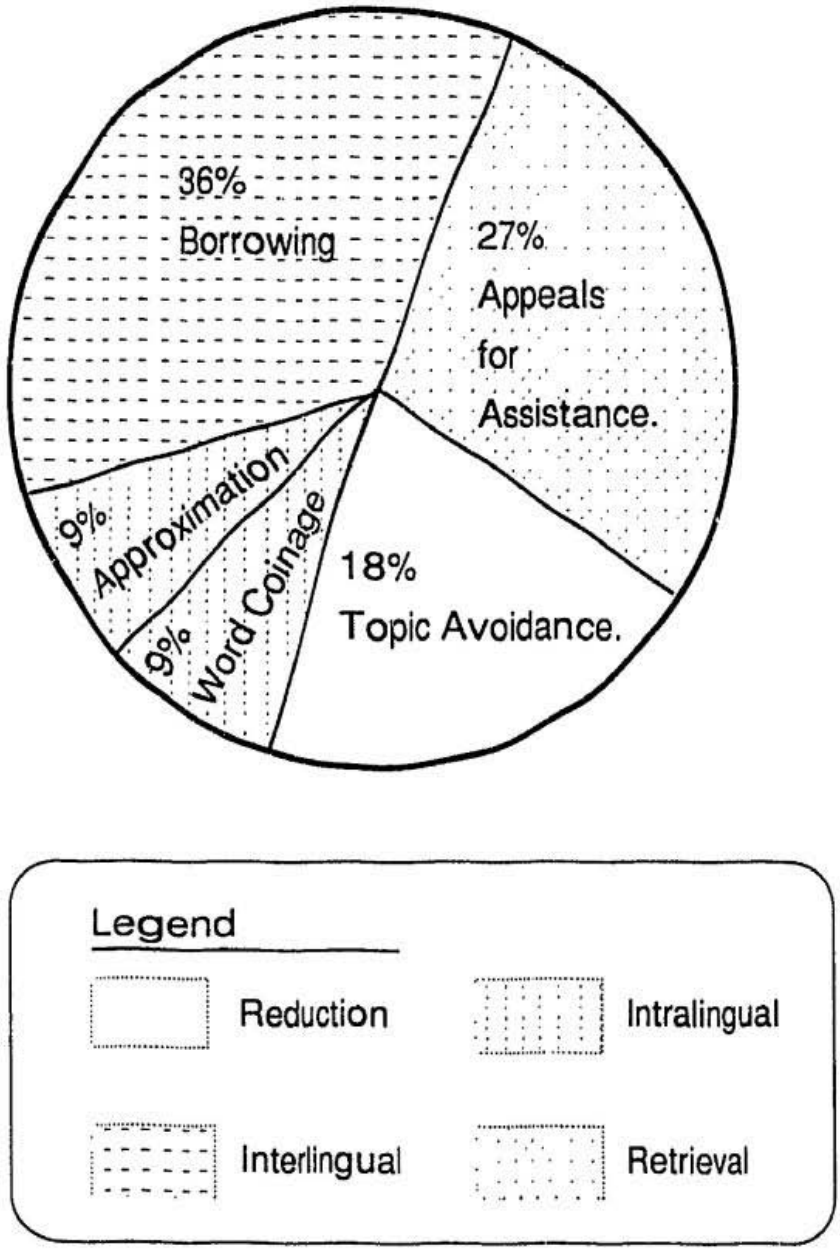


Figure 4.22

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 3, Grade 9 as a Percentage of the Total



Speech Sample: Subject Two

While Subject Two used strategies from the four strategy types, for a total of ten occurrences, he restricted his choice of specific strategies to four.

From the Reduction strategy type, Message Abandonment occurred once when he tried to describe things in his bedroom. He began: "J'ai un pupit ... pupit ... eh, desk". The interlingual strategy of Borrowing was used six times, as for example, when asked about his father's job, he replied: "Il fait dry-wall", and when further questioned about what his father did at home, he responded: "Il travaille dans le garden, et il fait des repairs". From the intralingual strategy type, he used Approximation twice. While attempting to describe the weather conditions for a particular day he said: "Il fait bruard", and when talking about his brother, he noted: "Il ne travaille pas dans le Terre-Neuve". This was apparently the closest he could come to saying that his brother was not able to find work in Newfoundland. This speech sample contained one example of Self-Repair; when talking about what his father did at home, he said he grew "les pommes de terre et cabbage ... eh ... les choux". (See Figure 4.23)

From Figure 4.24, we see that ten percent of all strategies employed by Subject Two belonged to the reduction strategy category of Message Abandonment. Of the achievement strategy types, the interlingual strategy of Borrowing was used sixty percent of the time, the intralingual strategy of Approximation, twenty percent, and Self-Repair, ten percent.

The strategy used most frequently by Subject Two was the interlingual strategy of Borrowing.

Figure 4.23

Communication Strategies used by Subject 2, Grade 9

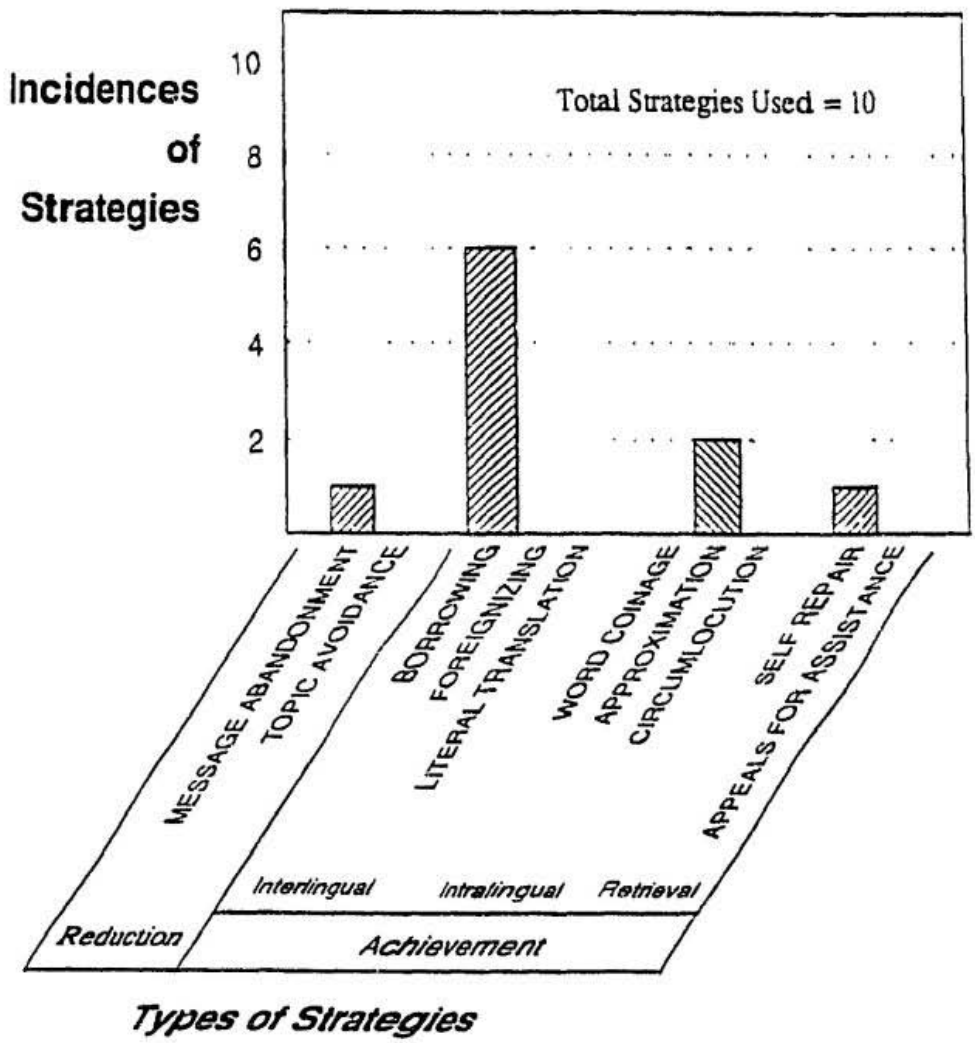
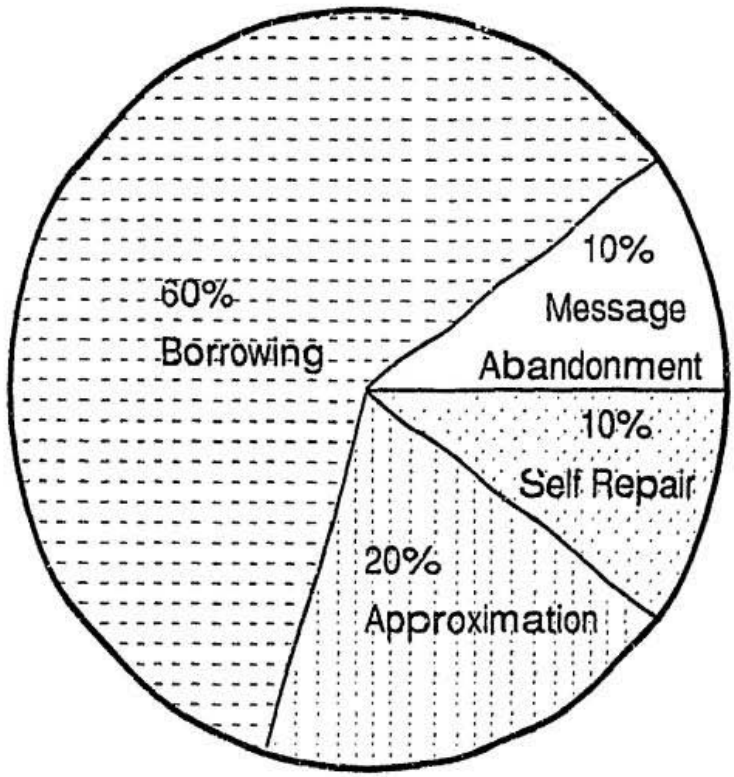
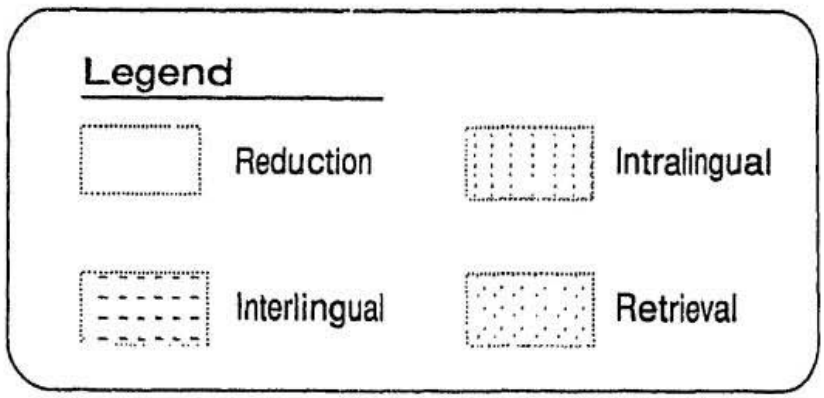


Figure 4.24

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 2, Grade 9 as a Percentage of the Total





Grade Eleven Speech Samples

Below is a detailed description of individual grade eleven speech samples. These subjects are presented from highest to lowest by their rank order as determined by criteria found in the Manual for Oral Testing in French 3200 (1986). (See Appendix C for further details.)

Speech Sample: Subject Six

Subject Six used three strategy types, with only the intralingual type not being used. This subject's speech sample contained a total of seven strategies, the smallest number used by a grade eleven student. In addition, Subject Six restricted his choice of particular strategies to three. Figure 4.25 provides a breakdown of strategy use by Subject six.

Of the reduction strategy type, Topic Avoidance was noted twice. When the subject did not feel confident enough to answer the questions posed, he replied: "Je ne sais pas", or "Je ne sais pas les autres". The interlingual strategy of Borrowing was used once; when asked: "Quelle sorte de travail?" (referring to his father's work), he replied: "Un labourer". This subject used Self-Repair four times. When asked to describe his father, he said: "Mon père a seize ans ... a soixante ans"; when talking about chores done by the family, he responded: "Nous faisons le vaisail ... excuse ... la vaisselle", and on two other occasions he corrected his verb: "J'ai prenais ... j'ai pris", and "Nous y avons resté ... nous y sommes restés".

The Reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance was used twenty-nine percent of the time and the interlingual strategy of Borrowing was used fourteen percent. Self-Repair, which was used most frequently, represented fifty-seven percent of the total strategy use by Subject Six. (See Figure 4.26)

Figure 4.25

Communication Strategies used by Subject 6, Grade 11

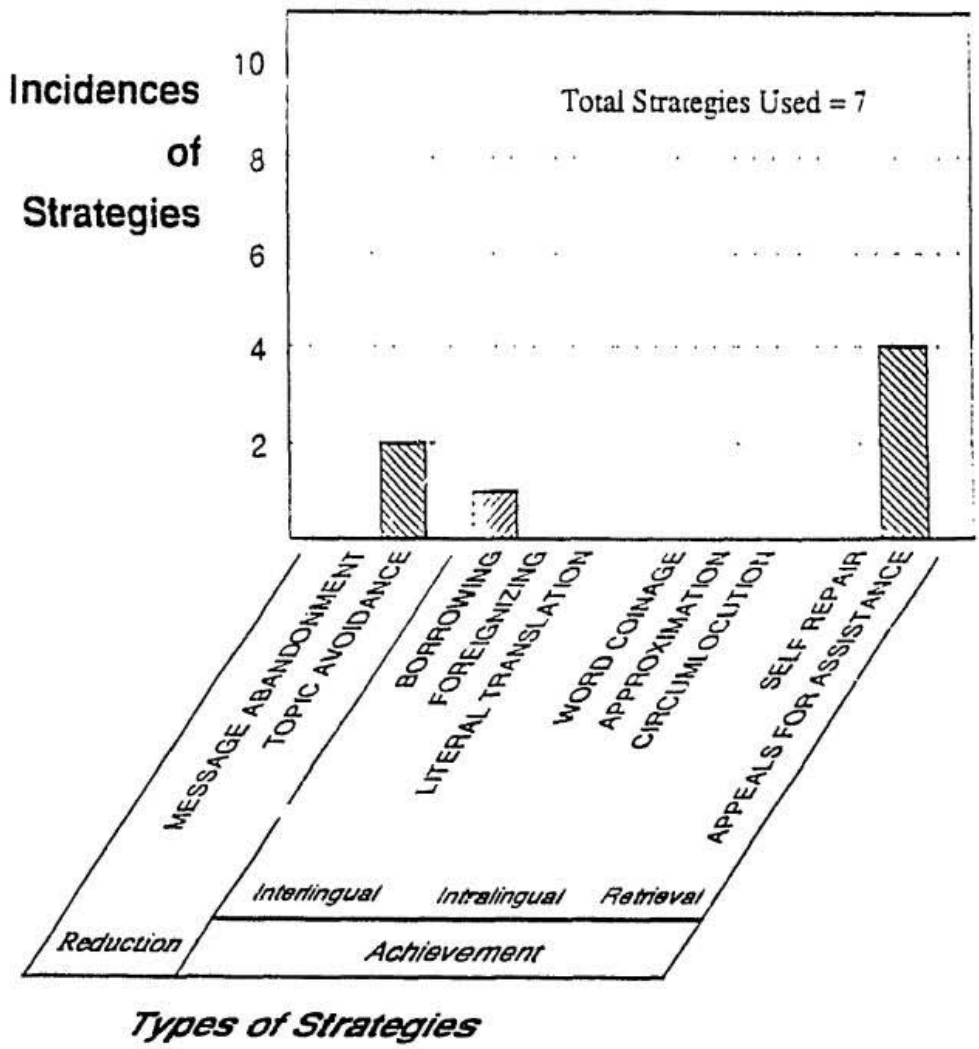
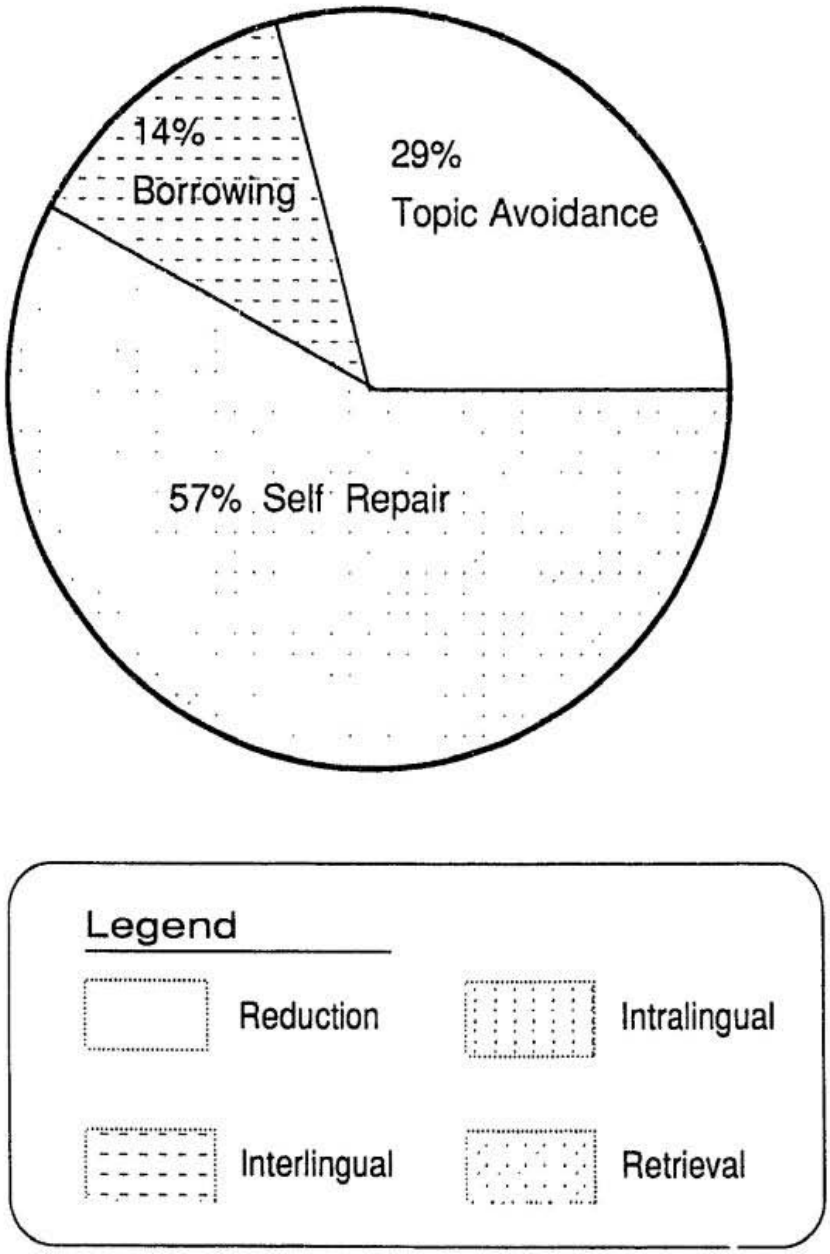


Figure 4.26

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 6, Grade 11 as a Percentage of the Total



Speech Sample: Subject Five

As indicated in Figure 4.27, Subject Five's speech sample contained a total of nine strategy uses, with at least one from each strategy type. This student chose three Topic Avoidance strategies: "Je ne sais pas" being used twice, while "J'ai oublié" was the response to a question asked about her father. She used Literal Translation, an interlingual strategy, when describing her mother: "Elle est quarante-trois". The intralingual strategy of Approximation occurred when this subject was telling what she did after supper. She noted: "J'étude pour ..." for "J'étudie". (She was probably familiar with the noun form "étude(s)" and attempted to use it in a sentence requiring the verb "étudier" because she knew it was close in meaning.) The interview also contained four occurrences of the retrieval strategy type. Self-Repair was used once in her description of her father when she said: "Il est ... il a cinquante ans". This subject used three Appeals for Assistance: "Comment est-ce qu'on dit 'welder' en français?"; "living room ... c'est quoi?"; and "Comment est-ce qu'on dit 'teaching'?"

Of the total number of strategies used by Subject Five, thirty-three percent were Topic Avoidance. The interlingual strategy of Literal Translation and the intralingual strategy of Approximation were each used eleven percent. She used both retrieval strategies: Self-Repair for eleven percent and Appeals for Assistance thirty-three percent. (See Figure 4.28)

Retrieval strategies were used most frequently by this student.

Speech Sample: Subject Three

Subject Three used a total of nineteen communication strategies from three of the strategy types, with only reduction strategies being excluded. (See Figure 4.29). Of the

Figure 4.27

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 5, Grade 11

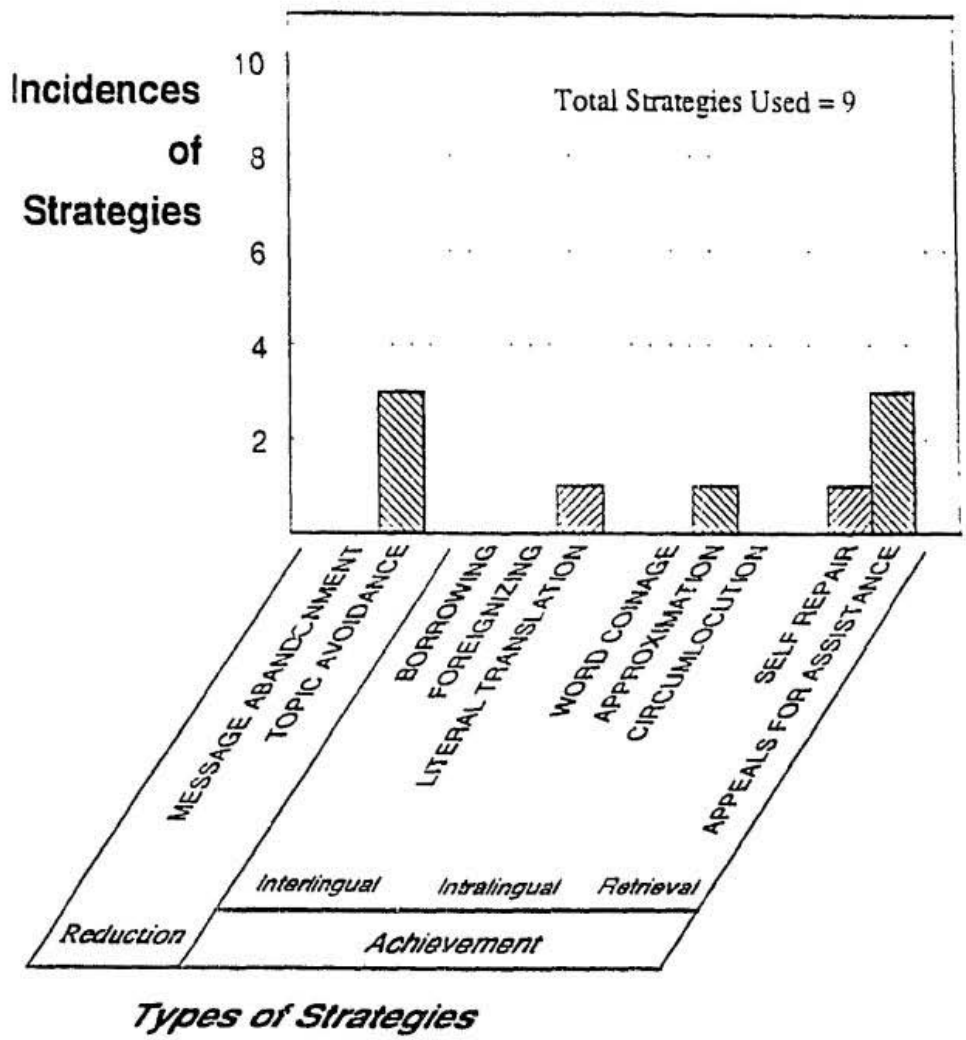


Figure 4.28

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 5, Grade 11 as a Percentage of the Total

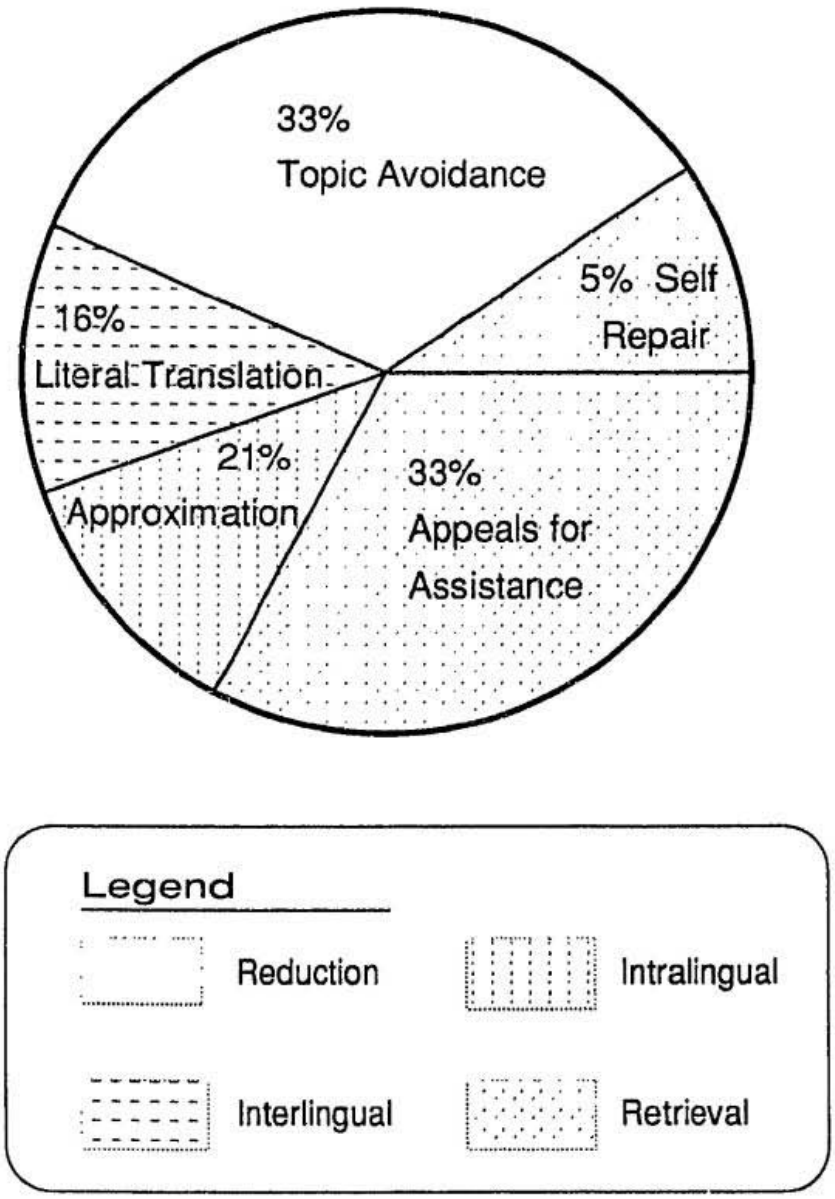
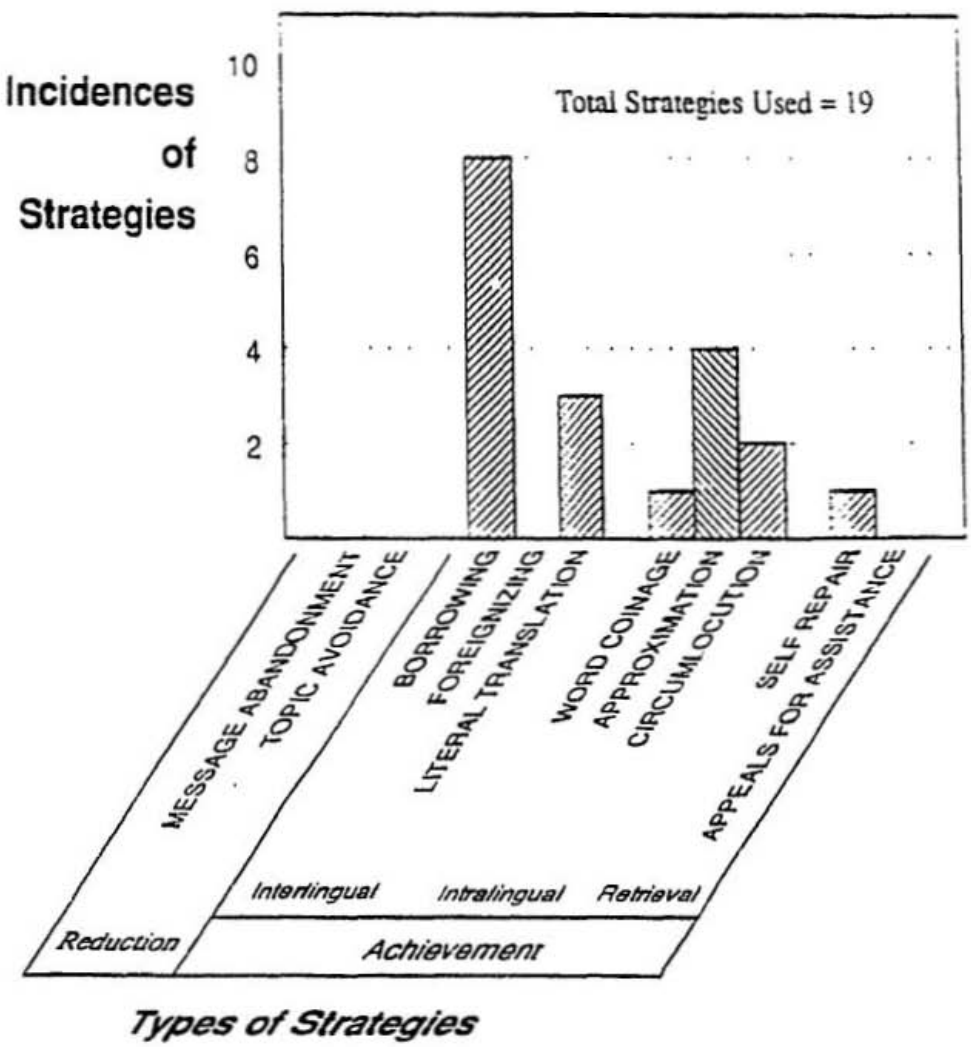


Figure 4.29

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 3, Grade 11



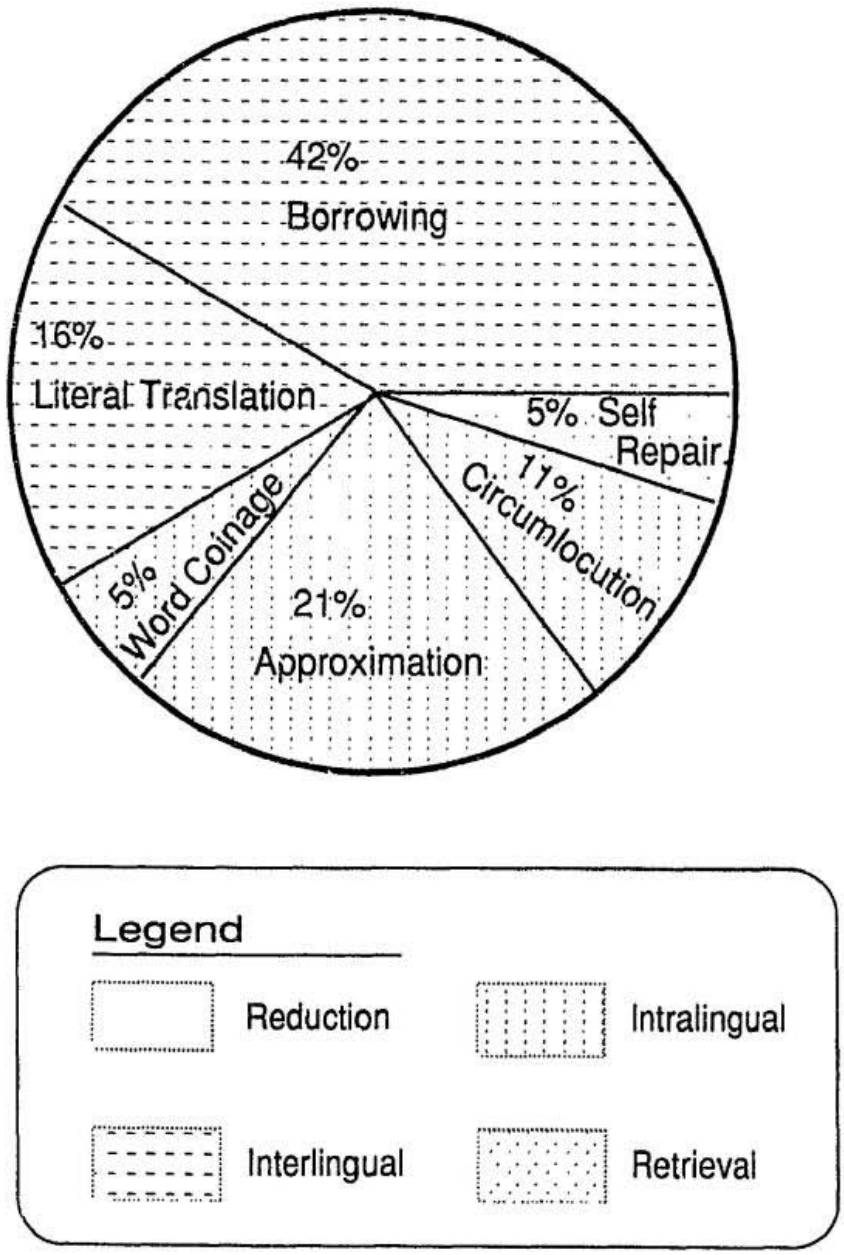
interlingual strategies, Borrowing occurred most frequently, eight times. Examples include: "Trois practices pour la musique" (when talking about her leisure time); "Nous sommes allés à Grand Falls avec un band" (referring to one of her weekends); "Les main ones sont ..." (describing characters on a TV show). The other interlingual strategy contained in the speech sample, Literal Translation, was used three times by Subject Three. While describing her father, she said: "Mon père est trente". Later she talked about the weather by saying: "Il était pleut". This subject used all three intralingual strategies. One occurrence of Word Coinage was noted when she tried to explain her summer job as "un professeur de voile". The strategy of Approximation occurred four times in this student's conversation; for example, she described her sister as "Judy est bon". Circumlocution was used twice. As an example, she talked about a half-hour television program as "un programme qui passe pour une demi-heure". One occurrence of the retrieval strategy, Self-Repair, was evident in: "Ils ne nous veulent ... ils ne veulent pas que nous ..."

Figure 4.30 indicates Subject Three's strategy use by percentage. The speech sample contained two interlingual strategies: Borrowing, which was used forty-two percent, and Literal Translation, sixteen percent. All three intralingual strategies were used by Subject three: Word Coinage (five percent), Approximation (twenty-one percent), and Circumlocution (eleven percent). The occurrence of the retrieval strategy of Self-Repair represented five percent of the total number of strategies used by Subject Three.

This subject used the interlingual strategies most frequently.

Figure 4.30

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 3, Grade 11 as a Percentage of the Total



Speech Sample: Subject Two

Subject Two's speech sample contained strategies from all four strategy types, for a total of nine occurrences.

The Reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance was used twice by this subject when she replied: "Je ne sais pas". This subject utilized the interlingual strategy of Borrowing once, (when she was describing her bedroom where she had "un bureau") and Approximation four times, as, for example, when asked about whether she would like to have children, she replied: "Oui, mais à six ans", meaning in six years time. The speech sample contained one occurrence of each retrieval strategy. This subject used Self-Repair once when trying to use the future: "Je suis fait ... je vais faire". Appeals for Assistance was employed on one occasion when she asked: "How do you say 'wash'?" (See Figure 4.31)

Figure 4.32 indicates that, of the total number of strategy uses, Subject Two used the Reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance twenty-two percent of the time. The interlingual strategies of Borrowing and Approximation accounted for eleven and forty-four percent respectively of all strategy uses. The Retrieval strategies of Self-Repair and Appeals for Assistance represented eleven percent of the total number of strategies used.

This subject used the intralingual strategy of Approximation most frequently.

Speech Sample: Subject Seven

Subject Seven used twenty strategies in her interview, the second highest number of strategies employed by a grade eleven student. Each category of achievement strategy was represented in the speech sample.

During the interview, Subject Seven employed interlingual strategies on fourteen occasions. She used Borrowing nine times; examples include "Elle est un bookkeeper" and

Figure 4.31

Communication Strategies used by Subject 2, Grade 11

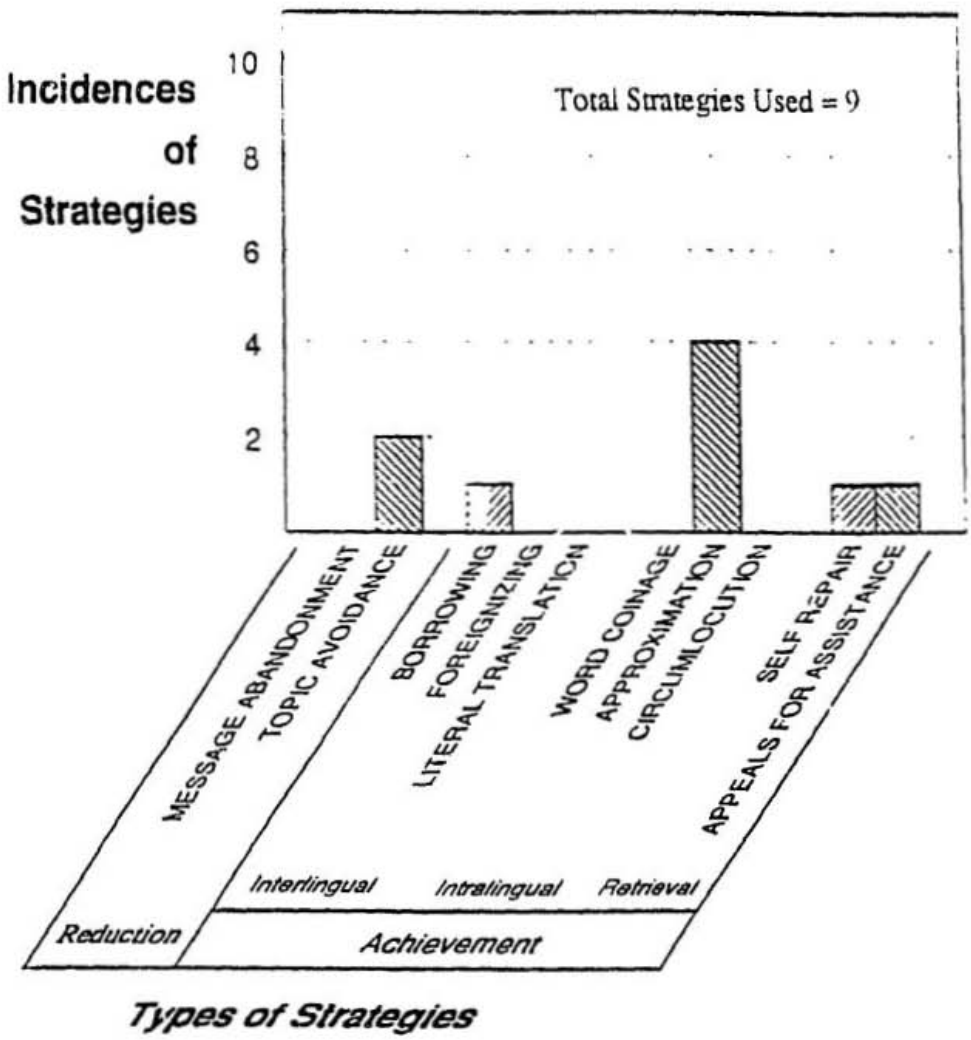
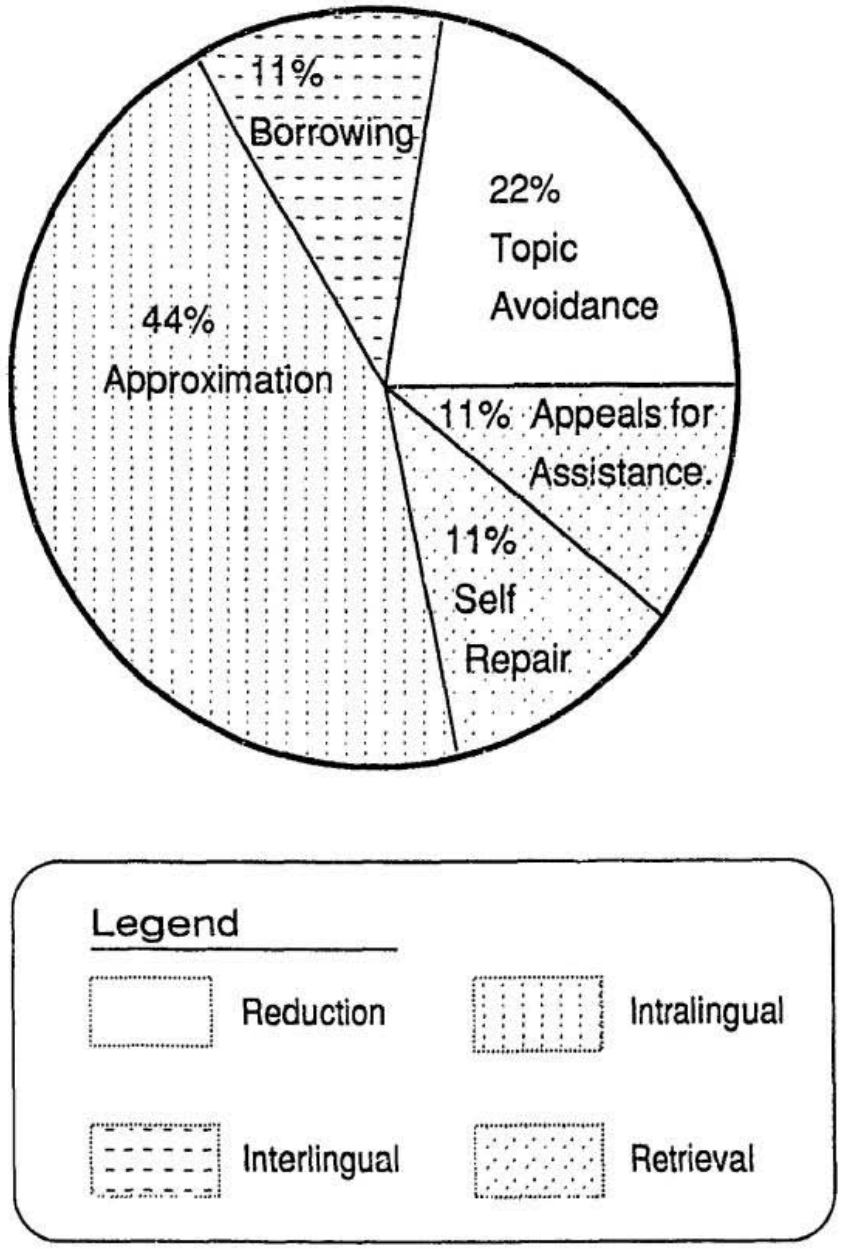


Figure 4.32

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 2, Grade 11 as a Percentage of the Total



"J'ai dusted pour ma mère". The speech sample also contained four examples of Literal Translation, examples being: "Marc est dix" and "des recherches papiers" (talking about her school work). The intralingual strategy of Approximation occurred twice. She noted: "Nous sommes restés toute la noir [nuit]" and while talking about money earned from summer work, she said: "J'ai gagné trente-six dollars de jour". This subject used Self-Repair once: "Je ... je ... make? ... eh ... je fais le lit" and Appeals for Assistance, four times. Examples of the latter include "Comment est-ce qu'on dit 'sawmill'?" when she was trying to describe her father's work and "How do you say ...?". (See Figure 4.33).

As seen in Figure 4.34, forty-five percent of strategy uses were classified as Borrowing, twenty percent as Literal Translation, meaning that sixty-five percent of the strategies used were of the interlingual type. The intralingual strategy of Approximation represented ten percent of strategy uses. The retrieval strategies of Self-Repair and Appeals for Assistance were evidenced five percent and twenty percent respectively.

The strategies used most frequently by Subject Seven were Borrowing and Literal Translation, two interlingual strategies.

Speech Sample: Subject Four

All four strategy types were employed by Subject Four, who used twenty-five strategies, the greatest number of strategies of any grade eleven student.

As seen in Figure 4.35, the reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance was noted twice; when she did not feel confident enough to answer the questions asked, she responded "Je ne sais pas". Subject Seven's speech sample contained eleven occurrences of interlingual strategies. Borrowing occurred six times as, for example, when talking about her sister, she said: "Nous avons une chambre together" and "Elle est en Kindergarten". She used

Figure 4.33

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 7, Grade 11

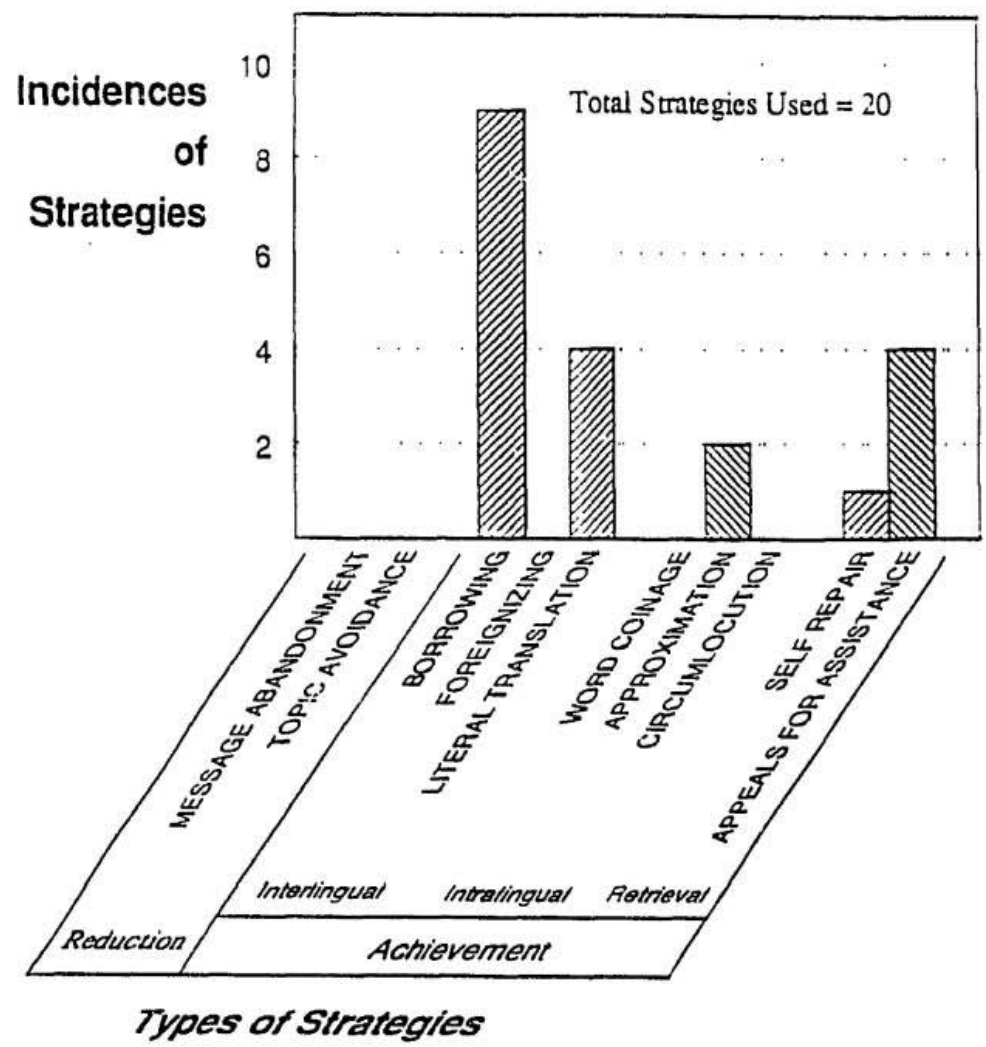


Figure 4.34

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 7, Grade 11 as a Percentage of the Total

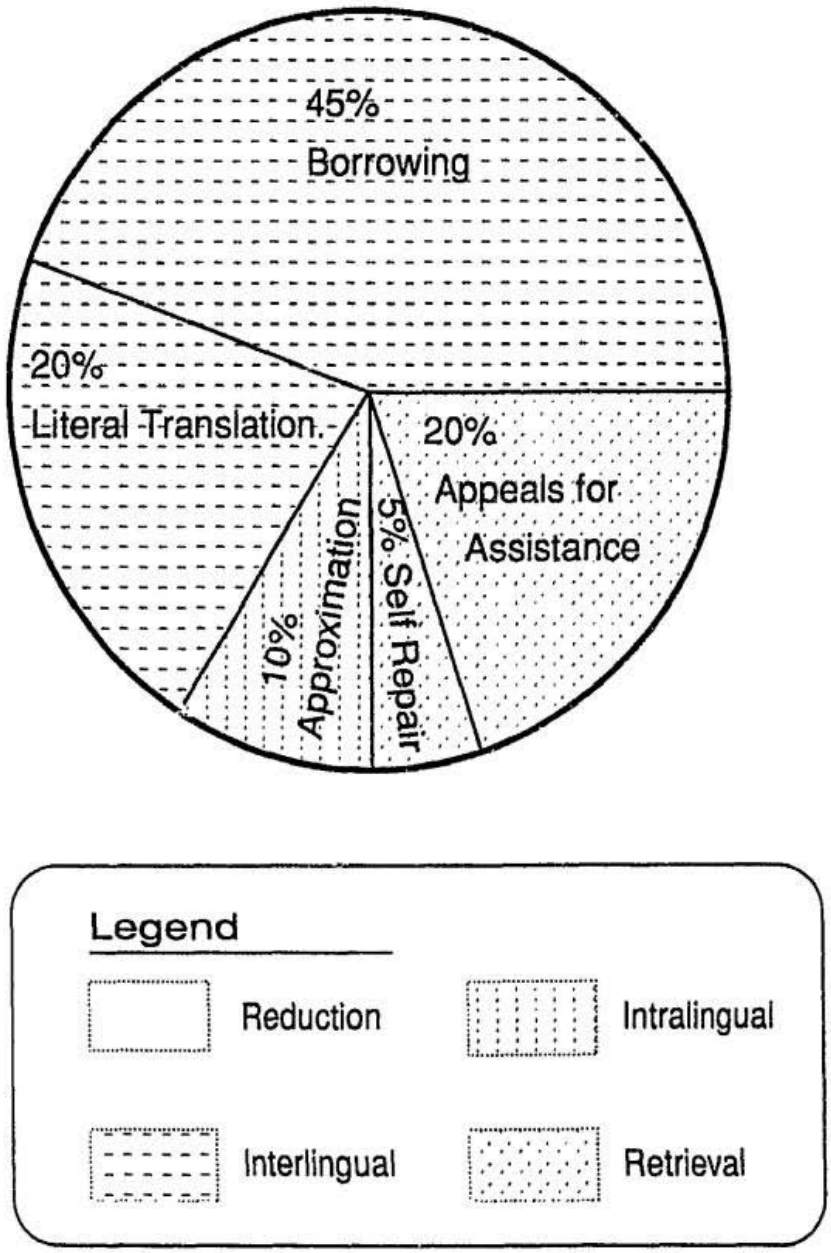
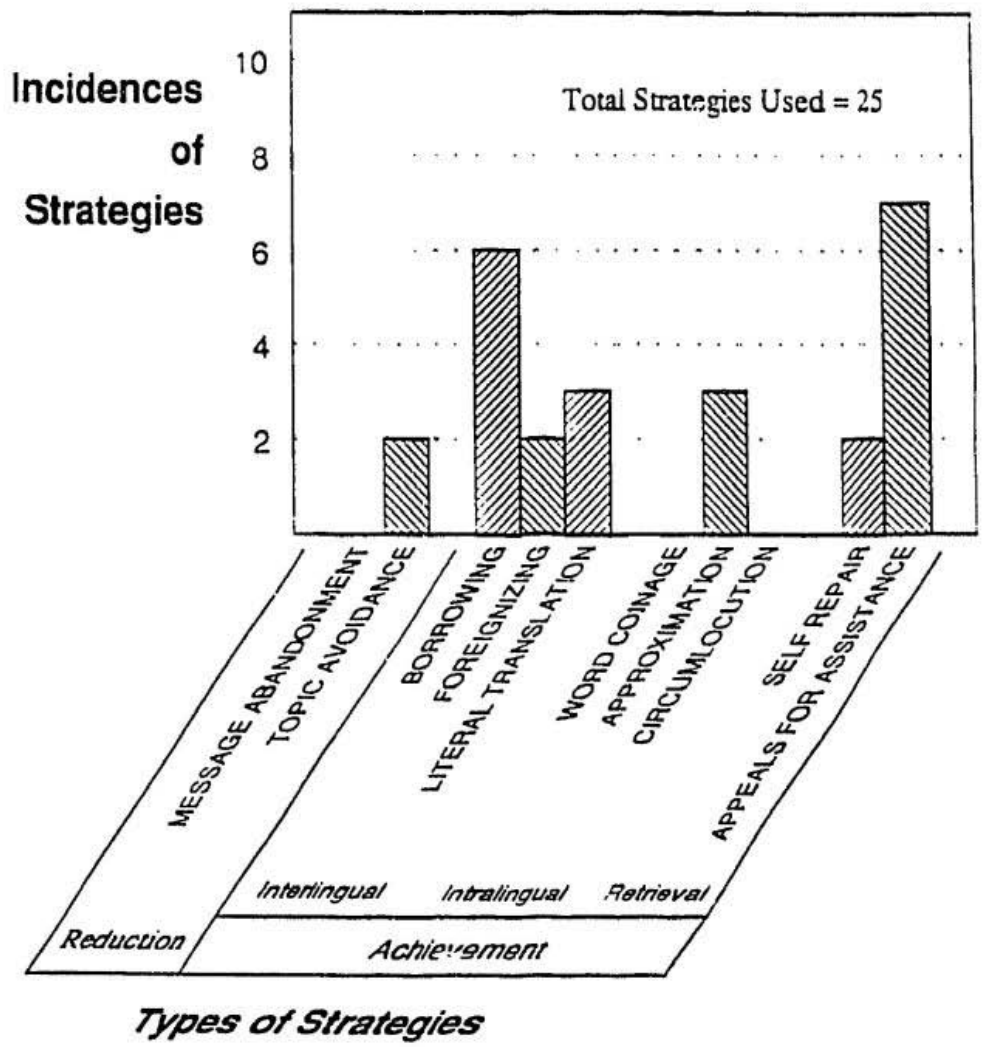


Figure 4.35

Communication Strategies used by
Subject 4, Grade 11



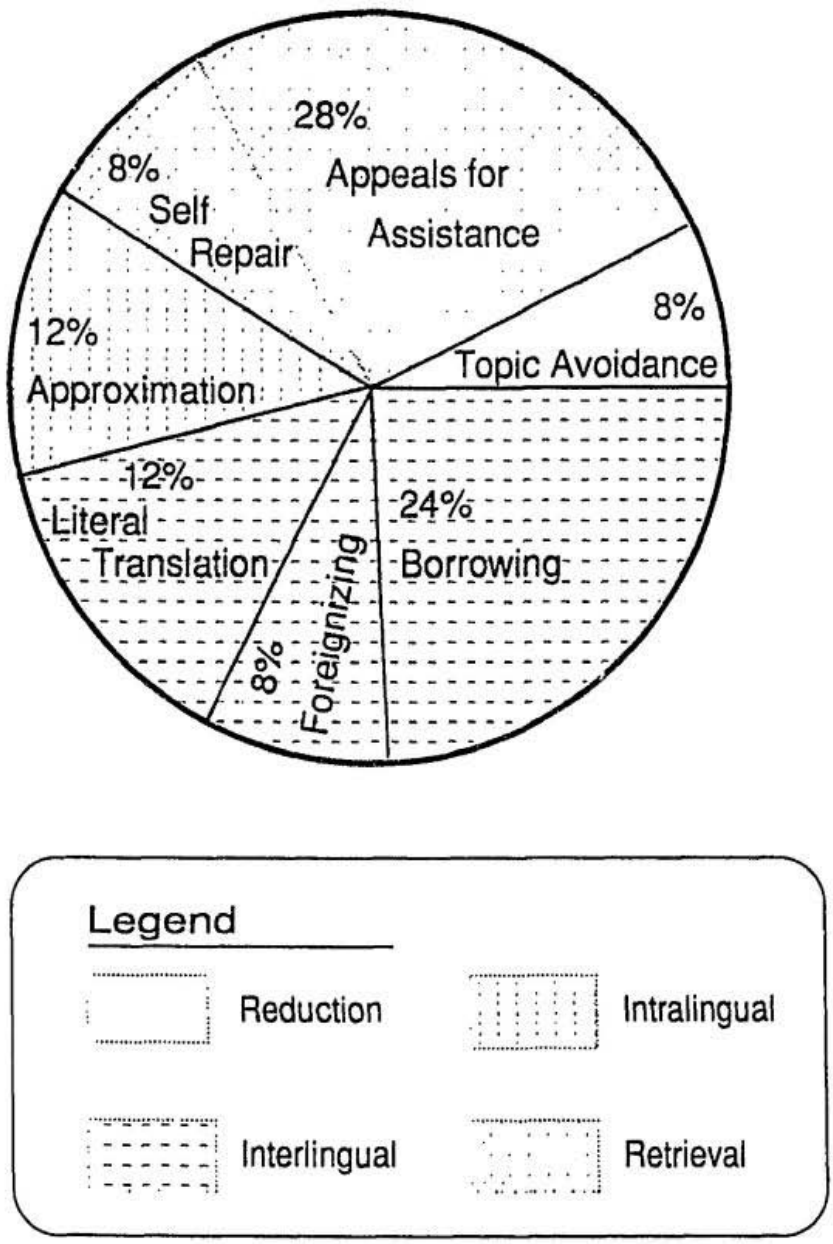
two examples of Foreignizing: "J'aime lire les novèls" and "un bureau" (describing her dresser). This subject also made use of Literal Translation three times. While describing her sisters, she said: "Elle est dix-huit ans" and "Elle est six ans". In talking about her leisure time, she noted: "J'aime écouter à la musique". The intralingual strategy of Approximation occurred three times; for example, during the discussion of her travels, she said: "J'ai vu beaucoup de fermiers [fermes]". This subject also used retrieval strategies on nine occasions. Self-Repair was used twice, when she said "J'aime la vie près de l'eau ... près de l'océan" and "Je vais voir quelquefois .. quelquefois? ... something ... non ... quelque chose". Appeals for Assistance occurred seven times, with examples including "Je suis très fussy ... comment est-ce qu'on dit 'fussy'?"; "'Comment'? ... how do I like it?"; "Je passe le ... what's 'vacuum cleaner'? ... oui, l'aspirateur".

The reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance represented eight percent of Subject Four's strategy uses. The three interlingual strategies of Borrowing, Foreignizing, and Literal Translation were used twenty-four percent, eight percent, and twelve percent of the time, respectively. The intralingual strategy of Approximation represented twelve percent of all strategy uses. Self-Repair and Appeals for Assistance, two retrieval strategies, were used eight percent and twenty-eight percent of the time, respectively. (See Figure 4.36)

Subject Four made use of the interlingual strategies more frequently than any other strategy type.

Figure 4.36

Individual Communication Strategies used by Subject 4, Grade 11 as a Percentage of the Total



Strategy Use by Grades

This section deals with a discussion of strategy use by grades, and focuses on (i) the total number of strategies used by each grade, (ii) types of strategies and their frequency of use by each grade, and (iii) the percentage of each strategy used as a proportion of the total number for that grade. Strategies used by each grade are shown by means of bar and pie graphs, which follow each description. A comparison of strategy use by the most successful students in grades seven, nine, and eleven will also be included in this section, along with the two questions being investigated in this study: (1) At each level, what is the frequency of communication strategies used by the most successful adolescent L2 learners? (2) Is the overall pattern of communication strategy use for successful adolescent L2 learners related to their linguistic competence? If so, how?

Communication Strategies: Grade Seven

The six most successful L2 learners in grade seven used a total of sixty-nine communication strategies in this study. Strategies were used from all types, with the exception of the reduction strategy, Message Abandonment.

Topic Avoidance strategies were recorded fifteen times in speech samples from this grade. Interlingual strategies occurred a total of twenty-five times, with Borrowing and Foreignizing being used twelve times each, and Literal Translation, once. The subjects in grade seven employed the three intralingual strategies on a total of twenty occasions, with Word Coinage occurring five times, Approximation, fourteen times and Circumlocution, once. The retrieval strategies of Self-Repair and Appeals for Assistance were employed a total of nine times by subjects from this level. The speech sample contained four occurrences of Self-Repair and five of Appeals for Assistance. (See Figure 4.37)

Figure 4.37

Communication Strategies used by Grade 7

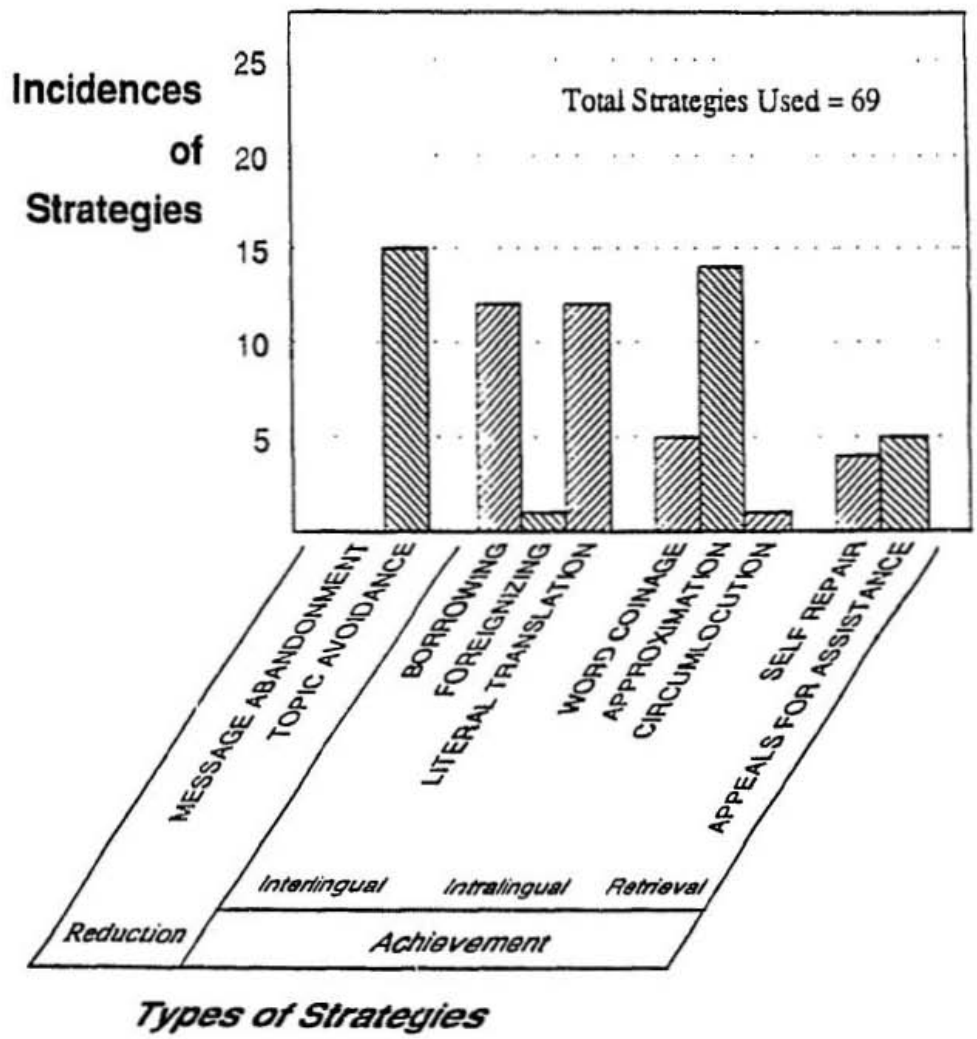


Figure 4.38 indicates the proportionate use of each strategy. From that figure we see that grade seven students chose the reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance twenty-two percent of the time. They employed interlingual strategies thirty-five percent of the time in order to communicate their messages: Borrowing (seventeen percent), Foreignizing (one percent), and Literal Translation (seventeen percent). The intralingual strategy type, which occurred a total of twenty-eight percent of the time was distributed as follows: Word Coinage, seven percent, Approximation, twenty percent, and Circumlocution, one percent. The retrieval strategies made up for thirteen percent of the strategies used by this group, with Self-Repair occurring six percent of the time and Appeals for Assistance, seven percent. The six most successful L2 students from grade seven tended to employ interlingual strategies most frequently, and retrieval strategies least frequently.

Communication Strategies: Grade Nine

The six most successful L2 learners in grade nine used a total of eighty communication strategies in this study.

Figure 4.39 shows that this group employed all types of communication strategies, with the exception of Circumlocution. Reduction strategies occurred a total of seven times: Message Abandonment being used twice and Topic Avoidance, five times. Students at this level chose interlingual strategies more often than the other types. Borrowing occurred twenty-seven times, Foreignizing, twelve, and Literal Translation, eight, for a total of forty-seven interlingual strategy uses. The occurrence of intralingual strategies totalled eleven, with Word Coinage recorded three times and Approximation, eight. Both retrieval strategies were employed by the grade nine students, with Self-Repair noted six times and Appeals for Assistance, nine.

Figure 4.38

Individual Communication Strategies used by Grade 7 as a Percentage of the Total

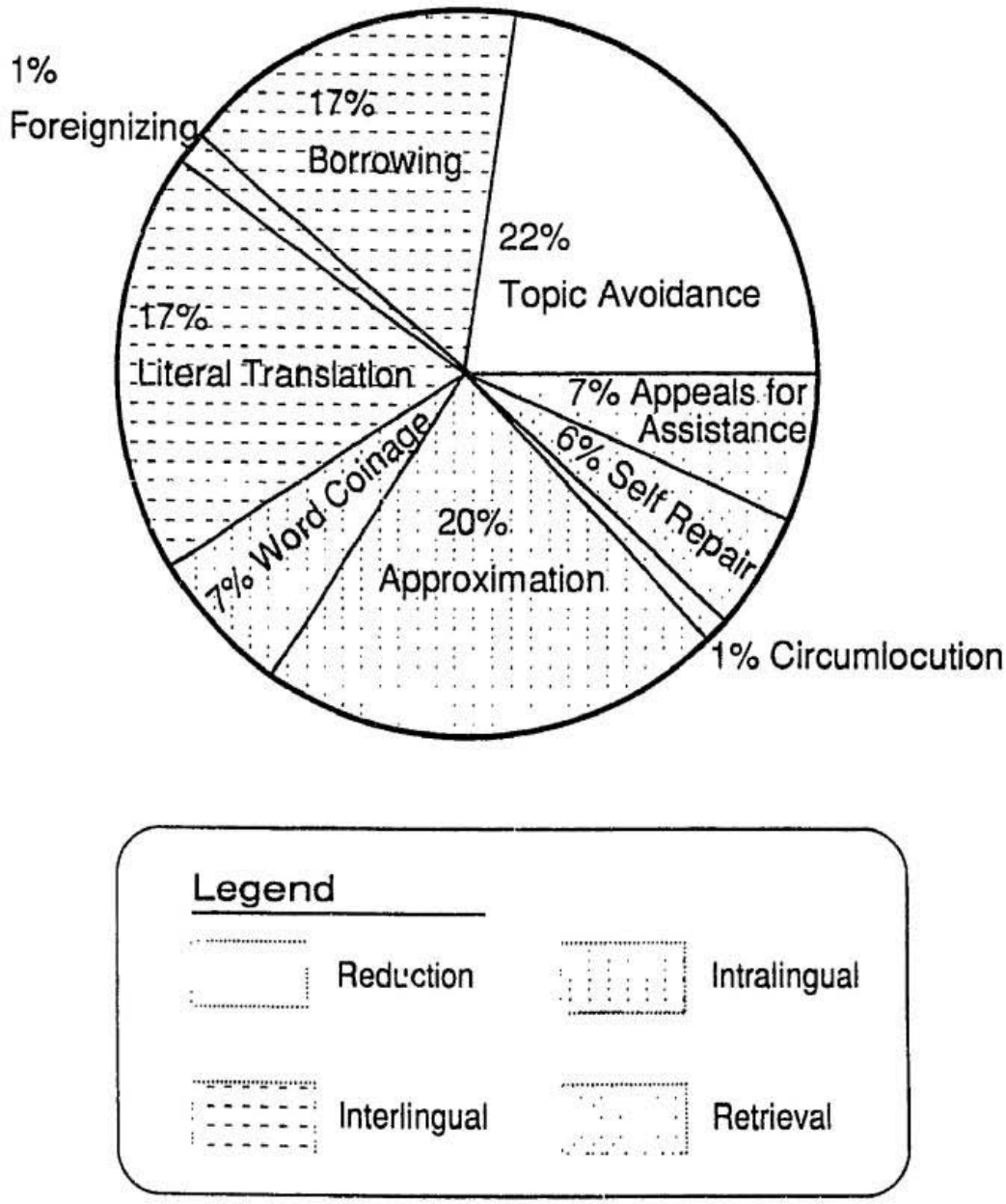
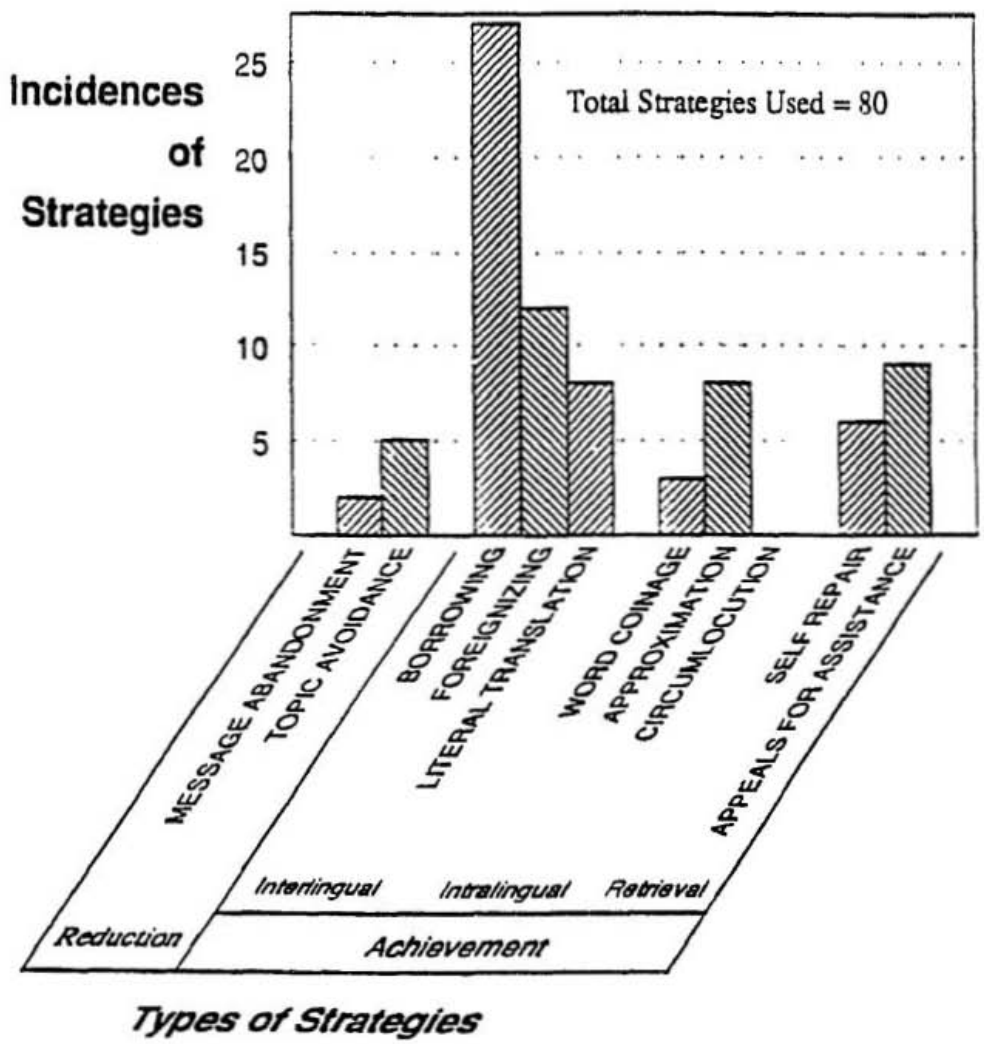


Figure 4.39

Communication Strategies used by Grade 9



The Reduction strategies, Message Abandonment and Topic Avoidance, were employed a total of 8.5 percent of the total number of strategies used by this group. Sixty-nine percent of the strategies recorded at this level were from the interlingual type, with Borrowing representing thirty-four percent, Foreignizing, fifteen percent, and Literal Translation, ten percent of strategy uses. The intralingual strategies of Word Coinage and Approximation were used four and ten percent, respectively. Both retrieval strategies were employed by the grade nine students, with Self-Repair noted 7.5 percent of the time, and Appeals for Assistance, eleven percent. (See Figure 4.40)

The six most successful L2 learners from the grade nine level employed the interlingual strategies most frequently, while reduction strategies were employed least frequently.

Communication Strategies: Grade Eleven

The six most successful L2 learners in grade eleven used a total of eighty-nine communication strategies in this study. The speech samples included examples of each strategy, with the exception of the reduction strategy of Message Abandonment.

The Reduction strategy of Topic Avoidance was noted nine times in the speech samples from this level. Interlingual strategies were employed a total of thirty-eight times and were distributed as follows: Borrowing, twenty-five times, Foreignizing, twice, and Literal Translation, eleven. This group used intralingual strategies on seventeen occasions, with Word Coinage being observed once, Approximation, fourteen times, and Circumlocution, twice. The speech samples of grade eleven subjects contained ten examples of Self-Repair, and fifteen examples of Appeals for Assistance for a total of twenty-five retrieval strategies. (See Figure 4.41)

Figure 4.40

Individual Communication Strategies used by Grade 9 as a Percentage of the Total

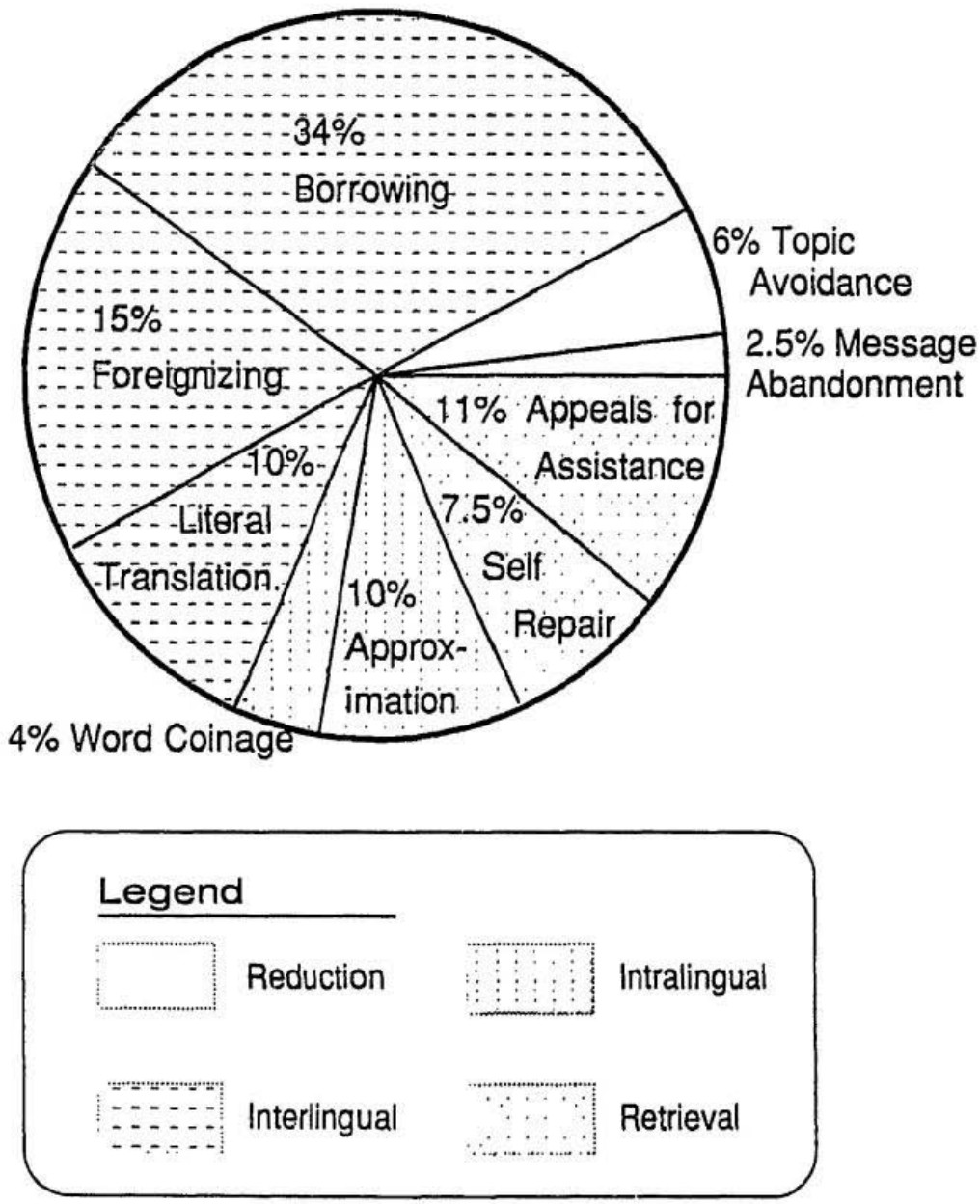


Figure 4.41

Communication Strategies used by Grade 11

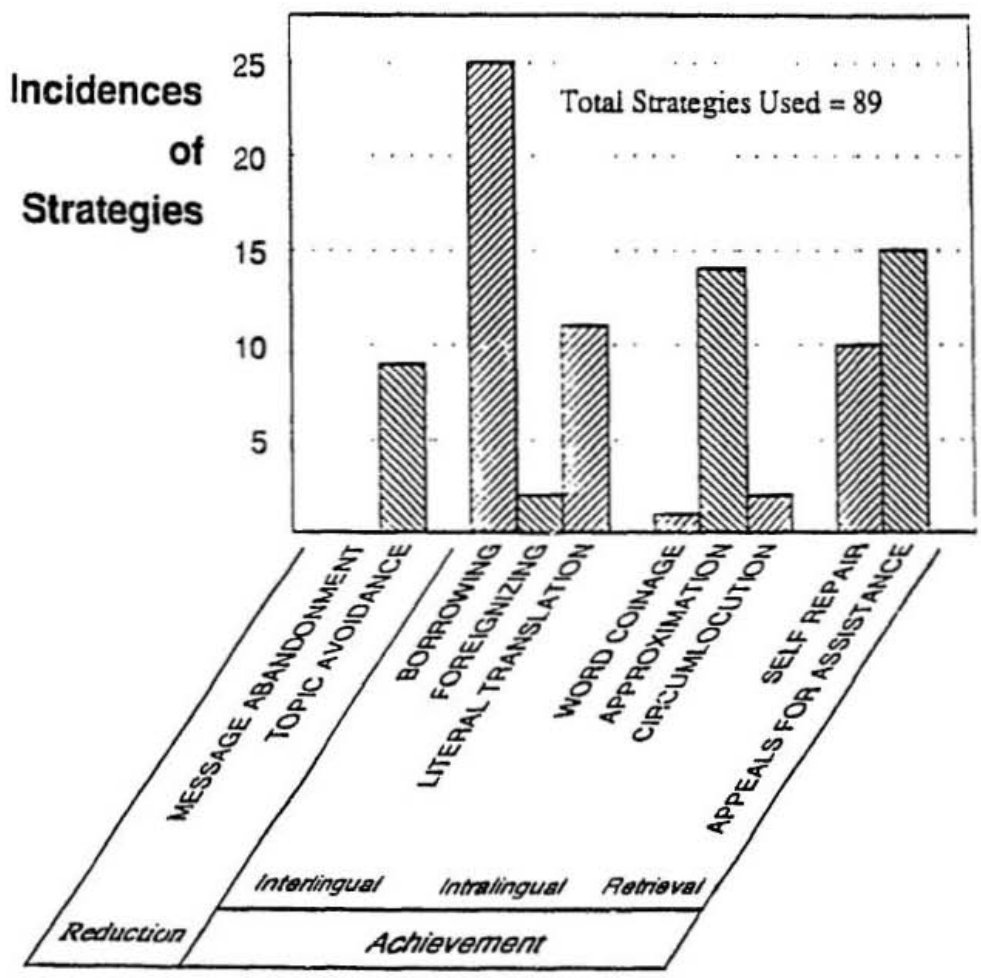
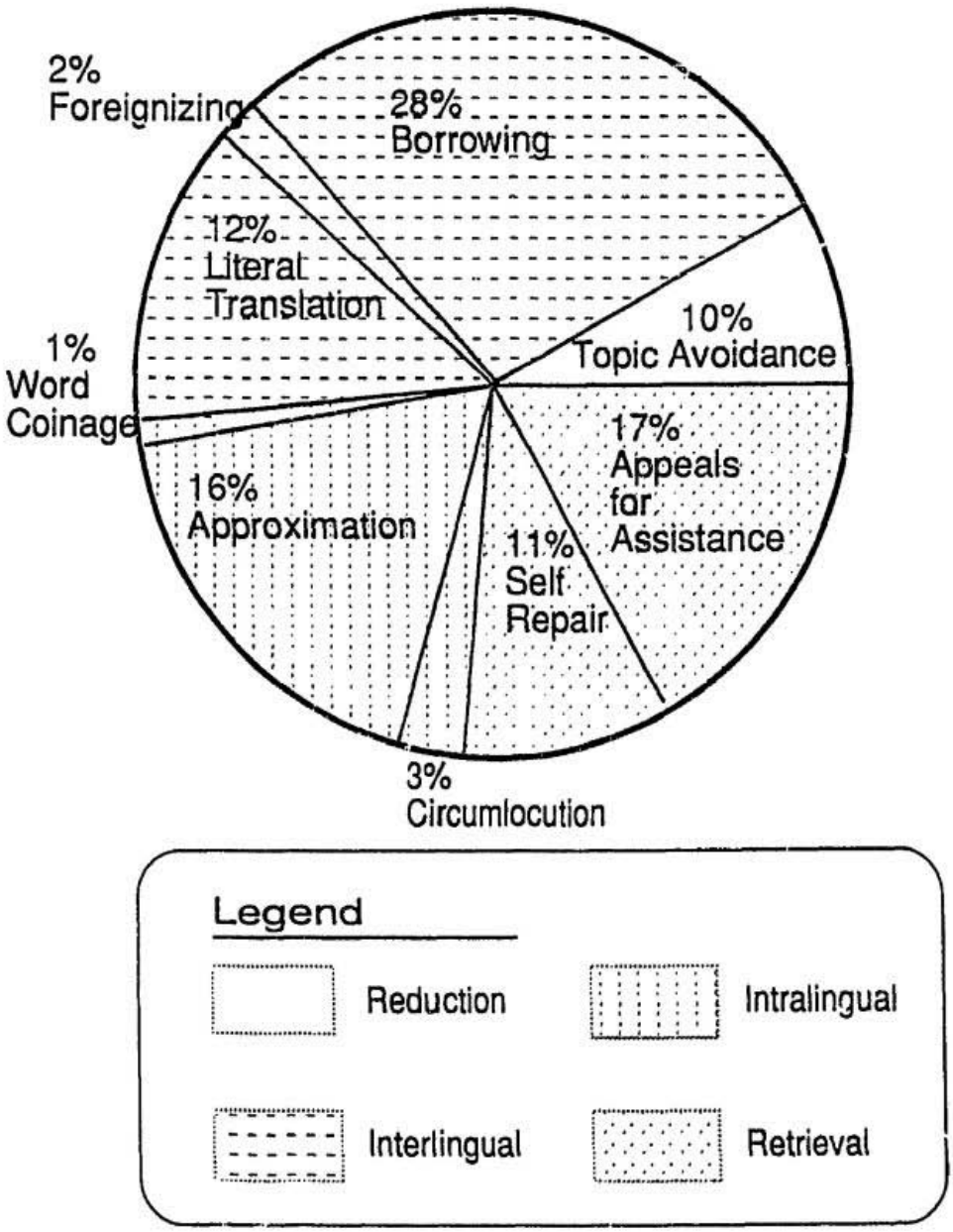


Figure 4.42 indicates that Topic Avoidance represents ten percent of the total strategies used. Interlingual strategies represented forty-two percent of strategy use, and was distributed as follows: Borrowing, twenty-eight percent, Foreignizing, two percent, and Literal Translation, twelve percent. Twenty percent of this group's strategies were of the intralingual type, with Word Coinage, Approximation, and Circumlocution being noted one, sixteen, and three percent, respectively. Grade eleven students employed both retrieval strategies, with Self-Repair representing eleven percent, and Appeals for Assistance, seventeen percent of strategy uses.

The six most successful L2 students at the grade eleven level used the interlingual strategies most frequently, and the reduction strategies least frequently.

Figure 4.42

Individual Communication Strategies used by Grade 11 as a Percentage of the Total



Comparison of Communication Strategy Use by Grades Seven, Nine and Eleven

A comparison of strategy use by the three grades interviewed, showed that students in grade eleven employed the greatest number of communication strategies, while those in grade seven employed the smallest number. This may suggest that as linguistic competence increases, strategy use may increase as well.

As Figure 4.43 shows, the three grades interviewed made use of more Achievement than reduction strategies. Grade sevens employed the reduction strategies more frequently than the other two groups. Considering the amount of exposure to the language by a grade seven student, this finding may suggest that students with minimal linguistic competence tend to rely more on reduction strategies than on the other strategy types.

It was also found that grade eleven subjects made more use of the retrieval strategies than those in grade seven or nine. In comparison to students in the other grades they also used proportionately more retrieval strategies than reduction strategies. The difference is particularly noteworthy when one compares the strategy use of eleventh and seventh grade students. If, as Paribakht (1986) suggests, a relationship exists between the learners' linguistic competence and their strategy use, the greater exposure of Grade eleven subjects to French may be related to their efficiency in correcting their own errors in the language.

This study also found that intralingual strategies of Word Coinage, Approximation, and Circumlocution were used less frequently than interlingual strategies by subjects at all three grade levels. In fact, each grade tended to use interlingual strategies more frequently than any other strategy type. The use of intralingual strategies involves a student modifying the language from within that same language meaning that the student must be capable of manipulating the L2 to get his message across in that code.

As noted earlier, one group of students, the grade seven cohort, made more use of the intralingual strategies; however, as previously mentioned, this may have occurred due to subject eight, who employed eight intralingual strategies, of the total of 20 used by the whole class. This subject could be described as an extrovert and an obvious risk-taker, who would go to great lengths in trying to communicate. The other Grade seven students tended to employ interlingual strategies most frequently when attempting to communicate.

The result showing the interlingual strategies being used more frequently by the three grades in this study may suggest that students in the core French program, even at the grade eleven level, do not have sufficient linguistic competence to manipulate the French language sufficiently to communicate fully in that language. Marrie (1989) found, in her study of early French immersion students, that the more effective communicators used the intralingual strategy of Approximation more than the other strategies, but those subjects were students who encountered communication problems daily and were given opportunity for practice in using what resources they had in order to deal with their communication problems. In contrast, students in the core French program would have been exposed to the language approximately 379 hours (grade seven), 544 hours (grade nine), and 725 hours (grade eleven). These numbers are based on the assumption that, on the average, students begin their study of French at the grade four level, and receive four forty-minute periods of instruction per week. Considering this brief contact with the language, it is not surprising that the linguistic competence of the students involved in this study is insufficient to enable them to use predominantly intralingual strategies.

Answers to Questions Investigated

An analysis of the communication strategies used by subjects in this study show:

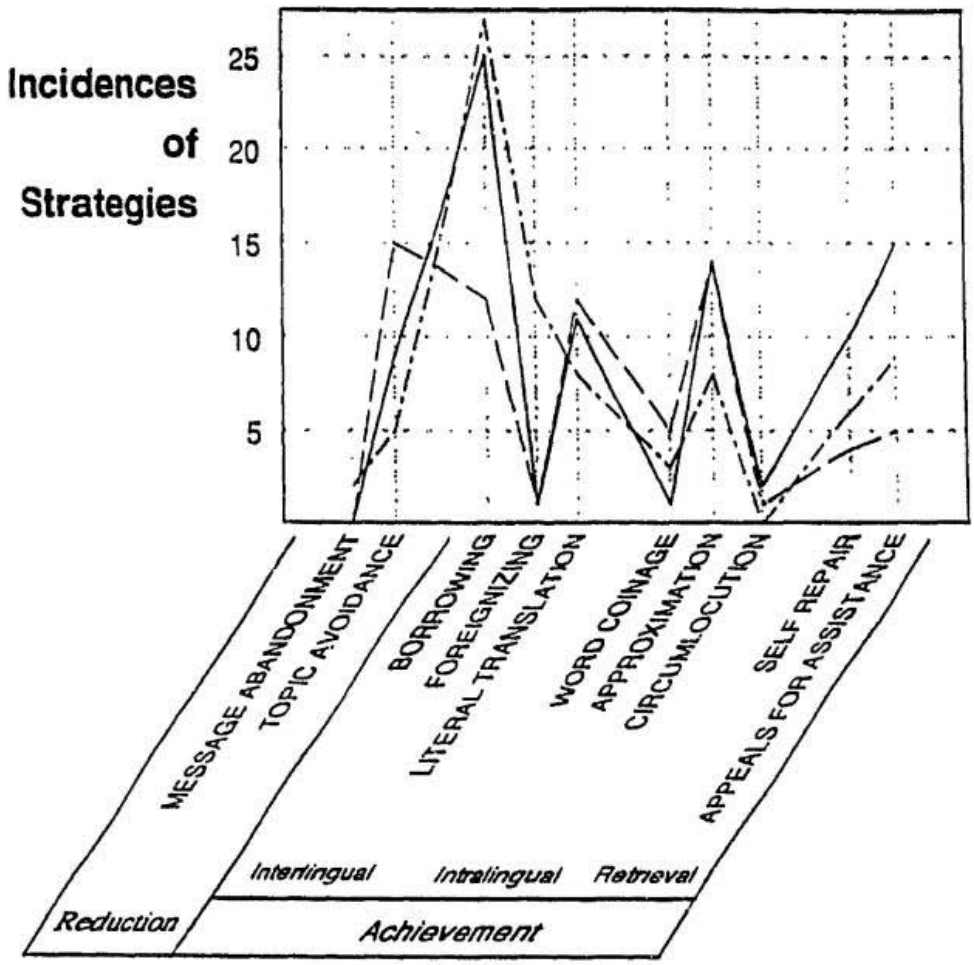
(1) At each level, the interlingual strategies tended to be used most frequently by the most successful adolescent L2 learners. Of the three strategy types in this category, Borrowing was employed most frequently. (See Figure 4.43)

(2) Communication strategy use seems to be related somewhat to the learner's linguistic competence. While cross-grade comparisons indicate a number of similarities in strategy use there is a considerable difference in the number of retrieval strategies used in grade eleven, when compared to grade seven subjects, suggesting that, as linguistic competence increases, students are more capable of manipulating the language to correct their own errors.

The final chapter will discuss the findings of this study in light of findings from previous research, some implications of the findings, and finally, some suggestions for further research in the area of communication strategies.

Figure 4.43

Comparison of Communication Strategy Use by Grades 7, 9, and 11.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will cover four aspects of the current study. It will include a short summary of the study involving the problem, the methodology and results obtained. Secondly, there will be a discussion of the results in light of findings from previous research in this field. Thirdly, this paper will suggest some implications of the results for educators involved in L2 teaching, and fourthly, we will propose some recommendations for further research in this area will be suggested.

Summary of the Study

Background

During the past decade we have witnessed a shift in emphasis in L2 teaching. The focus of L2 methodologies has centred on communicative competence; the goal being the spontaneous use of the L2 in real-life situations. While it is still important to 'know about' a language (linguistic competence), the ability to be able to 'know how to use it' has become increasingly more important. Students are encouraged to get their message across using whatever resources they have at their disposal. CS are the means that students use to solve their communication problems. This study addressed the issue of CS use by younger students, as most of the research in this field has been carried out with adult subjects. We attempted to discover the CS used most frequently by eighteen of the most successful core French students in grades seven, nine, and eleven from three schools, and observed whether the pattern of CS use was constant or variable with groups of learners whose linguistic competence varied.

Methodology

This investigation involved a pre-study sample of twenty-four of the most successful core French students in grades seven, nine, and eleven, from three schools. A speech sample, obtained by means of an interview format, was elicited from each subject. Two judges rated the samples from highest to lowest, based on the ratings in the French 3200 Oral Testing, A Manual for Interviewers (1986), further identifying the six most successful students in each of these three grades.

The eighteen speech samples were then studied for communication strategy use. The researcher used the typology of CS, found in Appendix A, as a guide in the analysis. Ten strategies had already been identified and categorized by previous researchers [Faerch and Kasper (1983), Corder (1983), Savignon (1983), Tarone (1983), Kramsch (1984), and Willems (1987)]. The ten strategies were then categorized into achievement and reduction strategies, with the former being further subdivided into interlingual, intralingual and retrieval strategies [Faerch and Kasper (1983a) and Willems (1987)]. The CS used by each subject were analyzed; the results suggest that:

(1) the CS previously identified as being used by older L2 learners were also employed by students in grades seven, nine and eleven;

(2) achievement strategies were utilized more frequently than reduction strategies by the three levels;

(3) interlingual strategies were the most frequently used strategies, with Borrowing being the most frequently used interlingual strategy;

(4) eleventh grade students employed the greatest number of strategies of the three groups; they also used the greatest number of retrieval strategies.

(5) in comparison to students in grades seven and nine, eleventh grade students used proportionately more strategies then reduction strategies; the difference was particularly noteworthy when comparing the pattern of strategy use by eleventh and seventh grade students.

Discussion of Results

As previously mentioned, most of the research done with CS has been carried out with adults, but it is interesting to note that younger L2 learners are capable of employing the same kinds of CS when faced with communication 'gaps'. In this study the younger subjects tended to use strategies most frequently from the L1-based type. Paribakht (1982) found that adults tend to abandon the L1-based communication strategies as they progress in the target language. Research has shown that adults seem to enter the L2 learning situation with a fairly well-developed strategic competence which appears to have developed in the adults L1 with their increased language experience, while children, with developing cognitive structures and limited linguistic knowledge, are unlikely to have the same level of strategic competence as adults. Bialystok (1979) agrees that learners with greater formal ability in the target language, or more experience in employing CS, may be more likely to use L2-based strategies. Marrie's (1989) study of speech samples from early French immersion students found that grade three immersion students employed L2-based strategies more frequently than L1-based strategies. This concurs with Bialystok's conclusion that students who are given more experience in employing CS, may be more likely to use L2 strategy types. Tarone (1984) also suggests that we would expect foreign language learners who are given practise in dealing with communication problems, to develop the resources needed to use Circumlocution and Approximation (Intralingual

Strategies). From this study it would appear that even at a grade eleven level, students do not have sufficient formal control over the target language and/or enough exposure to communicative situations to be sufficiently skilled to select more L2-based strategies in their communication.

In this study it was shown that students in grade eleven used a greater number of strategies than those in grades seven and nine, and utilized the greatest number of retrieval strategies. Paribakht (1982) also found that learners seem to abandon or adopt certain CS, and, as well, alter their proportional use of certain strategies as they become more efficient in the target language.

As noted previously, the intralingual strategies were used most frequently by students in grade seven, but a possible explanation by reference to this was given for Subject Eight, who probably skewed the results for this group. Had this subject's score reflected more the norm for her group, the grade elevens would have made most use of the intralingual strategies, which is what might be expected.

The results also showed that all students used more achievement, than reduction strategies. It might have been expected that the grade seven group would have employed more of the reduction-type strategies, given their limited linguistic knowledge. The fact that this was not the case, may be a reflection of the recent change in approach to the teaching of French, where students are encouraged to take risks, and are actively involved in situations where the L2 is used as a vehicle for communication. A study done by Piranian (1979) with a group of American University students studying Russian in a formal FL classroom, revealed that her students used far fewer different types of CS than were found in any of the previous studies to that date. The students in the group also seemed

to rely to a very great extent on reduction strategies. The author concluded that the focus of the method may, therefore, have an effect on a student's choice of achievement or reduction strategies.

Implications of the Findings

The findings from this study have certain implications for educators who work in the field of second language education.

(1) Students at the intermediate and senior high levels are capable of using strategies that adults use, to bridge the gap in communication. The teacher, in a communicative syllabus, may need to make the learner aware of CS, since it is possible that learners can be guided to greater communicative success through strategies.

(2) The use of CS facilitate the learner in getting his message across. Strategy teaching may be a useful supplement in providing the learner with 'tools' which could be readily available when a communication gap occurs.

(3) Since the grade eleven subjects were still employing interlingual strategies more frequently than the intralingual ones, we may need to be a little more realistic as to their capabilities, given the amount of exposure they have had to the French language.

(4) With the emphasis on oral language use in Core French, it may be useful for potential French teachers in training to be exposed to the value of CS in achieving this objective of oral proficiency.

(5) A thorough knowledge of existing CS, as part of the communicative approach, is recommended so that potential L2 teachers may be better equipped to help their students in developing communicative competence.

Recommendations for Further Research

Although researchers have begun to investigate L2 learners' strategic competence and its role in the communication process, much work remains to be done in this area. Suggestions for further research include:

(1) A study that would investigate the relationship between learner variables and learners' preference for strategies,

(2) A study of learners' strategy use for different tasks,

(3) Further studies of this type with other teachers to determine to what extent the findings of this study would be replicated,

(4) A similar study involving a larger sample, with more generalizable results,

(5) A comparison study of strategy use by the 'most successful' L2 students and the 'least successful' L2 students in core French, and

(6) A follow-up study using the same subjects in this study to determine if there is a change in their strategy use over time.

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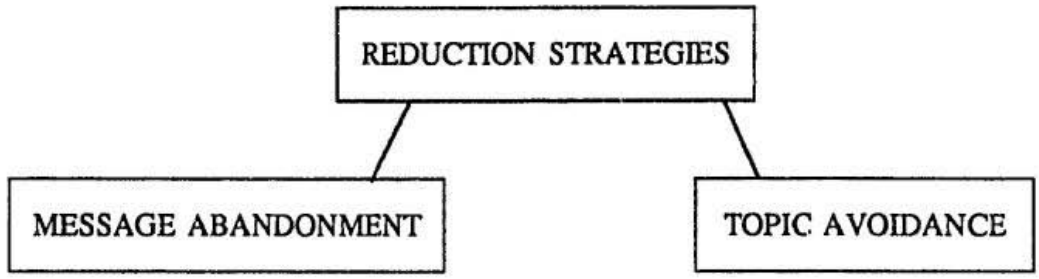
APPENDICES

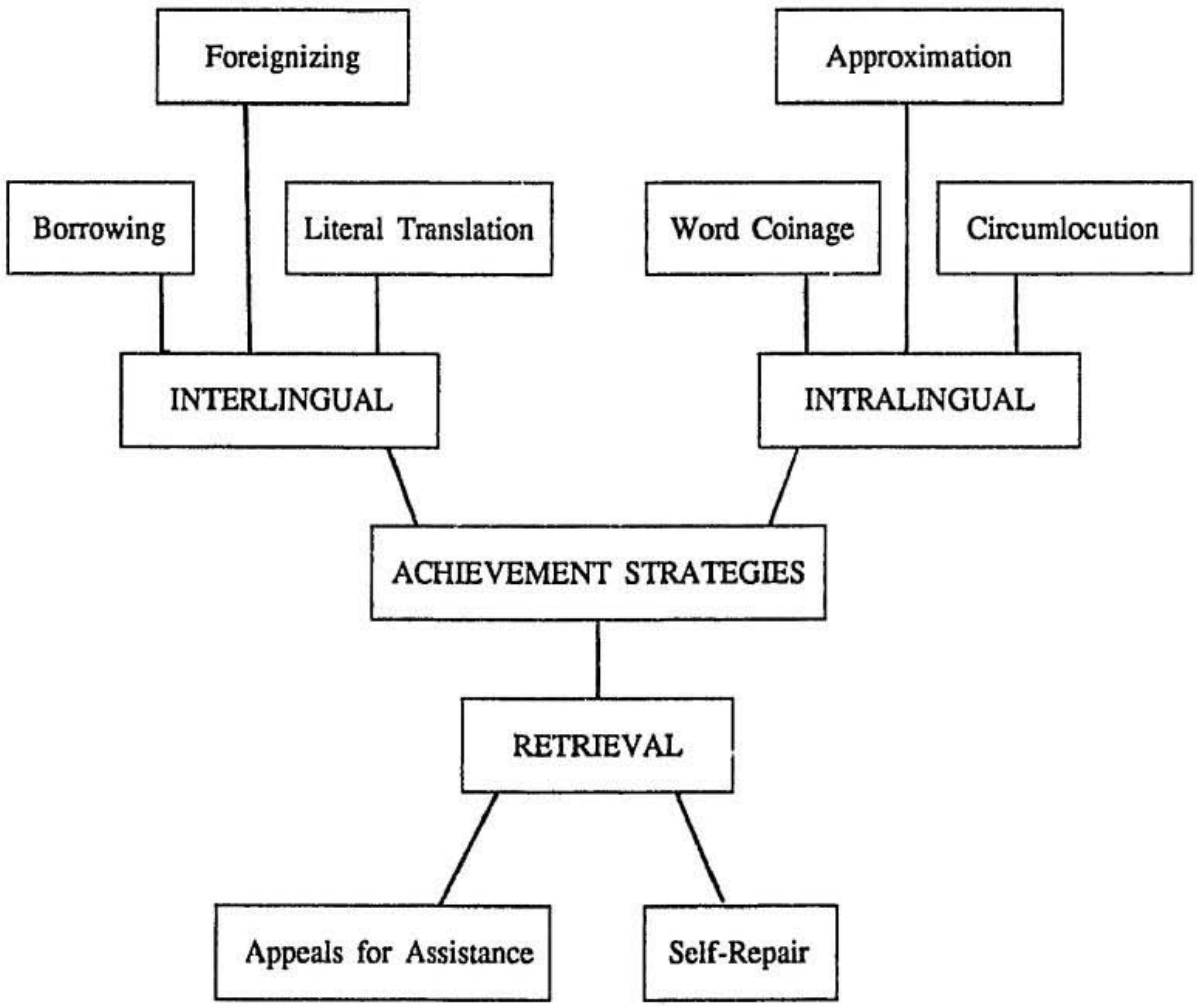
APPENDIX A

Proposed Typology of Communication Strategies
(Developed by the Researcher)

I. Reduction Strategies:



II. Achievement Strategies



APPENDIX B

Description of Proposed Typology of Communication Strategies

I. Reduction Strategies

Strategies a learner uses to reduce his communicative goal in order to avoid a problem.

A. Message Abandonment

The learner stops in mid-utterance when she feels she cannot continue.

Example: "L'homme etait ..."

B. Topic Avoidance

The learner simple refuses to talk.

Example: "Je ne sais pas."

"J'ai oublié."

II. Achievement Strategies

Strategies a learner uses to solve communication problems by expanding her communicative resources.

A. Interlingual (Use of L1)

(i) Borrowing

The learner uses a native language word with a L1 pronunciation.

Example: "Il a mangé des cherries."

(ii) Foreignizing

The learner uses a word from the L1 (mother tongue) with L2 pronunciation.

Example: "/garbáj/ from L1 'gárbage'."

(iii) Literal Translation

The learner translates word for word from the native language.

Example: "Je suis douze."

"Place de feu." (fireplace)

B. Intralingual (Use of L2)

(i) Word Coinage

The learner makes up a new word in order to communicate a desired concept.

Example: "airball" for "balloon".

"heurot" for "clock".

(ii) Approximation

The learner uses a target language vocabulary item or structure which he knows is not correct, but shares enough semantic features with what is needed to satisfy the listener.

Example: "L'animal est dans la rue." (for "la vache")

(iii) Circumlocution

The learner describes the characteristics of elements of the object instead of using the appropriate language item. It may include:

(a) physical properties

- size
- shape
- colour
- material

(b) specific features

(c) functional description

(d) locational features

Example: "C'est un fruit rouge." (for "apple")

"C'est métal et on mange avec." (for "le couteau")

C. Retrieval Strategies

The learner needs some time to retrieve a term or structure which she knows is there but which is not easily available to her.

(i) Self-Repair

Setting up a new speech plan when the original one fails.

Example: "Quand je suis arrivé à le ... à mon auto, ..."

(ii) Appeals for Assistance

Asking for the correct term.

Example: "What is _____ in French?"

"Is that correct?" (Asking is word is correct)

APPENDIX C

Characteristics of the Proficiency Levels as Determined in the *Manual for Oral Testing in French 3200*

Level 1

The student is able to operate only in a very limited capacity within very predictable areas of need.

Description

(i) Vocabulary is limited to that necessary (a) to express basic courtesy formulae, (b) to identify components in such areas as: basic objects, colours, clothing, numbers, weather, time, etc.

(ii) Syntax is fragmented (endings omitted, isolated words, short phrases).

(iii) Frequent long pauses.

(iv) Repetition of interlocutor's words is often necessary.

Level 2

The student is able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances.

Description

(i) No real autonomy of expression.

(ii) Slight increase in utterance length, but frequent long pauses still occur.

(iii) Can handle with confidence vocabulary related to most of the following subject areas: basic objects, colours, clothing, numbers, family members, food, months, time, weather, etc.

(iv) Cannot sustain performance that demonstrates ability to create with language.

(v) Unable to make needs known.

(vi) Some concept of present tense forms of verbs, but usage limited primarily to first person singular and first and second person plural.

(vii) Mistakes are numerous.

Level 3

The student is able to show some spontaneity in language production and to initiate and sustain simple dialogue.

Description

(i) Vocabulary is sufficient to go beyond basic survival needs.

(ii) Can use language creatively.

(iii) Can maintain simple face-to-face conversation.

(iv) Can talk simply about autobiographical details, leisure time activities, and daily schedule.

(v) Some grammatical accuracy in basic constructions, i.e., subject-verb agreement, noun adjective and gender agreement for familiar vocabulary.

(vi) Concept of past time but can only use isolated past tense forms.

(vii) Syntax is generally correct.

Level 4

The student is able to show considerable spontaneity in language production and to initiate and sustain general conversation.

Description

(i) The student can use language creatively to initiate and sustain routine conversation but accuracy may be uneven.

(ii) Is able to produce some narration in past, present, and/or future time, but cannot sustain performance at this level.

(iii) Can use most question forms.

(iv) Some control of past tense forms and basic reflexive verbs.

(v) May be able to use some direct and indirect object pronouns.

Level 5

The student is able to satisfy routine work or school requirements and to communicate in a limited manner on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence.

Description

(i) Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond with circumlocutions on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence.

(ii) Can narrate, describe, and explain in present, past, and future times although errors still occur.

(iii) Can explain points of view.

(iv) Can make factual comparisons.

(v) Speaking performance shows high degree of fluency and ease of speech.

(vi) Is able to use the paritive, demonstrative adjectives, most expressions of quantity, most adverbs, and some idiomatic expression.

APPENDIX D

THE ELICITATION TASK

Interview: Ma Famille

Warm-Up: Bonjour ... Ça va? ... Aujourd'hui nous allons parler de ta famille.

A. Les Personnes dans la Famille

- Déscris ta famille pour moi.

(Grade eleven)

- Combien de personnes y a-t-il dans ta famille?
- Est-ce que tu as un frère? ... une soeur?
- Quel âge a ton frère? ... ta soeur?
- Décris ton frère (ta soeur).
- Est-ce que ton père (ta mère) travaille à l'extérieur de la maison?
- Décris son travail.
- Qu'est-ce que ta mère (ton père) fait dans la maison?
- Est-ce que tu peux décrire ton père? (ta mère?)

B. La Maison

- Où est-ce que tu habites?
- Est-ce que tu aimes ... (town)? Pourquoi?
- Décris ta maison pour moi.
- Est-ce que tu peux décrire ta chambre?
- Qu'est-ce que tu fais dans ta chambre?

C. Les Activités de la Famille

- Est-ce que tu aides ta mère avec le ménage?
- Tu aimes préparer les repas? Quelle sorte de choses?
- Après le souper, dis-moi trois choses que tu aimes faire.
- Après l'école qu'est-ce que ... tu vas faire? (grade eleven) ... tu fais?
- Qu'est-ce que tu fais comme passe-temps?
- Décris ton programme favori à la télé.
- Qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire pendant le weekend? (avec tes parents ... tes amis?)
- Qu'est-ce que tu as fait pendant le weekend passé? (grade eleven)
- Pendant les vacances en été, qu'est-ce que tu fais?
- Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire cet été? (grade eleven)
- Est-ce que tu aimes voyager? Pourquoi?