

FRIGERIO, INES
Second language writ

2008

71262

71262

MFN:
Clasif:
T-792

71202



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE RÍO CUARTO
ESCUELA DE POSTGRADUACIÓN
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS

Maestría en Inglés
Orientación en Lingüística Aplicada

Tesis de Maestría

Second Language Writing: Communication Strategies in
Narrative and Descriptive Texts

de

Ines Frigerio

Directora: María Cristina Astorga

Año 2008

ABSTRACT

The primary data in the field of second language acquisition is learner language, which has been investigated from different perspectives. An important area of research has described and explained what happens when L2 learners attempt to convey meanings in the foreign language being learnt. The concept “communication strategy” was introduced in the research literature in order to explain the difficulties experienced by L2 learners due to a limited command of the target language. Different taxonomies of communication strategies have been developed by researchers to account for those problems.

This cross-sectional, descriptive study investigates a) the relation between the type of communication strategy and the genre attempted in writing, and b) the relation between the students’ perceptions of the difficulties experienced while composing and the identified communication strategies in their written texts.

The corpus consisted of ten descriptive and ten narrative written texts, collected from ten EFL learners attending their first year at the English Training College at Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, and ten questionnaires on the learners’ perceptions of the difficulties experienced while writing the two genres. All these data were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.

The findings showed that L1- and L2-based lexical communication strategies were employed in both genres, with a higher frequency of L2-based ones. It was also found that the students’ responses to the questionnaires were highly consistent with the written texts in relation to the problems they experienced, namely, lexical, as shown by their recourse to lexical communication strategies, and also to the difficulties determined by the genre attempted.

Limitations of this study are discussed, pedagogical implications are suggested, and directions for further research are given, particularly as regards the development of learners’ strategic competence to overcome linguistic difficulties.

To my family

*Esta tesis está dedicada a mi familia,
por su incondicional y constante apoyo durante su elaboración.*

Acknowledgements

I want to thank all the people who in one way or another contributed to the completion of this work.

In the first place, MA María Cristina Astorga, for her invaluable help and constant advice throughout the development of this project.

I also want to thank my colleagues Elisa Cadario, María Inés Valsecchi and Ana María Longhini for providing me with additional material for this work.

Besides, I want to mention my work mates, whose friendship also helped along the way: Silvia Depetris, María Laura Provensal, Laura Severini, María Elena Alonso, Graciela Placci, Romina Picchio, Renata Cardinali, Gabriela Sergi, Celina Barbeito and Gabriela Jure.

While looking up information to start shaping my study, I contacted several leading pioneers in the field of communication strategy research: Elaine Tarone, Nanda Poulisse, Ellen Kellerman, Zoltan Dornyei, Ken Hyland (Personal Communication). They expressed their support in relation to my research interests not only by supplying priceless material, but also through encouraging and challenging comments. Their words and generosity certainly contributed to the realization of the present research.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	9
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	14
2.1 Communication Strategies.....	14
2.2 Communication Strategies in Interlanguage Speech Production.....	15
2.3 Communication Strategies in Interlanguage Written Production.....	16
2.4 Communication Strategies and Genre.....	17
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	22
3.1 Second Language Writing.....	22
3.2 Genre Theory and Second Language Writing.....	24
3.3 Descriptive Texts.....	26
3.4 Narrative Texts.....	27
3.5 Learner Language. Internal and External Factors of Variation.....	29
3.6 A Cognitive Account of Error in Second Language Acquisition.....	31
3.7 Vocabulary Knowledge and Writing Quality.....	32
3.8 Communication Strategies in L2 Use.....	34
3.9 Conceptualizations of Communication Strategies.....	36
3.10 Taxonomies of Communication Strategies.....	38
4. METHODOLOGY.....	45
4.1 Objectives.....	45
4.2 Research Questions.....	45
4.3 Design.....	46
4.4 Subjects.....	46
4.5 Data Collection Procedures.....	46
4.5.1 The written texts.....	46
4.5.2 The questionnaires.....	48
4.6 Data Analysis.....	49
4.6.1 Qualitative Analysis.....	49
4.6.2 Quantitative Analysis.....	50

5. RESULTS	51
5.1 The written texts.....	51
5.1.1 Qualitative results.....	51
5.1.2 Quantitative results.....	51
5.2 The questionnaires	54
6. DISCUSSION	56
6.1 Transfer	58
6.2 Overgeneralization	59
6.3 Paraphrase Approximation.....	61
6.4 Distribution of L1- and L2-based communication strategies across genres	63
6.5 Frequency of appearance of L1- and L2-based communication strategies in the description stage of the descriptive texts.....	64
6.6 Frequency of appearance of L1- and L2-based communication strategies in the complication stage of the narrative texts.	65
The questionnaires	66
7. CONCLUDING REMARKS	68
7.1 Directions for future research.....	69
7.2 Pedagogic implications	70
APPENDIX A: Performance Data: Communication Strategies	72
APPENDIX B: Students' Descriptive and Narrative texts	77
APPENDIX C: The Questionnaire	98
REFERENCES	99

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 5.1: L1- L2-based communication strategies across both genres	51
TABLE 5.2: Percentages of the distribution of L1- and L2-based communication strategies across both genres.....	51
TABLE 5.3: Frequency of appearance of communication strategies in each stage of the descriptive texts	52
TABLE 5.4: Frequency of appearance of communication strategies in each stage of the narrative texts	52
TABLE 5.5: Frequency of appearance of L1- and L2-based communication strategies in each stage of the descriptive texts	53
TABLE 5.6: Frequency of appearance of L1- and L2-based communication strategies in each stage of the narrative texts.....	53
TABLE 5.7: Highest frequency of appearance of communication strategies per stage in both genres.....	54
TABLE 5.8: Task-related difficulty and its causes	54
TABLE 5.9: Percentages of task-related difficulty and of its causes.....	55

*Proper words in proper places make
the true definition of style*

Jonathan Swift, 1720

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on second language acquisition aims at the identification and explanation of the ways through which second language learners comprehend and produce language (Ellis, 1994). Within this field, psycholinguists have researched the internal mechanisms L2 learners activate when expressing their meanings in English. More specifically, a large number of researchers in this area (James, 1998; Myles, 2002; Yates and Kenkel, 2002) have investigated the strategies employed by learners in order to achieve their intended meanings when faced with communication problems.

It has been hypothesized that these problems result from insufficient knowledge of the foreign language, i.e., gaps in the learners' interlanguage. Selinker (1972) postulated the existence of a separate linguistic system –an interlanguage- that in his view could be observed in the learners' output in the target language. In a similar fashion, S.P.Corder (1974) described this system as 'transitional competence', referring to the systematic errors produced by learners from which researchers "are able to reconstruct their knowledge of the language to date" (p. 25). Consequently, learner errors are not seen as detrimental to, or interfering with the learning of a target language, but as evidence of the linguistic system being learnt. Corder points out that the significance of learner errors lies in the fact that, when a learner makes them, there is evidence of a strategy which is, in turn, the result of the hypotheses testing processes he is involved in during learning. Within this view, errors are regarded as a very important source of information about a learner's linguistic development during the learning process.

According to Selinker (1972), second language acquisition researchers interested in investigating learner language and the internal mechanisms underlying interlanguage behaviour should focus their attention on the "only observable data" (p. 34), that is to say, meaningful performance data which consist of the utterances that L2 learners produce when they attempt to communicate messages in the target language. In the field of second language acquisition, different methods have been used to investigate learner language, which range from naturally-occurring samples, through clinically elicited ones to experimentally-elicited samples (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). The present study utilizes clinical elicitation, which involves the use of tasks specifically collected for the purposes of the research, and where learners are primarily concerned with message

conveyance. These samples constitute concrete evidence of learners' strategic behaviour. Communication strategies have drawn researchers' attention, since they are the manifestations of the internal mechanisms activated by learners in their attempt to transmit meanings in the face of a communication problem. When students do not find it possible to use their interlanguage in an unproblematic way, they resort to strategies in order to cope with such obstacles. This ability to handle communication strategies in response to linguistic difficulties forms part of a learner's strategic competence, and is closely related to the creative aspects of language (Faerch & Kasper, 1983b).

As early as 1972, Selinker observed that communication strategies accounted for certain classes of errors that were evidence of a learner's attempt to express meanings with an inadequate grasp of the target language system. Likewise, Haastrup and Phillipson (1983) state that when learners are "manifestly in trouble in putting across" what they intend to express, they "will generally have recourse to a communication strategy" (p. 144). This view is also shared by Brown (2000), who considers that the communication strategies used by learners while trying to get their meanings across "can themselves become a source of error" (p. 227). The insights contributed by Corder, Selinker and other specialists in error analysis have provided the basis for empirical studies that pursue the investigation of psycholinguistic processes underlying performance. Numerous studies (Tarone, 1983; Faerch and Kasper, 1983b; Váradi, 1983; Roca de Larios et al, 1999; Faucette, 2001) have focused on the communication strategies foreign language learners use in order to compensate for "inadequate knowledge when communicating a particular message" (Ellis, 1994, p. 30). In this respect, however, most investigations on communication strategies have dealt with difficulties experienced during oral performance (Blum-Kulka and Levenson, 1983; Haastrup and Phillipson, 1983; Dechert, 1983; Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1983), mainly due to the researchers' interest in the analysis of interactional aspects of communication. Váradi (1983) states, "in order to assess the communicative effect of learners' utterances more precisely, they must be placed into an interactional perspective involving the native speaker's reception and responses" (p. 75). Undoubtedly, this emphasis on oral communication strategies has its origin in the difficulties involved in oral production, such as the considerable attentional resources demanded by oral output (Skehan, 1998), the management of interaction, as well as the negotiation of meaning in real time. Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that the production of written texts is also the outcome of complicated cognitive operations,

which involve, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), different phases: construction, transformation and execution. Furthermore, the difficulties that students may encounter when writing can also be attributed to the nature of the mode. Martin (in Martin and Rothery, 1986) states that writing does not allow immediate feedback, and involves distance from the topic. Therefore, writers need to bring into play all the linguistic resources at hand in order to construct a context-independent text. Along the same line, Richards (1990) argues that "the rules of written discourse are largely learned through instruction and practice" (p. 101), and since the goal of written language is the conveyance of accurate, effective and appropriate information, it demands a more marked explicitness than spoken language (Richards, 1990).

Writing accurately in a second language is beyond doubt a difficult task that entails a lengthy learning process. Research indicates that underlying competences are called upon at the moment of actual performance (Skehan 1998). Ellis (1994) and Tarone (1988) state that the ability to use language appropriately in specific contexts demands that learners draw upon their knowledge of syntax, lexis and discourse, while at the same time being sociolinguistically and strategically competent (Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983).

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) describe writing as the complex combination of content information, rhetorical demands, and reader interpretation. Similarly, Richards (1990) observes that besides "the linguistic organization of written discourse" (p. 101), writers have "to consider the genre of text they are trying to produce" (p. 101) in view of their purpose. In relation to this, Grabe and Kaplan (op.cit.) explain that foreign language learners are expected to "transform their L2 knowledge when the context imposes limiting constraints, i.e., in the face of a complex writing assignment" (p. 115). This means that learning to write requires the manipulation of complex structural, lexical and rhetorical dimensions through specific instruction, due to the intrinsic difficulties involved in composing in a foreign language. More specifically, research on writing processes indicates that writing skillfully entails "planning longer and elaborately, reviewing and reassessing plans regularly, considering solutions to rhetorical problems, as well as considering the reader's point of view in planning and writing, revising in line with global goals, and having a wide range of strategies to call upon" (p. 240).

Composing is a complex activity that demands more content words (Martin and Rothery, 1986) to express meanings efficiently. According to Halliday (1985b), the complexity of writing is lexical, and consequently, a good writer should be able to

control his ability to adjust the lexical density of his text in view of the requirements of the task.

Genre specialists have shown that different genres make different demands on learners. Consequently, they need to be exposed to a variety of text-types within the relevant target genres. Apart from controlling lexical density, writers need to be responsive to the social purposes of written communication. This entails the ability to structure the written texts and to choose the appropriate lexico-grammatical and discourse resources as determined by the genre of the texts (Hyland 2002a). Research in L2 writing has shown that raising learners' awareness on the generic structure of texts has a positive influence on their proficiency as writers (Chimbanga, 2000; Martin and Rothery, 1986). Several discourse analysts believe that genre provides the vehicle through which learners "order their communication experiences during composition" (Chimbanga, 2000, p. 3), and also a context that helps improve their writing skills.

With very few exceptions (Koda, 1993), not much research has been undertaken to investigate the use of communication strategies in writing. However, it is in the early 70s. when Selinker (1972) proposes that oral as well as written products constitute psychologically relevant data to study interlanguage. Scholfield and Katamine (2000) consider it important to investigate the communication strategies employed in written output, as well as the relationship they bear to error.

The purpose of the present study is precisely to investigate what kind of communication strategies first year EFL college learners resort to in order to solve their communication problems when writing. Descriptions and narrations are two of the genres of the language curriculum that they are expected to master.

Formal assessment of these students' written output provided evidence of problems of different kinds:

- a) at the level of the micro-structure of texts: errors in the use of lexico-grammatical resources (non-idiomatic expressions), and
- b) at the level of the macro-structure of texts: errors in the organization and development of ideas affecting the schematic structure – 'stages' - of texts.

This situation has motivated the present study since these beginning L2 writers face a twofold problem: they are simultaneously learning the linguistic code of the target language while being called upon to meet the demands of composing specific genres in that language (Engber, 1995).

Therefore, research into the type of communication strategies our First Year learners tend to apply when writing in English may contribute with knowledge and insight into how they convey their meanings and how they solve their communication difficulties in the written mode across genres.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research into second language writing has directed its attention on a variety of related areas, in the hope of understanding what cognitive processes are activated during composing, which entails the ability to produce or re-produce information taking into account different discourse types (Myles, 2002). The applied linguists Grabe and Kaplan (1996) affirm that since “writing abilities are not naturally acquired”, they involve “training, instruction, practice, experience and purpose” (p. 6). Although there have been many studies about communication strategies, the vast majority have analysed them as problem-solving devices in the process of oral production, and following a variety of taxonomical categories for their identification. However, few investigations have dealt with the interaction between written communication strategies and specific discourse types. This is a topic that has to be investigated in order to study these alternative mechanisms utilized to compensate for gaps in target language knowledge in combination with the context provided by texts with specific generic structures. The present study attempts to address this issue taking into account previous research into communication and compensatory strategies interacting with descriptive and narrative texts, with a focus on lexical difficulties.

2.1 Communication Strategies

It was as early as the late 60s. that S.P. Corder (1967) pointed out the relevance of errors as evidence of a learner’s application of strategies in the discovery of the right forms while learning a language. Some years later, Selinker in his work ‘Interlanguage’ (1972), applied the term ‘strategies of communication’ to refer to certain classes of errors made by L2 learners due to an incomplete knowledge of the target language. In view of these insightful perspectives on second language acquisition, researchers started focusing their attention on language learners’ communication strategies and, as a result, there appeared a profusion of typologies with their classification (e.g. Tarone, Cohen & Dumas, 1983; Faerch & Kasper, 1983a; S. P. Corder, 1983; Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1983; Poulisse, 1987).

2.2 Communication Strategies in IL speech production

Haastrup & Phillipson (1983) explored how learners coped in real communication situations. For this purpose, they set out to investigate how Danish learners of English interacted with native speakers of English in conversations about life experiences that were video-taped. The fact that the English speakers knew no Danish and were not familiar with the Danish style of life put the learners in the position of having to provide the native speakers of English with a good deal of basic information in the target language, which led to some communication disruptions. Drawing on Faerch & Kasper's (1983b) taxonomy of compensatory strategies, the authors found that 'L1-based strategies nearly always lead to partial or non-comprehension, and interlanguage-based strategies often lead to full comprehension' (p. 165). While their findings are inconclusive in relation to which achievement strategy is the most effective, the general pattern that arose in this research is that interlanguage-based strategies have great potential for communicative success.

Bialystok (1983) investigated the strategies employed by a group of Anglo-Canadian learners of French (adults and adolescents) who had received instruction in the L2. The elicitation method consisted of an oral picture-reconstruction task. After analysing the L1- and L2- based strategies applied by the students while describing the pictures to the native speakers so that the latter were able to reconstruct them, Bialystok's results showed that the more efficient strategies are those which are based on the target language and that the best strategy users combine an adequate L2 proficiency and an ability to select the right strategy.

Some years later, in an empirical research designed to explore the relationship between Chinese EFL learners' proficiency and their strategic competence by means of a concept-identification task with native speakers, Chen (1990) reported that the frequency, type and effectiveness of communication strategies vary according to the learners' proficiency level. The strategies identified in this study included, among others, linguistic-based, which are equivalent to L2-based- lexical communication strategies. Despite the fact that the participants' oral output consisted of isolated sentences instead of connected discourse, a major qualitative finding of this study was that

...the linguistic-based communication strategies were more effective in conveying the meaning of the concept, because they stated the necessary and appropriate information in a clear and direct way, which was more informative to the native speaker (1990:175).

Littlemore (2003) researched the communicative effectiveness of different types of communication strategies as employed by French university learners of English. The data, consisting in the oral description of pictures which contained individual items, were classified into three strategy families: substitution, substitution plus, and reconceptualization (Poulisse, 1993). The quantitative and qualitative findings showed that the use of reconceptualization strategies, mainly paraphrasing, appeared to be the most communicatively effective. Although the results of this study cannot be generalized to all language learners in all situations, it was shown how gaps in target language lexis can be overcome by means of the application of communication strategies.

2.3 Communication strategies in IL written production

A more recent contribution to the understanding of how compensatory strategies are used to explain the process behind the production of errors is Olsen's (1999). By means of the elicitation of written compositions by Norwegian school learners of English with little exposure to the target language, the author focused on different categories of errors, among which were lexical deviant forms, and then analysed them following an adapted taxonomy of communication strategies. Despite the fact that not all the errors found in the data are specified in detail, his findings indicate that "less proficient learners use L1 patterns in their L2" (p. 201). The researcher makes the observation that

...less proficient learners will have an interlanguage containing more elements from their native language since they have not reached a stage where the native language is no longer necessary for reference (1999:193)

A further contribution to communication strategies research is Chimbanga's (2000), who carried out a study on these strategies as used in the writing of ESL students' answers to questions in the field of Biology. This research was prompted by the author's concern about the generally low proficiency level of many first year science students in their written communication skills. The collected data consisted in the answers to open-ended questions on biology topics. After a qualitative and quantitative analyses of a large amount of data utilizing an adapted taxonomy, the study showed that those students who were prepared to take risks by exploiting their resource-expansion

strategies tended to do better. The most relevant implication of this study is that tasks that enhance strategic competence might promote overall writing proficiency.

All the studies revised above illustrate different researchers' concern about the relationship that appears to exist between gaps in target language lexical knowledge and the use of communication strategies. However, several differences distinguished these investigations one from the other, such as the subjects' linguistic proficiency level, their learning environments, the taxonomies of communication strategies employed, the medium through which the output was produced, as well as the methodology used to collect and analyze data, and the presentation of results. Specifically, with regard to mode, some researchers investigated communication strategies in oral communication, while others saw the necessity to study them in written production; some decided to have the participants interact with native speakers of English, whereas others chose to obtain their data from written output in response to pictures. Also, some researchers used their own adapted taxonomies, while others followed established categories of communication or compensatory strategies. Analyses of data were carried out by means of either quantitative or qualitative measures, and in some cases both methods were employed.

Notwithstanding the dissimilarities among the above mentioned research studies, they all share a concern about how second or foreign language learners manage to convey their meanings with an inadequate grasp of the target language. General results indicate that through the activation of strategic competence manifested through the use of communication strategies, specific meanings can be transmitted, in spite of lexical gaps.

2.4 Communication strategies and genre

As shown above, there have been a number of investigations related to the application of communication strategies in interlanguage speech production, whereas in writing, this area has received lesser attention. Furthermore, what to the best of my knowledge is lacking in the study of communication strategies is the connection between their use and specific text types.

In the early 80s, and prompted by the need to study "the internal procedures of mental processing" (p. 176), Dechert (1983) set out to analyse the strategies, or procedures, involved in the oral production of interlanguage. He was interested in "what

procedures or levels of representation are actually activated by a second language speaker in the performance of a special task” (p. 176). In order to investigate this, he elicited the production of an oral narration from an advanced EFL learner using cartoons as prompts, and recorded the learner narrating the sequence. His findings were that, despite some linguistic errors in her output, the participant’s underlying narrative structure was coherent, since she was able “to reconstruct the rather difficult visual input quite well” (p. 183).

Fakhri (1984) examined the use of communication strategies in narrative discourse. By means of twelve recorded narrations elicited from one English speaker learning Moroccan Arabic as a second language over a four-week period, the researcher investigated how a particular discourse genre constrained the use of communication strategies. After a qualitative and quantitative analysis on the basis of Tarone’s (1980) taxonomy, Fakhri found that the stage of the genre determined to a large extent the strategy employed. Specifically, he found that the strategy ‘lexical borrowing’ that outnumbered other communication strategies appeared in the ‘episodic component’ (p. 22), which corresponds to Labov’s (1972, in Fakhri, op.cit.) ‘complicating action’. Moreover, the participant managed to convey meanings effectively by using various communication strategies to compensate for linguistic deficiencies.

Another research that focused on the effect of task-related factors on the use of compensatory strategies to solve lexical problems was Poulisse and Schils’ (1989) study. The forty-five participants, who had different levels of language proficiency, were tested on three different tasks: a picture naming/description task, a story retell task, and an oral interview with a native speaker of English. The compensatory strategies employed were categorized as conceptual and linguistic. The data were quantitatively analysed, and showed that the type of strategy applied was not related to the participants’ proficiency level. Instead, factors related to the type of task and context were found to bear a relationship with the choice of compensatory strategy. This means that while in the story retell task and the oral interview “it was possible for the subjects to leave some lexical problems unresolved and yet successfully complete the task as a whole” (p. 37), the picture naming/description task was more linguistically demanding and demanded a higher level of clarity since it “required the subjects to solve all lexical problems”, posed by the photographs presented in isolation (pp. 37-38). This study provides evidence that text types may affect the way L2 learners communicate their meanings in the target language.

In an exploratory investigation on the performance of strategic competence, Yule & Tarone (1990) elicited the oral production of three tasks: a description, a narration and instructions, with the aim of identifying referents, or entities, in each of them. By 'referents' it is meant the "referring expressions used in actual speech" (p. 180). These tasks were designed in order for the communicative act to have a purpose to fulfil (p. 185). After the analysis of the recorded data provided by native and non-native speakers of English, it was found that the narrative task was easy for all the participants, the descriptive task contained more communication strategies because some objects being described were unfamiliar to the participants, and also some degree of overlap of forms used by both groups of students in the instructional task. The relevance of this research lies, as the authors state, in that the tasks proposed "provide opportunities for genuinely communicative activities" (p. 193), leading to the accomplishment of the conveyance of meaning, which is, after all, the ultimate aim of strategic competence. Furthermore, it shows that the application of target language-based communication strategies leads to effective communication.

A further study that established a connection between the application of lexical communication strategies and genre was McClure's (1991). She made a detailed investigation on the use of lexical strategies in L2 narratives by means of a comparison of a large corpus of L1 and L2 written narrations elicited through a silent film. The statistical and descriptive analyses indicated that there was a greater lexical diversity in the stories produced by more advanced students, and that overgeneralization was a common strategy, followed by transfer and circumlocution. Though this study investigated the use of communication strategies in narrative discourse, it did not focus on the section within which they were employed. However, these results are illustrative of the strategic behaviour of language learners during composing both in L1 and L2.

The influence of different types of genre on the quality of foreign language composition was also considered by Koda (1993). Twenty five American college students learning Japanese provided the data, which consisted of descriptive and narrative tasks that were qualitative and quantitatively analysed in order to assess grammar and vocabulary knowledge in relation to the writing demands of each task. The analyses demonstrated that "the tasks posed varying linguistic and rhetorical requirements" (p. 343), and that "vocabulary knowledge contributes substantially to foreign language composition" (p. 337). The author concluded that "narrative tasks may involve more demanding linguistic processing at varying levels, e.g. lexical, than

descriptive tasks” (p. 343). This study reinforces the importance of knowledge of content words for constructing meaning of texts.

One of the latest contributions to the research of communication strategies as applied in specific genres has been a study by Scholfield and Katamine (2000), which re-affirmed the relevance of the concept of communication strategies in relation to written production. One of the purposes of their research was examining the effects of the medium of production-speech vs. writing- on strategy choice. An oral and a written picture description task in English were elicited from twenty PhD students at the University of Birmingham. This task was followed by a written description, this time in the learners’ native language, with the purpose of ascertaining the optimal meaning conveyed in the absence of linguistic problems. The taxonomy of communication strategies employed was Tarone’s (1977, in Scholfield and Katamine, *op. cit.*), and the data were analysed qualitative and quantitatively. Though one group of participants was allowed to resort to a bilingual dictionary for the written task in English, they also resorted to communication strategies for the transmission of meanings. Circumlocution was acknowledged to be the most communicatively successful strategy in both genres. Another conclusion the researchers arrived at was that when learners notice an output problem, some learning may occur along with their attempts to deal with it. This is an inherent notion underlying the concept of communication strategy, as it seems that when learners run short of vocabulary to express their thoughts, certain psycholinguistic processes are activated in order to solve the problem and be able to continue with the cognitive task of composing.

In summary, the literature review of communication strategies as applied by EFL learners in a variety of contexts shows the researchers’ concern with the learners’ application of problem-solving mechanisms. Some have dealt with them in isolated sentences, while others in connected discourse and in some cases, elicited by visual images. Some investigators have focused on the oral verbalization of narrative and descriptive text types. Other researchers have considered how the specific stages of genres can determine the type of strategy utilized, whereas others have been concerned with the use of communication strategies in different text types such as descriptions and narrations, verbalized either in the mother tongue or in the target language, through the comparison of the lexical diversity manifested in each.

Though the results of these studies were varied, they shared some similarities, such as the use of certain communication strategies in specific stages, the focus on

either oral or written media, and mainly, the relevance of vocabulary for meaning-making.

The findings from the above mentioned research serve to illustrate that the investigation of communication strategies as applied by L2 learners may provide insightful information about second or foreign language production processes associated with both the spoken and written modes, and specifically about the way learners deploy their knowledge of the target language to communicate intended meanings using the linguistic resources that have at their disposal. It is my contention that the connection between L2 writing, communication strategies and text types is worthy of investigation because it may throw light into an issue of great concern among second language instructors: given the different types of texts that students are expected to produce in writing, which are the texts that appear more problematic and are, therefore, a source of difficulty? How do learners behave linguistically to cope with such difficulties?.

To sum up, the relationship between the employment of communication strategies and the development of strategic competence has been the focus of plentiful research in second language acquisition in the last two decades. Furthermore, communication strategies have received researchers' attention mostly from the point of view of oral production, in L1 as well as in L2 contexts, and in different fields of study. However, there remain gaps in the research of communication strategies in the written medium (Scholfield & Katamine, 2000). Chimbanga (2000) put special emphasis on the need learners experience when faced with overwhelming communicative problems in writing, by stating that:

...unlike in oral communication where there is shared meaning between the interlocutors, there is no immediate feedback in written communication. Learners must, therefore, find from their linguistic resources the facilitative strategies which will enable them to convey the intended meaning as accurately as possible (p. 3).

The present study seeks to provide some insights into the way L2 learners use communication strategies in the writing of two specific discourse genres, namely, a descriptive and a narrative text.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Second language writing

The complex and dynamic nature of writing, including the composing process itself, has been extensively focused upon and researched in the literature of foreign and second language learning and teaching.

Most specialists in second language writing agree that the ability to write is not “naturally acquired” (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996, p. 6). This means that it is a set of skills- a ‘technology’- that is learnt only through experience and practice, specific training as well as instruction, that “serves social functions and is culturally transmitted” (Grabe and Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 17). Celce-Murcia and Olshtein (2000) also support the view that writing is often perceived as the most difficult skill since “it requires a higher level of productive language control than the other skills” (p. 161). According to some L2 writing investigators, the cognitive demands of composing in a foreign language are diminished when the writers are aware of the fact that writing is, simply, the process of making meaning by means of the linguistic resources at their disposal. Wray and Medwell (1991) regard composing as a “creative act involving the moulding of ideas and the creation and ordering of knowledge” (p. 117). Within this perspective, language is viewed as “a means of making sense of one’s world” (p. 117).

In order to improve the quality of the written products of foreign language learners of English as well as to make writing instruction relevant to students’ academic lives, Hyland (2002a) observes that instructors should direct their attention to “the ways individuals write, the issues they consider when composing, the texts they produce, and the strategies they can use” (p. 150). Long and Richards state that “the teaching of writing is based on an understanding of the nature of texts, cognitive processes, learners, participants, and learning contexts” (in Kroll, 2003, preface). James (1998) emphasizes the importance of the teaching of writing by expressing that “it is in the written medium that both native and second language users need to conform to a standard” (p. 44) in order to be linguistically accurate to be understood by a wide readership.

In the 1980s, the interest in writing shifted from considering it from the point of view of sentence-structure to that of discourse-level structure, and this shift opened the way towards seeing this activity as purposeful, “to resolve real-world language-based problems” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 1). Under the influence of several researchers

(Flower and Hayes, 1981; Zamel, 1982, 1985; Raimes, 1985, 1987; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), writing started being viewed as the outcome of a “thinking process in its own right” (White & Arndt, *op.cit.*, p. 3). This new perspective on how text is composed emphasized the concept of attention to meaning, and not just form. Researchers found that the act of creating text responds to multiple and recursive facets, from generating ideas, focusing, structuring, drafting, evaluating, re-viewing, to editing (White & Arndt, *op.cit.*). By observing “what actually goes on when people write” (White & Arndt, *op.cit.* p. 3), specialists in L2 writing started investigating the cognitive skills involved in the highly intricate mechanism of writing. Nunan (1989) describes the process of writing as the evolution of the composing act “through several stages as writers discover, through the process, what it is that they are trying to say” (p. 36), and observes that there is a transformation and refinement of ideas “as the writer writes and rewrites” (p. 36). Also Cohen (1990) makes reference to the recursiveness of this approach, as “writers go back to go forth”, and emphasizes its pedagogic value by stating that “the writer’s awareness of writing processes is heightened” (p. 105).

Evidence from research on process writing has demonstrated that writing goes beyond the application of linguistic and rhetorical rules. It has been shown that it is a problem-solving activity during which writers apply strategic behaviour with the purpose of dealing effectively with the difficulties encountered during the production of a coherent message. According to White & Arndt (*op.cit.*), what differentiates a process-focused approach from a product-centred one is that the outcome of writing, i.e., the text, has not been pre-conceived by analyses of model texts; on the contrary, process writing enables students to exert control over the cognitive operations and strategies so that the generated text will be the result of a discovery process by the writers themselves.

In their critique of process writing, L2 writing researchers like Hyland (2003) sustain that process models fail to inform learners of the ways social context affects linguistic outcomes, and Martin (1993, in Hyland, *op.cit.*) states that process-centred techniques do not allow learners to participate in valued discourses. In a similar fashion, Grabe & Kaplan (1996) point out that apart from considering the process-oriented perspective on writing, it is also necessary to address issues of “audience and social context” (p. 37) in relation to the written product.

Realizing the need for more socially-oriented views of writing, some researchers (Swales 1990) laid the foundation of the genre-based approach to the teaching of

language through which a new perspective was added: writing began to be considered not only a set of cognitive abilities but as a purposeful activity by means of which meanings are socially constructed in response to different contexts and communities. Also, Kress (1994) considered that “texts are social objects” (p. 221), recognizable as genres and that the knowledge of generic forms constitutes a requirement to be fully competent in writing. Similarly, Hyland (2003) emphasized the social value of genre and its relationship with writing as a “resource for constructing our relationships with others and for understanding our experience of the world” (p. 28).

From a pedagogic point of view, research insights have proved that a genre-based approach to writing empowers L2 learners to produce, by means of a conscious manipulation of adequate linguistic choices, target text types that are distinct and recognizable in terms of their purpose, audience and message (Macken-Horarik, 2002). Furthermore, as Johns (2002) points out, the conventions of a genre and its context have a strong influence on the features of a text. Consequently, student writers need to conform to those boundaries through specific genre instruction to be able to control specific text types.

3.2 Genre theory and second language writing

Within the area of L2 teaching and learning, the notion of genre has been given a predominant role. As early as 1981, the term ‘genre’ was employed by Elaine Tarone and John Swales to refer to the discourse structure and linguistic features of scientific research reports. This term is also used in relation to the teaching of academic writing to ESL students, since it is considered as an “organizing principle for the development of language learning programs” (Paltridge, 2001, p. 3).

Various schools of genre have emerged in response to their “different conceptions in terms of the research and pedagogies they encourage” (Hyland, 2002b, p. 114).

Hyland (op.cit.) describes the three orientations to the genre approach as follows:

- The New Rhetoric group concerns itself with investigating contexts, studying genre “as the motivated, functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation” (Coe, as cited in Hyland, op. cit. p. 114). Research methodologies of this school are ethnographic rather than text analytic, and aim at exploring attitudes, values and beliefs of the communities of text users that genres imply and construct.

- The ESP approach to genre emphasizes the communicative purpose and formal properties of text. Genre stands for “a class of communicative events employed by specific discourse communities whose members share broad communicative purposes” (Swales, in Hyland, op. cit. p. 115).
- The ‘Sydney School’, based on the theoretical work of Michael Halliday’s (1994) *Systemic Functional Linguistics*, puts emphasis on the social purpose of genres as it regards language as systematically linked to context, and aims at describing the schematic structures that serve them. Martin (1984) defined genre as “a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture” (in Paltridge, 2001, p. 11). Gerot and Wignell (1994) also emphasize the functional aspect of genres by asserting that “genres arose in social interaction to fulfill humans’ social purposes” (p. 190). Specialists of this school study the specific stages of genres, together with patterns of lexico-grammatical and cohesive devices which “construct the functions of the stages of the genres” (Rothery, as cited in Hyland, op. cit. p.115).

Despite their differences, what the three approaches to the study of genre share is “an attempt to describe and explain regularities of purpose, form and situated social action” (Hyland, op. cit. p. 115).

Several theoreticians refer to the main features of a genre-based approach to writing. Paltridge (2001) states that the systemic functional theory of language explains how language works “in terms of the choices a speaker or writer makes from the language system in particular contexts of use” (p. 2). Hyland (2002b) argues that genres bring the social and the cognitive together, because they play a key role in the way users of a language “understand, construct and reproduce social realities” (p. 114). Similarly, Johns (2002) believes that when writing takes place in situations in which context is defined by the genre, “texts are viewed as genre exemplars: purposeful and situated social responses” (p. 3).

The Hallidayan (1993) view that language serves the purpose of making meaning and that it varies in relation to content and context implies that student writers have to be able to select the linguistic patterns that suit the meanings they are aiming at. Different genre specialists have focused on the schematic structures and linguistic features of various genres. Gerot and Wignell (1995) observe that “since genres are culture-specific, they have particular purposes, particular stages-distinctive beginnings,

middles and ends-, and particular linguistic features, associated with them". Martin (1989) argues that when students integrate language, content and context, they are able to control information through the practice of genres that demand this integration. In a similar way, Paltridge (2001) points out that in order to empower learners for successful communication and allow them to access "socially powerful forms of language" (p. 3), writing instructors can make learners aware of the rhetorical organization and linguistic features of the different genres, as well as stress the socio-cultural purpose each of them serves. Johns is in favour of the explicit teaching of genres in language classrooms so that learners can "acquire knowledge that they can use in undertaking tasks beyond the course in which such teaching occurs" (in Kroll, 2003, p. 197), and acknowledges that by understanding the "genres of culture", students will be able to "enter academic life" (p. 201).

Different genres exhibit a typical, internal schematic organization constituted by the 'stages' that characterize each genre, as well as by "the patterns of lexical, grammatical, and cohesive choices which construct the function of the stages of the genres (Rothery, as cited in Hyland, 2002, p. 115). It is widely recognized now that genre-based instruction constitutes a pedagogic practice that raises learners' awareness of the "expectations of the context of communication" (Paltridge, 2001, p. 8) and the social purposes of different genres.

In the local educational context, the students in the English Training College at Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto need to have control over a variety of written genres, including descriptive and narrative texts that are the first genres they begin to produce in English. Therefore, choosing these two genres as focus of research may provide insights into the problems that our learners experience specifically in relation to these text types. Following the systemic linguists, the term 'text type' is used as synonymous with 'genre'. Currently, some specialists are concerned with establishing the differences between these two concepts (Paltridge, 2001).

3.3 Descriptive Texts

Genre specialists (Gerot and Wignell, 1994; Evans and Dooley, 1999; Unsworth, 2001; Droga and Humphrey, 2003) agree that the social function of descriptions is to describe a particular person, place or thing.

Their generic structure develops along two stages: the identification stage, in which the phenomenon to be described is identified and introduced, and the description stage itself, in which parts, qualities, attributes, behaviour and other characteristics are detailed. Besides, there may be an optional recommendation stage, which expresses the writer's feeling or opinion concerning the subject.

The lexico-grammatical features typical of descriptive texts are: the use of simple present tense, the use of attributive and identifying processes, frequent use of epithets and classifiers in nominal groups, lexical cohesion achieved by repetition, class/sub-class and whole-part relationships. Descriptive texts are concerned with individualized participants.

3.4 Narrative Texts

Narratives, one of the story genres, have a common social purpose of entertainment (Rothery and Stenglin, 1997). More specifically, they “amuse, entertain, and deal with actual or vicarious experience in different ways” (Gerot and Wignell, 1994, p. 204). Similarly, Butt et al (2001) believe that the social purpose of narratives is “to construct a pattern of events with a problematic and/or unexpected outcome that entertains and instructs the reader or listener” (p. 9). Also, Toolan (1988) defines this genre by saying that it speaks of “non-randomly connected events: a connectedness which is motivated and significant” (p. 7). In a narrative, the specific, individualized participants perform active roles all along its generic structure.

As early as 1972, William Labov proposed his six-part structure of a fully formed narrative: the abstract, the orientation, the complicating action, the evaluation, the result or resolution, and the coda (In Toolan, *op. cit.* p. 152).

The functions of the stages of narrative texts have been defined by specialists as follows:

- The abstract, which is one of the optional moves, outlines the story, and sketches it in a severely abridged form. It gives a prospective evaluation of what is to come (Rothery and Stenglin, 1997, p. 236)
- The orientation specifies the participants and circumstances, especially of place and time, i.e., the setting. Toolan (1988) points out that its more usual position is between the abstract and the complicating action, though sometimes some components of the orientation may be “strategically delayed” (p. 155).

- The complication is realized by an activity sequence which deals with some disruption of usuality so that the actions constitute a problem for the participants (Rothery and Stenglin, *op. cit.* p. 233). Toolan (1988) calls this stage “the obligatory nucleus” (p. 153).
- The evaluation conveys the narrator’s personal involvement, and when well placed, it creates suspense and arouses interest. According to Rothery and Stenglin, the evaluation attaches significance to the different events by building up tension. Although in Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) model this stage is between the complication and the resolution, Martin (1988) claims that it may be found at almost any point in the telling since it expresses interpersonal meaning that may spread throughout the whole story. Astorga et. al (2003) provide empirical evidence that confirms Martin’s hypothesis.
- The resolution describes how the problem or crisis is resolved and normal events are re-established. Rothery and Stenglin (*op.cit.*) call this obligatory stage “a return to some kind of stability” (p. 239).
- The coda is another optional stage that signals the “sealing off” of the narrative (Toolan, *op. cit.* p. 161). In Rothery and Stenglin’s view, it resembles the abstract in that it gives an overall evaluation of the events, but retrospectively (p. 237).

The functional labels for each stage have a semantic orientation which aims to capture both the function of the stage in achieving the semantic unity of the text and its role in achieving the genre’s social purpose (Rothery and Stenglin, *op. cit.*, p. 236).

The typical linguistic features of a narrative are: the use of past tenses (as unmarked choice), verbal groups representing thoughts, sayings and relations, prepositional phrases, adverbs or adverbial clauses locating the story in time and place.

Existing research into genre has enriched the field of foreign language writing. However, although there have been studies on communication strategies employed in oral narrative texts as well as in descriptive texts (Bialystok, 1983; Poulisse and Schils, 1989; Yule and Tarone, 1990), little research seems to have been carried out on the application of those strategies in relation to the stages of different genres in the written mode. It can be speculated that this might have been due to the fact that at the time of those first studies, there was not yet an informed theory of genre that detailed the specific features of the genres including their stages as we can count on at present.

3.5 Learner Language. Internal and external factors of variation

For several decades now, research in foreign and second language acquisition has been focusing on the description of learner language, or interlanguage, and on how it varies under the influence of internal and external factors.

In his seminal paper *'Interlanguage'*, Selinker (1972) proposed that second language learners develop along a separate linguistic system that he named 'interlanguage', resulting from the learners' attempted production in the target language. Selinker's research on interlanguage led him to claim that there is systematicity in it, which is evidenced by recognizable strategies, or cognitive activities, involving "the processing of L2 data in the attempt to express meaning" (in McLaughlin, 1987, p. 62). Selinker also observed that the relevant data are the utterances produced by L2 learners in speech or writing, as they try to communicate meanings in the language they are in the process of learning. Tarone and Yule (1989) observe that this interlanguage is "distinct from the systems of both, the first and second languages" (p. 73). Likewise, S. Pit Corder in 1967, and William Nemser in 1971 introduced the terms 'transitional competence' and 'approximative system' respectively, to name these intermediate systems, and proposed that learner language will develop on the basis of input, from "non-existent knowledge towards native-like competence without necessarily reaching it" (Laufer, 1998, p. 255). This interlanguage is observable in every point in the learner's language development, view that is shared by Tarone (1998) when she states that it is "the linguistic system revealed when learners are involved in authentic, situated L2 use" (p. 71), and which exhibits unique characteristics. McLaughlin (1987) refers to interlanguage as a system that "evolves over time as learners employ various internal strategies to make sense of the input and to control their own output" (p. 62). Interestingly, James (1998) defines this interlanguage as "the learners' version of the target language" (p. 3), as it shows their efforts, sometimes successful, sometimes not, to meet their communicative goals.

The concept of interlanguage is, in Ellis's view (1994), essential for an understanding of "the mental processes responsible for second language acquisition" (p. 350). It constitutes a construct that makes reference to the development of a linguistic system both at "a single point in time" as well as its progress "over time" (p. 350). Under this perspective, many key issues in second language acquisition can be addressed, such as the nature of the processes underlying interlanguage construction and most importantly, the reason why "most learners do not achieve full target language

competence” (p. 351). Ellis (1994) points out that the theory of variability in interlanguage has shed more light into the way learners perform in a second language, since “language learners seem particularly prone to variability” (p. 22).

The notion of interlanguage variation is closely connected to that of systematicity in the language produced by second language learners. Tarone (1988) explains that variation is systematic because it can be predicted by rules. For example, empirical research into interlanguage has been able to demonstrate that the learners did not use the same forms in the same way all the time, thus showing variation, and that such variation could be predicted by rule: learners were expected to be more accurate in the use of the same forms in tasks that required more attention to form, such as grammaticality judgement tests (Tarone, 1985). In relation to these observations, S.P. Corder proposed that “learner language should be viewed not only as systematic, but also as unstable, i.e. changing over time, and creative, i.e. with rules unique to itself, not just borrowed from the native language” (in Tarone, 1988, p. 9).

In Ellis’s (1994) opinion, systematic variability takes place in the presence of external factors related with “the linguistic context, which concerns the elements surrounding the variable structure in question, the situational context, dealing with participants, setting, topic, and the psycholinguistic context, related with planning and monitoring. Several researchers have defined interlanguage variation from two perspectives: as internal, independent of the target language system, and as external variation, “determined by the use/non-use of predetermined language forms in obligatory context” (Tarone, 1988, p. 11). Research evidence has demonstrated that the students’ performance of different tasks brings about a considerable variation in the output (Larsen-Freeman, 1975; Tarone, 1988; Tarone and Yule, 1989; Koda, 1993). Ellis (1994) expands on the notion of task-induced variability as context-induced, since “a particular task creates specific contexts of use which influence the forms a learner chooses to use” (p. 138). This means that the target language resources to be employed by learners in the production of the elicited data are determined by the contextual environment.

Given that previous research findings have shown that students perform differently in response to different tasks, I hypothesize that, in the present study, the students investigated are likely to perform differently resorting to different communication strategies in view of the demands of each mode of discourse, or what

can be called a genre-related variation. Indeed, genre is one of the factors mentioned by Ellis (1994) that “can bring about variation in learner output” (p. 49).

3.6 A cognitive account of error in Second Language Acquisition

When EFL/ESL learners try to produce the target language, it is likely that faulty linguistic behaviour shows up. As Selinker (1992) clearly expressed, “interlanguage begins when one attempts to express meaning in the target language” (p. 31).

S. Pit Corder’s insights on error analysis provided a breakthrough in interlanguage studies as he was the first in seeing errors as windows into learners’ interlanguage competence, and he conceived errors as “a learning strategy perhaps necessary to promote second language acquisition” (in Selinker, 1992, p. 144).

As early as 1967, Corder observed that mother tongue acquisition and second language learning ‘are governed by the same underlying mechanisms, procedures and strategies’, though he also pointed out that it is likely that mother tongue knowledge is a facilitator for the learning of another language. Also, the presence of errors is, in his view, a manifestation of the existence of ‘an independent system of language’, unlike L1 or L2, which signals a “transitional competence” (p. 25). Corder (1974b) used the concept of “idiosyncratic dialect” –the learner’s version of the target language- to explain that the utterances produced by second language learners are unique. Corder (1974b) also hypothesized that “some at least of the strategies adopted by the learner of a second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired” (p. 22).

For some error analysts such as Selinker (1992), “errors are that part of interlanguage performance judged to be deviant from an idealized target language norm in some way” (p. 118). Along the same line, James (1998) states that a foreign/second language learner’s linguistic production is labelled as wrong when there exists “a discrepancy between what this particular learner (or some typical population of learners) tends to say and what the collective entity of native speakers (or the ideal native speaker) tend to say” (p. 83).

The presence of learners’ systematic errors enables instructors as well as researchers to reconstruct their transitional competence, i.e., their interlanguage development to date (Corder, 1974a). They are also evidence of “what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language” (Corder, *op. cit.*,

p. 25). From a cognitive point of view, errors can be regarded as strategies the learner employs to test hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. This is, in Corder's (1974a) conception, the significance errors have: the fact that learners themselves investigate "the systems of the new language" (p. 27).

In the literature on Error Analysis a distinction is drawn between interlingual and intralingual sources of errors. The former, also called negative transfer or interference, "reflect the influence of the learner's first language" (Mc Laughlin, 1987, p. 68). On the other hand, intralingual errors are explained by Richards (1974) as "items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language" (p. 6). They reflect learners' transitional competence, because they sometimes "derive from the strategies employed by the learners during language acquisition" (Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 182).

To conclude, learners' attempts to refer to linguistic entities in the target language enter within the category of communication strategies. As Faerch and Kasper (1983b) claim, "the use of a communication strategy presupposes a problem" (p. 53). This problem, they state, may be due to lack of knowledge of the appropriate term, to difficulty to retrieve it, or to the fact that the item is problematic from a correctness or fluency point of view.

Several empirical studies have demonstrated that lexical errors are serious since it is through lexis that "language impinges with content" (James, 1998, p. 229).

The present study is oriented towards lexical communication strategies because my previous experience as instructor of similar groups of students enabled me to detect a recurrent problem that the students showed to have in classroom practice: lack of lexical resources that prevented them from transmitting their meanings efficiently.

3.7 Vocabulary knowledge and writing quality

Extensive research on vocabulary has demonstrated that knowledge of lexis in the target language is fundamental for the development of comprehensible writing. In Read's (2000) opinion, in order to help our learners of English as a foreign language to meet their communicative needs, the area of vocabulary teaching ought to be conceived as a priority.

Teachers of English as a foreign language should envisage the area of vocabulary development as a primary concern, since lexical deficiencies have proved to be an

obstacle both to meaning and communication: “when the wrong word is used, meaning is very likely to be obscured” (Santos, 1988, p. 84). Lexical competence is at the heart of communicative competence. Nunan (1995) considers that “the development of a rich vocabulary is an important element in the acquisition of a second language” (p. 118), and Rivers (in Nunan, 1995) has also argued that “the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful language use” (p. 117), while Singleton (1999) affirms that “the amount of L2 vocabulary that is actually learned has a major impact on the capacity of the learner to perform various skills in the L2” (p.183). Similarly, Schmitt (2000) maintains that lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to second language acquisition.

The importance of lexis has also been acknowledged by second language acquisition specialists. Skehan (1998) favours the view that “language is much more lexical than is usually accepted” (p. 29). He proposes a model of L2 learning that includes the existence of two systems: a rule-based, analytic one, and an exemplar or lexically-based system. The former is in charge of computing well-formed sentences, while the latter is occupied by a very large memory system of lexical elements. According to Skehan (1998), the combined operation of both systems would account for interlanguage development (p. 53), though he acknowledges that a lexical basis is necessary to achieve native-like fluency.

Drawing on Halliday (1985b), Gerot and Wignell (1995) state that written language tends to be complex from the lexical point of view, as well as being “lexically dense” (p. 161) and that the meanings of any written text depend on its lexical density.

Many researchers have concentrated their attention on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and writing ability. Raimés’s (1985) findings proved that “... writers were hampered by a lack of language, particularly vocabulary”, and claimed that “to generate, develop and present ideas, our students need an adequate vocabulary” (p. 248). Her opinion is shared by Grabe, who states that “lexicon is a significant component in both the construction and interpretation of meaningful text” (as cited in Engber, 1995, p. 141). Drawing on Santos’s (1988) research on essay writing, Engber (op. cit.) acknowledges the importance of retrieving vocabulary efficiently so that meaning is not obscured by the use of wrong words.

The importance of vocabulary in academic writing has also been emphasized from the pedagogical point of view. In studies by Silva (as cited in Leki, 1992) and Leki and Carson (1994), it was found that ESL students felt that a limited vocabulary affected the

quality of their written products, while in Santos's (1988) work, writing instructors expressed that the lexical deficiencies were judged as the most serious of all language errors.

Vocabulary size is another relevant research issue related to L2 writing quality. Laufer (1998) considers vocabulary size to be of crucial importance to ESL language learners, as "learners themselves associate progress in language learning with an increase in the number of words they know", and she cites studies which claim that vocabulary size "correlates with writing quality" (p. 256). Furthermore, Laufer and Nation (1995) regard the writer's vocabulary size as one of the "major determinants of the vocabulary used in written production". They argue that "a well-written composition, among other things, makes effective use of vocabulary" (p. 307).

The importance of vocabulary has also been considered in relation to L1 and L2 writers. Leki (1992) found that, in order to generate the necessary vocabulary, L2 writers are at a disadvantage in relation to L1 writers, since they need more time to retrieve it. Raimes (as cited in Leki, *op. cit.*) concluded that "compared to first language writers, ESL students need more of everything: more time, more contact with English, more opportunity to read and write" (p. 82).

The fact that lexis is now recognized as central to any language acquisition process has been summarized by Mc Carthy:

No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way". (as cited in Laufer, 1997: p.140).

3.8 Communication strategies in L2 use

In the model of communicative competence developed by Canale and Swain (1980), there exist four areas of knowledge and skill: grammatical competence, concerned with mastery of the language code, sociolinguistic competence, related to sociocultural rules and rules of discourse, discourse competence, concerned with cohesion in form and coherence in meaning, and strategic competence, the capacity that relates language competence with knowledge of context of communication, and is concerned with mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (Canale, 1983, Bachman, 1990). Communicative competence involves, in Canale's (1983) terms

“what one knows about the language and about other aspects of communicative language use, as well as how well one can perform this knowledge in actual communication” (p. 5). Similarly, Bachman (1990) described communicative language ability as “both knowledge, or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use” (p. 84).

Canale and Swain’s (1980) approach was further developed by Bachman (1990). One of the significant differences between the two models lies in the greater status Bachman assigns to strategic competence in relation to the other competences, by considering it as “central to all communication” (in Skehan, 1998, p. 161). Bachman stresses that strategic competence characterizes the mental capacity that relates language competencies to the context of situation in a dynamic way.

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) also expand the notion of strategic competence when they state that this type of competence, besides being a means of overcoming limitations in language use, stretches the “students’ ability to write well” (p. 120).

Likewise, Kasper (1997) emphasizes the utility of strategic competence when communication is being hindered by “performance variables or insufficient competence” (p. 345). However, Skehan (1998) questions the influence that the use of this type of strategic behaviour can have on interlanguage change and development over time, unless certain conditions are met. In his view, for learning to happen, some trace of the solution to the communication problem must remain in our processing capacity, the improvised solution should allow some hypothesis generation, and finally, the communicative solution needs to become “proceduralized” (p. 32), and available for use when similar communication problems arise. In this way, solving problems of this type can activate students’ learning capacity, and interlanguage can be said to develop.

It has been empirically demonstrated that the ways learners use their interlanguage systems is in direct relation with how they manage to communicate meanings in the foreign language. In order to be able to overcome linguistic difficulties, L2 learners need to resort to strategies in interlanguage communication, by activating their strategic competence so that they can come up with a solution in an effective way.

With the purpose of describing learner language, several researchers have investigated performance data produced by target language students, and their findings have led them to the identification of different types of communication strategies as well as to the development of several taxonomies that classify them.

3.9 Conceptualizations of communication strategies

In the literature of communication strategies, there is a vast array of definitions that depend on the authors' conceptual orientations. In general, researchers agree on the basic concept that communication strategies are attempts, plans, means or devices, mainly in oral communication, verbal and non-verbal, employed by learners to decode and express meanings when they have to deal with breakdowns in communication and lack the required linguistic knowledge. As such, they are considered elements of an overall strategic competence that, in Brown's (2000) conception, enables language users to "send clear messages in a second language" (p. 127).

It is useful to distinguish two broad characterizations of communication strategies: they can be viewed as external manifestations of learner output in interactive situations, or treated as cognitive processes involved in L2 reception and production (Ellis, 1994).

The first characterization can be described as interactional. In Tarone's (1983) definition, they constitute "mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (p. 65). From this interactional perspective, learners' attempts can be seen as focusing on the negotiation of meaning, and on making themselves understood by their interlocutors; consequently, these strategies are essentially cooperative.

The second characterization corresponds to the psycholinguistic approach, defined by Faerch and Kasper (1983b) as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (p. 36). In view of the original communicative goal in mind, the language user makes a conscious selection of the linguistic elements that he considers appropriate to satisfy his objective, i.e., he carries out a planning process, after which there comes the execution process, whereby the end product is reached: the communicative act (Faerch & Kasper, *op. cit.* p. 25). These cognitive processes involved in language output are "normally subconscious and highly automatic" (Faerch & Kasper, *op. cit.* p. 25) in L1 communication. However, when a foreign language learner intends to communicate in the target language, he frequently has to construct and test hypotheses when he finds himself in situations beyond his linguistic resources. This behaviour is characteristic of interlanguage communication, since "IL systems are typically restricted compared to L1 systems" (Faerch & Kasper, *op. cit.* p. 34). This means that communication strategies, or cognitive 'strategic plans', come into play when the language user feels that his

linguistic knowledge is not sufficient to meet the demands of his communicative goal. In the face of such problems, Faerch and Kasper (op. cit.) point out that learners can either adopt an avoidance behaviour through a change in the communicative goal, or rely on achievement behaviour, i.e., they can maintain the original goal and tackle the problem strategically through an alternative plan.

Corder (1983) and Faerch and Kasper (op. cit.) coincide in the idea that achievement strategies, which imply taking risks, encourage hypotheses formation, as the learner is forced to expand his communicative resources. These researchers also hold the view that achievement communication strategies may contribute to successful language learning.

One of the central interests of cognitively oriented models of second/foreign language learning is the way that L2 learners establish and test hypotheses about target language rules during communicative events, i.e., when there is a predominant need on the part of the learner to communicate in the foreign language. In order for researchers to have a deeper understanding of the processes underlying foreign/second language communication, all aspects of interlanguage performance should be taken into account, for they are considered “psychologically relevant data” (Faerch & Kasper, op.cit., p. 222).

Also, Dornyei & Scott (1997) have argued that communication strategies are “inherently mental procedures” (p. 180) involving cognitive processes that underlie strategic language use. In a similar way, Yule & Tarone (in Kasper and Kellerman, 1997) discuss the psychological processes that are activated when L2 learners “attempt to create L2 reference” (p. 17), and explain that this internal processing characterizes “the cognitive decisions” (p.19) made during linguistic performance, when communication strategies are employed to solve a communication difficulty. The adoption of a communication strategy by a language user is also explained from a psychological perspective by Poulisse (1993), who describes the cognitive process followed by the learner to get his meanings across: after planning a message, the learner has to encode it at a certain moment; if he manages to retrieve the appropriate term, there may be no need to resort to any strategic behaviour. If, on the other hand, his ‘mental lexicon’ lacks the required word, or, due to some temporary reason he cannot access it, then the need to employ a communication strategy comes up as an alternative way to transmit the desired meanings.

3.10 Taxonomies of Communication Strategies

As it has already been pointed out, communication strategies have been the target of interlanguage research for several decades now, since linguistic difficulties constitute a salient component of communication in a foreign language. Consequently, the linguistic analysis carried out by different researchers in view of their individual orientations has given existence to a variety of approaches aimed at understanding these language devices (Dornyei & Scott, 1997). This concern about L2 learners' performance is reflected in the following pioneering taxonomies.

3.10.1

One of the earliest and most influential taxonomies in the field was developed by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1983), originally published in 1976, through which they characterize erroneous aspects of learner language as products of the application of communication strategies.

- *Transfer from the native language*-also known as 'literal translation / negative transfer'- refers to the use of a native language meaning for an already existing word in the target language.
- *Language switch*- also known as 'code switching' consists of the transportation of a native language word or expression, untranslated, into the interlanguage utterance, in an attempt to avoid a difficult target language form or one that has not yet been learned.
- *Overgeneralization* is defined as the application of an item of the target language to inappropriate target language items or contexts because the learner is unaware of the semantic limitations contingent on its use.
- *Overelaboration* consists of the production of utterances and terms which seem stilted and inordinately formal due to an attempt to produce careful target language items.
- *Paraphrase* refers to the rewording of the message in an alternate, acceptable target language construction, in order to avoid a more difficult form or construction. Within the area of lexical paraphrase, several subtypes are categorized:
 - *Word coinage* is the creation of a non-existent lexical item in the target language, in situations where the desired lexical item is not known.

- *Circumlocution* occurs when the learner provides a description of the desired lexical item or a definition of it in other words.
- *High coverage word* is defined as the use of a superordinate term used instead of a subordinate term which carries more information in a particular context.
- *Low frequency word* is the use of a relatively obscure, uncommon word instead of the more appropriate general word.

The strategies defined below are all different means of getting around target language forms that are not yet an established part of the learner's competence:

- *Topic avoidance* refers to the attempt to completely evade communication about topics which require the use of target language forms which the learner does not yet handle well enough.
- *Semantic avoidance* is concerned with the way the learner evades the communication of content for which the appropriate L2 forms are not available, by dealing with *related* concepts which may presuppose the desired content.
- *Appeal to authority* occurs when there is an explicit request for a needed lexical item.
- *Message abandonment* is defined as the initiation of a message which is cut short due to the user's difficulty with a particular term.

Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (op.cit.) point out that the above mentioned categories are not always mutually exclusive from one another, because these strategies "operate in multi-dimensional ways" (p. 12). However, they constitute helpful devices to make sense of second language acquisition data.

3.10.2

In 1983, in another attempt to understand how foreign language users intend to communicate meaningful content, Tarone (1983) examined the following list of strategies, originally published in 1981, in order to clarify and broaden the notion *communication strategy*.

- *Paraphrase* is the general term for the following lexical communication strategies:

- *Approximation* refers to the use of a single target language vocabulary item, which the learner knows is not correct, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item.
- *Word coinage* is the making-up of a new word in order to communicate a desired concept.
- *Circumlocution* is defined as the description of the characteristics or elements of the instead of using the appropriate target language item.

As can be seen, the categories that Tarone had labelled *high coverage word* and *low frequency word* in 1981 were included within *approximation* in the 1983 taxonomy.

- *Borrowing* occurs when an interlanguage user may, in his attempts to communicate, simply ‘borrow’ for immediate purposes features or items of his mother tongue. Within this general strategy, the following apply:
 - *Literal translation* –also known as *transfer*- consists of a word-for-word translation from the native language.
 - *Language switch* can be defined as the use of a native language term without being translated.

Tarone also included the following strategies in her 1981 taxonomy:

- *Appeal for assistance* is the request for the correct term.
- *Mime* implies the use of nonverbal strategies in place of a lexical item.
- *Avoidance* is another general communication strategy that can be broken down into the following subcategories:
 - *Message abandonment* can be defined as the inability to continue with the original message.
 - *Topic avoidance* occurs when the learner simply tries not to talk about concepts for which the target language item is not known.

These two *avoidance* strategies are employed when the gap between the target language user’s linguistic knowledge and his intended meanings is perceived as unbridgeable. On the other hand, Tarone considers *approximation* as well as *circumlocution* as appropriate to bridge this gap.

Tarone (1983) makes the observation that communication strategies do not seem to be a part of the speaker’s linguistic knowledge. Rather, they are “descriptive of the learner’s pattern of use of what he knows as he tries to communicate” (p. 63).

3.10.3

Faerch and Kasper (1983) locate communication strategies within a model of speech production, though they clarify that it may well be applied in “textual data” (p. 22), i.e. in writing. They divide it into two phases: a planning phase and an execution phase, and they consider that communication strategies can be best placed within the planning phase, and more specifically, within the area of the planning process.

As already discussed above, Faerch and Kasper explain that learners overcome communication problems in two fundamentally different ways: either by adopting *avoidance behaviour*, changing the communicative objective to put an end to the linguistic difficulty, or by relying on *achievement behaviour*, in an effort to deal with the problem directly through an alternative plan. As a result of these two different approaches, two main types of strategies are developed: *reduction, and achievement-or ‘compensatory’- strategies*.

- *Reduction strategies* include *formal* and *functional reduction*. The former imply that the learner communicates by means of a ‘reduced system’, to avoid producing incorrect utterances. The latter imply that the learner reduces his communicative goal in order to avoid a problem. Within the *functional reduction* type, the following apply:
 - *Message abandonment*, through which the learner gives up his intended message.
 - *Topic avoidance* refers to avoiding formulating goals which include topics perceived as linguistically problematic.
 - *Meaning replacement* occurs when the learner faces a planning problem and changes his communicative goal.
- *Achievement strategies*:
 - Based on the native language (L1-based):
 - *Code switching* can be defined as the switch from L2 to L1. When it affects single words only, this strategy is sometimes referred to as ‘*borrowing*’.
 - *Interlingual transfer* is a combination of features from the IL and the L1, such as ‘*foreignizing*’ and ‘*literal translation*’.

Based on interlanguage (IL or L2-based):

- *Generalization* concerns the filling-in of lexical gaps with IL items not normally used in such contexts.

- *Paraphrase* is the use of a well-formed construction based on the learner's IL system. They can have the form of '*circumlocutions*', which focus on characteristic properties or functions of the intended referent.
- *Word coinage* is defined as the use of a creative construction of a new IL word.
- *Restructuring* refers to the use of an alternative plan to communicate an intended message without reduction ('*message abandonment*' can be considered the reductional parallel to '*restructuring*')

The taxonomies presented above recognize a basic duality in strategy use: strategies are employed either (a) to tailor one's message to one's resources by altering, reducing, or completely abandoning the original content, or (b) to try to convey the intended message in spite of the linguistic deficiencies by extending or manipulating the available language system (Dornyei and Scott, 1997).

Although the above described taxonomies exhibit subtle differences, it can be appreciated that there exist many similarities, mainly in relation to those communication strategies that result in the achievement of the intended message. Researchers such as Faerch and Kasper (op.cit.) point out that "a basic condition for communication strategies to have a potential learning effect is that they are governed by achievement behaviour" (p. 54). Therefore, those compensatory communication strategies through which the target language user expands his resources without giving up his interlanguage system, as in the case of language switch, for example, can lead to hypotheses formation and consequently, to interlanguage development. Successful communication strategies, i.e., those that manage to get meanings across, have been shown to be those based on the target language, such as paraphrase and its sub-components.

Some strategies are problematic to identify and even to classify, such as *transfer* and *overgeneralization*. In such cases, Tarone (op.cit.) suggests that the use of introspective methods may be able to provide a clear analysis of performance data.

Dornyei and Scott (op.cit.) provide a comprehensive overview of different taxonomical classifications (see next pages), developed by Tarone (1977), Faerch and Kasper (1983), Bialystok (1983), Paribakht (1985), Willems (1987), Bialystok (1990), the Nijmegen Group, Poullisse (1993), and Dornyei and Scott (1995). Dornyei and Scott (op.cit.) observe that the comparison among the different taxonomical classifications that appear in their table shows that they "concern various ranges of language devices in

different degrees of elaborateness" (p. 187). It has been included here to show the continual concern of different researchers about the study of communication strategies.

Various Taxonomies of Communication Strategies

Tarone (1977)	Færch & Kasper (1983b)	Bialystok (1983)	Paribakht (1985)	Willems (1987)
AVOIDANCE Topic avoidance Message abandonment	FORMAL REDUCTION Phonological Morphological Syntactic Lexical	L1-BASED STRATEGIES Language switch Foreignizing Transliteration	LINGUISTIC APPROACH <i>Semantic contiguity</i> -Superordinate -Comparison * Positive comparison Analogy Synonymy * Negative comparison Contrast & opposit. Antonymy <i>Circumlocution</i> -Physical description * Size * Shape * Color * Material - Constituent features * Features * Elaborated features -Locational property -Historical property - Other features -Functional description <i>Metalinguistic clues</i>	REDUCTION STRATEGIES Formal reduction -Phonological -Morphological -Syntactic -Lexical Functional reduction -Message abandonment -Meaning replacement -Topic avoidance
PARAPHRASE Approximation Word coinage Circumlocution	FUNCTIONAL REDUCTION Actional red. Modal red. Reduction of propositional content -Topic avoidance -Message abandonment -Meaning replacement	L2-BASED STRATEGIES Semantic contiguity Description Word coinage	CONTEXTUAL APPROACH Linguistic context Use of L2 idioms and proverbs Transliteration of L1 idioms and proverbs Idiomatic transfer	ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGIES Paralinguistic strategies Interlingual strategies -Borrowing/code switching -Literal translation -Foreignizing Intralingual strategies -Approximation -Word coinage -Paraphrase * Description * Circumlocution * Exemplification - Smurfing - Self-repair -Appeals for assistance * Explicit * Implicit * Checking questions -Initiating repair
CONSCIOUS TRANSFER Literal translation Language switch	NON-LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES	NON-LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES	CONCEPTUAL APPROACH Demonstration Exemplification Metonymy	
APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE			MIME Replacing verbal output Accompanying verbal output	
MIME	ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGIES <i>Compensatory strategies</i> -Code switching -Interlingual transfer -Inter/intralingual transfer - IL based strategies * Generalization * Paraphrase * Word coinage * Restructuring -Cooperative strategies -Non-linguistic strategies <i>Retrieval strategies</i>			

Various Taxonomies of Communication Strategies

Bialystok (1990)	Nijmegen Group	Poulisse (1993)	Dörnyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)
ANALYSIS- BASED STRATEGIES	CONCEPTUAL STRATEGIES Analytic Holistic	SUBSTITUTION STRATEGIES	DIRECT STRATEGIES <i>Resource deficit-related strategies</i>
CONTROL- BASED STRATEGIES	LINGUISTIC/ CODE STRATEGIES Morphological creativity Transfer	SUBSTITUTION PLUS STRATEGIES	* Message abandonment * Message reduction * Message replacement * Circumlocution * Approximation * Use of all-purpose words * Word-coinage * Restructuring * Literal translation * Foreignizing * Code switching * Use of similar sounding words * Mumbling * Omission * Retrieval * Mime
		RECONCEPTU- ALIZATION STRATEGIES	<i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Self-rephrasing * Self-repair <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Other-repair
			INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES <i>Resource deficit-related strategies</i> * Appeals for help <i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Comprehension check * Own-accuracy check <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Asking for repetition * Asking for clarification * Asking for confirmation * Guessing * Expressing nonunderstanding * Interpretive summary * Responses
			INDIRECT STRATEGIES <i>Processing time pressure-related strategies</i> * Use of fillers * Repetitions <i>Own-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Verbal strategy markers <i>Other-performance problem-related strategies</i> * Feigning understanding

For the analysis of the corpus of the present study, the taxonomy devised by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1983) has been followed due to its suitability for the objectives of the present research.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Objectives

The general objective of the present study is

- To investigate the strategic competence of first year EFL learners on two different written tasks, a description and a narration, with the purpose of finding out what lexical communication strategies they use when writing across these two genres.

The specific objectives are:

- To characterize these learners' strategic style through a detailed analysis of the identified communication strategies across two different genres: a narration and a description.
- To describe the relation between the types of communication strategy and their frequency of use in the different stages of the written genres in which they are used.
- To compare the learners' identified strategic style to their perceptions about task difficulty.

4.2 Research questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) What type of communication strategies do the learners resort to in order to solve communication problems associated with the meanings of their narrative and descriptive texts?
- 2) In what genre –the description or the narration- do they tend to resort to communication strategies with greater frequency? In what sections of each genre do they tend to use more communication strategies?
- 3) Is there any relation between the students' perceptions about the difficulties they experienced when composing and the strategic styles identified in the written texts?

4.3 Design

This research is a cross-sectional and descriptive study that seeks to provide an in-depth description of L2 learners as they attempt to communicate their meanings in two different written genres. The two genres under study were chosen because they are two of the genres these learners need to be able to master at the end of their first year (Language I and Language II) of their course of studies as stated in the objectives of the English language curriculum.

For the purpose of the research, I collected two data sources in order to be able to answer the three research questions: for research questions 1 and 2, I used a corpus that consisted of ten written descriptive texts and ten narrative texts; for research question 3, a questionnaire that elicited the subjects' perceptions about the difficulties they experienced while composing.

4.4 Subjects

The participants for this study were ten Spanish-speaking students, (a naturally formed group) attending their first year at the English Training College at National University of Río Cuarto.

4.5 Data collection procedures

4.5.1 The written texts

In order to elicit the students' most spontaneous style, or what Tarone (1988) calls vernacular style, and also to prevent anxiety, the written texts that constitute the corpus of this study as well as the questionnaires were collected on a regular two-hour writing class.

In order to collect the data, I used the following procedures: I read the writing instructions aloud to ensure understanding, that is to say, to give the students the opportunity to reflect on the assignments and ask questions in case doubts arose. I was present all through the writing period to make sure students were working on their own. Because I was interested in finding out how they solved communication breakdowns when they appeared, I asked learners not to use their dictionaries during composing. For the same reason, I would not answer any request for help (Roca de Larios et al. 1999). No length of output was specified. None of the topics required expert knowledge of, or

familiarity with particular subject matter. The same visual images were used with all the informants to ensure a satisfactory baseline data for comparison (Tarone & Yule, 1989).

In order to elicit the descriptive text, the image I used was a visual picture of a scene, which consisted of an old house near a graveyard surrounded by bare trees, in a stormy night. This drawing was adapted from *Nexus Workbook* (1993, p.56) (Appendix B). For the elicitation of the narrative text, a sequenced cartoon-strip was chosen (from Dechert, H., 1983, p. 181). This cartoon consisted of a drawing of a dog tied to a tree, about to eat its food, and a raven trying to get its chance to steal the dog's food (Appendix B).

Many specialists have shown the value of pictures as tools to elicit writing tasks. For example, Scholfield & Katamine (2000) observe that pictures “control the essentials of the content to be conveyed”. Linnarud (1986) states that “use of pictures is preferred to allowing the learners to write on a free subject for the following reasons: to ensure as much uniformity as possible in the content of the compositions, as well as to stimulate the imagination of writers with a low creative ability” (p. 40). The visual images selected to elicit the writing tasks were assessed in order to identify the narrative and descriptive images (Astorga, 1999) depicting the characters, events, settings, and objects that the learners would have to verbalize. Specialists in IL communication notice that one of the problems the researcher has to face in the analysis of learner language is to determine what exactly L2 learners had attempted to communicate in the target language (Selinker, 1992; Ellis, 1997). I contend that visual images have the value of allowing the researcher to establish how close the L2 learners come to their intended meanings by comparing their actual messages to the meanings communicated in the visual text. This comparison is fundamental for the researcher to be able to classify the communication strategies employed by the learners in relation to their intended meanings. (Tarone, 1983, p. 71).

According to Tarone & Yule (1989), “using carefully designed elicitation prompts will go a long way towards controlling discourse” (p. 125). Consequently, I took special care in the design of the two elicitation tasks.

The assignment that prompted the descriptive text was verbalized as follows: *‘Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words’*. The assignment used to elicit the narrative text was verbalized as follows: *‘Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures so that a person who has not seen*

the story can reconstruct it from your words'. Both pictures consisted of images without verbal information.

As it has already been pointed out, the two genres used for the present study constitute part of the writing requirements of my learners' course of studies. Furthermore, these genres were selected due to the fact that the context they provide proves adequate for the purpose of this research: to find out how the lexical choices made by the learners helped them to transmit their intended meanings, and to see if there was variation or not in the frequency with which they applied compensatory strategies in each task. Although some specialists (Tarone and Yule, 1989; Koda, 1993, Kang, 2005) have investigated communication strategies in the context of descriptive and narrative texts constructed by second language learners, they have not dealt with the relationship between communication strategies and the generic structure of those texts, i.e., the stages in which they have been employed. This study intends to bridge this gap because it is believed that the study of communication strategies in relation to the stages in which learners employ them may provide insightful information about which type of text presents greater writing difficulties and about how learners solve their writing problems in the different sections of a text.

4.5.2 The questionnaires

Questionnaires are valuable research instruments which "allow for large amounts of data to be collected quickly" (Ellis, 1994, p. 534), and are a source of dependable information (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Furthermore, I used group-administered questionnaires to gather the learners' personal information to be able to build a larger picture regarding their written performance across the two genres and their perceived difficulties.

Immediately after the completion of the descriptive and the narrative tasks, the subjects were asked to answer a questionnaire designed to elicit their subjective comments of the difficulties encountered during the writing of each task.

The information collected through this means was later compared to their actual performance as revealed in their written products. The questionnaire was administered in the learners' mother tongue (Appendix C) since it was assumed that as intermediate-level students they would feel more comfortable when talking about their perceived difficulties and that their comments in L1 would more authentically represent their experiences when composing. The questionnaire consisted of two sets of closed

questions to be answered by selecting from choices provided for each set (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 41). In this case, it was group-administered, because the learners completed it at the same time and in the same place. Specifically, the questionnaires were meant to obtain information about:

- what task -the description or the narration- had proved more difficult;
- what problems they had experienced when verbalizing the images. In order to answer this, they had to choose factors from a four-item list that included problems
 - in the interpretation of the visual input,
 - in the use of connectors,
 - in the choice of appropriate verbal tense/s,
 - in lack of lexis.

The questionnaire also included an open-ended question for the subjects to expand on any other source of difficulty that had not been included in the list, also in their mother tongue.

4.6 Data analysis

The twenty texts that constituted the corpus were submitted to both a qualitative and a quantitative analysis. To ensure anonymity, and to help describe the phenomenon under investigation appropriately (Hyland, 2002a, p. 184), the ten subjects were coded from one to ten for easy reference. Since each subject produced two different texts, each description and each narration by the same informant was given the same number, for example: learner 1: description 1, narration 1 (Appendix B).

4.6.1 Qualitative analysis

For the qualitative analysis of the corpus consisting of twenty written texts, I carried out a top-down analysis by identifying and labelling the stages of each text. Following Labov & Waletzky (1967), the narrative texts were segmented into stages: (*abstract*), *orientation*, *complication*, and *resolution (coda)*. The descriptive texts were segmented into *identification* and *description*, following Gerot & Wignell, (1995).

The bottom-up analysis included the identification and classification of the communication strategies that the learners had used in the different stages of both texts. Once I identified the lexical choices that appeared as non-idiomatic, the strategies were

classified on the basis of a pre-established typology, proposed by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1983). The strategies were distinguished as L1-based or L2-based depending on whether the strategic effort was derived from the learners' mother tongue, or from the target language itself (Bialystok, 1983, p. 105; Haastrup and Phillipson, 1983, p. 153).

The identified communication strategies were transcribed verbatim into specially designed matrices. Also, each segment of text that contained a communication strategy was reconstructed (Corder, 1974) in the following way: a native speaker was required to observe the images used as prompts of each written task, to read the already identified communication strategies in each stage, and then to write her own version by reconstructing the portion of the learners' texts where the errors had been identified. Furthermore, in order to ensure the reliability of the strategy classifications, two independent raters acquainted with the taxonomy of strategies also conducted their own analysis of the same corpus independently. With the purpose of facilitating their task, the two raters were provided with blank display matrices and a copy of each descriptive and narrative text, also coded with numbers. The analyses carried out by the two raters were compared to my first analysis. In cases in which there was a difference of opinion as to the categorization of two or more strategies, the inter-raters and I conferenced until an agreement was reached in relation to which categorization was closer to one or the other of the two classifications of the type of strategy.

The data collected by the questionnaires were interpreted qualitatively and then compared to the students' written texts. The purpose of this was to establish a relationship between what the learners had experienced while composing the two texts, and what they had really produced as output.

4.6.2 Quantitative analysis

A quantitative analysis was performed in order to determine the frequency of appearance of each type of communication strategies that had been employed in each stage of both written texts.

5. RESULTS

5.1 The written texts

5.1.1 Qualitative results

In order to answer research question one, the twenty texts were analysed following the procedures specified in the methodology section.

This qualitative analysis showed that both types of strategies, those based on the mother tongue, called L1-based, and those based on the target language, or L2-based-, were used in the descriptions as well as in the narrations. Specifically, the overall findings from the qualitative analyses revealed that:

In the descriptive texts, the only L1-based communication strategy identified was *transfer*, whereas the L2-based strategies were *generalization*, *paraphrase*, *approximation*, *word coinage* and *overelaboration* (Table 1).

In the narrative texts, the L1-based strategies employed were *transfer* and *language switch*, while the L2-based communication strategies identified were *generalization*, *paraphrase*, *approximation* and *overelaboration* (Table 1).

Table 1
L1- L2-based communication strategies across both genres

DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS		NARRATIVE TEXTS	
L1-based	L2-based	L1-based	L2-based
transfer	generalization	transfer	generalization
	paraphrase	language switch	paraphrase
	approximation		approximation
	word coinage		overelaboration

5.1.2 Quantitative results

In order to answer research question two, the frequency of appearance of the communication strategies was calculated statistically, in order to determine in what sections of each genre they had been resorted to more extensively.

Overall, the quantitative analysis showed that the participants used sixty three communication strategies in both genres, distributed as follows: L2-based being more frequent than L1-based, as shown by the percentages in Table 2.

Table 2
Percentages of the distribution of L1- and L2-based communication strategies across both genres

L-1 based communication strategies	L-2 based communication strategies
39,68%	60,32%

The quantitative results across the sections in each genre read as follows:

In the descriptive texts, the L1-based strategy *transfer* was used twelve times: two in the identification (6,06%) and ten in the description stages (37,03%). The L2-based strategies were distributed as follows: *generalization* appeared eleven times, two in the identification stage (6,06%), and nine in the description stage (33,33%); *approximation* was resorted to on eight occasions: two in the identification section (6,06%), and six in the description section (18,18%). *Paraphrase* and *word coinage* were used once each (3,03%), both in the description section (Table 3).

Table 3
Frequency of appearance of communication strategies in each stage of the descriptive texts

STRATEGIES	STAGES	
	IDENTIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
transfer	two (6,06%)	ten (37,03%)
generalization	two (6,06%)	nine (33,33%)
paraphrase	---	one (3,03%)
approximation	two (6,06%)	six (18,18%)
word coinage	---	one (3,03%)
TOTAL	six (18,18%)	twenty seven (81,82%)

In the narrative texts, two L1-based communication strategies were employed: *transfer* and *language switch*. The latter appeared once in the orientation stage (3,33%), while the former was applied once in the orientation section (3,33%), twice in the resolution section (6,66%), and nine times in the complication stage (40,90%). The L2-based strategies used in this genre were distributed in the following way: *generalization* was applied once in the abstract section (3,33%), on six occasions in the complication section (27,27%), and once in the resolution (3,33%); *paraphrase* appeared three times in the complication stage (10%), the same as *approximation* (10%), which was also used once in the abstract (3,33%) and once in the orientation stages (3,33%); *overelaboration* was applied on one occasion in the complication section (3,33%) (Table 4).

Table 4
Frequency of appearance of communication strategies in each stage of the narrative texts

STRATEGIES	STAGES			
	ABSTRACT	ORIENTATION	COMPLICATION	RESOLUTION
language switch	---	one (3,33%)	---	---
transfer	---	one (3,33%)	nine (40,90%)	two (6,66%)
generalization	one (3,33%)	---	six (27,27%)	one (3,33%)
paraphrase	---	---	three (10,00%)	---
approximation	one (3,33%)	one (3,33%)	three (10,00%)	---
overelaboration	---	---	one (3,33%)	---
TOTAL	two (6,66%)	three (10,00%)	twenty two (73,34%)	three (10,00%)

These quantitative results in relation to the use of L1 and L2- based communication strategies in each stage across the two genres indicate the following:

In the descriptive texts, thirty three communication strategies were applied, in the following way: six strategies appeared in the identification stage: two are L1-based, and four are L2-based; twenty seven communication strategies were employed in the description stage: ten are L1-based and seventeen are L2-based (Table 5).

Table 5
Frequency of appearance of L1- and L2-based communication strategies in each stage of the descriptive texts

Total N° of L1- and L2- based strategies: 33	Identification	Description
	Total: 6 strategies: 2 L1-based 4 L2-based	Total: 27 strategies: 10 L1-based 17 L2-based

In the narrative texts, thirty communication strategies were used, distributed as follows: twenty two strategies were applied in the complication stage, nine of which are L1-based, and thirteen are L2-based; three strategies appeared in the resolution stage, two L1-based, and one L1-based; in the orientation section, there were three communication strategies, one L1-based, and two L2-based. In the abstract, two L2-based strategies were applied (Table 6).

Table 6
Frequency of appearance of L1- and L2-based communication strategies in each stage of the narrative texts

Total N° of L1- and L2-based strategies: 30	Abstract	Orientation	Complication	Resolution
	Total: 2 L2-based strategies	Total: 3 strategies: 1 L1-based 2 L2-based	Total: 22 strategies: 9 L1-based 13 L2-based	Total: 3 strategies: 2 L1-based 1 L2-based

Overall, the quantitative analysis reveals that

- in the descriptive genre, the communication strategies appeared most frequently in the description stage, namely, *transfer* (L1-based), *generalization* and *approximation* (L2-based). (Tables 3, 5 and 7).
- in the narrative genre, the most extensively employed communication strategies were used in the complication section, namely, *transfer* (L1-based), *generalization*, *paraphrase*, and *approximation* (L2-based). (Tables 4, 6 and 7).

Table 7
Highest frequency of appearance of communication strategies per stage in both genres

Genre	Stage	Frequency
Descriptive text	description	81,82%
Narrative text	complication	73,34%

5.2 The questionnaires

With the purpose of answering the third research question, I analysed the ten questionnaires that included the subjects' responses about two different pieces of information: which of both tasks had proved more difficult to write, and the causes of the learners' perceived difficulties when composing. These questionnaires were answered immediately after the written production of the description and the narration.

The analysis of the questionnaires revealed that the ten participants identified 'lack of lexis' as the cause of their difficulties when trying to express their meanings in English, in both genres. This answer is consistent with the results: the subjects investigated made use of communication strategies to solve lexical problems. Only four learners also mentioned to have experienced problems with grammar and discourse. These types of linguistic problems are beyond the scope of the present research.

In relation to the participants' answers about the difficulty they had experienced in relation to the type of genre they had to write, six considered the narration more difficult than the description, three found the description harder than the narration, and only one participant regarded both genres at the same level of writing difficulty (Table 8).

Table 8
Task-related difficulty and its causes

INFORMANT	More difficult task	CAUSE/S
Nº 1	Description	Lack of lexis
Nº 2	Narration	Lack of lexis
Nº 3	Narration	Lack of lexis
		Use of connectors
		Choice of tense
Nº 4	Description	Lack of lexis
		Choice of tense
Nº 5	Narration	Lack of lexis
Nº 6	Narration	Lack of lexis
Nº 7	Description	Lack of lexis
		Use of connectors
Nº 8	Description (50%)	Lack of lexis (+ a long
	Narration (50%)	explanation)
Nº 9	Narration	Lack of lexis
		Choice of tense
Nº 10	Narration	Lack of lexis
		Choice of tense

- The ten participants identified **lack of lexis** as the first cause of difficulty **(100%)**.
- Six participants found the **narration** more difficult **(60%)**.
- Three participants found the description more difficult (30%).
- One participant found both genres as difficult (5% 5%) (Table 9)

Table 9
Percentage of cause of difficulty

Cause of difficulty	N° of participants	Percentage
Lack of lexis	10	100%

Percentage of task-related difficulty

Genre	N° of participants	Percentage
Narration	6	60%
Description	3	30%
Narration and description	1	5% 5%

Altogether, the quantitative analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaires revealed that the narrative text was regarded as more difficult than the descriptive text by most learners. Furthermore, all the participants manifested that lack of lexical resources had proved to be their main obstacle when they were communicating their meanings across both genres (Tables 8 and 9).

6. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the foreign language learners who participated in this study resorted to their strategic competence in order to express their intended meanings in English across the two genres, and thus achieve their communicative goals by means of the application of L1- and L2-based communication strategies.

As shown in Table 1 in the results, the participants made use of different kinds of communication strategies by resorting to both, their knowledge of the mother tongue and the target language, in the descriptive and narrative texts. This means that in spite of the fact that the participants were attending the 1^o year at the English Training College, they activated their strategic competence and managed to communicate the meanings represented by the descriptive and narrative visual images. However, the fact that they resorted to the L1-based communication strategies *transfer* and *language switch* to bridge their lexical gaps also provides evidence that they had limitations at the moment of retrieving specific L2 vocabulary. This result is consistent with Bialystok (1983), who states that the proficiency of the student determines to some extent whether the strategy will be L1-based or L2-based (p. 110). Other researchers (Paribakht 1982, 1985, as cited in Poulisse & Schils 1989, p. 17; Qi & Lapkin, 2001) also agree that communication strategy use and proficiency level are related. Notwithstanding this, the percentages in Table 2 reveal that the L2-based strategies outnumbered the L1-based ones across the two genres, which shows that, despite running short of target language lexis, these learners were strategically competent at the time of transmitting their ideas because they made use of their knowledge of the target language in order to communicate, through alternative means, the message contained in the visual images of both the descriptive and the narrative text.

The data from Tables 3 and 4 provide evidence that accounts for the frequency and diversity of communication strategies the participants applied to express their intended meanings. This finding is in accordance with Roca de Larios et al (1999), who state that “the writer’s need to compensate for lack of linguistic knowledge is reflected in the number of [communication] strategies reported” (p. p.14).

According to James (1998), lexical communication strategies are resorted to when learners either think they know a word and carelessly produce a lexical error, or when they assume that they do not know the right word (p.146). In other words, when learners aim at a communicative act in L2 but lack the necessary knowledge, they resort to

alternative plans, that is to say, to communication strategies (p.178), which can be, as James states, sources of error (p.185). Nevertheless, Corder (1974) refers to them as idiosyncratic since they generally “present no difficulties of interpretation” (p. 163) and can therefore be “reconstructed” (p. 166) in the target language. In actual fact, communication strategies do not always have to be associated with erroneous behaviour given that, often, as Bialystok (1983) contends, “the effective use of communication strategies is unambiguously related to formal proficiency” (p. 116). It must be clarified that the learners’ utterances were reconstructed on the basis of the meanings conveyed by the images.

In order to show the communication strategies identified in the corpus, some samples of each will be reproduced and explained. It should be remembered that two independent raters also identified the communication strategies on “the basis of problem indicators in the data” (Poullisse & Schils, 1989, p.21). The two interraters and I met to reach a consensus in the cases that were problematic, i.e., when there were doubts as to the categorization of certain communication strategies. This happened mainly with the identification of *transfer* versus that of *generalization*. In fact, according to Tarone, Cohen & Dumas (1983), “it may not be possible to firmly establish whether a learner is utilizing the communication strategy of transfer or of overgeneralization in producing an interlanguage form” (p. 8).

The examples to be discussed in this section are those which I found most illustrative of each strategy. However, further instances of each can be found in Appendix A: Performance Data

Since out of the total number of communication strategies identified -sixty three- in both genres, the L1-based communication strategy *transfer* was the most extensively employed across genres, appearing twenty four times (Tables 3 and 4), and interestingly, several learners reproduced the meanings of the visual texts by using exactly the same lexical choice through *transfer*, it will be discussed first. Afterwards, *overgeneralization* will be analysed, because it was, in terms of frequency, the most widely used L2-based communication strategy. Finally, a discussion of *paraphrase* and *approximation* will follow as they were also frequently used and are illustrative of the learners’ creative efforts to overcome communication breakdowns.

6.1 Transfer

Several specialists have been concerned with the interlingual sources of error (Tarone, Cohen & Dumas, 1983; James, 1998; Dornyei & Scott, 1997). An L1 *transfer* error is the consequence of a learner not knowing the required target language item and borrowing an L1 term that shares some degree of similarity with the equivalent item in the learner's L1, which is thus "negatively transferred" (James, 1998, p.179, p. 255) into the L2 output. In Raupach's (1983) opinion, by means of *transfer*, learners solve their retrieval problems while being under the strong influence of L1 (p. 202).

One example of *transfer* used by two participants (see Appendix A) was 'rays', meaning in fact, 'lightning'. I hypothesize that the cause of this mother tongue interference is its morphological similarity with Spanish 'rayos'. Other choices of the same type included the use of the 'principal' door meaning the 'entrance' door, 'forestation' for 'forest'. All these choices made by the learners seem to be the result of a "lexical void" (Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1983) in the target language, because what the learners created is also called a false cognate, which originated in the foreign language and was borrowed into the learner's L1 with a changed meaning. Research by various specialists has also shown a meaningful connection between *transfer* and language proficiency level. For example, Poulisse and Schils, (1989), found that learners with a limited command of the foreign language resort systematically to their knowledge of the mother tongue. Likewise, McClure (1991) found that *transfer* was the strategy more widely used by learners in their written narratives. In research on students' compositions, Mei Hang (2005) found that "L2 learners commit more errors of lexical choice caused by *transfer* and lower proficiency of second language" (p. 44). Also, the research carried out by Agustin Lach et al (2005) showed that *transfer* was the source of the great majority of lexical errors in writing, mainly in the first stages of second language acquisition. This finding provides support to the psycholinguistic view that the learners' mother tongue serves as the linguistic scaffolding to develop their L2 competence.

Other examples from the corpus are:

Learners' output	Reconstructed message
- 'stairs...drive to an unknown place'	stairs...lead to an unknown place
- 'a crow has visualized his target'	a crow has spotted his target
- '...provokes the dog's attention'	...calls the dog's attention
- 'indescriptible scenes'	indescribable scenes

As to the frequency of use of this interlingual strategy in relation to the stages of both genres, results indicate that it was used more extensively in the description stage of the descriptive text, and in the complication stage of the narrative text (See Tables 3 and 4). This may be attributed to the fact that in the complication stage, learners have to create what Martin (1992) calls ‘the counterexpectation’, which is a critical feature in this genre, linguistically demanding because the L2 learner has to be able to show that something unexpected occurred and also to construct with words the danger of the situation. The use of *transfer* was also frequent in the description stage because it is longer than the identification stage and it requires a linguistic precision on which an accurate description depends.

This suggests that the linguistic difficulty involved in the development of the description and complication stages may have driven the learners to resort to their mother tongue due to insufficiently automatized L2 lexis in order to reach their communicative ends. Given that the description and the complication stages seem to demand a greater knowledge of vocabulary than the other stages because of their key role in the development of both genres, it appears reasonable to argue that knowledge of content-word meanings contributes significantly to foreign language composition (Koda, 1993).

Furthermore, it is also likely that the wide use of *transfer* can be attributed to the difficulty involved in the verbalization of the visual images. Thus, it can be inferred that the participants must have felt the need to call upon any linguistic means to attempt a solution when they were running short of vocabulary. Resorting to L1 during L2 production is considered one of the sources of error in learner language (Ellis, 1997). It should be stressed that the fact that the inter-raters and I share the participants’ mother tongue facilitated the understanding of their intended meanings. In Brown’s opinion (2000), “fluent knowledge or even familiarity with a learner’s language of course aids the teacher in detecting and analyzing errors” (p.224).

6.2 Overgeneralization

Among the thirty eight L2-based communication strategies found in the corpus across both genres, overgeneralization was the most frequent. The fact that the participants resorted to this alternative plan to solve their lack of appropriate L2 terms accounts for their attempt to apply their knowledge of the target language, although

their interlanguage choices resulted in utterances that were inappropriate to the contexts in which they were used. This behaviour can be attributed to the semantic and collocational differences between the learners' mother tongue and the target language (Olsen, 1999). Overgeneralization data from the present study show that in most cases, the participants made semantic associations by overextending lexical items on the basis of earlier learning and applied them in erroneous contexts (Shin, 2006). The result is an expression that though it is comprehensible, it is at the same time inaccurate and inappropriate to the context.

Some examples from the corpus are:

Learners' output	Reconstructed message
- 'dried trees'	dry/leafless tree
- 'it (the house) can be accessed by a stair'	There are external stairs that lead to the house
- 'impotent dog'	powerless dog
- 'a house which is sitted in the top...'	A house which sits/is situated on the top
- 'the rope runs ou'	The rope gets too short

These findings support results reported by Olsen (1999) and Shin (2006), who consider that the interlanguage of less proficient L2 writers shows they still have wrong assumptions about the target language, and when they try out hypotheses during production, the outcome is far from being native-like.

During the analysis of the data, some expressions were found to be problematic for the purposes of categorization, especially in the cases of *transfer* and *generalization*. This might have been due to the fact that, as Faerch & Kasper (1983) state, "this usage (overgeneralization) conflates an IL with a L2 perspective" (p. 48). Empirically, and in accordance with Tarone, Cohen & Dumas (1983), it is controversial to decide whether certain IL forms should be considered a result of L1 transfer or rather a target language overgeneralization, or probably, "a combination of both" (p.8). In support of this view, Brown (2000) contends that "all generalizing involves transfer, and all transfer involves generalizing" (p. 97).

An example of the ambiguous use of either strategy is 'the old build * is rounded by...', meaning 'surrounded', in which it is hypothesized that the learner was mentally translating an L1 meaning: 'rodeado', without knowing or realizing that 'to round' in English means 'to move in a curve', and what he actually needed to describe was that a certain element was situated around the building, i.e., 'the old building was surrounded by...'. Consequently, one may wonder if the learner was either transferring an L1 meaning into L2 use, or was generalizing an L2 term into the wrong context.

A similar example is ‘...clouds, which are running out’; the meaning the learner was aiming at was ‘...clouds, which are fading away’. Interestingly, this finding reveals that the participant oversupplied “an interlanguage feature in a context in which it does not occur in target-language use” (Ellis, 1997, p. 142). This strategic behaviour can be interpreted as being due to an insufficient understanding of the semantic boundaries of target language terms, which led the learner to apply target language lexis in situations in which it did not fit; however, it also shows that her communicative goal was not changed, because she believed that the substitute term might fill a gap (Faerch & Kasper, 1983b, p. 48).

6.3 Paraphrase Approximation

The second L2-based communication strategy most frequently employed was *approximation*, followed by *paraphrase* (see Tables 3 and 4). At this point, it seems useful to point out that researchers like Tarone (1983) have categorized *approximation* as embedded within the wider concept of *paraphrase*, since the latter refers to the “rewording of a message in an acceptable target language construction” (p. 10), which can take the form of a “single target vocabulary item”, as in *approximation*, or of longer stretches of discourse, as in *paraphrase*. Consequently, for the present discussion, *paraphrase* and *approximation* will be regarded as similar alternative means used to overcome lexical limitations through either well-formed constructions according to the learners’ interlanguage system (Faerch & Kasper, 1983b, p.49), or through a vocabulary item which refers to a semantic component that approximates the optimal meaning (Váradi, 1983, p. 92). Kasper & Kellerman (1997) state that there is overlap across these strategies, since there may be more than one strategy embedded within each linguistic output (p. 195).

Through the many instances of *approximation* in the data, it can be appreciated how the participants tried to compensate for their lexical deficiencies by employing “single alternative items that share semantic features with the target word” (Tarone, 1977; Bialystok, 1983; Willems, 1987).

Examples of this L2-based communication strategy include:

Learners' output	Reconstructed message
-‘birds’	bats
-‘sparrow’	crow
-‘rocks’	tombstones
-‘lights/flashlights’	lightning
-‘stick’	pole

In spite of the fact that in some *approximations*, the meaning is changed completely, as for example, in ‘birds’ (instead of ‘bats’), these two terms refer to different animal species, in others, (‘sparrow’, ‘stick’), only part of the message is lost, because we see the learners’ attempt to approximate the real meaning as the terms employed share several features with the item aimed at: sparrows and crows are dark-coloured birds, while a stick and a pole may be wood objects.

The following example of a *paraphrase* strategy: “the dog has wasted the extension of the rope” illustrates the linguistic effort of the learner to express what she must have considered a complex concept in a crucial instance of the complication stage. That is to say, she tried to bridge the gap between her actual message and her intended meaning –“the rope is now too short for the dog to move”- by resorting to an achievement strategy (Faerch & Kasper, 1983b, p. 37) through knowledge of the target language. One cannot avoid being surprised by this idiosyncratic choice which, beyond its unidiomatic nature, exhibits the learner’s creative capacity to construct an expression that is unlike L1 and L2.

These linguistic choices helped the participants to overcome lexical gaps, i.e., vocabulary items which had not been learnt or could not be recalled at the moment of the production of both written genres. These results match McClure’s (1991), in the sense that students employed words that they semantically associated with the terms that would have been appropriate in these given contexts.

The present discussion has so far focused on how both types of communication strategies -L1- and L2-based (also called interlanguage-based and target-language based) have assisted the participants in bridging gaps in their vocabulary at the time of writing descriptive and narrative texts in the target language. It is now relevant to consider how effective each type of communication strategy is for the achievement of the intended meanings. Previous research has shown that “the best strategies are those which are based on the target language and take account of the specific features of the intended concept” (Bialystok, 1983, p.116; Chen, 1990). Along the same line, Haastруп & Phillipson (1983) support the idea that “IL-based strategies have great potential for

leading to communicative success” (p. 195). More recently, Flyman (1997) states that “efficiency is determined in view of the success of the strategy” (p.17). In a recent study, Littlemore (2003) found that *reconceptualization* –one of Poulisse’s (1993) categories that corresponds to Tarone’s (1983) *paraphrase*- was the most communicatively effective, whereas *transfer* strategies, which are L1-based-, did not seem to contribute to communicative effectiveness. In my opinion, effectiveness should be considered at two distinct levels: communication and learning. On occasions, *transfer* can be communicatively effective if the learner’s message is understood in the context in which it is employed. However, it may not contribute to L2 learning because learners fail to try out hypotheses about target rules or the meanings of lexical items, and corroborate or reject them. It has been shown (McLaughlin, 1987) that this process leads to the restructuring of interlanguage as through it learners modify their internal representations of the forms which are not target-like. In relation to this, in the present study the learners’ intended meanings expressed by L1-based strategies such as *transfer* were understood because of the shared L1 knowledge between the researcher, the participants and the interraters, although they would not be recognised as idiomatic lexical choices, since idiosyncratic meanings may result obscure and certainly, not stylish at all.

In connection with the value of communication strategies, a basic condition for them to have a potential learning effect is that “they are governed by achievement behaviour” (Faerch & Kasper, 1983b, p. 54). What this means is that if, in spite of difficulties, learners do not abandon their communication goal and manage to retrieve the specific linguistic item, it may be easier for them to use the item on future occasions. Consequently, the learners’ extension of their linguistic resources by means of the employment of compensatory communication strategies can lead to hypothesis formation, which is considered part of the process of learning a second language. When learners are engaged in tasks where meaning-making is central, their interlanguage is thought to be driven forward (Skehan, 1998).

6.4 Distribution of L1- and L2-based communication strategies across genres

Concerning how both types of communication strategies were found to be distributed across the two written genres (see Table 2), the findings show that L2-based ones were more frequently used than L1-based, and this indicates that learners took

risks in trying out lexical hypotheses which proved successful in relation to their communicative goals, since they managed to solve some communication breakdowns by drawing on their target language resourcefulness in a creative way (Skehan, 1998). It was in the complication stage of the narrative text and in the description stage of the descriptive text where communication strategies were most frequently employed.

6.5 Frequency of appearance of L1- and L2-based communication strategies in the description stage of the descriptive texts

In relation to the frequency of appearance of both types of strategies in the stages of each genre, the findings indicate that in the descriptive text, in order to meet the communicative demands imposed by the visual input, learners made use of more communication strategies in the description stage than in the identification stage (see Table 5). This strategic behaviour in the description section may be attributed to the requirements imposed by the stage itself, since a higher degree of elaboration is expected in it due to the fact that most of the information, i.e., general features as well as specific details and characteristics (Evans & Dooley, 1999) of this genre is condensed in this stage, while the identification stage tends to be shorter as its main function is to introduce the topic and to provide a general orientation to it. The learners' efforts to construct meaning in the descriptive stage are associated mainly with the description of the weather conditions as well as with the building itself and its surroundings.

The following examples from the data ¹ will serve as illustrations:

Learners' output	Reconstructed messages
- 'a storm full of lightnings* and thunder'	a severe electric storm
- 'rays'	lightning
- 'lightnings* turn light into day'	lightning lights up the sky
- 'clouds and flashlights'	clouds and lightning
- 'furious sky'	thundery sky
- 'forestation'	forest
- 'three white rocks'	three white tombstones
- 'entrance preceded by stairs'	stairs that lead to the entrance
- 'the old build* is rounded by...'	the old building is surrounded by...
- 'dried trees'	dry/leafless trees

¹ The first five examples describe weather conditions, and the others describe the building and its surroundings

According to James (1998), "communication strategies can be the source of error" (p. 185), as shown above, but they also are the manifestation of learners' interlanguage at work and reflective of their underlying strategic competence (Brown, 2000).

It must be acknowledged that the image selected for the elicitation of the descriptive text requires a type of description these learners may not be really familiar with, and may have caused them to stretch their linguistic resources beyond their interlanguage knowledge.

6.6 Frequency of appearance of L1- and L2-based communication strategies in the complication stage of the narrative texts

In connection with the frequency of appearance of communication strategies in the narrative texts (see Table 6), the results show that the strategies that were employed in the complication stage outnumbered the ones in the other stages, as can be seen in Table 6. In a similar study, Fakhri (1984) states that “the application of strategies was not random but constrained by narrative features” (p. 15). Specifically, in what he calls “the episodic component”, i.e., the complication, “the choices of communication strategies is constrained by the urgency to convey meaning” (p. 14) and construct a dramatic situation. In this sense, it can be inferred that the learners in this study resorted to an extensive use of lexical strategies because, in order to make the narration of events more effective, their attention was focused on explaining how the problematic situation illustrated by the visual images in the complication stage was unfolding.

This can be illustrated by means of the following instances from the performance data:

Learners' output	Reconstructed message
-‘the dog...run* forward the crow’	the dog...dashed towards the crow
-‘the dog...attached* to the post	the dog tied round the post
-‘in each try, the dog had the tie around his body’	in each try, the rope got shorter and shorter
-‘the dog has wasted the extension of the rope round the tree’	the rope is now too short
-‘how the dog was getting close to the stick’	how the dog was getting trapped round the pole

In relation to the development of the story towards the crisis, learners succeeded in “building up the tension of the story” (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 63), in spite of difficulties when searching for the most accurate lexical expressions that would aid them to transmit the disruptive events with better precision: the crow flying around the pole, the dog on a leash getting always angrier while running after the crow round the pole, and finally the dog ending up tied round the pole, unable to move. This is in line with Koda’s (1993) research on descriptive and narrative texts, in which he reports that

“knowledge of content-word meanings underlies the ability to expand and elaborate discourse” (p. 343). As Rothery & Stenglin (1997) affirm, “the challenge for participants is to confront the crisis and overcome the disruption” (p. 239). In the present study, the students did not abandon their intended meanings but tried their best to construct the complicating actions through the application of communication strategies and thus realize their communicative intentions.

These findings match Dechert’s (1983) report concerning “second-language specific processing problems” (p. 183), because, in order for learners to reconstruct the visual input as accurately as possible, they have to activate “special knowledge sources to deal with lexical search” (p. 183).

Concerning the visual input to the narrative text, it can be stated that the dog-and-raven cartoon “has proved useful in that it creates various processing problems” (Dechert, 1983, p. 178), such as the absence of verbal information accompanying the images, the slowly progressing complication of the action, which is overcomplete and thus more difficult to verbalize, and in particular, the lexis necessary to refer to the ‘props’ that support the story: the dog’s food, the ‘dish’ the dog is eating from, the element the dog is fastened to, and what he is fastened with. All these details make this visual text quite demanding to describe for a non-native speaker of English.

6.7 The questionnaires

The information provided by the learners’ responses to the questionnaires in relation to the main cause of difficulty allows the identification of a high correspondence between their subjective reports and their behaviour in relation to their strategic styles.

The communication strategies that were identified across both genres reflect the lexical difficulties experienced during composing, when the learners were trying to produce “the correct retrieval of the vocabulary item” (Cohen, 1998, p. 39). In a thorough investigation by Linnarud (1986) on the importance of lexis in L2 learners’ written performance, it was concluded that vocabulary size correlates well with writing quality. Also, Laufer (1998) states that “learners themselves associate progress in language learning with an increase in the number of words they know” (p. 256).

Several researchers have also focused their attention on the relevance of lexical proficiency in relation to L2 composing (Enger, 1995; Snellings et al 2004) as well as

content (Santos, 1998). The students' perceptions as expressed in the questionnaire confirm that lack of lexis represented an obstacle when they were attempting to express their intended meanings as adequately as possible in the target language (Table 8). Insufficient mastery of content words was perceived by all the participants to be the main cause of difficulty at the moment of transmitting meanings. What this implies is that learners themselves realize that adequate vocabulary knowledge is essential to meet their communicative needs (Read, 2000, p. 2).

In relation to the learners' self-reports as to what genre -the descriptive or the narrative text- had proved more difficult to produce, the latter was found by most students to be more complex (Table 9). This finding is consistent with the results found by several narrative researchers, such as Kang (2005), who claims that written narrative discourse is especially challenging for L2 learners. In a study on how different writing tasks influence the quality of foreign language composition, Koda (1993) came to the conclusion that "narrative tasks may involve more demanding linguistic processing than descriptive tasks" (p. 343). Rothery and Stenglin (1997), in their analysis of narrative – "the story genre most highly valued in many contexts of culture"- point out that it "deals with disruptions that constitute a crisis whose outcome is problematic" (p. 239). The linguistic demands for L2 writers of narrative texts seem to be directly connected to their ability to confront this disruption and meet the challenge of overcoming it. In Rothery and Stenglin's words, "disruption can and must be dealt with in order to restore equilibrium to the field" (p. 254). This concept is in direct line with the learners' self-reports as to the greater difficulty they perceived about producing a written narrative text.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study has shown that:

- In spite of lexical deficiencies, the participants managed to get their meanings across by using various communication strategies to compensate for those gaps in their knowledge of the target language. This implies that learners relied on their strategic competence to solve communication problems.
- The learners complied with the generic structure of the written texts, which means that none of them is incoherent since they exhibit the canonical features of each genre (Fakhri, 1984). It is my contention that the visual images accompanying each text played a decisive role in prompting the successful verbalization of each task. In the case of the narrative text, its schematic structure is signalled by the picture-frames themselves that represent the order in which the events occurred. Consequently, a connection between characters, setting, actions and what is verbally recounted is established.
- It is also likely that because the visual images provided the contents of each written task, the learners were motivated to communicate the meanings represented visually and thus did not attempt to abandon their intended meanings. This can be accounted for by their use of achievement communication strategies.
- Communication strategies based on knowledge of the target language – or L2-based- were found to be more communicatively successful than those based on the mother tongue – or L1-based, as they reflected more idiomatic lexical choices. This may suggest that there may be “a directionality of transition in the learners’ use of compensatory strategies toward that of native speakers, which in turn reflects the transitional nature of their interlanguages” (Paribakht, 1985, p. 141).
- A significant relationship was found between the students’ perceptions as to what had been the main cause of their difficulties while composing: lack of lexis, and their strategic styles identified in the written texts.
- A connection between the students’ strategic competence and generic competence (Bhatia, 2000) was found as communication strategies were more widely employed in two specific stages of each genre.

The results of this work emphasize the relevance of strategic competence as an effective means of compensating for breakdowns in L2 communication. The findings suggest directions for future research and also have implications for L2 writing instruction.

7.1 Directions for future research

Though the importance of introducing genres in the second language classroom has been acknowledged by specialists (Paltridge, 2001; Johns, 2002), the connection between communication strategies and a variety of genres remains to be further investigated. In the research literature to date, few studies (Fakhri, 1984) have addressed the interaction between the use of communication strategies and the stages of specific genres. One of the findings of this study shows that the participants experienced linguistic problems which could be associated with specific sections of either genre, i.e., the description stage in the descriptive text and the complication stage in the narrative text. In my opinion, further research is required that investigates if this phenomenon occurs longitudinally, i.e., if the same learners go through the same difficulties over a period of time with the same genres, or else with other written genres such as argumentations, which have been acknowledged to make high demands on student writers (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).

Another suggestion for future research that can be made from this study is the need to focus on two sources of data at the same time: internal data as represented by the students' perceptions and external data which consist of the students' written texts. Both sources may contribute important information regarding the development of writing skills and specifically the source of communicative problems that students may experience in foreign language writing. In this study I found a significant relationship between the participants' lexical gaps as identified through their employment of communication strategies, and their perceptions which indicated that the students were aware of their lack of sufficient target lexical repertoire. If a link between the use of communication strategies to compensate for resource deficits and the learners' developing writing skills can be established, researchers could be better informed about the psychological processes underlying L2 production.

Furthermore, the exploration between the meanings represented by the visual images and the meanings that the students can verbalize may be fertile soil for future

research. The interrelationship between both types of meanings may enable the researcher to investigate whether students may retrieve and use appropriate L2 lexis, whether they come close to their intended meanings, and what communication strategies they resort to so as to be able to encode the meanings of the verbal text. Needless to say, this requires that the researcher explores the semiotics of images (Astorga, 1999).

7.2 Pedagogic implications

As shown by the results of the present study, when learners are engaged in production they take risks and test hypotheses. The lexico-grammatical errors they may make reflect their creativity and help them develop their problem-solving skills. Swain and Lapkin (1995) state that “learners will not progress beyond a given state of competence unless pushed to exploit all their resources...; through output, students ‘stretch’ their interlanguage to meet communicative goals” (as cited in Laufer, 1998, pp. 126-127). This implies that learners need to be encouraged to take risks, use more difficult vocabulary (Laufer, 1998), while maximizing hypotheses-testing. In this way, they can build their own criteria in relation to the appropriateness of the language forms they are employing.

A further pedagogical recommendation from this study is connected with strategy training, since the learners investigated proved to be strategically competent to overcome their lexical gaps. A very controversial question is related to the teachability of communication strategies. While some investigators (Bialystok, 1990, in Faucette, 2001; Kellerman, 1991) do not consider the teaching of these strategies necessary, others (Dornyei, 1995; Tarone, 1984, in Faucette, 2001; Faerch & Kasper, 1983b; Willems, 1987, in Faucette, 2001; Tarone and Yule, 1989) advocate students’ systematic training in the use of strategic competence to solve problems in communication. Faucette (2001) suggests helping learners expand their lexical choices through the modelling of linguistic options to verbalize communication strategies: for example, in order to be able to paraphrase, learners can be provided with useful expressions such as “It is used for...”; it looks like...”. In this way, they are given tools with which to try to convey their intended messages.

Since the findings of the present study have demonstrated that, thanks to the participants’ strategic resources they succeeded in overcoming lexical obstacles without

abandoning their original messages, it is my contention that making learners conscious of their strategic behaviour will help them in the direction of more idiomatic lexical choices. If learners have a tendency to use L1-based communication strategies, they need to be shown ways to solve their communicative problems by resorting also to his L2 knowledge. Consequently, the explicit teaching of communication strategies may enable L2 learners deploy their knowledge of the target language in ways that approximate native speaker competence.

In any developing linguistic system, the role played by lexis is obviously central. Lexical richness has been found to be closely related to written proficiency (Linnarud, 1986; Laufer, 1991; Leki & Carson, 1994). Therefore, another value of communication strategy instruction would be the extra benefit of learning specifically useful vocabulary that effectively furthers communication and learning (Faucette, 2001). Experienced researchers (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Tarone & Yule, 1989) believe that strategies that compensate for lexical deficiencies and strategies for acquiring lexis are closely linked. Consequently, the incorporation of lexical communication strategies into an L2 teaching programme is favoured. It is my view that if lexical richness is insisted on and rewarded, if exposure to target language lexis is maximized, foreign language learners will become more confident and independent at the time of verbalizing their intended meanings.

The results of the present research cannot be extrapolated to a larger population due to the fact that the strategic behaviour identified somehow mirrors the characteristics of the learning context shared by the ten first year Spanish-speaking participants, whose exposure to the target language is limited to the formal classroom setting. Also, the identification of specific communication strategies may prove problematic especially when it is necessary to determine whether a strategy is based on the mother tongue or in the foreign language. Therefore, the application of clear and effective target language-based communication strategies should be encouraged.

The research reported here has attempted to broaden our knowledge of second language strategic competence as used in conjunction with generic competence. It is my strong belief that foreign language learners in our educational context should be encouraged to take risks and employ communication strategies so that they feel empowered to cope with frequent communication breakdowns.

APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE DATA: DESCRIPTIVE AND NARRATIVE TEXTS

Participant N° 1

Description

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Description: -“a storm full of lightnings and thunders”	-transfer	-a severe electric storm
-“...stairs...drive to an unknown place”	-transfer	-...stairs...lead to an unknown place

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Orientation: -“poste”	-language switch	-pole / tree
-“...a crow has visualized his target”	-transfer	-...a crow has spotted his target

Participant N° 2

Description

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Description: -“a house which is sitted in the top of a hill”	-generalization	-a house which is situated /sits on the top of a hill
-“it can be accessed by a stair”	-generalization	-there are external stairs that lead to...
-“rays”	-transfer	-lightning

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Complication: -“the dog...run* forward the crow”	-transfer	-the dog dashed towards the crow
-“the rope runs out”	-generalization	-the rope gets too short
-“he is so tied with his own rope that he can't even move”	-transfer	-the rope prevented him from moving

Participant N° 3

Description

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Description: -“lightnings* turn night into day”	-paraphrase	-lightning lights up the sky
-“dried trees”	-generalization	-dry / leafless trees

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Complication: -“...attached* to the post”	-generalization	-...tied to/ wrapped round the post
Resolution: -“impotent” (dog)	-generalization	-unable to move (dog)

Participant N° 4

Description

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Identification: -“lights”	-approximation	-lightning
Description: -“the old build* is rounded by...” -“patio” -“crypts” -“I feel scare and panic”	-generalization -approximation -approximation -generalization	-the old building is surrounded by... -garden / yard -tombs -I feel fear and panic

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Complication: -“...tries to trap the crown*” -“in each try, the dog had the tie around his body”	-generalization -paraphrase	-“...tries to catch the crow” -in each try, the rope got too short
Resolution: -“it had all his body tied”	-transfer	-it was completely wrapped round the pole

Participant N° 5

Description

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Identification: -“...a house around by old trees”	-approximation	-...a house surrounded by old trees
Description: -“...the windows open and close every time”	-generalization	-the windows open and close once and again

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Complication: -“the dog finished tie* around the tree”	-transfer	-the dog ended up wrapped round the tree

Participant N° 6**Description**

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Description: -“gallery that is preceding...” -“thunders are everywhere” -“entrance preceded by stairs” -“the principal door”	-transfer + generalization -transfer -transfer + generalization -transfer	-balcony that leads to... -there is a lot of thunder -stairs that lead to the entrance -the entrance door

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Complication: -“...provokes the dog’s attention” -“the dog has wasted the extension of the rope round the tree” -“the dog has now stucked* with the rope to the tree”	-transfer -paraphrase -generalization	-...calls the dog’s attention -the rope is now too short -the dog is now wrapped round the tree and unable to move

Participant N° 7**Description**

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Identification: -“naked trees” -“solemn mansion”	-transfer -generalization	-bare / leafless trees -imposing mansion
Description: -“indescribable scenes”	-transfer	-indescribable scenes

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Complication: -“...(dog) manouvered* so badly...”	-overelaboration	-...(dog) moved so badly...

Participant N° 8**Description**

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Description: -“...clouds and flashlights”	-approximation	-... clouds and lightning

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Complication: -"... the dog upsets because..." -"the bird starts to surround the tree" -"... and his tye* starts to enrolled* in the tree" -"the dog got trapped by himself"	-generalization -transfer -approximation + transfer -transfer	-... the dog gets upset because... -the bird starts to fly around the tree -his rope starts to roll up round the tree -the dog got trapped
Resolution: -"... and the bird goes to eat..."	transfer	-... and the bird starts eating / eats...

Participant N° 9

Description

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Identification: -"... a bright moon, which lets see..." -"... clouds, which are running out"	-transfer -generalization	-... a bright moon, which lights up... -... clouds, which are fading away
Description: -"forestation" -"two bars of wood" -"two birds" -"three white rocks"	-transfer -approximation -approximation -approximation	-forest -two handrails / banisters -two bats -three white tombstones

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Orientation: -"... was tied in* a wood stick"	-approximation	-... was tied to a pole / tree
Complication: -"... the stick" -"Like the bird didn't go..." -"... how the dog was getting close* to the stick"	-approximation -generalization + transfer -paraphrase + approximation	-the pole -As the bird didn't fly away... -... how the dog was getting trapped round the pole

Participant N° 10

Description

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Description: -"furious sky" -"rays" -"... makes your skin stringle"	-generalization -transfer -word coinage	-overcast / thundery sky -lightning -... makes your skin shiver

Narration

Stage	Communication Strategy	Reconstructed Message
Abstract: -“...the sparrow...” -“...was very hungry sat in the tree...”	-approximation -generalization	-...the bird / crow... -...was very hungry perched in the tree...
Complication: -“...(dog) finished tying* himself to the tree”	-transfer	-...(dog) ended up tied to the tree

APPENDIX B

STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE AND NARRATIVE TEXTS

Participant 1

1.1.

Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.

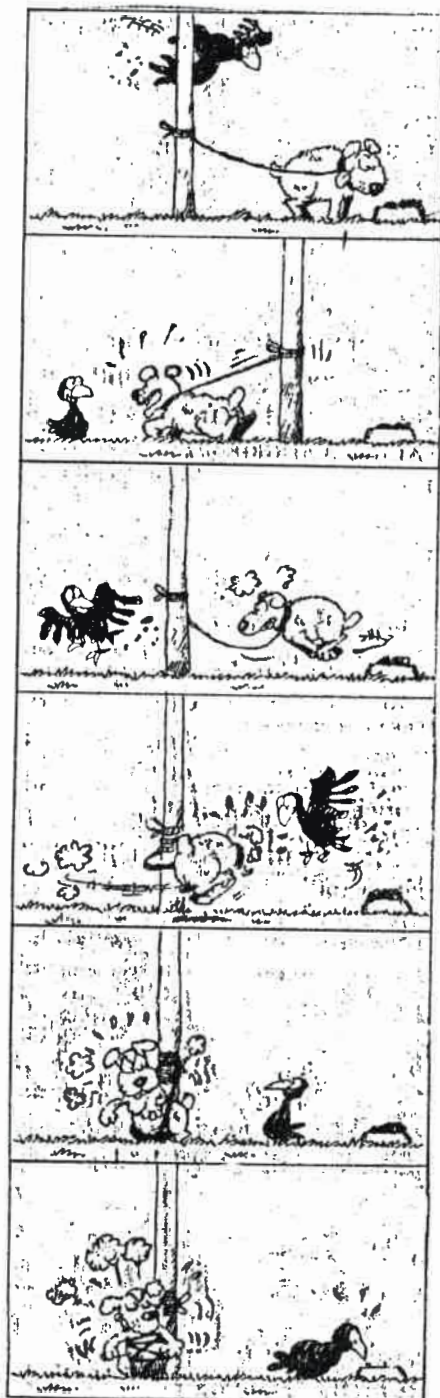


Completely isolated, a huge house stands in middle of a forest ^{on top of a hill}. It looks like an abandoned place, with tombs in its front garden and some horrible bats flying around. What makes the scene here its placed worse, is a storm full of lightning and thunders.

The imposing house is made up of three parts, all of whom have several windows. Some shadows can be distinguished from outside. The house also has stairs, which come from a wide porch and drive to an unknown place, maybe full of trees with long threatening branches. Beside, there seem to be a deep silence into the night and a calm breeze which would surely make any soul shake to death.

1.2.

Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



There is this white mice dog, which being tied to a 'poste', is about to eat its appetizing food. Meanwhile, a crow is flying and has visualized his target - the poor little dog's plate full of food. As soon as the dog sees it, starts barking so as to keep the bird off. But the crow, which has just stand next to the dog, has no intention of going away. Then the dog tries to catch it and starts chasing it around the 'poste'. Of course, the dog soon gets trapped with the rope and so the crow successfully reaches the treasure chest for which he has been fighting so much; and eats it all through.

Participant 2

2.1.

Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.

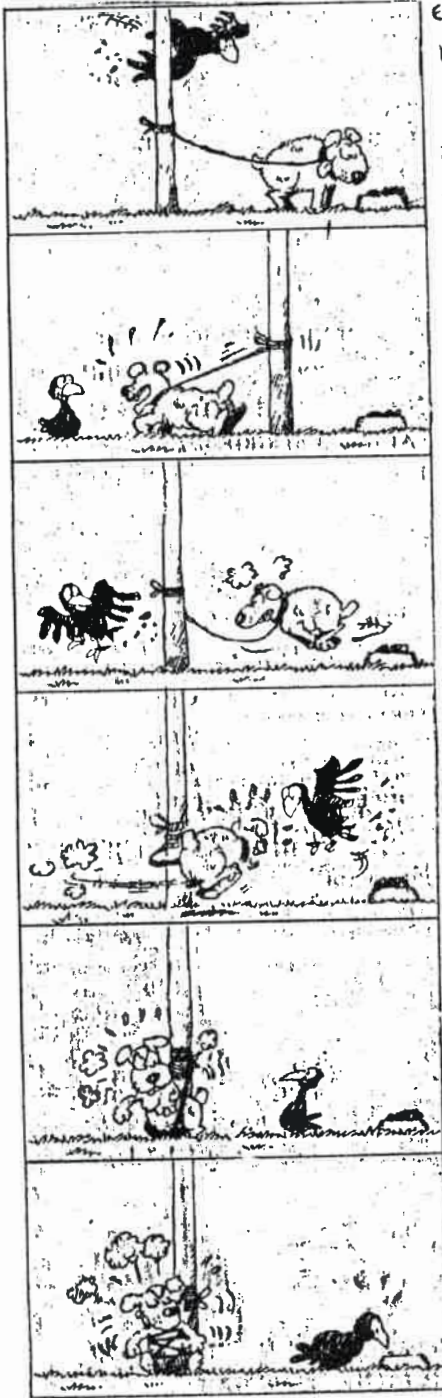


There is a mansion in the middle of the picture, which has almost all of its windows closed. However, three windows are opened and a person can be seen through one of them. The house is surrounded by tombstones and lots of trees without leaves (or leaves). The sky is quite dark, with some clouds and rays (rays). It seems to be raining. Besides, there are two bats flying around a full moon, just above the house.

⊗ It is a Victorian house, which is situated in the top of a hill. It can be accessed by a stair which ends in the main door.

2.2.

Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



Chicho (the dog) is very happy because he finally is going to eat. Suddenly, an incredibly smart crow appears and starts butchering the dog. The dog, defending his food, runs forward the crow, who knows how long the rope is and he doesn't even move. Actually, he seems to be laughing! which peace the dog off.

After that, the crow starts flying around the tree, and the dog follows him.

They keep doing this until the rope runs out. When Chicho finally became aware about the crow's plan, it's too late, because he is so tied with his own rope that he can't even move.

Obviously, the crow eats the dog's food, which was his plan since the very beginning.

Participant 3

3.1.

Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.

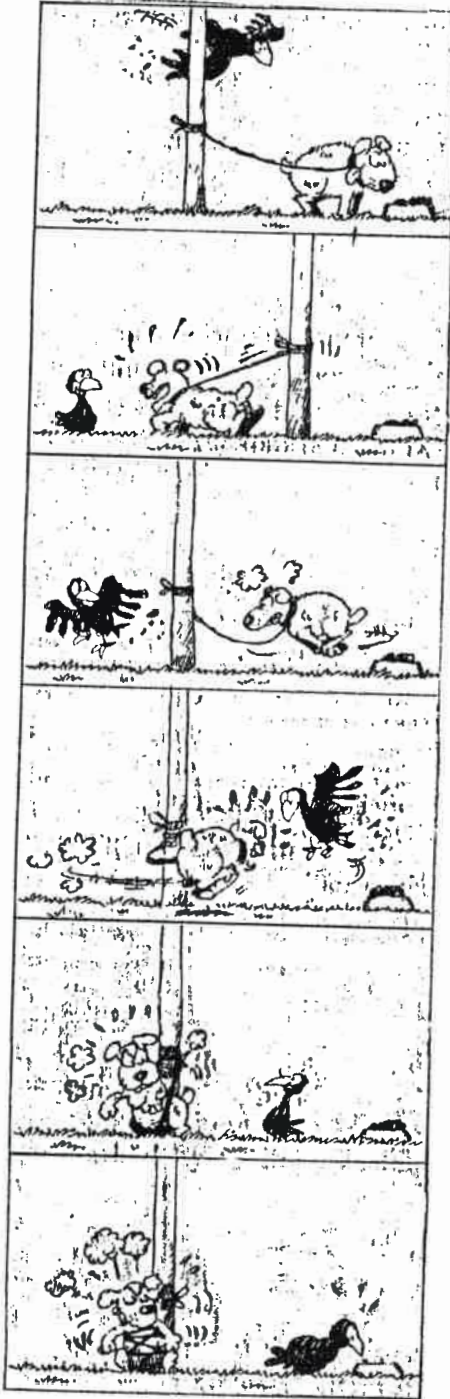


An old gloomy house is settled in a glade of a woods, this ruined house is big, made from wood and has a slate roof. Long stairs which leads to the entrance door goes up over the hill. In its yard, there are several tombstones covered by weed. A dark figure is standing staring through the window. Outside the house, a storm is getting closer, lightnings turn night into day and the dried trees which surround the house seems holding it with their branches.

↳ large bats fly over the place

3.2.

Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



A dog which is tied with a dog collar to a post is about to eat. A crow showed up, flying straight to the food.

But the dog realised and tried to bite the crow. However, he was tied and couldn't catch him.

So the clever crow started turning around the post and the angry dog persued him to kill him.

Seconds later, the dog was completely attached to the post without being able to move.

Then, the crow watched the dog until being sure that he would not be able to move.

Finally, the crow ate the dog's food meanwhile the furious dog was watching, impotent.

Participant 4

4.1.

Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.



The kid picture I think see a black shape not very much like a bird but it's flying light.

In this picture I can see a frightening sight. The sky is dark, I think is going to rain because there are lightnings lights.

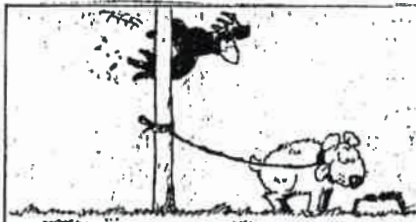
I think there is a house, a big one and it is old. But ^{It is over a mountain.} there are people living in there or one person at least. The old build is rounded by trees without leaves, which seems very mysterious.

This is like a cemetery because in the yard patio there are crypts, it's confusing. I'm able to see bats flying near to the house.

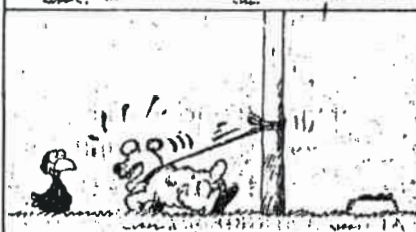
When I watch it, I feel scare and panic.

4.2.

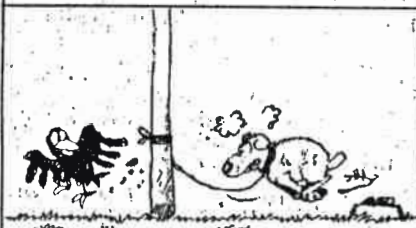
Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



The dog is going to eat its food. Suddenly a crow flies to it.



The dog saw the crow, so it started to ~~barking~~ - bark.



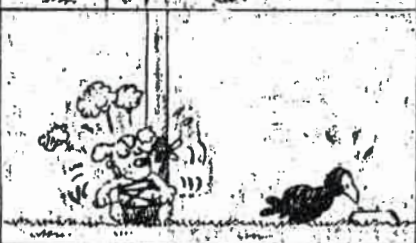
The dog tries to trap the crow, ~~but~~



But it escapes over and over again. The dog is tied near a tree so it is an obstacle to him to catch the crow.



Because in each try the dog had the tree around his body, and the crow was looking at him ~~surprising~~ surprised.



Finally the dog ^{was} very angry with the crow because it ~~was~~ had all his body tied. Then the crow could eat the dog's food while it was ~~sticking~~ ^{sticking} him.

Participant 5

5.1.

Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.



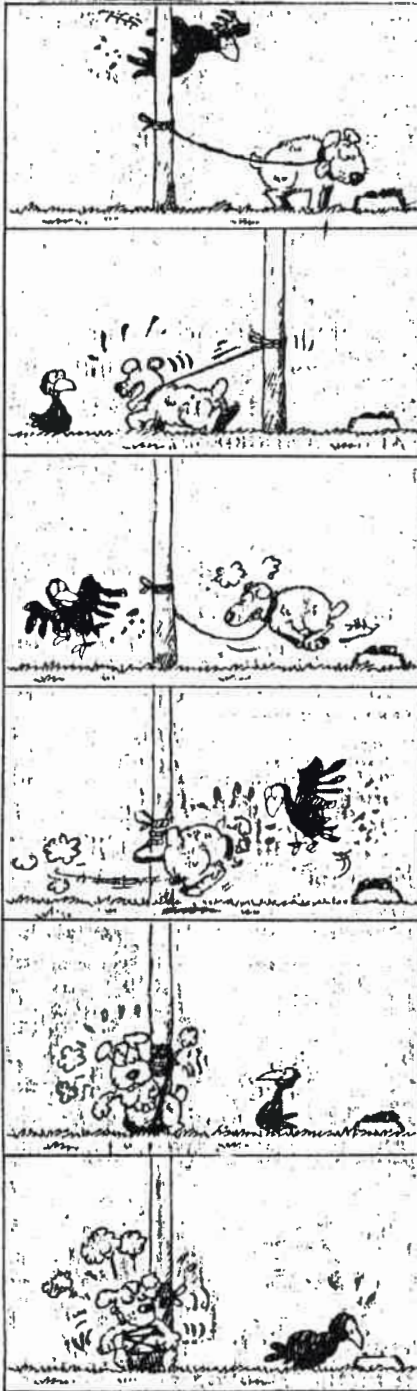
This is a frightened place, where there is a hunting house around by old trees, birds and bats. The full moon looks huge and bright.

The house is very dirty, old and nobody apparently live there but sometimes there are strange noises inside of the house.

The night is freezing, The wind is very strong and it make the windows open and close every time.

5.2.

Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



floppy is a very hungry dog, it loves the food that his owner prepared for him, but one day when it was eating, a bird started to fight with him.

floppy started to bark and bird bit him. The dog was very angry with the annoyed bird and floppy can not stop to bark him.

The dog finished the around the tree and finally the bird ate his delicious food.

Participant 6

6.1.

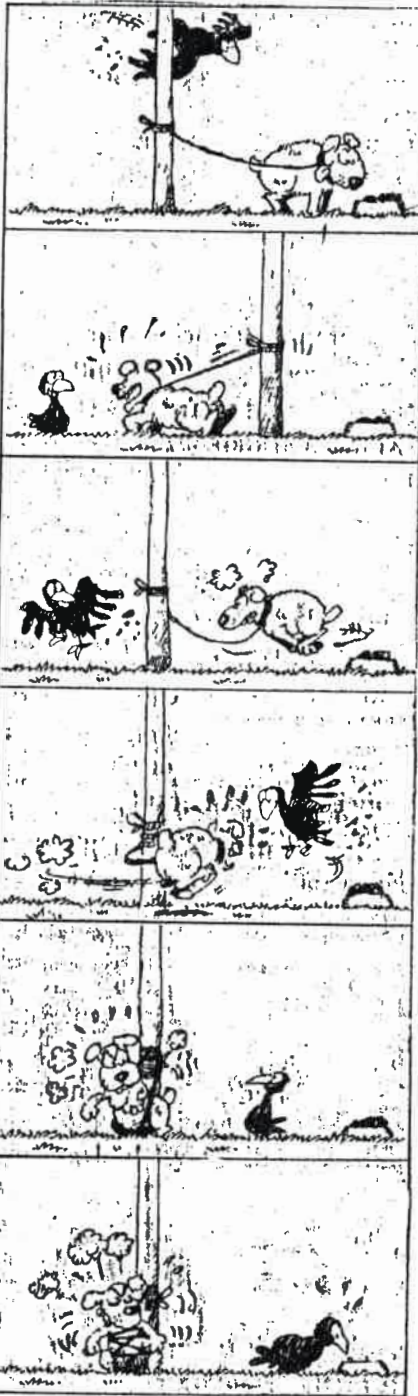
Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.



There is darkness all over the picture, it is a rainy night and thunders are everywhere. There are a lot of creepy trees surrounding a mansion. The old mansion seems to be abandoned, however, I can see a shadow, the small figure of a man through the window. With arms wide open the man seems to be in a ritual or any spiritual invocation. The mansion is in the centre of the picture and in an elevated place, that is why there is a main entrance preceded by ~~an~~ stairs. The main entrance is darkened by the shadow of the roof. The roof of the gallery that is ~~preceded~~ ^{preceded} the principal door.

6.2.

Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



- A dog is feeding. The dog is tied with a rope to a tree, suddenly ~~all~~ a bird appears from the sky.

= The bird lands and provokes the dog's attention. The dog is barking at the bird. The dog seems irritated.

- The bird flies all over the tree (in which the dog is tied). The dog starts following the bird ~~at~~ around the tree.

- Suddenly, the dog has ~~wasted~~ the extension of the rope around the tree.

= The dog has now stuck with the rope to the tree. The dog is now unable to make any movement.

- The dog is ~~now~~ furious. The dog is unable to move and can do nothing to stop the bird feeding from the dog's food. The bird is eating the dog's food from the dog's plate.

Participant 7

7.1.

Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.



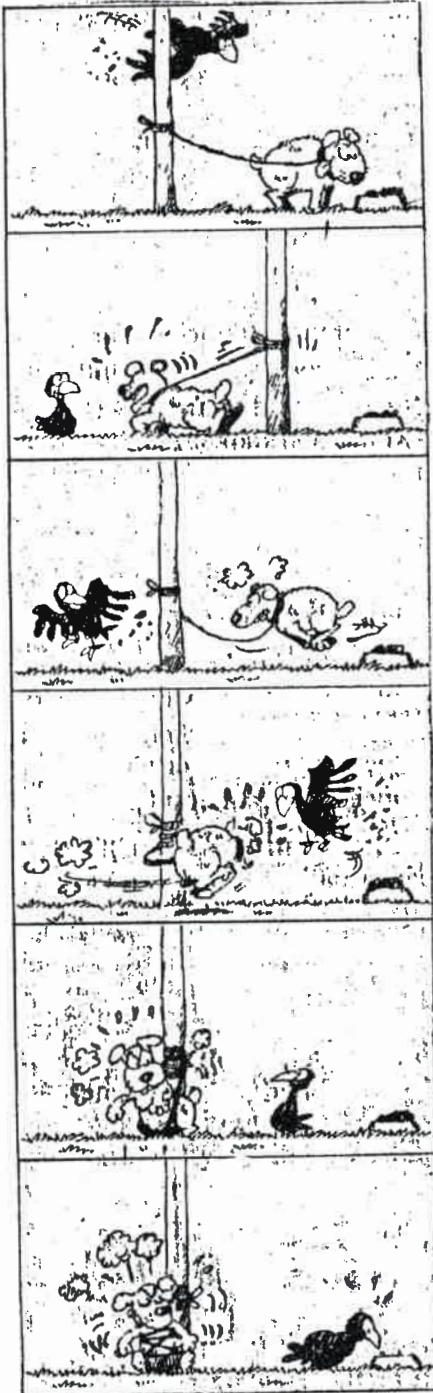
The Mansion

A dark sky, Bats hiding behind threatening clouds. Naked trees bent in the wind. It was late at night moonlight was so weak it hardly lighted the stairs to the house's entrance.

You would shiver to the sight: of craked graves dating remote times. And there it was The solemn mansion, with its sombre look. Mistry was in the air The walls, which had withstated years of strong winds and heavy rain, were lighted by the flashes of lightnings. The many windows lived in, the wind, showing from time to time indescriptible scenes from inside the building.

7.2.

Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



The smart bird

Trotsky, a little dog tied to a tree, was willing to empty his food dish. All of a sudden, a black bird came into sight.

Trotsky immediately barked at it. He was furious, he even tried to snap it. He started chasing the bird, running around the tree. Trotsky manoeuvred so badly he ended up trapped with his own rope. The bird who had quietly witnessed the impotent dog running around, decided he should give Trotsky a hand (a peak) to finish the food dish.

Participant 8

8.1.

Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.



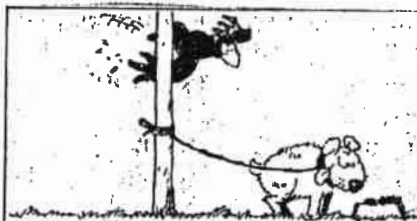
It is night, there is a big house situated on the top of a hill, surrounded by a cemetery and dead trees that give the house a horrible aspect. It looks very old and frightening. I look like a haunted house. It is made of wood and it has two floors with several closed windows and just three of them opened. The house has stairs that take you to the ^{entrance} hall from the garden, in which I can see three graves. Apparently those stairs come from the cemetery.

I can see the figure of a person who is looking through one of the second-floor-open windows.

I think that a storm is coming because there are clouds and "flashes" in the sky. There are two bats flying in the darkness.

8.2.

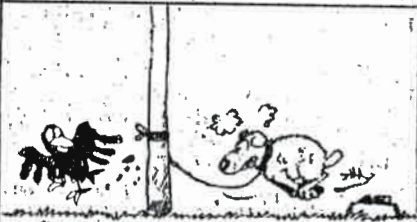
Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



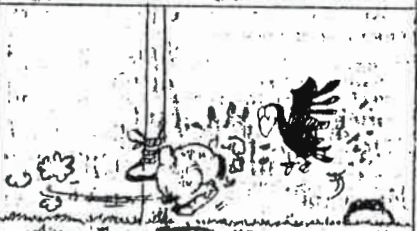
there is a dog tied to a tree, who just wants to eat its food. But a bird is looking up at him, the dog upsets because of the bird presence.



the dog starts to bark to the bird nervously.



then the bird starts to surround the tree and the dog starts to do so.



but the dog starts to run over the tree and his eye starts to enrolled in the tree.



The bird looks how the dog got trapped by himself.



And then the bird goes to eat the dog's food. The dog is really angry and upset because of that, but he can't do anything.

Participant 9

9.1.

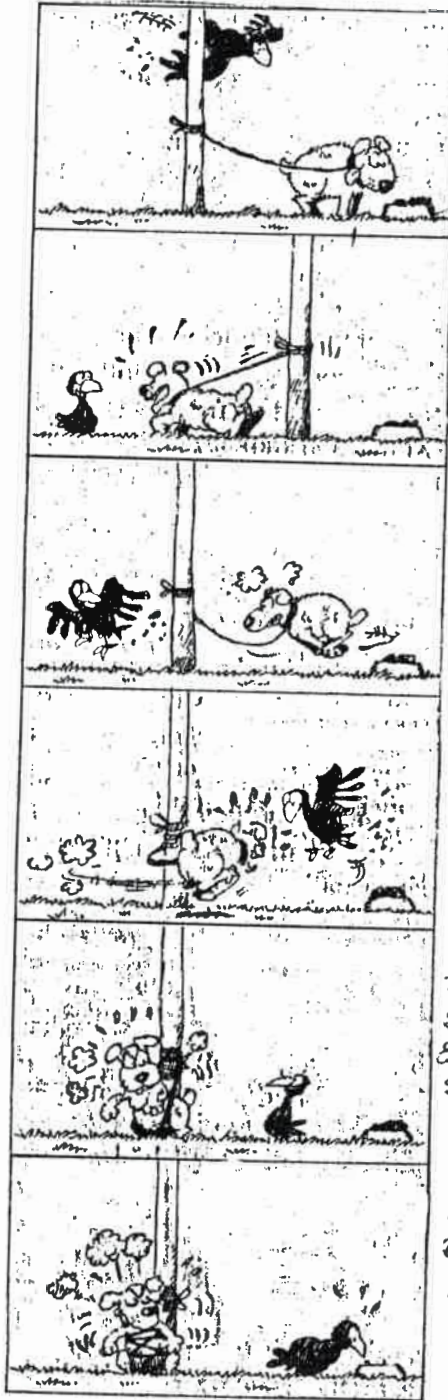
Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.



It is a windy night with a bright moon, which lets see different things, and three storm clouds which are running out. An ancient house is in the middle of a great forestation and it is very big and it looks like a building with several flats. There are three windows and three of them are open also in one of them there is a person and he looks like he/she was looking something (he/she is on the left of the second floor). There is also a long stair, which is in front of a narrow hall, with two bars of wood and the walls that are in both side of the stair. Besides, there are two birds flying inside the house (one on the left of the moon and the other on the right of it). And there are three white marks (two are on the right of the stair and the other on the left.)

9.2.

Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



there was a dog who is going to eat its food and a bird appeared flying inside it. The dog was tied in a wood stick.

And when it realized that the bird was flying near him, it started to back to it.

Then the bird began to fly around the stick and the dog ~~persecuted~~ ^{persecuted} it ran extremely furious.

Like the birds didn't go, it continue persecuted it and it was because of that it felt a little tired. ~~that~~ Instead, the birds seemed to be ironically happy seeing how the dog was getting close to the stick.

Finally, the dog could move because he was trapped with several knots and the birds saw him separately.

At the last, And then it decided to eat food and dog's food and the dog got very angry.

Participant 10

10.1.

Describe the picture in detail, as accurately as possible: write about every visual image that you notice in it so that a person who has not seen the picture can reconstruct it from your words.



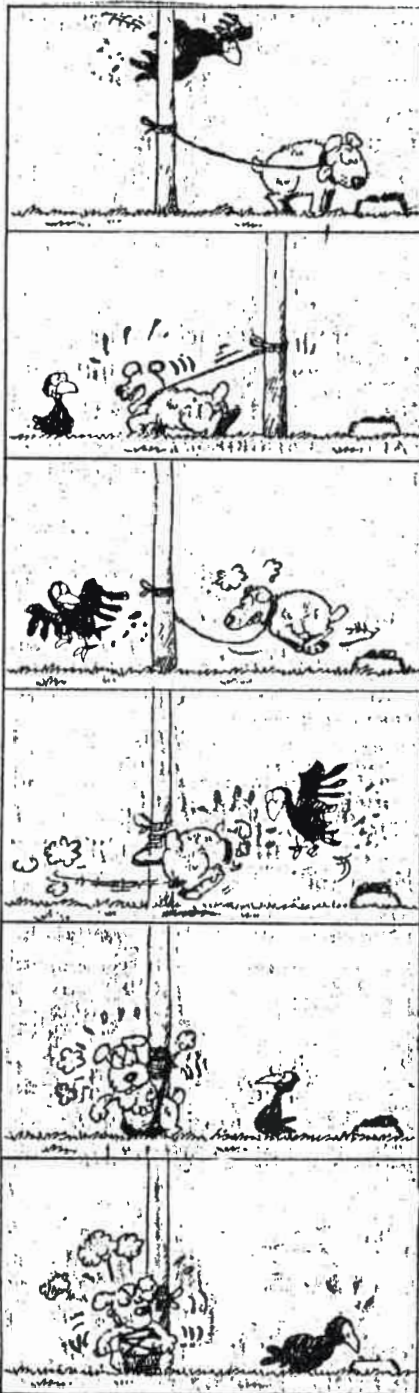
The picture is about a haunted house. It is on the top of a hill. The sky is dark and it seems to be funny because you can see lightning and rays everywhere. The cold wind brings strange noises which makes your skin shingle. There is a full moon (rounded) by two bats who fly around the house as if they were looking for food.

The haunted house has two floors, it is a big house which has many rooms*. On the right side it has a gallery with a long stair with finish in the garden. In front of the house between the stair, there are three old stumps. The haunted house apart from the front garden, it's surrounded by old trees which have not leaves and high grass. -

* At the second floor there is a person looking through the window, probably the person is closing the windows because of the wind. -

10.2.

Tell the story that you see in the sequenced pictures.



It was a sunny day and Roy, the sparrow, was very hungry and sat in the tree, so he thought I'm going to ask Tom if he want share his food with me.

When Roy arrived at the garden Tom was just starting to eat his lunch. Suddenly, Tom got very angry and he didn't want to share his food.

Roy had an idea. I'm going to fly around the tree and Tom is going to follow me. Tom was tied at the tree so, when he ran around the tree, he finished tying himself to the tree. Finally, Roy ate Tom's food and Tom was very angry alone, only because he didn't want to listen to Roy's request.

APPENDIX C

Cuestionario:

Marque con una cruz:

- a) ¿Qué tarea le resultó más difícil: 1) La descripción
2) La narración

b) En vista de su respuesta anterior, ¿a cuál o cuáles de los factores listados a continuación cree que se debieron sus problemas?

Marque la/s respuesta/s correcta/s en la siguiente lista con una cruz:

- 1) Dificultad en la interpretación de la imagen visual
2) Desconocimiento del léxico (vocabulario) requerido para la verbalización
de la imagen
3) Dificultad para conectar las cláusulas (uso de conectores)
4) Dificultad en la elección del tiempo verbal
5) Otros (agregue a voluntad otros aspectos como causa de problemas para
realizar las tareas escritas)



REFERENCES

- AGUSTIN LLACH, M.P., A. FERNÁNDEZ FONTECHA, and S. MORENO ESPINOSA (2005) *Differences in the Griten Production of Young Spanish and German Learners: Evidence from Lexical Errors in a Composition*. Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona. Barcelona Language and Literature Studies. 1-13.
- ASTORGA, M.C. (1999) The text-image interaction and second language learning. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*. Vol. 22 (3): 212-233.
- ASTORGA, C., S. KAUL, and L. UNSWORTH (2003) *Developing Second Language Writing in English. Teaching the narrative of personal experience (A genre-based approach)*. Río Cuarto: Editorial de la Fundación de la Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto.
- BACHMAN, L. (1990) *Fundamental Considerations in Language Texting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BEREITER, C. and M. SCARDAMALIA (1987) *The psychology of written composition*. New Jersey: The Guildford Press.
- BHATIA, V.K. (2000) Integrating discursive competence and professional practice: A new challenge for ESP. Paper presented at the TESOL colloquium "Rethinking ESP for the New Century", Vancouver, March.
- BIALYSTOK, E. (1983) Some factors in the selection and implementation of communication strategies. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication* London and New York: Longman.
- BLUM-KULKA, S. and E.A. LEVENSTON (1983) Universals of lexical simplification. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- BROWN, H.D. (2000) *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (4th ed.) New York: Addison Wesley Longman.
- BUTT, D., R. FEEZ, S. SPINKS and C. YALLOP (2001) *Using Functional Grammar: An Explorer's Guide*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Macquaire University.
- CANALE, M. and M. SWAIN (1980) Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1): 1-47.

- CANALE, M. (1983) From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In RICHARDS, J. and R. SCHMIDT (ed.) *Language and Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- CELCE-MURCIA, M. and E. OLSHTEIN (2000) *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CHEN, S. (1990) A Study of Communication Strategies in Interlanguage Production by Chinese EFL Learners. *Language Learning*, 40:2, 155-187.
- CHIMBGANDA, A.B. (2002) Communication strategies used in the writing of answers in biology by ESL first year science students of the University of Botswana. *English for Specific Purposes*. Vol. 19 (4): 305-329.
- COHEN, A. (1990) *Language Learning*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- COHEN, A. (1998) *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.
- CORDER, S.P. (1967) The Significance of Learners' Errors. *IRAL*, 5, 161-170.
- CORDER, S.P. (1973) The elicitation of interlanguage. In *Errata*, STARTVIK, J. (ed.), 36-47. Lund, Sweden: Gleerup.
- CORDER, S.P. (1974a) The significance of learners' errors. In RICHARDS, J. (ed.) *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. London: Longman.
- CORDER, S.P. (1974b) Idiosyncratic Dialects and Error Analysis. In RICHARDS, J. (ed.) *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. London: Longman.
- CORDER, S.P. (1983) Strategies of communication. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- DECHERT, H.W. (1983) How a story is done in a second language. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- DORNYEI, Z. and J. KORMOS (1998) Problem-solving mechanisms in L2 communication. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 20: 349-385.
- DORNYEI, Z. and M.L. SCOTT (1997) Communication Strategies in a Second Language: Definitions and Taxonomies. *Language Learning*. 47 (1): 173-210.
- DORNYEI, Z. (1995) On the Teachability of Communication Strategies. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol. 29 (1): 55-85.
- DROGA, L. and S. HUMPHREY (2003) *Grammar and Meaning: An Introduction for Primary Teachers*. Berry, NSW: Target Texts.

- ELLIS, R. (1994) *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1997) *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ELLIS, R. and G. BARKHUIZEN (2005) *Analysing Learner Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ENGBER, C. (1995) The Relationship of Lexical Proficiency to the Quality of ESL Compositions. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 4 (2): 139-155.
- EVANS, V. and J. DOOLEY (1999) *Reading and Writing Targets*. Express Publishing.
- FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) (1983a) *Strategies in interlanguage communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (1983b) Plans and strategies in interlanguage communication. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- FAKHRI, A. (1984) The use of communication strategies in narrative discourse: a case study of a learner of Moroccan Arabic as a second language. *Language Learning*. Vol. 34 (3): 15-34.
- FAUCETTE, P. (2001) A pedagogical perspective on communication strategies: benefits of training and an analysis of English language teaching materials. *Second Language Studies*. 19(2): 1-40.
- FLOWER, L. and J. HAYES. (1981) A cognitive process theory of writing. *College composition and communication*. 32/4 pp. 365-387.
- FLOWERDEW, J. (2002) Genre in the Classroom: A Linguistic Approach. In JOHNS, A. (ed.) *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives*. London: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.
- FLYMAN, A. (1997) Communication strategies in French as a foreign language. *Working Papers*. 46: 57-73.
- GEROT, L. and P. WIGNELL (1994) *Making sense of functional grammar*. Sydney: Gerd Stabler AEE Publishing.
- GRABE, W. and R.B. KAPLAN (1996) *Theory and Practice of Writing*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.
- HALLIDAY, M.A.K. (1985a) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- HALLIDAY, M.A.K. (1985b) *Spoken and Written Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- HALLIDAY, M.A.K. (1993) Toward a language-based theory of learning. *Linguistics and Education*. 5, 93-116.
- HALLIDAY, M.A.K. (1994) *An introduction to functional grammar* (2nd ed.) London: Edward Arnold.
- HAASTRUP, K. and R. PHILLIPSON (1983) Achievement strategies in learner/native speaker interaction. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- HANG, J.M. (2005) A study of lexical errors in Cantonese ESL students' writing. Master of Arts dissertation. University of Hong Kong.
- HENRY, A. and R.L. ROSEBERRY (1998) An Evaluation of a Genre-Based Approach to the Teaching of EAP/ESP Writing. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol. 32 (1): 147-156.
- HYLAND, K. (2002a) *Teaching and Researching Writing*. Great Britain: Pearson Education.
- HYLAND, K. (2002b) Genre: Language, Context, and Literacy. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 22: 113-135.
- HYLAND, K. (2003) Genre-based pedagogies: A social response to process. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. Vol. 12 (1): 17-29.
- HYON, S. (2002) Genre and ESL Reading: A Classroom Study. In JOHNS, A. (ed.) *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives*. London: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.
- JAMES, C. (1998) *Errors in Language Learning and Use. Exploring Error Analysis*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.
- JOHNS, A. (ed.) (2002) *Genre in the Classroom: Multiple Perspectives*. New Jersey: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.
- JOHNS, A. (2003) Genre and ESL/EFL composition instruction. In KROLL, B. (ed.) *Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- KANG, J.Y. (2005) Written narratives as an index of L2 competence in Korean EFL learners. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 14: 259-279.
- KASPER, G. (1997) *Beyond Reference*. In KASPER, G. y E. KELLERMAN (ed.) *Communication Strategies. Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. London: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.
- KASPER, G. and E. KELLERMAN (ed.) (1997) *Communication Strategies: Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. London and New York: Longman.
- KELLERMAN, E. (1991) Compensatory strategies in second language research: A critique, a revision, and some (non-)implications for the classroom. In PHILLIPSON,

- R., E. KELLERMAN, L. SELINKER, M. SHARWOOD-SMITH and M. SWAIN (ed.), *Foreign/second language pedagogy research* (pp. 142-161). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- KODA, K. (1993) Task-Induced Variability in FL Composition: Language-Specific Perspectives. *Foreign Language Annals*. Vol. 26, 3: 332-346.
- KRESS, G. (1994). *Learning to write*. (2nd ed.) London: Routledge.
- KROLL, B. (ed). (2003) *Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- LABOV, W. and J. WALETZKY (1967) *Narrative Analysis: oral versions of personal experience*. In Helm, J. (ed.) *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- LARSEN-FREEMAN, D. (1975) The acquisition of grammatical morphemes by adult ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly* 9: 409-419.
- LAUFER, B. (1997) What's in a word that makes it hard or easy? Intralexical factors affecting the difficulty of vocabulary acquisition. In SCHMITT, N. and M.J. *McCarthy* (eds.) *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition, Pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- LAUFER, B. (1998) The Development of Passive and Active Vocabulary in a Second Language: Same or Different? *Applied Linguistics*. 19/2: 255-271.
- LAUFER, B. and P. NATION (1995) Vocabulary Size and Use: Lexical Richness in L2 Written Production. *Applied Linguistics*. Vol. 16, N° 3: 307-322.
- LAUFER, B. (1991) The Development of L2 Lexis in the Expression of the Advanced Learner. *The Modern Language Journal*. 75, iv: 440-447.
- LEKI, I. (1992) *Understanding ESL Writers: A guide for teachers*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- LEKI, I. and J. CARSON (1994) Students' perceptions of EAP writing instruction and writing needs across the discipline. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 81-101.
- LEKI, I. (1995) Coping Strategies of ESL Students in Writing Tasks across the Curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol. 29 (2): 235-260.
- LEKI, I. (2003) A challenge to second language writing professionals: Is writing overrated? In KROLL, B. (ed.) *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- LINNARUD, M. (1986) *Lexis in Composition A Performance Analysis of Swedish Learners' Written English*. Lund Studies in English. SCHAAR, C. and J. STARVIK (ed.) Publishers: Liber Forlag Malmo Sweden.
- LITTLEMORE, J.M. (2003) The Communicative Effectiveness of Different Types of Communication Strategy. *System*. 31(3): 331-347.
- MACKEN-HORARIK, M. (2002) "Something to shoot for": A Systemic Functional Approach to Teaching Genre in Secondary School. In JOHNS, A. (ed.) *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives*. London: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.
- MAKALELA, L. (2004) Differential Error Types in Second Language Students' Written and Spoken Texts: Implications for Instruction in Writing. *Written Communication*. Vol. 22 (4): 368-385.
- MARTIN, J.R. and J. ROTHERY (1986) Writing Project Report N° 2 and N° 4, Working papers in Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, University of Sydney.
- MARTIN, J. (1989) *Factual Writing: Exploring and Challenging Social Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- MARTIN, J. (1992) *English Text: System and Structure*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- MARTIN, J. and D. ROSE (2007) *Genre Relations: mapping culture*. London: Equinox.
- MCCLURE, E. (1991) A Comparison of Lexical Strategies in L1 and L2 Written English Narratives. *Pragmatics and Language Learning*. 2: 141-154.
- MCLAUGHLIN, B. (1987) *Theories of Second Language Learning*. London: Routledge.
- MILLS, M. (1993) *Nexus* (Workbook). Oxford: Heinemann.
- MYLES, J. (2002) Second Language Writing and Research: the Writing Process and Error Analysis in Student Texts. *TESL-EJ*. Vol. 6 (2): 1-18.
- NEMSER, W. (1971) Approximative systems of foreign language learners. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*. 9, 115-123.
- NUNAN, D. (1989). *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- NUNAN, D. (1995) *Language Teaching Methodology*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.
- OLSEN, S. (1999) Errors and compensatory strategies: a study of grammar and vocabulary in texts written by Norwegian learners of English. *System*. 27: 191-205.
- O'MALLEY, J. and A. CHAMOT (1990) *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- OXFORD, R. (1990) *Language Learning Strategies. What every teacher should know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

- PALTRIDGE, B. (2001) *Genre and the Language Learning Classroom*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.
- PARIBAKHT, T. (1985) Strategic competence and language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, 6, 132-146.
- PARIBAKHT, T. (1986) On the pedagogical relevance of strategic competence. *TESL Canada Journal*, 3, 53-66.
- POULISSE, N. (1987) Problems and solutions in the classification of compensatory strategies. *Second Language Research*, 3, 141-153.
- POULISSE, N. and T. BONGAERTS (1994) First Language Use in Second Language Production. *Applied Linguistics*. Vol. 15, N° 1: 36-57.
- POULISSE, N. (1993) A Theoretical Account of Lexical Communication Strategies. In SCHRENDER, R. & M. WELTENS (ed.) *The Bilingual Lexicon*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- POULISSE, N. and E. SCHILS (1989) The influence of Task – and Proficiency-Related Factors on the Use of Compensatory Strategies: A Quantitative Analysis. *Language Learning*. Vol. 39, N° 1: 14-48.
- QI, D. S. and S. LAPKIN (2001) Exploring the role of noticing in a three-stage second language writing task. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 10: 277-303.
- RAIMES, A. (1985) What unskilled ESL students do as they write: a classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol. 19 (2): 229-258.
- RAIMES, A. (1987) *Exploring through writing*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- RAUPACH, M. (1983) Analysis and evaluation of communication strategies. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- READ, J. (2000) *Assessing Vocabulary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- RICHARDS, J. and G. SAMPSON (1974) The Study of Learner English. In RICHARDS, J. (ed.) *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. London: Longman.
- RICHARDS, J. (1974) A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis. In RICHARDS, J. (ed.) *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. London: Longman.
- RICHARDS, J. (1990) From meaning into words: Writing in a second or foreign language. In RICHARDS, J. *The language teaching matrix*. Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press. 100-117.

- ROCA DE LARIOS, J., L. MURPHY and R. MANCHON (1999) The Use of Restructuring Strategies in EFL Writing: A Study of Spanish Learners of English as a Foreign Language. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 8 (1): 13-44.
- ROTHERY, J. and M. STENGLIN (1997) Entertaining and instructing: exploring experience through story. In CHRISTIE, F. and J.R. MARTIN (ed.) *Genre and Institutions. Social Processes in the Workplace and School*. London and Washington: Cassell.
- SANTOS, T. (1988) Professors' Reactions to the Academic Writing of Non-native Speaking Students. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 22: 60-90.
- SCARCELLA, R. and R. OXFORD (1992) *The Tapestry of Language Learning: the Individual in the Communicative Classroom*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.
- SCHMITT, N. (2000) *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SCHOLFIELD, P. (1987) Communication strategies-the Researcher Outmanoeuvred? *Applied Linguistics*. Vol. 8 (3): 219-232.
- SCHOLFIELD, P. (1987) Lexical Errors- A collector's guide. *Bangor Teaching Resource Materials in Linguistics*. 1: 34-55.
- SCHOLFIELD, P. (1987) Vocabulary Problems in Communication: What determines the Learner's Choice of Strategy?. *Bangor Teaching Resource Materials in Linguistics*. 1: 56-75.
- SCHOLFIELD, P. and L. KATAMINE (In preparation: Nov 2000). Is there an 'Ecology' of Communication Strategies in Writing? (unpublished article) Available at: <http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/scholp/katamine2.htm>
- SELINKER, L. (1972) Interlanguage. *IRAL*. 10: 209-231.
- SELINKER, L. (1992) *Rediscovering Interlanguage*. London and New York: Longman.
- SHIN, S-C (2006) *High Frequency Errors in KFL and Pedagogical Strategies*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of New South Wales.
- SINGLETON, D. (1999) *Exploring the Second Language Mental Lexicon*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- SKEHAN, P. (1996) A Framework for the Implementation of Task-based Instruction. *Applied Linguistics*. Vol. 17, N° 1: 38-62.
- SKEHAN, P. (1998) *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Snellings, P., A. VAN GELDEREN and K. DE GLOPPER (2004) Validating a test of second Language written lexical retrieval: a new measure of fluency in written language production. *Language Testing*. 21(2): 107-134.
- SWAIN, M. and S. LAPKIN (1995) Problems in Output and the Cognitive Processes They Generate: A Step Towards Second Language Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 6 (3): 371-391.
- SWALES, J. (1990) *Genre Analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- TARONE, E. (1980) Communication strategies, foreigner talk, and repair in interlanguage. *Language Learning*, 30(2), 417-431.
- TARONE, E. (1983). Some thoughts on the notion of 'communication strategy'. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- TARONE, E., A.D. COHEN and G. DUMAS (1983) A closer look at some interlanguage terminology: a framework for communication strategies. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- TARONE, E. (1985) Variability in interlanguage use: a study of style-shifting in morphology and syntax. *Language Learning* 35, 3: 373-404.
- TARONE, E. (1988) *Variation in Interlanguage*. London: Edward Arnold.
- TARONE, E. and G. YULE (1989) *Focus on the Language Learner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- TARONE, E. (1998) Research on Interlanguage Variation: Implications for Language Testing. In BACHMAN, L. and A. COHEN (ed.) *Interfaces between Second Language Acquisition and Language Testing Research*. Ambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- TOOLAN, M. (1988) *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.
- UNSWORTH, L. (2001) *Teaching Multiliteracies across the Curriculum: Changing Contexts of Text and Image in Classroom Practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- VÁRADI, T. (1983) Strategies of target language learner communication: message adjustment. In FAERCH, C. and G. KASPER (ed.) *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*. London and New York: Longman.

- WANG, L. (2003) Switching to first language among writers with differing second-language proficiency. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 12: 347-375.
- WHITE, R. and V. ARNDT (1991) *Process Writing*. London: Longman.
- WILLEMS, G. (1987) Communication strategies and their significance in foreign language teaching. *System*, 15(3), 351-364.
- WRAY, D. and J. MEDWELL (1991) *Literacy and Language in the Primary Years*. London: Routledge.
- YATES, R. and J. KENKEL (2002) Responding to sentence-level errors in writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 11-1: 29-47.
- YULE, G. and E. TARONE (1990) Eliciting the performance of strategic competence. In Scarcella, R., E. ANDERSEN and S. KRASHEN (ed.) *Developing Communicative Competence in a Second Language*. New York: Newbury House Publishers.
- YULE, G. and E. TARONE (1997) Investigating communication strategies in L2 reference: pros and cons. In KASPER, G. and E. KELLERMAN (ed.). *Communication Strategies. Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. London: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.
- ZAMEL, V. (1982) Writing: the process of discovering meaning. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol. 16 (2): 195-209).
- ZAMEL, V. (1985) Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol. 19(1): 79-101.



U N F C
Biblioteca Central



71262

71262