

NONNATIVE SPEAKERS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN WORD SEARCHES  
FROM A CONVERSATION ANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE

BY

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THESIS

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis uses conversation analysis methodology to analyze how nonnative speakers of English use communication strategies when searching for words. Language learners employ many communication strategies when searching for words, including language switch, appeals for assistance, gestures and circumlocution. In particular, the phenomena of language switch and circumlocution, as they occur in naturally occurring talk in combination with other communication strategies, are analyzed in depth in this thesis. The participants of this study were 9 graduate international students from a local university who speak Romance languages as their native language and 2 native speakers of English. Approximately 10 hours of naturally occurring talk were audio and video-recorded during informal get-togethers with the participants, in groups of two or three. The phenomenon of circumlocution was observed to occur together with other communication strategies, such as language switch and word coinage. Furthermore, it was used in collaboration among the participants in order to elicit the word being searched for. Similarly, language switch was also used together with other communication strategies, such as gestures. The issue of language expertise between the more and less proficient speakers of English and how the former collaborates with the latter when they share the same or similar native languages will also be discussed. This thesis concludes with a discussion of the implications for research and language learning and teaching.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication Strategies (CS) have become an extremely important topic when it comes to second language learning and they have been the focus of many studies in the field of Second Language Acquisition. However, most of the studies done on CS have not analyzed them in naturally occurring talk outside the classroom. Rather, they have analyzed CS as they happen in classrooms or are elicited through interviews or questionnaires. This thesis aims at analyzing how CS are used by nonnative speakers of English in naturally occurring talk among friends and acquaintances. This study is distinct from most others done in the field for two reasons: first because it analyzes CS as they occur in naturally occurring conversations as opposed to classroom discourse or elicited data; and second because most of the data collected for this study analyzes English as a lingua franca. The majority of the conversations recorded happen among speakers of English as a second language who share different native languages, but use English to communicate with each other.

#### 1.2 DEFINING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

CS have been defined by Tarone (1977) as strategies “used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual thought” (p. 195). Later, using a more interactional approach to CS, Tarone (1981) characterized them as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on

a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (p. 288). She went on to argue that “CS, viewed from this perspective, may be seen as attempts to bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the second language learner, and the linguistic knowledge of the target language interlocutor in real communication situations” (Tarone, 1981, p. 288). Tarone (1981) created three criteria to further define CS: the first is the need for a learner to communicate something to an interlocutor; the second criteria is characterized by the awareness of the speaker that he or she does not have the linguistic structure necessary to communicate his or her desired meaning; and the third is when the speaker decides to avoid the message altogether or try ways to make himself or herself understood (Tarone, 1981). Færch and Kasper (1983) have defined CS as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” (p. 36). According to them, when learners cannot find a way to communicate without problems, they turn to strategies to deal with the problems they encounter while communicating (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Poulisse, Bongaerts and Kellerman (1984) assert that they are “strategies which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to his own linguistic short-comings” (p. 72). Dornyei (1995) described CS as “various verbal and non-verbal means of dealing with difficulties and breakdowns that occur in everyday communication” (p. 55).

### 1.3 CATEGORIZING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Perhaps the first distinction that needs to be made regarding CS is the distinction between the psycholinguistic approach and the interactional approach to CS. The first approach views CS as a mental activity (Bialystok, 1978), and as Willey (2001) points out:

Unfortunately, the definition of CS as a mental plan on the part of the learner presupposes that signs of CS may never surface in the interaction, as CS may take place entirely within the learner's head. This definition of CS entails an empirical quandary: if some CS indeed do not surface at all in the interaction, how can the investigator identify them? (p. 7)

The interactional approach, on the other hand, sees CS as a joint effort between the speaker and the interlocutor, and that CS functions as a means to "exchange enough information" in the target language "to ensure that both interlocutors are talking about the same thing" (Tarone, 1981, p.288). As claimed by Willey (2001), the interactional approach to CS is a more practical one, because it allows us to identify more easily the strategies employed by learners as they surface in interaction.

Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) categorized CS into six strategies: negative transfer from the native language; overgeneralization, when learners apply a rule from the target language inappropriately to other forms of the target language; prefabricated pattern, when learners are aware of certain patterns in the target language, but employ them inappropriately – this can be a subcategory of overgeneralization; overelaboration, when learners produce an utterance which does not sound native-like and sounds overtly formal or more characteristic of written discourse; epenthesis or vowel insertion,

when learners cannot produce consonant clusters with which they are unfamiliar and use schwas between consonants; different types of avoidance, topic and semantic; appeal to authority; and paraphrase.

Corder (1983) believed that CS fell into one of the following two categories: message adjustment strategies or resource expansion strategies. Message abandonment, topic avoidance, semantic avoidance and message reduction are characterized as message adjustment strategies; while borrowing, paraphrasing, gestures and appeals for help are examples of resource expansion strategies (Corder, 1983).

Tarone (1978) divided CS into three categories: paraphrase, transfer and avoidance. Paraphrase is further split into approximation, for which a learner substitutes a vocabulary item which is not available to him or her with another one which shares a similar meaning; word coinage, when the learner invents a new word to communicate the intended meaning; and circumlocution, when the language learner explains the meaning of a vocabulary item that is not available to him or her (Tarone, 1978). She breaks down transfer into the following categories: literal translation, in which the speaker translates word by word from his or her native language; and language switch, when the learner uses a word from his native language, without translating it into the target language (Tarone, 1978). The phenomenon of transfer can be observed in different areas of the language, such as phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1983). Avoidance is divided into topic avoidance, when the language learner completely avoids a topic for which he or she does not have enough vocabulary or structures available; and message abandonment, when the speaker

decides to abandon a message for lack of vocabulary or structures in the L2 (Tarone, 1978). Williams, Inscoe and Tasker (1997) add to the list of CS confirmation checks, clarification requests and comprehension checks. They define confirmation checks as “utterances seeking confirmation of anything contained in the entire preceding written or spoken discourse” (p.310); clarification requests are requests for clarification of anything in preceding utterances; comprehension checks is when the speaker checks with the interlocutor that he or she has understood what was said (Williams, Inscoe and Tasker, 1997). Tarone (1983) also includes in the list of CS “appeal for assistance,” “when the learner asks for the correct term”, for example, ‘what is this?’ (p. 62).

Confirmation checks and clarification requests are examples of repair. Repair is defined by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977, p. 361) as a way to address to problems “in speaking, hearing and understanding” of a speaker’s utterance and it is a characteristic of the speech of both native and nonnative speakers. Repairs consist of a repair initiation, “marking possible disjunction with the immediately preceding talk” (Schegloff, 1997, p. 503) and a repair outcome, in which there is either a solution to the problem that initiated the repair or total abandonment of it (Schegloff, 1997). A word search, in which speakers look for a word they have momentarily forgotten or do not know (Hosoda, 2006) is also an example of repair. Repair can be initiated by the speaker who is experiencing problems in the talk, which is called self-initiated repair – namely repair initiated on one’s own talk – or by other speakers in the conversation, which is known as other-initiated repair, although a clear preference for the former has been found (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks say that “self initiations within the same turn use a variety of non-lexical speech

perturbations, e.g. cut-offs, sound stretches, uh's etc. to signal the possibility of repair-initiation immediately following" (1977, p. 367).

An important issue that may occur among nonnative speakers of a language is the presence of both novice and more expert speakers of the language in the interaction.

The participants' differential language expertise can become a matter of displayed interactional relevance when they delay the action in progress by initiating and solving problems of speaking, hearing and understanding, and the repair activity becomes interactional business in its own right.

(Hosoda, 2006, p. 32)

That is, when there are speakers who are more proficient in the target language than others, one can help and elicit help from the other when doing repair, and the repair becomes a collective activity done conjointly by the participants.

#### 1.4 WORD SEARCHES

According to Goodwin (1983), word searches happen when the "speaker is finding his/her utterance in trouble and is not immediately able to locate an appropriate word" (p. 129). That is, when speakers want to use a word in their speech which they have forgotten for a moment. The speaker, when unsure of a language item, can convey that he or she is in the process of a word search by looking away from the other participant or participants and by producing "a characteristic 'thinking face' as they withdraw their gaze" (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1986, p. 57).

Word searches are not only characteristic of the speech of native speakers. Nonnative speakers also do word searches. It is important to emphasize that when a language learner initiates a word search, it does not mean he or she does not know the word he or she is searching for; they might have momentarily forgotten it (Koshik and Seo, 2008). However, language learners do sometimes search for words they do not know or have not fully learned yet in the second language (Koshik and Seo, 2008). In addition, they employ many communication strategies during these word searches. Kasper and Kellerman (1997) explain that word searches happen when “a speaker wishes to label a concept for which she does not have the lexical resources, or where these resources are available but cannot be recalled, or where available and retrievable resources cannot be used successfully because of contextual constraints” (p. 8).

Koshik and Seo explain that sometimes “speakers display an inability to find the solution themselves, and another participant temporarily enters the turn to provide a ‘candidate solution’, i.e., a solution that the original speaker needs to accept or reject” (2008, p. 2). In order for the speaker to invite other speakers to participate in the word search, he or she usually returns eye gaze to the other participant and asks a wh-question (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1986). The eye gaze toward the other speaker or speakers changes the word search from a “solitary search” to a “multi party” search (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1986, p. 63). Brouwer adds that “participants in an interaction are able to recognize the traits of a word search sequence as it unfolds, and thereby engage in building such sequences” (p. 537). She says that “in order to hear an explicit word search marker as an invitation to participate in a word search, the other participant must hear enough information about the type of word that is being sought” (Brouwer,

2003, p. 539). Gaskill (1980) asserts that “word searches are frequently done in collaboration with another speaker or speakers and that candidate solutions to the search are often changed by one speaker or another” (p. 133). In other words, other participants can help the speaker search for the targeted item by providing possible candidate solutions to the search themselves. This way, other participants can collaborate in the word search. Gaskill claims that it is common to have speakers assist each other in word searches (1980). Speakers give information about the item being searched for to the other participants, they turn to other participants for help, and sometimes they explain why they cannot provide the item to other participants as an attempt to get them to help in the word search (Brouwer, 2003).

“In some cases, not only do participants solicit help from other, but they simultaneously orient to their interlocutor’s expertise in the language being used. For example, they use explicit word search markers, such as (...) ‘I don’t know what it is in Danish’, (...) ‘I don’t know how to say it’, (...) ‘How does one say it?’, and (...) ‘What does one say?’. These explicit markers account for the word search and, simultaneously, point to the hearer’s expertise” (Brouwer, 2003, p. 540).

Sometimes, when L2 speakers have problems with the language, they ask for confirmation on the word or phrase they produce (Hosoda, 2006). They do this by providing their own solutions to word searches and when they are unsure of the language item they utter it with upward intonation, usually looking at another participant and at other times they elicit help explicitly (Koshik and Seo, 2008). Hosoda claims that:

By checking everyday vocabulary items, the L2 speakers themselves, at that moment, although it is not necessarily beyond them to complete the repair sequence, orient themselves as 'novice' in the language spoken in the interaction while they treat their interlocutors at that moment, as a language expert. (2008, p. 33)

Koshik and Seo claim that "it is not always clear whether the learner is actually proffering a candidate solution for confirmation or eliciting the correct form by proffering a more general term or synonym" (2008, p. 18). In addition, "the rising intonation at the end of a learner's word search can also be interpreted as eliciting confirmation of the content of their talk or confirmation of understanding" (Koshik and Seo, 2008, p. 21-22).

## 1.5 DATA COLLECTION IN CS RESEARCH

CS have been the focus of many studies in the last few decades. However, most of the research done on this topic has analyzed CS in interviews, questionnaires and through elicited data, and not through naturally occurring talk. One of the most relevant examples of this might be the Nijmegen Project. It analyzed three groups of Dutch learners of English of different proficiency levels while they performed tasks such as describing objects and graphic designs, retelling stories and having interviews with native speakers of English (Poullisse, Bongaerts and Kellerman, 1990). In a somewhat different study, Varadi (1983) analyzed how two groups of learners of English described drawings in English and in their native language through written texts. They were asked to write their descriptions of the same pictures in both languages, at different times, and days later they were asked to translate their English text into their native language and

vice-versa (Varadi, 1983). Examples of approximation and circumlocution could be observed by Varadi (1983). However, it should be noted the distinct differences between spoken and written discourse – written discourse is usually more carefully planned and does not receive online feedback, whereas spoken discourse is more spontaneous and requires more cognitive mechanisms, such as attending to syntax, lexicon, register, pronunciation, speech delivery, all at the same time. Dechert (1983), more similarly to the Nijmegen Project, recorded a non-native speaker of English describing a series of cartoons which made up a story. Dechert identified problems such as word searches. The learner received no feedback during the telling of the story and therefore there was no interaction.

As pointed out by Willey (2001), in order to have a deeper understanding of when, how and why CS function we have to analyze them in interaction. As discussed in Section 1.1 of this thesis, if CS are an attempt of interlocutors to reach an agreement on meaning when they cannot understand each other (Tarone, 1981), then there is no better situation to analyze CS than in interaction. In addition, the interactions that are to be analyzed need to be naturally occurring talk, because only then will we be able to see how CS are actually employed by learners and have a better understanding of how they use CS. Lee (2001) argues that, by collecting data from individuals and not interactions, researchers are turning their backs on a crucial feature of CS, which is communication itself. In an attempt to generate less artificial data, Haastrup and Phillipson (1983) videotaped Danish speakers of English having conversations with British speakers and were able to identify various types of strategies, such as paraphrase, word coinage, appeals, gestures and language switch. Although this study

generated much more natural talk, it is still a bit unreal, since the interlocutors did not know each other previous to their conversation and were given topics to which they could refer in case they did not know what to say to each other. Wagner and Firth (1997) recorded telephone conversations between workers of Danish companies and foreign partners from other companies worldwide and analyzed how CS were used in German, Danish, French and English. They found that the number of CS used in these naturally occurring telephone conversations were significantly smaller than the amount of CS used in studies which used elicited data (Wagner and Firth, 1997).

More recently, Willey (2001) analyzed word searches in an ESL conversation class at an American University. Although this is a huge step in analyzing CS when compared to some other studies done in the field because of the use of naturally occurring talk, “the conversation classes that comprise the data for [the] study do not always resemble every day, ‘real-world’ conversation among equals” even though they are often very conversational in nature (Willey, 2001, p. 17). What is more, they are, at times, an example of institutional talk. As any language classroom, the teacher may be seen as an authority. In addition, the teacher in Willey’s data is the native speaker expert who the students can turn to if they encounter problems with the target language. This environment might be slightly different from friends and acquaintances communicating with each other. Markee (2009) observed the behavior of avoidance in a classroom for English for Specific Purposes, while a Chinese student did a Power Point presentation for the rest of the class. The avoidance of the vocabulary item was further confirmed during a student-teacher conference some time after the presentation, when the student affirmed she did not use the word because she did not know how to

pronounce it and avoided pronouncing it all throughout the conference (Markee, 2009). Markee's study is another example of institutional talk. Lee (2004) video-recorded a family of three Korean speakers of English discussing books and articles which they had read with the objective of improving their L2. Although there is no doubt that the data collected by Lee is considered naturally occurring talk, there might be something unnatural about speakers of the same language using English to communicate with each other when they could easily use their native language to do so.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

#### **2.1 THE PRESENT STUDY**

This study seeks to analyze how CS are employed by nonnative speakers of English in naturally occurring talk. An approximate total of 10 hours of data was collected by video recording friends and acquaintances having informal conversations over a snack or lunch, at the investigator's apartment in a university town in the U.S. It is important to emphasize that nothing was done before or during the conversations to manipulate output: no topics were pre-selected; there were no tasks to be accomplished among the participants; they were never asked to describe pictures – they were simply told to engage in conversation as they normally do when they spend time together. This is one of the reasons why this study is different from many of the ones done previously on CS, in which data were elicited and the participants did not know each other, or the data collected involved some kind of institutional talk. Another reason why this study is distinct from many others is that most of the participants use English as a lingua franca, since they do not share the same native language and speak English as their second language. There are conversations in which there are two native speakers of Portuguese, but since there is another speaker in the room who does not share the same native language, they turn to English to communicate with each other.

## 2.2. THE PARTICIPANTS

There were a total of eleven participants in this study (including the researcher), who were video-recorded for two hours in groups of three – including the investigator. However, there was one exception to the latter. One recording was done with only two participants, who did not share the same native language and did not know any languages which are from the same language family. All of the participants but two are international students who have come to the U.S. to study and all but one are graduate students at the same university; one was an undergraduate at the time of the recording. Furthermore, they are all friends or acquaintances who often spend time together at dinner parties or bars. One interesting thing about these participants is that they all (with the exception of the two English native speakers) speak Romance languages as their native language – Portuguese, Spanish and Italian. The native speakers of English, on the other hand, do not speak any Romance languages.

L, whose native language is Spanish, is an Argentinean graduate student at the local university. She is in her late twenties and has studied English since she was eight years old. She has been in the U.S. for the last two and a half years and she received a score of 103 on the TOEFL iBT. M1 is a female visiting scholar from Italy who had first visited the U.S. in 2008 for four months and returned in 2009 for another four months. She is also in her late twenties. M2 is a male graduate student from Brazil in his early thirties, whose native language is Portuguese and who has been studying in the U.S. for three and a half years. He received a score of 273 on the TOEFL CBT. M3 is also a graduate student from Brazil who has been in the U.S. for one and a half years. He is in his mid thirties, has been studying English for fifteen years both in Brazil and in the U.S.

and received a score of 106 on the TOEFL iBT. S is a male graduate student in his late twenties. He is from Italy and has been in the U.S. for one and a half years. He had previously lived in the U.S. for a year and had studied English for eight years in school. His score on the TOEFL iBT was 110. R, similarly to S, is an Italian graduate student who has lived in the U.S. for the past two years. He studied English for five years in school and received 111 on the TOEFL iBT. J1 is a male Brazilian visiting scholar who had been here for two months at the time of the recording. He is in his mid thirties and had never visited the U.S. before. J2 is a native speaker of English. He is a graduate student from Canada in his mid twenties. J3 is a graduate student from Brazil in his mid twenties and spent six months in the U.S. to do research and participate in an internship. He had never had any prior formal instruction in English before his trip here. K was an undergraduate student at the time of the recording. She is in her early twenties and the only American among the participants. V, who is the researcher for this study, is in her late twenties and she is a graduate student from Brazil. She received a score of 115 in the TOEFL iBT and has lived in the U.S. for the last year and a half. She was an exchange student in her teens in California.

### 2.3 METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were collected at the investigator's apartment, as mentioned previously, in sessions that were video-recorded for two hours in groups of three, with one exception. One recording was done with only two participants, who did not share the same native language as stated earlier. The participants were grouped together in a manner that there were never three speakers of the same native language

at the same time. There were sessions in which there were two speakers of the same native language at the same time, but another speaker whose native language was different. There were only two sessions in which native speakers of English were present, and they happened to have been grouped with the speakers with the lowest proficiency levels in English of all of the participants. The participants were instructed to talk about whatever subject they wanted and were never told to speak a specific language during the recording. However, since there was always a speaker who did not share the same native language as the others, English was used as the lingua franca in all recording sessions. The data collected for this study were transcribed using Conversation Analysis transcription conventions (explained in the Appendix) and Conversation Analysis is used as a methodology to investigate the CS analyzed in this thesis.

According to Clayman and Gill (2001), “it is primarily through interaction that (...) language is put to use” (p. 589). There is no better way, then, to see what really happens in conversation and how language is used than in interaction itself. Conversation Analysis (CA) “offers a rigorous methodology of data collection and analysis that is uniquely suited to addressing the problems and exploiting the opportunities posed by human interaction as an object of inquiry” (Clayman and Gill, 2001, p. 589). Naturally-occurring interaction provides a much richer and more detailed illustration of how interaction works than elicited data (Clayman and Gill, 2001). CA data are audio and video recorded (Koshik, 2005). When naturally occurring talk is both audio and video recorded, it is possible to observe how things are said by the participants, silences, non-verbal behaviors such as gestures and eye gaze, and so on

(Clayman and Gill, 2001). Moreover, Clayman and Gill also claim that “ordinary conversation among acquaintances and family members appears to represent the richest and most varied source of interactional phenomena” (2001, p. 593). As mentioned previously, all of the participants know each other and spend a large amount of time with each other in their free time.

Schegloff and Sacks (1973) use a basic question for analyzing CA data: “Why that now?”.

In other words, participants in conversation try to understand what co-participants are doing by saying a particular utterance at a particular point in the sequence of talk. Participants, in the course of interaction, regularly demonstrate their understanding of what other participants’ talk is doing. They demonstrate this understanding to other participants as a natural process of responding to their talk, and this same demonstration of understanding is also available to the researcher. Analysts can use this displayed understanding to try to understand what sort of ‘that’ triggers that issue for the participants, what sort of now it is embedded in, and what sort of accounts the participants come up with for it. (Koshik, 2005 p. 4)

Koshik (2005 p. 4) explains that “CA researchers work with a collection of fragments of talk that exemplify the phenomenon or domain of phenomena being studied”. She further asserts that:

A microanalysis such as this can show us in detail how a particular practice of talk comes to accomplish a particular social action, how it comes to be understood by the participants as doing that social action, and what its consequences are for subsequent talk. When a number of separate micro-analyses are done on related phenomena, they can form together a detailed picture that contributes to our understanding of macro issues in language and social interaction. (Koshik, 2005 p. 5)

In the following chapters I will analyze excerpts of the data collected for this study which contain examples of CS used by nonnative speakers of English when doing a word search. In chapter 3, the phenomenon known as circumlocution, as it happens in word searches, will be discussed. There will be an analysis of each data segment, followed by a discussion of that segment. In chapter 4, I will analyze how language switch, together with other CS such as gestures and appeals for assistance, is used by the nonnative participants. Similarly to chapter 3, in chapter 4 there will be an analysis of each data segment, following by a discussion of the segment. In chapter 5 I will discuss the implications of this study for further research and for second language learning.

## CHAPTER 3

### CIRCUMLOCUTION

#### 3.1 CIRCUMLOCUTION

Circumlocution is “a description of the desired lexical item or a definition of it in other words - as in a thing you dry your hands on for towel” (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1983, p. 11). Tarone (1983) defines circumlocution as when the speaker explains the characteristics of the object or action he or she is describing as opposed to using the target language item. Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1983) explain that:

When used in dictionary definitions, and thus are context-free, circumlocutions are expected to specify all the semantic features of the defined word: “island- a tract of land surrounded by water”. In translations, text-simplifications and learners’ speech, circumlocutions are never context-free, and hence tend to vary in their degree of accuracy, if considered as definitions of the words they replace. (p. 135)

Even though the term circumlocution, as seen in the literature about CS, is being used to describe the phenomenon this chapter will discuss and analyze, it by no means restricts the analysis of the data to simply what the literature describes about circumlocution. As will be observed in the excerpts below, circumlocution is but a small part of what is really happening in terms of CS.

This chapter will analyze how the participants of this study use circumlocution as a CS in word searches.



In the extract above, J3 is trying to elicit the word “gall bladder”, which he does not know in English and nor does V. In lines 1 and 2, J3 clearly shows he is entering a word search - he pauses numerous times, elongates the first vowel sound of the word “horse” - all signs that the speaker is searching for a word (Goodwin, 1983). He also abruptly cuts off the first syllable of the word “liquid” at the end of line 2 (li-), which is a sign of self-correction (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). He is about to say liquid, but cuts the word off and adds the adjective green and repeats the word liquid to say “green liquid”. In lines 1 and 2, J3 seems to be searching for the word “bile”, or searching for how to describe it, i.e., circumlocution. J3 uses circumlocution as a strategy to elicit the word. He first describes where the gland is located in an animal – close to the stomach – and he then explains the function of the gland – which is to produce a green liquid, for which he also does not know the word in English. In line 3, K tries to guess what the green liquid that J3 is describing is by saying “oh bile” with upward intonation to show uncertainty. Both J3 and V confirm the word in lines 4 and 5. In line 6, K attempts to guess the name of the gland J3 is trying to describe, by once more using upward intonation to say the word “pancreas” in order to show uncertainty at her guess. However, J3 rejects the word in line 7 and so does V in line 8. Since K has not yet provided J3 with the word he is searching for, in line 9, he elaborates more on the description of the word by explaining that he thinks horses do not have this gland. In line 10, he wants to use the word “gland”, but since he cannot remember how to say it, or how to pronounce it correctly, he uses word coinage to form the word “gandle”. In excerpt IV below, in a word search which preceded excerpt I above, J3 asks V how to say gland in English and attempts to say the word also using word coinage. In excerpt

IV, V provides the word “gland” for J3 in English - this confirms he has already heard the word before, and probably, either cannot remember the word, or how to pronounce it correctly. If the latter is right, then J3 is not using word coinage as a CS. V confirms that horses do not have a gall bladder in line 13, and in an attempt to help J3 to explain the meaning of the word, in line 16, she adds that when there is an inflammation in this gland, humans have to get it removed. This shows that V is also participating in the word search and is also using a CS to help J3 elicit the word from K. By saying that sometimes this gland gets inflamed, V is providing more information for the word search by further describing the gall bladder - using circumlocution. K interrupts V in line 18, by trying again to guess the word by saying the word “appendix” with upward intonation to show that she is unsure that this is the correct item. After a micropause in line 19, V and J3 reject the word in lines 20 and 21. However, K insists on the word by saying that appendicitis is a common disease in line 22. J3 says, in line 23, that he is not familiar with that, but it is difficult to perceive what he is referring to here – is he saying he does not know the word “appendicitis” or is he continuing to affirm that he does not know how to say gall bladder? However, in line 25, he rejects appendicitis as the word he is searching for, even though he asks for clarification on the meaning of the word in lines 26 and 27 by asking if this is a kind of disease in the intestine. V rejects this solution once more in line 24. In lines 29 to 32, J3 uses the same strategy again - circumlocution -, this time providing yet another function of the gland – to improve digestion – and adds another piece of information about the gall bladder – that it is present in mammals. In line 29, to explain the function of the gall bladder, he uses the word “stuff” as a substitute for gall bladder – which is an approximation of the word he is looking for. In

line 33, K shows that she still does not know which gland V and J3 are talking about by responding to J3 by saying “hum”. In line 34, J3 repeats that he does not know the word in English. Therefore, unfortunately, this strategy did not prove to be successful in this extract, because the native speaker from whom J3 was eliciting the vocabulary item did not provide the word gall bladder, even after numerous attempts by J3 at describing the word, in collaboration with V, and various attempts by K to guess the word. This might have happened because K does not know the location or functions of the gall bladder or because she felt confused with all the information V and J3 were trying to communicate to her.

As can be observed from the extract above, after each effort J3 makes to explain gall bladder to K, the latter tries to guess the word, by uttering it with upward intonation. Although his vocabulary and sentence structures are limited, J3, who is a graduate student in Animal Sciences, is using his expertise on the topic to explain the organ’s function, location and the knowledge he has that horses do not have it. It is important to emphasize that circumlocution is not the only strategy J3 uses in the extract above. He uses word coinage, to explain what kind of organ he is trying to describe in line 10 by uttering the word “glandle”; he uses approximation, when he substitutes the name of the gland by “stuff”; and he uses his expertise of the topic as a tool to circumlocute the meaning of gall bladder – had he not known where the gland is located, its function and its presence or absence in certain animals, he would not have been able to use circumlocution.

The differences between elicited data and the extract above are numerous. First and foremost, with elicited data, sometimes there is not the presence of an interlocutor;

and other times, if there is one, they might not engage so actively in the conversation as the interlocutors do in the example above and as anyone who knows their interlocutors very well and converse very often with them do. When there is no one for the participant to interact with, the very basic nature of how CS are used is lost – and that is interaction. Furthermore, since all three participants are responding and communicating with each other actively, there is a joint effort by everyone to discover the word one of the participants is looking for. The topic they are discussing was not imposed on them, and they can all turn to their expertise and knowledge on the subject to use CS more effectively, whereas in elicited data, topics are not chosen by the participant(s) – they are told to tell a story, or describe a picture or a map. When people engage in conversation in their daily lives, no one tells them to sit in a room and describe a picture, or tell a story, etc. They usually discuss topics they are familiar with. The extract above is also a very good example of how CS are used conjointly with other CS and how “messy” the conversation can become when this happens, although that “messiness” is, in fact, quite orderly in its sequential organization. There are word searches within word searches. In lines 1 and 2, J3 starts to search for a word (bile) to describe another word he was searching for previously to this excerpt (gall bladder). There are various attempts by the participants to explain the word they are searching for, as can be seen in lines 1 to 2, 9, 16 and 29 to 32. There is the use of the native language to try to guess how to say a word in English, such as when J3 forms the word “glandle” in line 10. Furthermore, there are various guesses by one participant to try to find the word being searched for, as in lines 3, 6 and 18. There are many pauses and overlaps. All of the

things just described are impossible to observe in elicited data where there is no interaction between the participants.

The following excerpt takes place later in the conversation between J3, V and K seen in the previous excerpt. Approximately 2 minutes after the previous excerpt, when V and K had already moved on to another topic, J3 returns to his search for the word “gall bladder”.

### Excerpt 2

1 J3 we have this part  
2 some peoples want to do a surgery (0.5)  
3 to take it off thi:s (1) hh  
4 when they got the problem  
5 ((dog barks))  
6 some people like (.) feel ba:d the stomach  
7 oh it's my blah blah blah again  
8 ((dog barks))  
9 J3 [I don't know the name  
10 V [Ki:ta  
11 (2)  
12 J3 it's a gando ((dog barks)) glandlo?  
13 V [gla:nd ]  
14 [((chuckles))]  
15 J3 gla:nd a gree:n gla:nd (0.2)  
16 that produce a gree:n (0.5)  
17 V liquid  
18 J3 no sorry is not the (.) the f- (0.5) ah [*figado?*  
19 [((liver))]<sup>1</sup>  
20 (0.5)  
21 V liver  
22 J3 the liver produce that liquid  
23 and this (.) gland just (1) uhm store  
24 (1.5)  
25 V umhum  
26 K stores it  
27 J3 yeah store this liquid  
28 K see the only thing I can think of

---

<sup>1</sup> Whenever a word appears in italics in the transcription, it is in a language other than English. The translation for the word is provided immediately below it in double parentheses.

29 is the pancreas or the=  
30 J3 =no is not the pancreas  
31 the pancreas is like other gland that produce i:nsulin and  
32 K this is gonna=  
33 J3 =o:ther hormones but not this one

In line 1, J3 returns to his word search by explaining that we, humans, have the organ he is eliciting. In lines 2 to 4 he further explains that some people have to take this organ out when they have a problem with it, a piece of information V had already provided in line 16 of excerpt 1. He adds, in lines 6 and 7, that, when people feel sick in the stomach they complain that it is the organ he is describing that is making them sick. He uses the expression “blah blah blah” to substitute for the organ he does not know how to say in English. He once again says that he does not know the name in English in line 9. After a two second pause, J3 repeats that the organ he is describing is a gland - another piece of information that he had already provided in lines 1 and 10 of excerpt 1. However, he cannot remember how to say gland in English and again he uses the strategy of word coinage to try to guess how to say it. He utters the words “gando” and “gandlo” in line 12 with upward intonation, to show uncertainty, either of his pronunciation of the word or of the item itself. V provides him with the word “gland” once again, and chuckles while doing so in line 13. J3 repeats the word gland in line 15. He continues his word search by explaining that it is a green gland in, line 15, that it produces a green liquid, in line 16 - also information he had already given in excerpt 1 in line 2. In line 18, J3 signals he is entering another word search. He pauses once, starts to pronounce a word, but cuts it off and pauses another time, for half a second. He then utters the word “figado” in Portuguese, which means liver, with upward intonation. By doing so, he is clearly appealing for V’s help once more, since she is the only one in the

room besides him who speaks Portuguese. After a half second pause, V provides him the translation in line 22. J3 corrects what he had said before in lines 23 and 24 by saying that it is not the gall bladder which produces the green liquid, but it is the liver that does so. The search for the word liver is a word search whose solution is necessary for another self-repair - for correcting that it is not the gall bladder which produces the liquid, it is the liver. In line 24 he explains that the gall bladder simply stores the green liquid (bile). There is a 1.5 second pause, and in line 27, K, either correcting J3 for saying “store it” in line 24, or just for the sake of repeating what he said, says “stores it”. J3 confirms the information in line 28 by saying that it stores the liquid. K, unable to think of another organ, says that she can only think of the pancreas. In line 30 J3 rejects K’s guess by saying that it is not the pancreas and expands his explanation in line 31 by saying that the pancreas produces insulin and other hormones.

For the most part of the excerpt above, J3 does not add any new information about the gall bladder. He seems to repeat what he had said before, this time with less hesitation and using more compact, simple sentences than before. He explains that humans have it; he repeats what V had said about people removing it; and then he adds that when people feel sick to the stomach they say that it is because of the gall bladder. By using “blah blah blah” in line 7, J3 is making sure he continues with his explanation without having to know the exact word and without hesitating or stopping. In lines 15 and 16, he says “gla:nd a gree:n gla:nd that produce a gree:n” and V completes it with “liquid” after he pauses for half a second. In excerpt I above, he takes longer to say the same thing in lines 1 and 2 when he says “the gland over close to (1.8) stomach that produce the (0.5) li- gree:n liquid”. The latter sentence is longer and has much longer

pauses than the sentence he utters in this excerpt. He then adds in line 21 and 22 that the liver is the organ that produces the green liquid and "this gland" stores it. He really only added two more pieces of information in this excerpt: it is somehow connected to the stomach and it stores the bile. However, he does so more effectively and quicker.

Unfortunately, even after the extra effort of repeating the information he had said in excerpt 1 and adding two more pieces of information, the word search continues to be unsuccessful, because K still does not know what gland J3 is describing. Again, for someone with his low level of proficiency in English, he is proving to be interactionally competent because he is successfully explaining the function, location, and problems of the gall bladder. He is using his expertise of the subject to produce a CS. V and K show no sign at any time in excerpts 1 and 2 that they do not understand what J3 is saying. The problem here is that neither J3 nor V know how to say gall bladder in English and K does not seem to know enough about the topic to guess the targeted item even after all the detailed information J3 provided her with.

### 3.2 DISCUSSION

From the two excerpts analyzed above, it is easy to see how the three participants, together, try to negotiate meaning and solve the word searches J3 enters. V helps J3's word search by adding information he had previously not mentioned about the gall bladder. K attempts various guesses to try to help J3 find the solution to his word search in English. It is also possible to see that, sometimes, even after all the effort the three participants make to find the solution to word searches together, the participants do not find the solution to a word search - they had to abandon the search



J3            the liver produce that liquid  
                 and this (.) gland just (1) uhm store

In the two data segments above, J3 uses a variety of different CS at different times and he combines them frequently as well. He uses circumlocution, language switch, word coinage, approximation, as well as his expertise of the topic and a more expert speaker of English.

It is also possible to observe from excerpts I and II above, that, besides using multiple CS combined, J3 has word searches inside word searches. In excerpt I, when he was already searching for the word gall bladder, he enters yet another word search to elicit the word bile. In excerpt II, while still searching for “gall bladder”, he enters another word search to find the word liver. He also searches for the word gland in both excerpts 1 and 2.

It is interesting to compare the descriptions J3 gives of the gall bladder and the bile with the definitions found in the dictionary. Dictionary.com defines gall bladder as “a pear-shaped, muscular sac attached to the undersurface of the right lobe of the liver, in which bile is stored and concentrated”. It is interesting to notice that J3 used one of the five characteristics of the gall bladder according to the dictionary - he explains that the gall bladder stores bile. The other information he provides about the gall bladder would not be found in dictionaries. The fact that the gall bladder is not present in horses, for example, is a piece of information that is not commonly known, except by people who have studied horse anatomy and physiology - which shows how he is making use of his expertise on the topic as a CS. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary describes bile as “ a greenish brown liquid with a bitter unpleasant taste that is produced by the

liver to help the body deal with fats". When J3 elicited the word bile from the recipients, he explained that it was a green liquid that helps improve digestion - both characteristics the dictionary also describes. Therefore, the definitions he provided the other participants are very similar to the ones which can be read in dictionaries. As mentioned previously, Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1983) claim that "circumlocutions are never context-free, and hence tend to vary in their degree of accuracy" when compared to dictionary definitions (p. 135). However, J3's circumlocutions are shown to be extremely accurate. This might have been the case because of the knowledge J3 has of the subject matter. A closer analysis of how circumlocution is done by different nonnative speakers is needed in order to determine how similar or different these circumlocutions are when compared to dictionary definitions.

The richness of the two excerpts analyzed above provides the researcher with a richer concept of what speakers do when they use CS. Elicited data provides the researcher with a very simplified idea of how CS are used by nonnative speakers. One cannot find all the CS which could be found in excerpts 1 and 2, and one cannot especially see how participants use all of the CS found in the data segments above used together. The effort the participants make to find the solution to the searches J3 enters is another feature of naturally occurring talk which cannot be found in elicited data.

## CHAPTER 4

### LANGUAGE SWITCH

#### 4. 1 LANGUAGE SWITCH

Tarone (1983) explains language switch as the learner using his or her native language without translating it into the L2. According to Bialystok (1983), language switch “refers to the insertion of a word or phrase in a language other than the target language, usually the speaker’s native language” (p. 103).

This chapter will analyze how the participants use their native languages, combined with other strategies, such as gestures and appeals for assistance, as a CS in searching for words, and how effective or ineffective this CS, associated with others, proves to be.

In the following extract, V is a native speaker of Portuguese, M1 is a native speaker of Italian and L is a native speaker of Spanish – none of them shares the same native language. However, they do speak Romance languages, which share many common features and vocabulary. In this extract, they are talking about make-up. M1 searches for the word “eye shadow” in English, but does not know how to say it. She uses the translation of eye shadow in Italian as a CS. However, the word for eye shadow in Italian, “ombretto” is not a cognate in Spanish or Portuguese. M1 uses this strategy once more at the end of this extract, when she utters the word for “mascara” in Italian. In all three languages, the word for mascara is rimel.

### Excerpt 3

1 V what do you what do you wear  
2 M1 <sup>0</sup>nothing  
3 V when you go out?  
4 M1 <sup>0</sup>nothing  
5 V nothing?  
6 M1 no on the face nothing  
7 V uhu  
8 M1 just (.) uh (.) [thi:s correction  
9 [((points to the area under her eyes))  
10 V uhu  
11 M1 a:nd (.) [*ombretto* I don't know in English how to say  
12 [((eye shadow))  
13 [((points to her eyelid))  
14 I'm sorry (0.2)  
15 ((cough))  
16 L [here? [shadow?  
17 [((points to her eyelid))  
18 M1 [the color ]  
19 [((pretends she is putting on eye shadow))]  
20 V [uhu  
21 L [uhum  
22 M1 yeah the pencil (0.2) and mascara (0.1) and [*rimel* that's it  
23 [((mascara))

In line 8, M1 wants to say that she wears concealer under her eyes. She shows that she is entering a word search in line 8 by pausing once, saying “uh”, pausing once again and elongating the vowel sound of the word “this” (Goodwin, 1983). However, because she lacks the vocabulary for saying this, she uses gestures as a CS and approximation, by saying the word “correction” instead of concealer. This combination of two CS, gesture and approximation, seems to be effective, because V appears to be showing that she understands what M1 is saying by saying “uhu” in line 10. In line 11, M1 is trying to say that she wears eye shadow when she goes out. However, she is not familiar with this vocabulary item in English so she turns to her native language, Italian, by saying “ombretto”, perhaps in the hopes that the word in Spanish or Portuguese is

similar to it. Immediately after she utters the word “ombretto”, she points to her right eyelid – again, she is using gestures as a CS. Also in line 11, she directly states that she does not know how to say ombretto in English, and apologizes in line 14 for the lack of the vocabulary item. The pause in line 14 after M1 apologizes might be signaling the interlocutor that she is indirectly asking for help to figure out how to say eye shadow. In line 16, L provides the word “shadow” with rising intonation. M1 further explains what she means by saying “color” in overlap with L’s shadow in line 16 - a phenomenon categorized as approximation in the CS literature - in line 18 and again using gestures as a CS by pretending she is putting on eye shadow on her eyelids. In lines 20 and 21, both V and L seem to be showing they understand what she is trying to say by saying “uhu” and “uhum” respectively. The word for eye shadow in Portuguese is “sombra”, while in Spanish it is “sombra de ojos”. They are similar in Portuguese and Spanish, but not in Italian, which shows that this strategy in this extract was not a useful one – it was the gesture, a nonverbal CS - M1 did with her hand, pointing to her eyelid and then pretending to put on eye shadow, combined with the use of the word color (approximation) that allowed L and V to understand what she wanted to say and guess correctly. M1 combined three CS to try to convey what she means – gestures, language switch, and approximation.

In line 22, M1 uses her native language once more. However, it is unclear whether she is using it as a CS or if she is unconsciously switching languages. This analysis does not show whether the language switch was used consciously or unconsciously. What is peculiar about this use of the native language is that she is simply repeating what she said 0.1 seconds before in the same turn. She says mascara,

pauses, and says *rimel*, which, as mentioned previously, is the word for mascara in Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. She might have initially thought that mascara was the right word, but then changed her mind and decided that *rimel* was the most appropriate word. Another hypothesis is that she was just repeating the word in her native language for her own benefit, and did not intend to be heard. However, the latter hypothesis does not seem to be the case, since she is not repeating the word quietly, to herself. One interesting thing about the data segment above is that M1 does not repeat the word *shadow* after L provided it to her. This shows that M1 is more concerned about communicating the message to the other participants than to do language learning, such as eliciting words she has not acquired and learning new vocabulary items.

In the next extract, M2 and V are native speakers of Portuguese and S is a native speaker of Italian – both Romance languages. They were talking about the longest river in the world and S mentioned the Blue River in China.

#### Excerpt 4

1 S I don't know [which co:lor is uh (.) [azzurro in uh in English?  
 2 [(blue))  
 3 [((looks at V))  
 4 (.) a very light blue  
 5 M2 blue no it's blue  
 6 V blue:  
 7 M2 regular [blue  
 8 S [no but we have [very different degrees of blue  
 9 M2 [yeah we have but uh  
 10 S like for instance [thi:s one for us  
 11 [((points to a picture on the coster))  
 12 (.) maybe the the the top can be blue  
 13 but this one is not blue for us  
 14 M2 oh you don't call it blue:?  
 15 S no  
 16 M2 we just (0.2) uh we say (.) we qualify the blue  
 17 you know we say

18 S           light blue dark blue  
19 M2          yeah

In line 1, S elicits help from the other participants by asking how to say the word “azzurro” in English, even though he does not share the same native language as M2 and V. He clearly asks this to V by maintaining eye contact with her while asking the question, a CS known as appeal for assistance. The eye gaze towards V indicates that S is addressing V, and not M2, to help him with his word search. S is combining two CS – appeal for assistance by asking “which color is...?” and language switch, by uttering the word “azzurro” in Italian – to elicit the targeted word. In line 4, S uses the phrase “a very light blue” to substitute the Italian word he provided earlier for blue - a CS known as approximation. However, M2 jumps in in line 5 by disagreeing with S and saying that “azzurro” is blue. V confirms that the word he wants to say in English is blue. In line 7, M2 once more disagrees with S by saying that “azzurro” is regular blue. The word “blue” in Portuguese is “azul”, which is very similar to the same word in Italian. However, even though any dictionary will tell you that the translation of “azzurro” to English is blue or to Portuguese is “azul”, S does not accept blue as the vocabulary item he intended to use, which came as a surprise to M2 in line 14. M2 is surprised that the word he provided is not the word S wants because, in Portuguese, the word “azul” is the direct translation for the word “blue” and, instead of having a different word for the tone of blue S wants to say, Portuguese has different adjectives that are added to the color to distinguish between tones – as explained by M2 in line 16. Again, similarly to the previous extract, this strategy did not seem to be very effective in this extract. However, this did not happen because Portuguese and Italian have very distinct words for blue; it happened

for a different reason: in S's opinion, "azzurro" is not the same as blue. This might be the case because in S's hometown they may have different words for different shades of blue. Although Italy is a small country, there are many different dialects which are used in different regions of the country, which might account for the difference in vocabulary.

The following extract is from the same conversation as extracts 1 and 2 above and it took place immediately before excerpt 1. As mentioned previously, J3 and V share the same native language, Portuguese, and K is a native speaker of English. They are discussing animal anatomy and physiology.

### Excerpt 5

1 J3 is it- uh how do you say: (0.2) vi- uh (.) uh [*vesicula biliar?*  
 2 [(gall bladder))  
 3 I don't know to say [that  
 4 V [I don't know  
 5 J3 do you know about ho:rse, the- not ho:rse u:h I mean (0.4)  
 6 hh do you know horse they don't have (.) that uh (.) I don't  
 7 know [*glandula?* glandlo gl ((laughs))  
 8 [(gland))  
 9 V gu gla:nd [gland?  
 10 J3 [no  
 11 V uh no (0.4)  
 12 J3 you know that=  
 13 V =glands [like these are glands ]  
 14 [(points to her throat))  
 15 J3 [that  
 16 J3 yeah glands

In line 1, J3 explicitly elicits help from V by asking how to say "vesicular biliar", which is the word for gall bladder in Portuguese, since they both share the same native language. This strategy is the exact same one S uses in extract IV above – appeal for assistance. The elongated sound in the word "say:", the 0.2 pause, the nonlexical

perturbation “uh”, another micropause and the nonlexical perturbation “uh” in line 1 might be signaling a search for the word “vesicula biliar” in Portuguese or the equivalent in English (Goodwin, 1983). In line 4, V says that she does not know how to say the word in English either. In an attempt to use circumlocution to explain what “vesicular biliar” is in lines 5 through 7, J3, lacking the vocabulary item for the word “gland”, elicits V’s help once more by uttering the word “glandula” in Portuguese in line 7, followed by an attempt to say the word in English – also known as word coinage. It is clear that, in line 5, J3 is entering another word search. He elongates the vowel sound of the first syllable of the word horse, pauses and uses the nonlexical perturbation “uh” (Goodwin, 1983). In line 6, he pauses twice and once again uses the nonlexical perturbation “uh” to signal he is searching for a word. He laughs in embarrassment at his attempt to say gland in line 7, even though it was close to the word he wanted to say. V, uncertain of the vocabulary item in English, utters the word gland in line 9 with rising intonation. J3 rejects V’s guess, until line 15, after V points to a pair of glands located in her throat, and this time she does not use rising intonation, showing that she is certain about the word. In line 16, J3 accepts V’s candidate solution and repeats the targeted language item. The first time J3 uses his native language as a communication strategy in line 1 did not prove to be effective, because V also lacked the item in English. Although language switch is not effective the first time J3 uses it, he once again tries using this strategy in line 7. However, this time the strategy is successful, because it leads to the word he was looking for, since V knows how to say the word “glandula” in English.

J3’s level of proficiency in English is not very high and it seems easier and more economical for him to use language switch, combined with an appeal for assistance, as

a strategy before having to rely on communication strategies that need more elaboration, more complex sentence structures and vocabulary, such as circumlocution - a strategy he used when language switch combined with other strategies did not work (mostly because V did not know how to say gall bladder in English). He makes use of V, a more proficient speaker of English than him, as a CS - this is a strategy that is impossible to find when eliciting data from participants. He not only uses language switch and appeal for assistance, but also attempts to utter the word gland in English by mixing it with Portuguese – word coinage. The same seems to be the case for M1. She seems to try language switch combined with gestures to convey meaning – two fairly “easy” strategies. One very interesting aspect of extracts 3 and 4 above is that language switch is used even though the speakers do not share the same native language. However, they are aware that these languages share many similar features, and this is why they use this strategy. In the extracts shown above, language switch seems to work when the targeted word is a cognate in the languages the participants speak. It also proves to be effective when they share the same native language and one of them knows how to say the targeted item in English. On the other hand, it does not seem to work when the word is not a cognate in the different Romance languages or, in the case of the participants who share the same native language, when the one being elicited for help does not know the vocabulary item in the target language.

The following four excerpts are taken from one conversation between J1, V and J2. J1 and V share the same native language, Portuguese, whereas J2 is a native speaker of English from Canada who does not speak any romance languages.

In the following excerpt, J1, V and J2 are talking about the Pan American Games which were held in Rio de Janeiro in 2007. J1 is explaining that the Pan American Games were a bit of a disaster. One of the reasons why is because the games were held in an extremely poor area of the city, very close to the slums. He describes that the people who live in the slums stole many things from the villas constructed for the games, such as toilet seats.

### Excerpt 6

1 J1 the pan american (1) is near the (0.7) [fa[*vela favela* the=  
2 ((slums slums))  
3 [(looks at V)]  
4 V =the slums  
5 J1 lums=  
6 J2 =ok  
7 J1 near the lums (0.7) e (.) the the finish the games (1.2)  
8 the: people of the lums (1.6) robe  
9 [robe? e (0.5) f-  
10 [(looks at V)]  
11 (0.6) e ((looks at V))  
12 V [yeah they robbed ]  
13 [((J1 continues to look at V))]  
14 J1 they robbed (.) the ((points to the bathroom)) (0.5) [*vaso sanitario*  
15 [(toilet seat)]  
16 [(looks at V)]  
17 J1 [(.) [*isso pra voce ter uma nocao* [as do  
18 [(so you have an idea)) [(of the))  
19 [(continues to look at V))  
20 V [toi:let seat  
21 J2 [oh my go:d  
22 J1 [toilet seats  
23 [(turns to look at J2))  
24 V je:sus  
25 J1 yes yes (.) toilet seats

J1 starts his turn in line 1 showing clear signs of a word search. He pauses twice - showing he is hesitating, which signals he might be entering a word search (Goodwin,

1983) - , and shows that he does not know the word he is searching for by uttering it in Portuguese twice (“favela favela”) and looking at V, who is a more proficient speaker of English than he is and who shares his native language, the second time he says the word. In line 4, V provides the translation for “favela” in English, which is slums. J1 repeats the word V provides him in line 5, but does so incorrectly (“lums”). Since J2 already knows the word J1 was searching for because V provided it in the previous turn, neither V nor J2 correct J1’s mispronunciation of slums. J2 shows he knows what J1 is talking about in line 6, when he says “ok”. J1 continues his account of the theft of toilet seats in line 7, and in line 8, shows once again signs of a word search. He elongates the vowel sound of the word “the”, pauses for 1.6 seconds before he utters the word “robe” twice, with rising intonation the second time and eye gaze towards V - all of which are signs that someone is entering a word search (Goodwin, 1983). By uttering the word “robe” in English, J1 might be using the CS known as word coinage. The vowel sound of the first syllable of the word for rob in Portuguese has the same sound as the word “robe”. Therefore, J1 might be transferring his knowledge of his L1 to try to form the word in English. There is another 0.5 second pause. This pause, followed by the filler “e”, a common filler used in Portuguese, and eye gaze towards V once more, shows that J1 is waiting for V to confirm or disconfirm whether or not he used the correct word. V confirms J1’s choice in line 12, but corrects J1’s pronunciation and choice of verb tense by saying “they robbed”. J1 repeats “they robbed” in line 14, pauses, utters the word “the” and points to the bathroom, pauses once more for 0.5 seconds, looks at V and utters the compound noun “vaso sanitario” in Portuguese. In line 17, he continues his turn in Portuguese, saying “isso pra vc ter uma nocao”, which

means “so you have an idea” in English, still looking at V. What is interesting about the latter is that, throughout the conversation, J1 maintains eye gaze towards J2 - except for when he turns to V for help. In line 16, he shifts eye gaze toward V to say the word “toilet seat” in Portuguese, and in line 17, he continues his account of the story in Portuguese instead of English and continues to look at V while doing so. This shows that he has momentarily shifted the audience of his telling from J2 to V. V overlaps with J1’s talk in line 20 by providing J2 with the translation for vaso sanitario, which is toilet seat. J2 shows surprise, by saying “oh my god” in line 21, overlapping with J1, who in line 22, repeats “toilet seats”. Even though J2 already knows what J1 is talking about, because V provided the word he was searching for in line 20, J1 repeats the word provided by V in line 22, which shows he is “doing being a language learner” (Hosoda, 2006) - his message had already been communicated and he repeated the word anyway. He says “yes yes” in line 25 and repeats “toilet seats” once more. This is an assessment of the reaction displayed by V and J2 in lines 20, 21 and 24. Although V displays some kind of reaction to the new information she received in line 20, when she provides the word “toilet seats” with rising intonation and elongated vowel sound, she leaves the “real” assessment of the story for after she has provided J1 with the word, in line 24, when she says “je:sus”. It seems that she is really reacting to the story only after J2 hears the word J1 was searching for, as if the story comes to an end only after J2 hears the end of it.

J1 uses language switch together with appeals for assistance and gestures in the excerpt above. Whenever he needs to use a word which he does not know in English, he turns to V and utters the word in his native language, Portuguese. This can be

observed in line 1, when he says the word “favela” looking at V. He also uses gestures as a CS, combining it with language switch in line 14. Since he is searching for the compound noun toilet seat, he points to the bathroom, where there is a toilet seat. He does not only use appeals for assistance combined with language switch. In line 9, for example, he says the word “robe” with upward intonation, since he is not sure of how to pronounce the word rob, or whether he is using the correct word or not, while looking at V. In this case, even though he pronounces the word “rob” incorrectly, he manages to find the word he was looking for. After getting the words he is searching for and does not know in English, and also after V corrects his pronunciation of rob, J1 always repeats the targeted word at least once, and sometimes even twice, as can be seen in lines 22 and 25, when he repeats the compound word “toilet seats” twice. Since he has V as a more expert speaker of English, to turn to for problems with lack of vocabulary or pronunciation, language switch together with appeals for assistance and gestures show themselves to be very effective CS in the excerpt above. He is able to successfully get the meaning across in a fast, effective way by uttering the targeted word in Portuguese with upward intonation and having V provide him with the translations. One interesting aspect of the conversation above is the issue of J1’s eye gaze and audience. It seems that he thinks of J2 as his audience, because J1 maintains eye gaze with him during most of the conversation, except when he elicits help from V. One explanation for why he might be doing this is his position in relation to J2 and V. In order to look at V, J1 needs to move his head completely to his left and also move his torso towards V. It is easier for him to look at J2, who is to his right. J1 only needs to move his head slightly to the right to do so. Therefore, the fact that J1 seems to mostly look at J2 throughout

the conversation can indicate that he thinks as J2 as his audience, and V as an observer and “personal dictionary”; or that it is simply easier physically to look at J2.

In the excerpt which follows, J1 is talking about the predictions that economists have made for the success of the Olympic Games which will be held in Brazil in 2016. He explains that economists say that Brazil will take off in the world after the Olympic Games are held there and that he believes they are being too optimistic about it.

### Excerpt 7

1 J1 the economist. (.) [economist e: (0.5) e: (.)]  
2 [(looks at V)] [(nods looking at J2)]  
3 J2 ((nods to J1))  
4 J1 one [*materia? como que e?*]  
5 [(article? how do you say it?)]  
6 [(looks at V)] ]  
7 V course  
8 J1 one course (.) this wee:k (0.5) about brazil  
9 J1 (0.6) the economist (.) ve:ry optimistic (0.4) about brazil  
10 J1 e the e the article [*artigo?*]  
11 [(article?)]  
12 [(thinking face)]  
13 V article  
14 J1 article e: (1) e: say  
15 e: (.) brazil [*decola*  
16 [(take off)] ]  
17 [(moves hands up in the air looking at V)]  
18 V will take off  
19 J1 e [take off (.) in the world  
29 [(turns to look at J2)]  
21 J2 mm  
22 J1 brazil take off in the world  
23 J1 ((mumbles something unintelligible)) ((chuckles))  
24 J2 well they can only [go up  
25 J1 [ah yeah  
26 ma[ny people’s optimist about brazil  
27 V [yeah  
28 J1 but I’m brazilian and no otimist  
29 J1 every otimist about brazil

J1 starts his turn at talk by once again showing signs of a word search. He pauses in line 1 after the word *economist*, pauses one more time after the Portuguese filler “e:” and uses the filler again after the 0.5 second pause. He also elongates the vowel of the filler, which also signals a word search (Goodwin, 1983). He says “*economist*” twice in line 1, and turns to look at J2 the second time he says it, nodding his head. He seems to be doing this in order to see if the recipient recognizes what he is talking about, i.e., the magazine “*The Economist*”. J2 nods back to show recognition. In line 4, J1 says “*one materia*”, uttering the word he is searching for, which is *article*, in Portuguese with upward intonation to show he does not know how to say the word in English, and adds an appeal for assistance in Portuguese by asking “*como e que e?*”, which means “how do you say it?” while maintaining eye gaze with V. V provides a solution for his word search in line 7. Through more careful analyses of what J1 is saying, it becomes clear that V does not provide him with the right translation. The word “*materia*” in Portuguese means two different things: newspaper or magazine article and course. Since he mentions the magazine “*The Economist*” twice in line 1, it is obvious he is referring to an article as opposed to a course. In lines 8 and 9, J1 continues his account by using the word V provided him and saying that the course, meaning “*article*,” was very optimistic about the country. Even though there is a lot of hesitation, obvious by the three pauses he makes, even though the sentence is broken up and not grammatically complete, and although V provides him with the wrong solution for his word search, it seems that J1 got his message across. However, he uses the filler “e” twice, as well as the article “the” in line 10. He utters the word “*article*”, but mispronounces it, stressing the second syllable instead of the first. In Portuguese, the

word “article” gets the stress in the second syllable, which might account for why J1 mispronounces the word in English. Then, he utters the same word again, this time with upward intonation and in Portuguese (“artigo”), and produces what Goodwin (1983) calls a “thinking face”. By uttering the word “artigo” with upward intonation, J1 is questioning whether “article” is the correct word or not. Since he does not look at V and displays a “thinking face” when he utters the word in Portuguese with upward intonation, it seems he is thinking to himself and trying to come up with the word by himself instead of asking V. Even though there is no eye gaze from J1 towards V, V confirms his choice of word, but also corrects him by saying the word “article” correctly in line 13. J1 repeats the word “article” in line 14, this time pronouncing it correctly. Still in line 14, J1 elongates the filler “e” in Portuguese, pauses for one second and elongates the filler “e” in Portuguese once more. This seems to be signaling a search for the Portuguese word “decola” in English, which he utters at the end of line 15, after elongating the filler once more in line 16 and pausing once again. At the same time he utters the word “decola” in Portuguese, he moves his hand up in the air, as if a plane was taking off while looking at V. V tells him what the translation for “decola” is in English in line 18 (“will take off”), and J1 repeats “take off” in line 19, leaving out the word will, and finishes his account by saying “in the world”. In line 21, J2 utters “mm”, either to show understanding of J1’s talk or to simply signal he is paying attention to J1’s story. J1 repeats “brazil take off in the world” once again in line 22, once more leaving the word “will” out. In lines 24 and 27, J2 and V, respectively, seem to assess J1’s account of the article he read. They both agree that the economy in Brazil will take off after the Olympic Games. However, this assessment of J2 and V seem to be misplaced, because J1 has not finished his account

yet, and this becomes clear in lines 26, 28 and 29, when he affirms that, even though he is Brazilian, he is not optimistic.

J1 once again uses language switches, appeals for assistance and gestures as CS. In line 4, he utters the word “artigo” with upward intonation and eye gaze toward V and he appeals for assistance in Portuguese, by saying “how do you say it” in his native language. In line 15, J1 uses language switch and gestures to explain what he wants to say. He does not say the word “decola” with upward intonation, but moves his hands up in the hair to elicit the word “take off” and looks at V. Even though he does not use upward intonation, it is clear he is appealing for assistance because he looks at V. Once again he repeats both targeted words, and in the case of “take off”, he repeats it twice. Even though it is not clear J1 is appealing for assistance in line 10, because although he utters the word “artigo” in Portuguese with upward intonation, he does not look at V, she still helps him by correcting his pronunciation or choice of word. Once more, the combinations of language switch with gestures and language switch with appeal for assistance seem to be extremely effective in the excerpt above.

In the next excerpt, J1, V and J2 are still talking about the Olympic Games which will be held in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. J1 is explaining that the Olympic villa will be built in the harbor region of Rio de Janeiro.



intonation and he does so while looking at V. However, as V does not provide him with the translation right away, he approximates what he has said in Portuguese by saying “regiao portuaria”. This time, V provides the translation of the targeted word in English. And as observed in two excerpts before this one, J1 repeats the target word. Once J1 noticed that V did not respond to his appeal for assistance with the word “porto”, he decides to use another word in Portuguese to describe what he is searching for - also known as approximation. He uses approximation in Portuguese to elicit the word from V. This time, V successfully completes J1’s word search by providing him with the word “harbor”.

In the next excerpt, J1, V and J2 are talking about TV shows they watch. J1 is telling them that he watches a TV show called “House”, and that he is currently watching the first season because he has watched many other episodes, but out of order.

### Excerpt 9

1 J1 I’m (1) I’m washing (.) house (1)  
 2 J1 the first temporate  
 3 V ((sneezes))  
 4 (.)  
 5 J1 [beca  
 6 V [the first the first season  
 7 J1 e the first season  
 8 J1 because (.) I washed (.) ma:ny (1.3)  
 9 J1 e: (.) many episodes  
 10 J2 umhum  
 11 J1 [*soltos assim*  
 12 [((out of order like))  
 13 [((moves each hand in the air in opposite directions))  
 14 [((looks at V))]  
 15 V out of order  
 16 J1 e [out of order  
 17 [((turns to look at J2))  
 18 (2)

19 V ((chuckles))  
 20 J1 the five season  
 21 J1 [the four season the three season  
 22 J2 [oh man

In line 1, J1 says he is watching “House”, and he mispronounces the word “watching” by saying “washing”, a common mistake Portuguese speakers of English make. In line 2, he means to say that he is watching the first season, but he creates a word for season based on the word in Portuguese, which is “temporada” - a phenomenon also known as word coinage. Even though J1 shows no sign of needing help (he does not look at V or utter the word with upward intonation), nor does J2 shows signs of not understanding J1’s talk, V overlaps with J1 in line 6 and interrupts him by correcting him and saying “the first the first season”. In line 7, J1 repeats “the first season” and signals in lines 8 and 9 that he is entering a word search. In lines 8 and 9, J1 pauses four times, elongates the first vowel sound of the word “many”, uses a filler (“e”), and repeats the word “many” adding the word “episodes”. These signs might signal that he is searching for the word “episodes”. In line 11, he says, in Portuguese, “soltos assim” and moves each hand in the air away from the other. The word “soltos” means out of order, while the word “assim” is a common filler used in Portuguese, similar in meaning “like”. While he utters “soltos assim” in Portuguese, he looks at V - before this, he was looking at J2. V provides the translation for J1 in line 15, and in line 16, J1 repeats “out of order”. To further explain his point, J1 says, in lines 20 and 21, that he has seen episodes from the fifth season, from the fourth season and from the third season. He mispronounces the word “season” in line 18, but still manages to get

his meaning across because the word has been used earlier in conversation, both by him and V.

In line 2, J1 uses a CS which he did not use in the other excerpts - word coinage. However, since the word “temporate” does not exist in English, this strategy did not prove to be successful in this case. V provides him with the correct word, and he repeats it in line 7, uses it correctly in line 20, but mispronounces it in line 21. His mispronunciation of the word “season” did not impede communication in this case, because J2 already knew what he was talking about before. Maybe that is why no one seems to attend to the mistake and correct J1’s mispronunciation. In line 11, J1 uses language switch one more time. This time, he does not utter the word with upward intonation. Instead, he just looks at V. He then repeats the targeted phrase in English in line 16. Language switch, together with gestures, yet again seems to prove to be a successful CS for J1, since he elicited the targeted phrase and communicated his message without any other problems. Once again, V interrupts J1, even though he did not show he needed help - he did not look at V nor utter the targeted word with upward intonation. J1 accepts V’s correction of his choice of word again, and continues what he was saying before.

There are four extremely interesting things happening in the four excerpts seen above - excerpts 6 to 9. One is how brave and very interactionally competent J1 shows himself to be in his L2. It is clear from the data seen above, that he is far from being fluent. He hesitates very often, constantly uses fillers, and lacks a lot of very basic vocabulary. But even so, because he is so extroverted, confident and talkative, none of these things seem to stop him or discourage him from talking. Hence, he is

interactionally competent in the sense that he still manages to get his meaning across, even though his L2 proficiency is very low. He continually initiates conversations, showing how brave and persistent of a language learner he is. Another interesting thing that could be observed from the data collected, J1 relies on V, who shares the same native language, throughout the data to get his meaning across to J2, which is an example of his interactional competence. Many moments were observed in the data when J1 was maintaining eye gaze with J2 for most of the talk, but looked at V as soon as he utters a word or phrase in Portuguese for which he does not know the translation in English. In every instance of this in the data, V provides the words or phrases in English. What is more, there are moments in which J1 does not even look at V for help, but she provides it anyway, and J1 always accepts it. This might be because of the fact that V is an ESL teacher and is taking advantage of the situation to help J1 improve his language skills. Another explanation might be the automatization of what is happening throughout the excerpts shown above. The constant need for help which J1 displays throughout the conversation has become so automatic, that V does not even wait for J1 to look at her or ask her how to say something anymore. J1 uses V's expertise of English and the fact that they share the same native language as a support to maintain the flow of conversation he is having with J2. J1 never, in any of the excerpts above, shows any sign of irritation or discomfort when V corrects him without any appeal for assistance.

It becomes very clear, from the four excerpts analyzed above, and from the methods of data collection used in many studies about CS, that only through observing naturally occurring talk, can we have a full understanding of how CS are used by

nonnative speakers of English. By using elicited data or role plays to analyze CS, one cannot see how they are really used in interaction - especially because elicited data does not involve interaction. Therefore, it is impossible to observe how participants can use more expert participants to keep the channels of communication open, and how together, they construct the interaction collaboratively. Limiting oneself to looking at how CS are used separately and creating names for them can be useful as a starting point. However, it is crucial to understand that these strategies, most of the time, are used together, and used collaboratively by the participants, and that only by looking at naturally occurring talk one will be able to analyze them more thoroughly and understand them more deeply.

J1 seems to be so comfortable in the environment he is in, and appears to accept very willingly all the help V is giving him. However, this does not mean every language learner feels this way about more expert speakers correcting them. On the contrary, most learners would feel extremely uncomfortable and irritated if this was the case and native speakers of English rarely correct nonnative speakers' errors. Research on native speaker error correction of nonnative speaker talk shows that a very small percentage of second language learners are corrected by native speakers - 8.9% according to Chun, Day, Chenoweth and Luppescu (1982). J1 seems to be aware enough of the fact that he needs help communicating and the advantages of practicing speaking as much as he is. Most language learners of his level would feel extremely self-conscious about talking to a native speaker and an ESL teacher at the same time. He clearly does not.

In the following excerpt, R, M and V are talking about cicadas. Neither R nor M know how to say the word cicada in English and M asks V, with whom he shares the same native language, how to say “cigarra” in English. R’s native language is Italian. This recording was done in the very beginning of the Fall semester, when cicadas are still singing on top of trees around town.

### Excerpt 10

1 R a million of (0.8) creatures making this son- this sou:nd  
 2 and I don’t know wha- (.) what they are is [probably  
 3 M [a ci- [*cigarra*?]  
 4 [((cicada?))  
 5 [((looks at V))]  
 6 V ci-  
 7 R is probably some small [bu:gs  
 8 M [how do you say [*cigarra*? The the ci-]  
 9 [((cicada?))  
 10 [((still looking at V)) ]  
 11 V [yeah  
 12 cicada?  
 13 M cicada?  
 14 V yeah  
 15 M [cicada? Like cri cri how do you say the?  
 16 [((turns to look at R))  
 17 V I [don’t know how they make it  
 18 R [grasshoppers?  
 19 M no [they  
 20 V [they sing not grasshoppers  
 21 M no [no  
 22 V [cause they’re a bug and they sing  
 23 M yeah they [sing  
 24 R [*cicala cicala*  
 25 [((cicada cicada))  
 26 M [*cicala* yeah  
 27 [((cicada))  
 28 V [yeah

In lines 1 and 2, R explains that he hears these creatures that make a sound, but that he does not know what they are. M immediately recognizes what R is talking about

and looks at V while he says “ci- cigarra?” in Portuguese with upward intonation in line 3. By uttering the word in Portuguese with upward intonation and looking at V, he is clearly eliciting for her help by using language switch and an appeal for assistance. In line 6, V starts to provide him with the translation for the word he elicited, but is cut off by R, who says, in line 7, that what he hears making the sounds is probably a bug of some kind. M continues to look at V, and overlaps with R’s talk in line 7 to ask, in line 8, how to say the word “cigarra” in English. Again, he is using language switch, this time with an explicit appeal for assistance, to elicit the targeted word. V utters the word “cicada” in line 12 with upward intonation to show that she is unsure of the targeted item as well. M repeats the word “cicada” in line 13 with upward intonation, either to ask if this is the correct item or to check if his pronunciation of the item is correct - if the latter is correct, M is “doing being a language learner”. Since V has provided him with the item, but with upward intonation, he might be uttering the word “cicada” with upward intonation as well to check if V is sure of the language item. V, in line 14, confirms that the item (or pronunciation) is correct and then M turns to look at R and repeats the word “cicada” with upward intonation in line 15, possibly to check whether this is the word R was searching for or whether he understands the word “cicada”. The sounds “cri cri” which he makes in line 15 might explain that he really is checking whether cicada is the bug R is talking about. In line 18, R utters the word “grasshoppers” with upward intonation to check if this is what V and M are talking about. However, both M and V reject his guess in lines 19 and 20 respectively. R finally shows he understands what bug they are talking about by uttering the word “cicala” in Italian, which means cicada in English, in line 24. M repeats the word “cicala” in Italian in 27 to confirm that this is the

bug R was initially talking about when he said he hears the creatures making these sounds in line 1. M could be repeating the word in Italian because he knows how to say cicada in Italian, or simply because the word somehow resembles the word in Portuguese. V also confirms that the item is correct by saying “yeah” in line 28. Notice that R never repeats the word cicada in English. This might be the case either because R is not very concerned about learning the word “cicada” in English, but interested in finding out what bugs he was hearing. In other words, he was more concerned about the interaction itself - communicating - than being a language learner. M, on the other hand, repeats the word “cicada” twice. Once with upward intonation and looking at V and another time with upward intonation and looking at R.

Excerpt 10 above is another example of a nonnative speaker using another speaker, with whom he shares the same native language, and who is more expert in the target language than he is, as a CS. Even though M is a fairly proficient speaker of English, he is using V as a resource to help him communicate with R and find out if the bugs he is hearing are in fact cicadas or not. First M utters the word in Portuguese with upward intonation and eye gaze on V. Since she has not provided him with the English translation for the word “cicada”, M tries appealing for help once more, but this time using a more explicit appeal for help - “how do you say cigarra?”. It appears that M also knows the word for cicada in Italian, because in line 15 he says “how do you say the?” looking at R and then repeats the word “cicala” in Italian after R, as a confirmation.

Since V knew the language item M was looking for, the CS he used - a more proficient speaker of English for help, language switch and appeal for assistance - proved to be extremely effective. In line 15, when M imitates the sound a cicada makes,

he is doing so to elicit from R how to say the word in Italian. This is a strategy this study had not come across yet - the use of sounds to show what something sounds like. He then adds “how do you say the?”, an appeal for assistance, to elicit the language item from R in Italian. The fact that M might already know how to say cicada in Italian and might have momentarily forgotten it further proves itself when, in line 27, he repeats the word in Italian after R.

Curious as to what might happen if J1, from excerpts VI to IX above, was left alone with a native speaker, without V’s help, another recording was done 3 months after the first recording with V, J1 and J2. This time, J1 and J2 were left alone to talk for almost two hours. In the following excerpt, J1 is explaining to J2 that, since his trip back to Brazil is approaching, he has been very worried and cannot sleep very well.

### Excerpt 11

1 J1 uh I- I’m very stressed (0.4) and (0.2) I e: many (0.8)  
 2 many nights I (.) I can’t (1.7)  
 3 I can’t sleep [(0.6) I’m- I’m ve:ry (0.7) e: (1) careful  
 4 J2 [(nods))  
 5 J1 [careful? [(0.6) no I’m very care (1) e: because I- I think  
 6 [(nods once to J2))  
 7 [(moves his head up))  
 8 oh my go:d (.) my airplane (1)  
 9 J2 [oh ok  
 10 [(nods))  
 11 J1 [((gestures a plane falling with one hand))] ((chuckles))  
 12 [(1) ]  
 13 go down [when (.) I go back to brazil  
 14 [(chuckles))

J1 shows some very clear signs that he is entering a word search in lines 1, 2 and 3. He uses the nonlexical perturbation “uh”, pauses twice, uses the filler “e” with elongated vowel sound, pauses for 0.8 seconds, and pauses once twice more in line 2 -

the last pause being extremely long (Goodwin, 1983). In line 3, he says he cannot sleep, pauses once more, elongates the first vowel sound of the word “very”, pauses once more, elongates the filler “e” and pauses again for 1 second. He utters the word careful twice, once with upward intonation, in line 5. He provides his own solution to his word search, but after saying his solution out loud, it seems he is not certain of it. The upward intonation shows he is confirming whether the word he uttered is in fact the word he is searching for in English and it shows that he is uncertain about the candidate solution he provided. As he says “careful” with upward intonation, he nods to J2, to confirm his solution. J2 does not signal that “careful” is the solution; probably because J1 has not given enough information to him about the word he is searching for. Instead, J2, who had his hand supporting his head, moves his head away from his hand, which may be an attempt to signal that he is listening to J2 and waiting for the solution to his search. J1 himself rejects his own solution to the search by saying “no” in line 5 after the 0.6 seconds pause. He starts to search for the word again, pausing for one second and elongating the filler “e” in line 5. He then starts to describe how he has been feeling by saying “oh my god my airplane” in line 8. He quotes what someone would say when they feel worried and he uses this as a CS to explain the word he is searching for – a CS which has not been described in CS literature. Before he finishes his turn, and after his 1 second pause, J2 shows that he understands what J1 means, by saying “oh ok” and nodding at the same time. J1 continues explaining the word he is searching for by moving his hand down in the air, as if a plane was falling from the sky, and finishes his turn by saying “go down when I go back to brazil” in line 13. Although J2 seems to understand what J1 means, he does not, at any time, provide a candidate solution to

J1's search. He only listens and signals he understands. From J1's description of the word he is searching for, it appears that he is searching for the word "worried".

Even though excerpt 11 above is a lot shorter than excerpts 6, 7 and 9, J1 shows much more hesitation than he did in the latter data segments. Not only does he pause more often, his pauses are also much longer. He has more cut-offs as well. There is a very obvious reason why such differences can be noticed. In excerpts 6 to 9, J1 has the presence of V, both a more expert speaker of English and a native speaker of Portuguese, to whom he can turn whenever he does not know how to say a word in English. In excerpt 11, on the other hand, he does not have a more expert speaker of English who shares the same native language as him. As a result, J1 needs to figure out the solution to his search on his own, without anyone's help and this is why there are more pauses and more hesitation. Another interesting aspect of excerpt 11 to analyze is the fact that J1 never actually managed to elicit the word he was searching for. In excerpts 6 to 9, whenever J1 entered a word search, he was successful in eliciting the target word.

## 4.2 DISCUSSION

Excerpts 3 to 10 all contain instances of language switch, combined with other CS, used by nonnative speakers of English when searching for words. In most of these excerpts, the nonnative speakers are using more expert and proficient speakers of English to help them find the solution to their searches. Some of them use language switch combined with appeals for assistance to elicit the words they are searching for from the more expert language speakers, such as in excerpts 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10.



The participants also use language switch combined with gestures as a way to elicit the targeted item. In excerpt 3, for example, M1 points to her eyelid to show where the make-up item she is searching for is applied. In addition, she also uses approximation when she says the word color to explain eye shadow. In excerpt 7, J1 also uses gestures to convey the meaning of “take off” while uttering the word in Portuguese. In excerpt 6, J1 points to the bathroom to indicate where one will find the item he is searching for.

One extremely interesting thing which happens in two of the excerpts above (3 and 4), is the fact that M1 and S use their native languages to appeal for assistance, even though the other participants do not share the same L1. At times, when the word is similar in the two L1s, this CS proves to be extremely effective. However, when the words are not cognates in the two languages, this strategy does not result in successful elicitation of the language item being searched for. Moreover, even when two participants share the same native language and use language switch to elicit a language item, this CS does not always result in finding the word they are searching for. For example, in excerpt 5, because V does not know how to say gall bladder in English, language switch did not lead to the word being searched for.

It is possible to see in the excerpts above that, especially when the nonnative speakers are not very proficient in the target language, like M1 and J1, that they seem to prefer to use more economic CS, such as approximation, language switch and gestures. These CS do not need too much elaboration from the participants. All they have to do is gesture the word they are searching for or point to the location where the





not feel comfortable when being corrected by native speakers or more expert speakers of the target language. However, J1's desire to communicate and learn the language seem to help him overlook the possible embarrassment of being corrected by an adult, who is younger than him, in front of another adult. Different participants allow for different CS to be used. When the participant's native language is the same, or similar to the other participants', it can be very effective to use language switch. When the participants' native language is not the same or similar, describing the word being searched for, using approximation and gestures seems to be the best way to solve the word search.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### **5.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH**

The data collected for this study are very unique in many different ways. Firstly, all the nonnative speakers of English share similar native language backgrounds - they all speak Romance languages. Furthermore, in many of the conversations recorded for this study, the participants use English as a lingua franca. In all the conversations, there is the issue of language expertise. There is always a more expert speaker of the target language, and he or she sometimes shares the same native language as other participants, which allows them to use their native languages to elicit help. Even when the participants' native language is not the same, but shares similar background, the participants make use of it to elicit help with vocabulary items. Most importantly, all the data collected are from naturally occurring talk, recorded in informal get-togethers among people who often spend time together and know each other well. All of the features described above allow for the conversations to be extremely rich when it comes to word searches and CS.

As mentioned previously, it is extremely important to look at CS in naturally occurring talk. Manipulated data usually does not allow for many CS to be used together, besides the fact that, when there is no interaction, it is extremely difficult to see how CS are really used in interaction, in real life communication. The need to have more research on CS employed by nonnative speakers in naturally occurring talk is very obvious. Only this way will we be able to see and analyze how nonnative speakers of

English employ the many CS described by many researchers, who seem to be more concerned with naming them and quantifying them, than to see how they are really used.

This study only included nonnative participants who speak Romance languages. It would certainly be extremely interesting and useful to see how speakers of other language backgrounds use CS and whether they employ them similarly or differently from those who speak Romance languages.

## 5.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

The issue of whether to teach CS in ESL and EFL classrooms has raised a lot of discussion among researchers. From the analyses of the data segments above, it is clear to see that nonnative speakers of English employ many different CS in their talk, especially in word searches. Moreover, for most of the data segments above, these CS proved to be successful in helping the learners elicit the words they were searching for, and therefore, getting their messages across and communicating more effectively. If the participants in this study did not know how to employ CS in their talk, or for any reasons did not use them, many of the conversations and topics which were discussed by them would have to be avoided, and this avoidance would, for sure, limit their conversations and, more importantly, limit the amount of input and output they would receive and produce, respectively.

Many researches argue that teaching CS in the classroom is not necessary. Bialystok (1990) and Kellerman (1991) argue that what learners need to learn in the classroom is language, and not CS. According to Dornyei, “most arguments concerning

the teachability issue are based on indirect or inconclusive evidence, but it must be noted that some of these data actually appear to confirm the validity of strategy training” (1995, p. 61). Dornyei argues that the teaching of CS would include the following:

Raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs (...); encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs (...); providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs (...); highlighting cross-cultural differences in CS use (...); teaching CSs directly (...); and providing opportunities for practice in strategy use. (1995, p. 63 and 64)

Whether or not CS should be taught in the classroom, and whether it helps second language learners to actually employ what they have learned in class needs to be further studied and analyzed. However, I do believe there is a need to incorporate more communicative activities in the classroom, and especially the types of activities in which students need to employ CS. For example, games such as taboo, in which learners have to explain the meaning of a word without saying it are very helpful in getting students to practice CS.

Even though a lot of language learning occurs in classroom settings, a great amount of language learning can take place in natural settings as well. As can be seen in the excerpts analyzed for this study, depending on the attitude of the learner towards communication in natural settings, opportunities for language learning can indeed occur in every day conversation. When nonnative speakers elicit vocabulary they have not acquired and practice it in conversations, they show that they are motivated and interested in turning every day conversations into learning opportunities. Whether or not

that new acquired vocabulary is actually acquired when it comes to long-term memory is impossible to identify in this study. However, the fact that eliciting and practicing new vocabulary is an opportunity for language learning cannot be denied. Turning everyday conversations into language learning opportunities depends solely on the attitude of the speakers toward the interaction. Some participants seem more concerned about getting their message across and not acquiring new vocabulary or practicing language items. Others, on the other hand, are clearly concerned about learning in addition to communicating. It is important for teachers to make students aware of the fact that they, as language learners, have the power to turn everyday conversations into language learning opportunities. Moreover, teachers should explain that CS can be an important tool for this language learning to occur and that the choice of whether learners will use CS as language learning tools is entirely dependent on them.

The way the participants respond to the candidate solutions provided by the more expert speaker of English is different depending on the participant. Some participants, such as J1, J3 and M, repeat the word they elicited after they are provided with the solutions. This is a way of showing that they are good language learners. Other participants, M1 and R, do not repeat the words they elicited. This seems to show that they might not have been too worried about improving their vocabulary skills; rather, it seems they were more worried about communicating the message they wanted. In other words, there are two ways language learners deal with CS in this study: as a language learning tool or as a way to get their message across, but not attending to language learning. Repeating the language item the learners are searching for, especially when they have not acquired it yet, which seems to be the case for the

excerpts above, seems to be a good strategy for acquiring new vocabulary. However, the acquisition of vocabulary elicited in word searches is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, the fact that word searches can be very good opportunities for language learning (Brouwer, 2003) cannot be ignored. Brouwer argues that :

“Sequences that may qualify as language learning opportunities share the following characteristics: (a) the other participant is invited to participate in the search, and (b) the interactants demonstrate an orientation to language expertise, with one participant being a novice and the other being an expert” (2003, p. 542).

J1's attitude to language learning might be more characteristic of more extroverted and courageous language learners. The more shy, insecure language learners have a lot to learn from learners such as J1. Even very low proficient speakers of a second language can communicate effectively, even if faulty and with lots of hesitation, when they try hard and possibly have someone more expert near by to ask for help. Even when V was not present in the room, J1 still succeeded in communicating - however slow, hesitant and sometimes confusing that communication might be.

The attitude of the more expert language learners or native speakers toward the less proficient speakers in this study is an interesting one to discuss. Whenever a mistake impedes communication, they correct the less proficient language learners. However, when the mistake does not impede communication, no one attends to it. This can be observed when V corrects J1 in excerpt 9 after he said the word “temporate” instead of “season”. V knew that J2 would not understand the word J1 uttered, and

chose to correct J1. In excerpt 6, on the other hand, J1 mispronounces the word “slums” and says “lums” instead, but since J2 had already had access to the vocabulary item J1 was using when J1 elicited it from V, no one attended to the pronunciation error. This further reinforces the importance of learners turning these occasions into language learning opportunities. Had J1 pronounced the word “lums” with upward intonation, V or J2 would have corrected him. Therefore, these language learning opportunities seem to be entirely dependent on what the language learners themselves choose to do when they encounter such opportunities to learn new vocabulary items.

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## APPENDIX A: CONVERSATION ANALYSIS TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

(adapted from Atkinson and Heritage, 1984)

[ ] Overlapping utterances

= Latching: when there is no interval between adjacent utterances

(0.2) Timed silence within or between utterances in tenths of a second

(.) Micropause: silence of .1 of a second or less.

- An abrupt cutoff of a word or sound

: Extension of the sound

. Falling intonation, e.g. final intonation.

, Continuing intonation

? Rising intonation

\_ Stressed syllable

° Quieter than surrounding talk

CAP Louder than surrounding talk

↑↓ Marked change in pitch: upward or downward.

(h) Aspirations

(.h) Inhalations

< > Utterance is delivered at slower pace than surrounding talk

> < Utterance is delivered at quicker pace than surrounding talk.

( ) Unclear hearing

(( )) Comments, details of the scene

Spelling may vary in an attempt to capture reductions and other variations. Because punctuation marks are used as conversation analytic symbols, punctuation marks that appear within quotation marks, including those just before the final quotation mark, are used as transcription symbols (e.g., “mm hm,”).