ผลกระทบของระดับความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษและประเภทของกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารที่มีต่อความสามารถทางการสื่อสารด้านการพูดของนักศึกษาไทยระดับอุดมศึกษา

นางสาวศุทธินี ชวนไชยสิทธิ์

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรดุษฎีบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ

บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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THE EFFECTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY AND TYPES OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON ORAL COMMUNICATION ABILITY OF THAI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Thesis Advisor	Professor Kanchana Prapphal, Ph.D.

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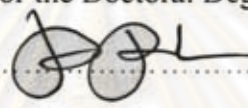

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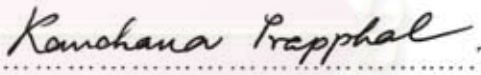

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ศุทธินี ชวนไชยสิทธิ์: ลกระทบของระดับความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษและประเภทของกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารที่มีต่อความสามารถทางการสื่อสารด้านการพูดของนักศึกษาไทยระดับอุดมศึกษา. (THE EFFECTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY AND TYPES OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON ORAL COMMUNICATION ABILITY OF THAI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ศ. ดร. กาญจนา ปราบพาล, 255 หน้า.

การวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์หลักเพื่อศึกษาผลกระทบของระดับความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษและประเภทของกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารที่มีต่อความสามารถทางการสื่อสารด้านการพูดของนักศึกษาไทยระดับอุดมศึกษาทั้งผลกระทบหลักและผลกระทบเชิงปฏิสัมพันธ์ และเพื่อศึกษาประเภทของกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารของนักศึกษาไทยซึ่งมีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษในระดับที่แตกต่างกัน กลุ่มตัวอย่างในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ ประกอบด้วยนักศึกษาไทยที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่ชั้นปีที่สาม วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ จากคณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยหอการค้าไทย จำนวนหนึ่งร้อยคนโดยการสุ่ม ผู้วิจัยแบ่งกลุ่มนักศึกษาออกเป็นสองกลุ่มคือ กลุ่มที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษอยู่ในระดับสูงและระดับอ่อน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยได้แก่ แบบทดสอบวัดความสามารถในการสื่อสารด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ (Oral Communication test) และแบบสอบถามกลวิธีทางการสื่อสารในการสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษ (Strategies Used in Speaking Task-Inventory) รูปแบบการวิจัยคือการสุ่มสมบูรณ์ภายในกลุ่ม (Randomized block design) สถิติที่ใช้วิเคราะห์คือ การวิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวนแบบจำแนกสองทาง (2-way ANOVA) และการใช้ตัวสถิติที (*t-test*) เพื่อวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณ นอกจากนี้ผู้วิจัยใช้การวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหาวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพเพื่อให้ได้ข้อมูลเชิงลึกและเพื่อยืนยันผลของการวิเคราะห์เชิงปริมาณ ผลการวิจัยพบว่าระดับความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษที่แตกต่างกันมีผลกระทบต่อความสามารถทางการสื่อสารด้านการพูดของนักศึกษาอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ดังนั้นแบบทดสอบวัดความสามารถในการสื่อสารด้านการพูดภาษาอังกฤษที่พัฒนาขึ้นนั้นสามารถแยกนักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษที่อยู่ในระดับสูงออกจากนักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถระดับอ่อน จากการวิจัยพบว่านักศึกษาที่ใช้กลวิธีทางการสื่อสารที่ใช้ความเสี่ยง (Risk-taking strategies) มีความสามารถทางการสื่อสารด้านการพูดมากกว่านักศึกษาที่ใช้กลวิธีทางการสื่อสารที่หลีกเลี่ยงความเสี่ยง (Risk-avoidance strategies) อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ อีกทั้งยังพบว่าตัวแปรทั้งสองไม่มีผลกระทบเชิงปฏิสัมพันธ์ต่อกัน (Interaction effect) นอกจากนี้ การวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหาพบว่ามีความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญในประเภทของกลวิธีที่ใช้ในการสื่อสารของนักศึกษาสองกลุ่ม นักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถระดับสูงใช้กลวิธีทางการสื่อสารที่ใช้ความเสี่ยง เช่นกลวิธีทางอารมณ์และสังคม กลวิธีที่เน้นความคล่อง กลวิธีขอความช่วยเหลือ และกลวิธีการใช้ถ้อยคำทางอ้อม ในขณะที่นักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถอ่อนใช้กลวิธีที่หลีกเลี่ยงความเสี่ยง ได้แก่ กลวิธีการยืดเวลา

สาขาวิชา อวยวอังอฤษเป็นภาษานวนวชาติ ลายมือชื่อ ศุทธินี ชวนไชยสิทธิ์

ปีการศึกษา 2552 ลายมืออ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ _____

4989696520: MAJOR ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE
KEYWORDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY / TYPES OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES / ORAL COMMUNICATION ABILITY / ORAL COMMUNICATION TEST / STRATEGIIES USED IN SPEAKING TASK INVENTORY

SUTTINEE CHUANCHAISIT: THE EFFECTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY AND TYPES OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON ORAL COMMUNICATION ABILITY OF THAI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. THESIS ADVISOR: PROF. KANCHANA PRAPPHAL, 255 pp.

The objectives of this study were to examine the effects of language ability levels and types of communication strategies (CSs) on students' oral communication ability, in both main and interaction effects, and to explore the differences in the use of the CSs by high and low language ability students. The subjects in the study were 100 third-year English majored students enrolled in the speaking course in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC). They were categorized into two groups, high and low ability, based on their average grades of their previous three English courses. The subjects participating in the main study were randomly selected for data analysis purposes. Research instruments were the Oral Communication Test (OCT), and the Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI). The research design was the 'randomized block design'. Descriptive statistics, 2x2 ANOVA, and t-test were used to analyze the quantitative data, and the content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative one, and to confirm the results obtained from the quantitative analysis.

It was found that language ability levels and types of CSs used had the significant effects on the students' oral communication ability. In addition to this, no significant interaction effect between them was found. The developed OCT could differentiate the high language ability students from the low language ability ones. Moreover, it was found that the students who employed risk-taking strategies performed significantly better in oral communication than those applying risk-avoidance strategies. The content analysis illustrated that the high ability students preferred risk-taking strategies such as social-affective, fluency-oriented, help-seeking, and circumlocution strategies, whereas the low ability students tended to employ more risk-avoidance strategies like time-gaining strategies.

Field of Study: English as an International Language
Academic Year : 2009

Student's Signature Suttinee Chuanchaisit
Advisor's Signature Kanchana Prapphal

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

From the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, the emergence of globalisation and the information technology era has had such a tremendous impact due to the fact that knowledge and information are disseminated quickly and boundlessly. In addition, global free trade has become more competitive. Therefore, countries affected from the impact must prepare themselves to cope with uncertain changes in order to survive in the near future. One of the vital factors of appropriate preparation and national development is human resources. We, as teachers or parents, have to prepare our students or children to cope with this fast changing world.

Education is undergoing tremendous change in the information age. Older paradigms of teaching and learning are being challenged. Many higher education institutions are now retooling and redefining the purpose of education, in which the goal now is to revitalize education by leading students into becoming „autonomous lifelong learners" and replacing pedagogies focusing on the simple transmission of knowledge from teachers to students with the modernist"s goal of creating „productive citizens" are fast losing their currency in the globalizing world. The new emphasis in education is on the process of learning, with a focus on the acquisition, rather than simply the transmission of content. As the goals and methods of educational pedagogy change from teaching of only linguistic competence to the teaching of communicative competence, so too do the methods and goals of language assessment.

In the field of education, the purpose of assessment is to interpret students" learning processes, and this is performed in several ways. We may observe what students can do, or we may listen to what they say, read what they write, or analyze what they produce (Hein, 1991: 116).

Newer educational paradigms are beginning to reject older ideas of „weak" and „strong" learners based on traditional modes of assessment. Multiple-choice tests, for example, are now disdained for focusing solely on recognition, recall and

decontextualized content (Wiggins, 1990). Such an assessment strategy rewards, and therefore encourages, rote learning and passive test-taking. To put it simply, students are spoon-fed „knowledge", and bring it up at the exam time. Although such an approach to assessment is not entirely devoid of merit, educators and assessors are now seeking alternative forms (O"Malley & Pierce, 1996). Assessment is moving away from standardized paper and pencil tests and incorporating the use of observation and contextualization to more authentically measure students „real world" abilities. Such „authentic assessment" is more nuanced, as it directly examines performance on worthy intellectual tasks (Wiggins, 1990).

In the globalized world, English is an international language which is obviously used for communication in every area, especially in higher education and leading businesses. As an overview of the present situation, approximately 80% of knowledge transmission around the world uses English as a medium. Moreover, around 75% of the international communication uses English as a standard language, and there are about 50% of non-native speakers who use English to be their communicative language (Hollet, 1999). Moreover, English has also become another factor in international business competition, which is used as a lingua franca. It leads to a situation that English is essentially the most influential language that links people in educational, business and economic world. It seems to be that countries, where their economy is improved effectively, signal that there are more population who are educated and have proficiency in English; like Singapore, and China. This evidence can clearly prove that English is very important in daily life nowadays.

Thailand is one of the developing countries where its economy is growing increasingly. Obviously, English has increased an importance as a role to play in the country, especially in higher education and leading business.

In addition, communication is also necessary in this era due to the fact that people have to communicate with each other to accomplish their personal and business goals. Since international companies are main players in the work force, English plays a highly important role in the business operations, as people should have the ability to communicate through English. This change has affected on students" goal to acquire other languages. The main reason of learning a foreign language, for most people, is to

be able to communicate. It is because they would like to send and receive messages, and negotiate meaning effectively through communication (Rubin & Thompson, 1994: 30). Communication in foreign language learning, nowadays, is focused on how to communicate effectively and this becomes much more important than writing and reading skills (Zhang, 2007: 43). Consequently, oral communication strategies (CSs) have turned into a current trend for all foreign language instructional fields since 1970s, as there has been a shift from examining the methods of teaching to investigating the process of learning (Purpura, 1999).

A number of scholars in second language acquisition (i.e. Bialystok, 1990; Cohen, 1998; McDonough, 1995) have argued that learner strategies affect their learning and using a language. In order to prove this statement, numerous studies; such as Oxford, 1996; O"Mallet, 1985; Purpura; 1999, have focused on examining the learning strategy underlying the different behaviours of successful and unsuccessful learners. Therefore, types, varieties, and frequencies of the learners" strategy use have been analysed in these studies, and a number of taxonomies have also been produced (Purpura; 1999).

Regarding communication strategy (CS), it is also pointed out that students can improve their oral communication ability by using specific CSs to enhance the effectiveness of communication (Dörnyei , 1995; Cohen, 1998; Nakatani, 2006). In many studies, oral CSs have been categorized into two main types: *achievement or compensatory strategies* and *reduction or avoidance strategies* (see Tarone, 1981; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Bialystok, 1990; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; and Nakatani, 2005). Students, who adopt the former types of strategies, seem to use an alternative way to reach their original goal by means of whatever resources are available. These CSs are regarded as "good learner" behaviours. In contrast, students are using the latter type of strategies if they avoid solving a communication problem and give up on conveying the message. These behaviours are common among low-proficiency students and they affect interaction negatively (Nakatani, 2006).

Since then, researchers in this field have used various competing taxonomies for CSs as opinions diverge on what constitutes a communication strategy. In this study, in order to avoid terms that might cause confusions regarding taxonomies, the term „CSs"

will be used instead of oral CSs and compensatory strategies. The CSs particularly focus on strategic behaviours that students use when encountering communication problems during interactional tasks.

Although several researchers (i.e. Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Oxford, 1996) have focused on the validity and reliability of using established strategy surveys, and issues of inter-rater reliability and generalizability of direct, semi-direct, or even computer-mediated interview tests (Moere, 2006; O'Loughlin, 1995; Bachman et al., 1995), not many studies have been published on the issues of the potential effects of language ability and types of CSs on test-takers' oral communication ability at the university level. In addition, there has not been a concrete study that deals with a reliable and valid communication strategy inventory for a speaking test task. It may be because dealing with communicative tests, which is subjective in nature and there are no clear criteria for correctness, makes educators' life much more difficult. That may be the reasons why several educators have avoided using them. Therefore, it would be sensible to study both the main effects of and the interaction effects between language ability levels and types of CSs on oral communication ability of Thai university students.

In order to study, it was aimed to investigate (1) whether the test-takers' English language ability affects their oral communication ability, (2) whether types of CSs used by the test-takers affect their oral communication ability, (3) whether there is an interaction effect between students with different language ability levels and types of CSs on their oral communication ability, and (4) how the strategies process is related to the test-takers' language ability levels.

In terms of the significance of the study, it was hoped that the findings of this research study would illuminate further understanding of the effects of the target language ability levels as well as types of communication strategies on the test-takers' oral communication ability.

1.2 Research questions

This study attempted to answer the following four research questions:

1.2.1 Do different language ability levels have a significant effect on students‟ oral communication ability? And if they do, how much is the effect size?

1.2.2 Do types of communication strategies (CSs) have a significant effect on students‟ oral communication ability? And if they do, how much is the effect size?

1.2.3 Is there any significant interaction effect between different language ability levels and types of communication strategies (CSs) on students‟ oral communication ability? And if there is, how much is each effect size?

1.2.4 What are the communication strategies (CSs) used by students with different language ability levels?

1.3 Research objectives

The purposes of the study were as follows:

1.3.1 To examine the effect of language ability levels [High (H) and Low (L)] on students‟ oral communication abilities, and to investigate the effect size;

1.3.2 To examine the effect of types of communication strategies (CSs) on students‟ oral communication abilities, and to investigate the effect size;

1.3.3 To investigate the interaction effect between language ability levels and types of communication strategies (CSs) on students‟ oral communication abilities, and to investigate each effect size;

1.3.4 To investigate the communication strategies (CSs) used by students with different language ability levels.

1.4 Statement of hypotheses

The null-hypotheses concerning the effects of language ability and types of CSs on test-takers‟ oral communication ability were:

1.4.1 HO_1: There is no significant effect of students with different language ability levels on their oral communication abilities.

1.4.2 HO_2: Types of CSs have no significant effect on students‟ oral communication abilities.

1.4.3 H_{O3}: There is no significant interaction effect between language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication ability.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study focused on the effects of language ability and types of CSs on test-takers‟ oral communication ability, both main effects and interaction effect between them. In this study, there were three instruments which were developed. The first one was the Oral Communication Test (OCT), which was used to assess the test-takers‟ oral communication ability. The second one was a questionnaire entitled the “Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory” (SUSTI) used for examining the effects of types of CSs on the test-takers‟ oral communication ability. The last one was content analysis which were used to investigate the test-takers‟ CSs and triangulate the results of the SUSTI. These instruments were administered to Thai third-year students of the Faculty of Humanities, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC). The format of the OCT was a semi-direct oral proficiency interview, including four sub-tasks, while the format of the SUSTI was a paper-pencil questionnaire, consisting of 32 multiple-choice test items.

This study aimed at examining the effects of different language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication ability by using the OCT and the SUSTI, and investigating the CSs of students with different language ability levels using the content analysis technique.

The subjects in this study were 100 students randomly selected from 300 third-year English major students, enrolled in the speaking course in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC). The data was collected in the second term of the academic year 2008.

With regard to variables, the independent variables were (1) English language ability in two levels: High (H) and Low (L), and (2) Types of CSs (Risk-taking strategies (RT), and Risk-avoidance strategies (RA). The dependent variable was the mean scores of the Oral Communication Test (OCT).

Focusing on the format of the instruments, the format of the OCT was the semi-direct speaking test consisting of four sub-tasks; a warm-up task, an interview task, a description task, and a problem-solving task. All tasks were focused on the real-approach of oral communication occurring in students‟ daily lives. As it was the semi-direct speaking test, the students‟ oral discourse was elicited through the use of recorded and visual task stimuli and the oral responses of the students are recorded (Shohamy, 1994: 100). The test administration took about 15 minutes, including a thinking gap and time allotted for the students to figure out the answer for each sub-task. The test-takers might be required to demonstrate their oral communication ability that realistically represents problems and situations likely to be encountered in the students‟ daily lives (Wiggins, 1990). However, it seemed to be impossible to set the test tasks to be exactly the same as in the natural setting and the test-takers have conscious feeling of being tested. There was a fact which should be kept in mind that no test in this world is as authentic as its referential meaning (ibid.). For the questionnaire, the format of the SUSTI was a Likert-type questionnaire developed to assess the degrees and types of speaking strategies which students use in oral communication. The 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) was used in the questionnaire.

1.6 Limitations of the study

With regard to the time constraint and limited budget, the researcher could only focus on developing speaking test tasks to measure the oral communication ability in English. The tests that measure the other three skills may be considered and developed in further studies. Additionally, the subjects in this study included 300 undergraduate students in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce only, while many more students from other universities were not included in the study. Thus, the score interpretations were based solely on these 300 subjects which might not be representative of the whole population of the undergraduate students. In other words, the results of this study might not be applied to the test-takers from other educational backgrounds. Therefore, decision-making should be careful when applying these score interpretations to other groups of test-takers.

1.7 Assumptions of the study

The following were the assumptions of this proposed study.

1.7.1 It is assumed that all subjects did the test and the questionnaire (the SUSTI) honestly with their best effort.

1.7.2 It is assumed that there will be a minimal effect of the test setting on the test scores of the OCT. This is because the similar environment of the test setting was arranged for both pilot and main studies.

1.8 Operational definition of terms

The key terms in this study were as follows.

1.8.1 Oral communication ability

Oral communication is the negotiation of meaning between interlocutors using both speaking and listening. Success in oral communication requires not only knowledge of linguistic ability but also world knowledge as an awareness of social contexts, since a benchmark for successful oral communication is to achieve linguistic and pragmatic goals in communicating with other speakers across the varieties of social contexts (Brown, 2001).

It refers to scores obtained from the Oral Communication Test (OCT), which measures the oral communication ability in general English of third-year students participating in this study. These scores indicate the students‟ ability to communicate in the OCT, comprising of four sub-tasks: a warm-up task, an interview task, a description task, and a problem-solving task.

1.8.2 English language ability levels

Conceptually, language ability can be defined as the capacity for using the knowledge of language use to create and interpret meaning (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, Mousavi, 1999).

In this study, English language ability levels refer to the test-takers‟ average grades of the speaking courses, the highest and the lowest grades that they received in their previous English courses while they were studying at the

University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC). The students were categorized into two groups: High and Low, according to their average grades. The high language ability group was made up of students who obtained the average grades above the +1 S.D. in these courses, while the low language ability group contained students whose grades were lower than -1 S.D. from the course.

1.8.3 Types of communication strategies (CSs)

Initially, communication strategies were regarded as a part of learners‟ problem-solving behavior during the target language communication (Tarone, Cohen, & Dumas, 1976) due to the fact that learners had a tendency to use CSs to compensate for their lack of appropriate linguistic knowledge when expressing meaning of their intended utterances. In 1980, Canale and Swain proposed CSs as one of the sub-categories of their model of communicative competence. Canale (1983) further extended the concept of CSs by introducing two types of CSs, which were (1) strategies to compensate for disruptions due to speakers‟ insufficient linguistic knowledge, and (2) strategies to enhance the effectiveness of communication with participants (1983: 12).

In this study, the CSs were categorized into two main types: **risk-taking strategies** referring to strategies that the speakers use for increasing their linguistic resources, as „resource expansion strategies‟, in order to achieve their communicative goals, and **risk-avoidance strategies** involve the speakers trying to adjust the message to match with the original linguistic resources. The criteria of selecting these strategies were to serve the objectives of the developed Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI), aiming at investigating types of CSs used by Thai students with different language abilities. There are six strategies involved with the risk-taking strategies, which are social-affective, fluency-oriented, accuracy-oriented, non-verbal strategies, help-seeking, and circumlocution (paraphrase) strategies. The risk-avoidance strategies include message abandonment, message reduction and alteration, and time-gaining strategies (see more details in Chapter 2)

1.8.4 Oral Communication Test (OCT)

As it is a type of oral communicative tests, Mousavi (1999) defined that it is "a highly structured oral INTERVIEW test in which the examinee is tested on his ability to convey certain kinds of information to the examiner" (Mousavi, 1999: 252). Moreover, the goal of successful communication in the test is that it is a must to have a correspondence between the intention of a speaker and the concept created by the participant (ibid.).

In this study, the OCT was developed to be used as a tool for assessing the test-takers" oral communication ability in the area of general English. The format was a semi-direct speaking test consisting of four sub-tasks: a warm-up task, an interview task, a description task, and a problem-solving task. All tasks focused on the real-approach of oral communication occurring in students" daily lives. As it is the semi-direct test, the students" oral discourse was elicited through the use of recorded and visual task stimuli and the oral responses of the students were recorded (Shohamy, 1994: 100). The test administration took about 15 minutes, including a thinking gap and time allotted for the students to figure out the answer for each sub-task.

1.8.5 The Semi-direct Speaking Test

The term "semi-direct speaking testing" is defined by Clark (1979: 36) and Malone (2000) to describe the testing that elicits active speech from the test-takers through tape-recordings, test-booklets, or non-human" elicitation procedures, rather than through face-to-face conversation with a live interviewer as in the direct testing. Davies et al (1999) state that a semi-direct speaking test is "a test of the spoken language in which for practical and reliability reasons the stimulus is pre-recorded or text-based, and the response by the candidate is recorded for distance rating" (Davies et al, 1999: 178). The best known example of the semi-direct test is the Stimulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) which is used as an alternative to the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), a direct speaking test.

Operationally, as the semi-direct speaking test seems to be more practical, it was used as a model for the OCT. It relied on audiotaped instructions and a test-booklet in order to elicit samples of language in their real-life from the

test-takers. The test-takers heard a record of an English native speaker making statements and asking questions relevant to the task described. The responses were recorded by a tape-recorder and were observed by the assessor.

1.8.6 The Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI)

A self-report questionnaire was selected as a basic instrument because it is possible to use this kind of questionnaire to survey a large number of participants in a manner which would be practically almost impossible using any other methods, thereby providing a relatively overview of communication strategies used. It was supported by Ellis (1994) that self-report data have proved "invaluable" (p.674) as a means of gaining insight into aspects of the development of language by speakers of other languages which are not readily observable. According to Dörnyei (2003), self-report questionnaires have the advantages of versatility, cost effectiveness and efficiency in terms of staff and students" time and effort.

In this study, a Likert-type of questionnaire was developed to assess the degrees and types of strategies used in oral communication. Participants were asked to respond on the 5-point Likert scale ranging from one (never) to five (always true of me). All items in the questionnaire were written in Thai to avoid the language problems. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part 1: Demographic information and Part 2: Types of CSs used. Items in Part2 were drawn from systematic lists of two major types of CSs; risk-taking strategies, and risk-avoidance strategies. The former refers to strategies the speakers use for increasing their linguistic resources as resource expansion to achieve communicative goals. The strategies include 1) social-affective strategies for dealing with emotions and attitudes; 2) fluency-oriented strategies for emphasizing on speech clarity and pronunciation; 3) accuracy-oriented strategies for paying attention on forms of the speech; 4) non-verbal strategies for giving hints by using gestures and facial expression; 5) help-seeking strategies for asking for repetition, clarification and confirmation; 6) circumlocution strategies for paraphrasing or describing the properties of the target objects. The later category refers to the strategy the speakers use to adjust the message to match with their original linguistic resources. The strategies include 1) message abandonment

strategies for leaving message unfinished; 2) message reduction and alteration strategies for using familiar words; and 3) time-gaining strategies for using gambits or fillers to fill pauses in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty.

1.9 Significance of the study

The results of this study could be advantageous in the following aspects.

1. Theoretical contribution

This study was among the pioneer research projects focusing on „simulated speaking test tasks", focusing on oral communication ability. Therefore, the study reflected some important theoretical aspects of the semi-direct speaking test. It also provided insightful information and contributed additional knowledge in the area of the test development. Findings also confirmed or refute the validity of such a test reported in the literature.

The findings of this research study illuminated further understanding of the effects of the target language ability levels as well as types of communication strategy on the test-takers" oral communication ability.

Finally, the study also provided information about how high and low language ability students invoked strategies in speaking tasks. From this, the results had numerous implications for language educators as they could potentially learn how high ability students differ from low ability students in their use of CSs.

2. Practical contribution

1) The test results could tell whether the test-takers with different language ability levels and types of CSs affect their oral communication ability, and could identify the CSs of the test-takers with different language ability levels.

2) The results of the study were beneficial to a number of parties involved:

(1) In general, the results of the study provide the Oral Communication Test (OCT) to assess the test-takers" oral communication ability, and the

Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) to investigate the test-takers‟ CSs.

(2) The Oral Communication Test (OCT) can be useful for the parties concerned as outlined below.

- For companies and employers, this study could yield possible insights into useful ways of assessing oral communication ability of staff in international companies. Both the stake-holders and the staff themselves might put more emphasis on the staff‟s CSs and language ability levels which might have an effect on the oral communication ability.

- For universities, this study provided guidelines for educators to design an in-house assessment to measure students‟ oral communication ability.

- For graduating students, the test could be useful as an instrument for self-assessment to practice and improve their oral communication ability.

(3) Regarding the SUSTI, teachers can use it to elicit responses related to the use of communication strategies of their students.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature covers the following main topics as the key terms presented in the title of this research study. First, it involves studies of communication strategies (CSs), including a brief overview of communication strategies and taxonomy of scholars in the field and that used in this study. Next, the nature of speaking test tasks and oral communication ability are presented. Finally, previous studies utilizing CSs employed in assessing oral communication ability and the effect size are reviewed.

2.2 Studies of Communication Strategies (CSs)

In the area of modern education, the overall goal of learning a foreign language is considered to be that students are able to communicate. It is not only a key in learning but it also initiates interaction among people in their daily lives. Oxford (1993: 213) stated that, of the four skills in English, speaking and listening play more significant roles in second language communication than the other skills. It may be interpreted that how to communicate effectively had become much more important in the modern world. As a result, CSs had become a crucial topic in the second language educational field.

2.2.1 A brief historical overview of communication strategies (CSs)

Considerable research has been done on communication strategies (CSs). The first notion of second language CSs was raised at the beginning of the 1970s focusing on the mismatch between L2 speakers‟ communicative intentions and their linguistic resources. It led to several systematic language phenomena in which the speaker‟s function is to handle difficulties and avoid communication breakdown (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997: 174). Selinker‟s (1972) article on interlanguage introduced the term „communicative strategies‟ but Hymes‟s (1972) study prompted researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) and L2 teachers to be concerned with the development of

integrated linguistic and sociolinguistic competences. Meanwhile, Savignon (1972) did research emphasizing the importance of „coping strategies" in communicative teaching and learning. Later, Varadi (1973, 1980) gave a presentation, considered to be the first systematic analysis of strategic language behaviour, centred on message adjustment in particular. However, this paper was not the first published on CSs as it came out in print in 1980. Furthermore, Canale and Swain (1980) used the term „strategic competence" which was included as one of the components of communicative competence.

Subsequently, the increasing importance, accorded to the development of communicative language skills, has brought about an attempt to define the term „CSs" and encouraged several researchers to study the use of it (Tarone, 1981; Færch & Kasper, 1983a; Paribakht, 1985; Poulisse, 1987, 1990).

Tarone (1981) completed two research studies focusing on CSs that first provides a definition of „communicative strategies" and taxonomy. Her taxonomy is still one of the most influential in this field (see details in Table 2.2).

Færch and Kasper published an edited volume „Strategies in Interlanguage Communication" in 1983. The volume contains a collection of important papers and also some interesting new research. These publications inspired other researchers to undertake studies in various areas of interest. As a result, there was a considerable increase in the number of publications in the 1980s, especially those identifying and classifying CSs and their teachability.

In the mid 1980s, Nijmegen University, Netherlands became the dominant centre of the study of CSs (Rababah, 2001: 4). Its group of researchers carried out a large-scale empirical project which emphasizes various aspects of CS use and challenged the previous taxonomies.

Canale and Swain (1980) posited that CSs are thought to be manifestations of underlying strategic competence which is one of the components of communicative competence. CSs can be used in both problematic and successful communication, as Canale (1983: 10-11) defined strategic competence:

> This component is composed of mastery of verbal and nonverbal CSs that may be called into action for two main reasons: (a) to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to limiting conditions in actual communication…; and (b) to enhance the effectiveness of communication.

The year 1990 was a productive one in CS research as two comprehensive monographs by Bialystok (1990) and Poulisse (1990) were published (see Varadi, 1992 for details). Since then, further empirical, conceptual analyses, and several reviews have been published (Chen, 1990; Yule & Tarone, 1991; Cook, 1993; Clennell, 1994; Poulisse, 1994; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b; Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2005, 2006).

The term „CSs" has been used generally in most of the literature in this field but some researchers often referred to them by different terms. For example, „communicational strategies" was used by Varadi (1983) while Corder (1983) preferred the term „communicative strategies." Additionally, Harding (1983) referred to them as „compensation strategies" while the term „compensatory strategies" was used by Poulisse (1990). However, the term „CSs" is used in this study with the same meaning as the above terms.

2.2.2 Definitions of Communication Strategies

There have been several definitions proposed for second language CSs. However, it is difficult to find an exact definition of communicative strategies on which researchers in the field have reached agreement. Generally, researchers have agreed that the main purpose of CS usage is to resolve communication problems consciously by applying some kind of techniques.

Corder (1981) simply defined CSs from a non-native English speaker's point of view that it is a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his or her own meaning when faced with some difficulty (Corder, 1981: 103; Corder, 1983: 16). Additionally, Tarone (1977, 1981) and Stern (1983) stated that CSs are used for coping with difficulty based on the speakers' lack of linguistic competence:

> A mutual attempt of two interlocutors to bridge the gap between the linguistic competence of the L2 speaker and the linguistic competence of

> target language interlocutor in real communication situations (Tarone, 1981: 288)
>
> CSs, i.e., techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language (Stern, 1983: 411)

Meanwhile, Canale (1983) and Long (1983) extended the scope of CSs to include „communication enhancing devices." They believed that CSs should not deal with problem-solving only by repairing discourse when troubles occur but also should be used to „avoid" conversational trouble or failure in communicative goals and offer spontaneous solutions to immediate problems (Long, 1983: 132).

The definitions of Tarone (1977), Brown (1987), and Færch and Kasper (1983a) focused on the idea that CSs be used consciously:

> Conscious CSs are used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual's thought (Tarone, 1977: 195)
>
> The conscious employment by verbal or non-verbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when precise linguistic forms are for some reasons not available to the learner at that point in communication. (Brown, 1987: 180)
>
> Potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal (Færch & Kasper, 1983a: 36).

These definitions have been influential in the studies of CSs but that of Færch and Kasper seems to have gained more popularity and the majority of later research studies have employed their conceptualization (Bialystok, 1983; Corder, 1983; Færch & Kasper, 1983a; Paribakht, 1985; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995). A number of taxonomies have been proposed although there might be an overlap in the categories (Katona, 1998).

Additionally, strategies for speaking are a set of skills that speakers use to achieve communication. Canale and Swain (1980), cited in Fulcher (2003), saw them in negative terms as dealing with difficulties due to deficiencies but researchers such as Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) regarded them as a general ability to communicate.

In the Thai context, Luangsaengthong (2002) defined CSs pedagogically as devices employed by learners when encountered with some difficulties that occur in speaking situations.

In this study, the researcher defines CS as "systematic communication-enhancing devices used to handle communication difficulties and avoid communication break down." This associates CS with both the problem-solving application to repair discourse when problems occur and approaches used to avoid conversational trouble, failure in expressing meaning, and maintaining interaction during communication. This definition differs from the vast majority of the CS literature as most other definitions are concerned with CSs only as devices used to manage the actual language-related problem in communication (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997).

It is clear that all language users adopt strategies to convey meaning. The adopted strategies depend upon both the speakers themselves and their interlocutors. In other words, what people attempt to communicate and how they do this are determined not only by the speakers‟ knowledge of the language but also by their interlocutors‟ linguistic competence and knowledge of the topic of discourse. Both of these are variables and can change in the course of ongoing interactions (Corder, 1983).

2.2.3 Comparisons between communication strategies, production strategies and learning strategies

According to Corder (1983), there is confusion in some definitions of CSs. There seems to be an overlap between strategies of communication and strategies of learning when defining CSs. Some researchers even regard these terms as almost synonymous.

Tarone (1981) proposed a conceptual framework for use in defining CSs more clearly and in distinguishing them from learning strategies or production strategies (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Characterized Criteria of a Communication Strategy

> 1. A speaker desires to communicate meaning X to a listener;
> 2. the speaker believes the linguistic or sociolinguistic structure desired to communicate meaning X is unavailable, or is not shared with the listener; thus
> 3. the speaker chooses to
>   (a) avoid – not attempt to communicate meaning X – or
>   (b) attempt alternate means to communicate meaning X. The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning.
>
> (Tarone, E., 1981: 288)

The utterance which can fulfil these criteria may be called CSs. The notion of production strategy (PS) is "an attempt to use one‟s linguistic system efficiently and clearly, with a minimum of effort" (Tarone, 1981: 288). PSs are similar to CSs in that both are attempts to use one‟s linguistic system but they differ in that PSs lack the interactional focus on the negotiation of meaning. Therefore, criteria 1 is absent as there might be no desire to communicate. The criteria 3(b) is also absent because the speakers may not find it necessary to use alternative means in the negotiation of meaning, for example, in the case of rehearsal. Another notion is that learning strategies (LSs) are defined as "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language" (ibid). LSs may not fulfil criteria 1 because the basic motivation of the learners is to learn the target language, not to communicate meaning (ibid.).

2.2.4 Taxonomies of communication strategies

Terminology used to describe strategic behaviour as language devices under the label „CSs‟ varies significantly. The following is a review of these classifications.

Table 2.2 presents 15 major different taxonomies offered in the literature (Varadi, 1973; Tarone, 1977; Færch & Kasper, 1983b; Corder. 1983; Bialystok, 1983; Paribakht, 1985; Willems, 1987; Bialystok, 1990; Nijmegen Group; Poulisse, 1993; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b; Dörnyei & Cohen, 2002; Luangsaengthong, 2002; Nakatani, 2005; Nakatani, 2006). Comparisons of the classifications reveal different degrees of elaborateness embedded in various ranges of these language devices

(Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). At one end of a continuum, the taxonomies of the Nijmegen Group and Poulisse (1993) emphasize the scope of language phenomena examined to lexical-compensatory strategies (see Kellerman, 1991 for rationale). The other end of the continuum is more general with Dörnyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b) concerned with L2 problem-management. Further details were provided in the description after Table 2.3.

Table 2.2: The Presentation of Fifteen Major Different Taxonomies [Modified from Rababah, G. (2001)]

Varida (1973)	Tarone (1977)	Færch & Kasper(1983b)	Corder (1983)	Bialystok (1983)
1. Reduction • Extensional • Intensional - Generalization - Approximation **2. Replacement** • Formal - Circumlocution - Paraphrase • Semantic	**1. Parapharse** • Approximation • Word coinage • Circumlocution **2. Conscious transfer** • Literal translation • Language switch • Appeal for assistance • Mime **3. Avoidance** • Topic avoidance • Message abandon	**1. Reduction strategies** • Formal reduction - Phonological - Morphological - Syntactic - Lexical • Functional reduction - Actional - Modal - Propositional content ≈ Topic avoidance ≈ Message abandonment ≈ Meaning Replacement **2. Achievement strategies** • Compensatory - Code switching - Interlingual transfer - Inter/Intra language transfer - IL-based strategies ≈ Generalization ≈ Paraphrase ≈ Word coinage ≈ Restructuring - Co-operative strategies - Non-linguistic strategies • Retrieval	**1. Message adjustment (risk-avoidance strategies)** • Topic avoidance • Message abandonment • Semantic avoidance • Message reduction **2. 2. Resource expansion (risk-taking strategies)** • Switching/ Borrowing • Inventing • Paraphrasing/ Circumlocution • Paralinguistic devices (gestures) • Appeal for help	**1. L1-based strategies** • Language switch • Foreignizing • Transliteration **2. L2-based strategies** • Semantic contiguity • Description • Word coinage **3. Paralinguistic strategies**

Paribakht (1985)	Willems (1987)	Bialystok (1990)	Nijmegen Group	Poulisse (1993)
1. Linguistic approach • Semantic contiguity - Superordinate - Comparison ≈ Positive comparison ▫ Analogy ▫ Synonymy ≈ Negative comparison ▫ Contrast & Opposite ▫ Antonymy • Circumlocution - Physical description ≈ Size ≈ Shape ≈ Colour ≈ Material - Constituent features ≈ Features ≈ Elaborated featured - Locational property - Historical property - Other features - Functional description • Metalinguistic clues **2. Contextual Approach** • Linguistic context • Use of L2 idioms and proverbs • Transliteration of L1 idioms and proverbs • Idiomatic transfer **3. Conceptual approach** • Demonstration • Exemplification • Metonymy **4. Mime** • Replacing verbal output • Accompanying verbal output	**1.Reduction strategies** • Formal reduction - Phonological - Morphological - Syntactic - Lexical • Functional reduction - Message abandonment - Meaning Replacement - Topic avoidance **2.Achievement strategies** • Paralinguistic strategies • Interlingual strategies - Borrowing/ code switching - Literal translation - Foreignizing Intralingual strategies • Intralingual strategies - Approximation - Word coinage - Paraphrase ≈ Description ≈ Circumlocution ≈ Exemplification - Smurfing - Self-repair - Appeals for assistance ≈ Explicit ≈ Implicit ≈ Checking questions - Initiating repair	**1. Analysis-based strategies** **2. Control-based strategies**	**1. Conceptual strategies** • Analytic • Holistic **2. Linguistic/ code strategies** • Transfer • Morphological creativity	**1. Substitution strategies** **2. Substitution plus strategies** **3. Reconceptualization strategies**

Dörnyei & Scott (1995a, 1995b)

1. Direct strategies

- Resource deficit-related Strategies

- Message abandonment
- Message reduction
- Message replacement
- Circumlocution
- Approximation
- Use of all-purpose words
- Word-coinage
- Restructuring
- Literal translation
- Foreignizing
- Code-switching
- Use of similar sounding words
- Mumbling
- Omission
- Retrieval
- Mime

- Own-performance problem-related strategies

- Self-rephrasing
- Self-repair

- Other-performance problem-related strategies

- Other-repair

2. Interactional strategies

- Resource deficit-related Strategies

- Appeals for help

- Own-performance problem related strategies

- Comprehension check
- Own-accuracy check

- Other-performance problem-related strategies

- Asking for repetition
- Asking for clarification
- Asking for confirmation
- Guessing
- Expressing non-understanding
- Interpretive summary
- Responses

3. Indirect strategies

- Processing time pressure-related strategies

- Use of fillers
- Repetitions

- Own-performance problem-related strategies

- Verbal strategy markers

- Other-performance problem-related strategies

- Feigning understanding

Dörnyei & Cohen (2002)

1. Avoidance or reduction strategies

- Message abandonment
- Topic avoidance
- Message replacement

2. Achievement or compensatory strategies

- Circumlocution
- Approximation
- Use of all-purpose word
- Word-coinage
- Use of non-linguistic means
- Literal translation
- Foreignizing
- Code switching

3. Stalling or Time-gaining strategies

- Use of fillers or other hesitation devices
- Repetition

4. Interactional strategies

- Appeal for help
- Asking for repetition
- Asking for clarification
- Asking for conformation
- Expressing non-understanding
- Interpretive summary

Nakatani (2005)	Nakatani (2006)
1. Achievement strategies • Help-seeking strategies • Modified interaction strategies • Modified output strategies • Time-gaining strategies Maintenance strategies • Self-solving strategies **2. Reduction strategies** • Message abandon strategies • First-language based strategies • Interlanguage-based reduction strategies • False starts	**Strategies for coping with speaking problems during communicative tasks** 1. Social affective strategies 2. Fluency-oriented strategies 3. Negotiation for meaning while speaking 4. Accuracy-oriented strategies 5. Message reduction and alteration strategies 6. Non-verbal strategies while speaking 7. Message abandonment 8. Attempt to think in English

Luangsaengthong (2002)

1. Avoidance strategy	2. Target language-based strategy	3. L1-based strategy	4. Modification devices	5. Nonlinguistic strategy
• Topic avoidance • Message avoidance	• Approximation • Circumlocution • Direct asking	• Language switching • Foreignizing	• Comprehension check • Clarification request • Overlap • Back channel • Self-repair •Confirmation • Pausing	• Gesture • Mime

Table 2.3 illustrates an inventory of taxonomies of communication strategies with descriptions, definitions, and examples. The list of taxonomies is based on the work of Dörnyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b). The last column shows whether a particular strategy is included in any of the other 12 taxonomies although sometimes under a different name (V=Varida, 1973; T=Tarone, 1977; C=Corder, 1983, F&K=Færch & Kasper, 1983b; B=Bialystok, 1983; P=Paribakht, 1985; W=Willems, 1987; T&Y=Tarone&Yule, 1987; N=the Nijmegen Group; L=Luangsaengthong, 2002; NK1=Nakatani, 2005; NK2=Nakatani, 2006; D&S=Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b) (Dörnyei , 1995; Dörnyei & Scott ,1995a, 1995b; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Brown, 2000).

Table 2.3: Presentation of the Summary of Definitions and Descriptions of Taxonomies

Strategy	Description & Example	Other Taxonomies
1. Message abandon	Leaving a message unfinished or pausing for a long time because of some language difficulty. e.g. "It is a person er..who is responsible for a house…I don't know…(laughter)"	T, F&K, W, C, NK1, NK2 L: Message avoidance
2. Message reduction (Topic avoidance)	Reducing the message by avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic language wise or by leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources.	T, F&K, W, C, NK2, L NK1: interlanguage-based reduction str.
3. Message replacement	Changing the original message with a new one because the speakers feel that they cannot execute it.	F&K, W
4. Circumlocution (paraphrase)	Describing or exemplifying the target object or action. e.g. „the thing you open doors with for key"	T, F&K, W, P, V, C, L B: description N: analytic str. NK1: self-solving str.
5. Approximation	Using an alternative lexical item expressing the meaning of the target lexical items as closely as possible e.g. „plate" instead of „bowl".	T, W, B, L P: semantic contiguity V: semantic F&K: generalization N: holistic str. NK1: self-solving str.
6. Use of all-purpose words	Extending a general „empty" lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking e.g. the word: stuff, the overuse of „thing", and „what-do-you-call-it".	W: smurfing
7. Word-coinage	Creating a non-existing L2 word based on a supposed rule e.g. paintist instead of painter.	T, F&K, B, W, N:

		morphological creativity
8. Restructuring	Abandoning the execution of the verbal plan because of language difficulties, leaving a message unfinished and communicating the intended message based on an alternative plan e.g. „On his face we can see the … so he‟s he‟s he‟s wondering.‟‟.	F&K, W: self-repair NK1: self-solving str.
9. Literal translation (transfer)	Translating literally a lexical item an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1 to L2 e.g. „I‟d made a big fault (from French).‟‟	T, W, N, F&K: interlingual transfer, P, B: transliteration
10. Foreinigning	Using a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology and morphology e.g. using L2 word with L1 pronunciation.	B, W, L F&K: interlingual transfer N: transfer
11. Code switching (Language switch)	Using a L1 word with L1 pronunciation in L2 speech e.g. using the Latin „ferrum‟‟ instead of „iron‟‟.	T, F&K, B, W, L N: transfer NK1: L1-based strategies
12. Use of similar-sounding words	Compensating for a lexical item whose form the speaker is unsure of with a word which sounds more or less like the target item e..g. using „cap‟‟ instead of „pan‟‟.	D&S
13. Mumbling	Swallowing or muttering inaudibly a word (or part of a word) whose correct form the speaker is uncertain about e.g. „And uh well he looks surprise or **sort of** XXX‟‟; the „sort of‟‟ marker indicates that the unintelligible part is not just a mere recording failure, but a strategy.	D&S
14. Omission	Leaving a gap when not knowing a word and carrying on as if it had been said e.g. „then…er...the sun is is…and he …‟‟	D&S
15. Retrieval	In an attempt to retrieve a lexical item saying of incomplete or wrong forms or structures before reaching the optimal form e.g. „It‟s brake er…it‟s broken broked broke.	D&S F&K
16. Self-repairing	Making self –initiated corrections in one‟s own speech e.g. „then the sun shines and the weather get be… gets better.‟‟	W, L
17. Self-rephrasing	Repeating a term, but not quite as it is, but by adding something or using or using paraphrase e.g. „I don‟t know the material…what it‟s made of‟‟.	T&Y NK1: modified output str.
18. Mime (nonlinguistic/ paralinguistic str.)	Describing whole concepts nonverbally, or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration e.g. using gesture or face expression.	T, F&K, B, P, W, L N: analytic or holistic str. NK2: non-verbal str.
19. Use of fillers/ hesitation	Using filling words or gambits to fill in pauses and to gain time to think e.g. let me see, well, you know, actually, it‟s a good question.	NK1: time-gaining str. L: back-channel
20. Self-repetition	Repeating a word or a string of words immediately after they were	T&Y

	said.	
21. Feigning understanding	Making an attempt to carry on the conversation in spite of not understanding something by pretending to understand.	D&S
22. Verbal strategy markers	Using verbal marking phrase before or after a strategy to signal that the word or structure does not carry the intended meaning perfectly in the L2 code e.g. a) Marking a circumlocution: „**I don't really know what's it called in English**…" b) Marking approximations: „It"s some er…it"s **some kind of** er paper". c) Marking code switching: „The bird from the clocks come out and say „kakkukk" or I don"t know what.	D&S
23. Direct appeal for help	Turning to the interlocutor for help by asking for an explicit question concerning a gap in one"s L2 knowledge.	T, F&K, W, C, L: direct asking NK1: help-seeking str.
24. Indirect appeal for help	Trying to elicit help from the conversation partner indirectly by expressing lack of a needed L2 item either verbally or nonverbally e.g. „I don"t know the name…(raising intonation, pause, eye contact)	T, F&K, W, C, NK1: help-seeking str.
25. Asking for repetition	Requesting repetition when not hearing or understanding something properly e.g. „pardon?" or „what?"	NK1: help-seeking
26. Asking for clarification	Requesting explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure e.g. „what do you mean?"	W, L: clarification request NK1=modified interaction str.
27. Asking for confirmation	Requesting confirmation that one heard or understood correctly e.g. „You said…?", „you mean…?", or „Do you mean…?"	W, L:confirmation check NK1: modified interaction str.
28. Guessing	Guessing has a similar meaning to a confirmation request but the latter implies a greater degree of certainty regarding the key word, while guessing involves real indecision e.g. „Oh. It is not the washing machine. Is it a sink?"	D&S
29. Interpretive summary	Extended paraphrase of the interlocutor"s message to check that the speaker has understood it correctly e.g. „So the pipe is broken, basically, and you don"t know what to do with it, right?"	W
30. Comprehension check	Asking the questions to check that the conversation partner can follow the speaker e.g. „And what is the diameter of the pipe? The diameter. Do you know what the diameter is?"	W, L NK1: modified interaction str.
31. Own-accuracy check	Checking that what you, as a speaker, said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question intonation e.g. „I can see a huge snow…snowman? Snowman in the garden."	D&S

Six of the presented taxonomies (Varida, 1973; Tarone, 1977; Færch & Kasper, 1983b; Corder, 1983; Willems, 1987; and Nakatani, 2005) identified a basic

duality in strategy use. It appears that strategies are used to either modify one‟s message to one‟s resources by altering, reducing, or abandoning the original message or to convey the intended message in spite of the lack of linguistic knowledge by extending or manipulating the available language system (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997).

Varida (1973), Færch and Kasper (1983b), and Nakatani (2005) grouped strategies according to „reduction strategies‟ and „achievement categories.‟ The former category was called „avoidance strategies‟ by Tarone (1977) while Corder (1983) labelled them „risk-avoidance strategies‟ and the term „message adjustment‟ was also used. With regard to the latter category; Corder (1983) referred to these terms as „resource expansion strategies‟ and considered them as „risk-taking strategies‟ because the speaker takes a certain risk of not being able to convey the message and uses them in a risky way.

Achievement and avoidance (reduction) strategies were also mentioned by Fulcher (2003). On one hand, achievement strategies are techniques of finding solutions to difficulties in speaking that arise due to insufficient language knowledge. These include:

- Overgeneralization – the overuse of –ed to signify the past tense of a verb resulting in “buyed,” “bringed,” and “taked”
- Approximation – the use of general words instead of more specific ones – “went” instead of “drove,” “walked,” or “flew”
- Paraphrase – the use of a description or summary due to lack of knowledge of the specific word – “eat a meal in the morning” instead of “had breakfast”
- Word coinage – the invention of new words due to lack of knowledge about the correct word – “air ball” instead of “balloon”
- Restructuring – the repetition in a different form and using different words due to lack of understanding of the first communication
- Cooperative strategies – receiving help from the listener
- Code switching – use of words from another language
- Non-linguistic strategies – gestures and pointing.

On the other hand, avoidance strategies are classified into formal and functional. Formal avoidance strategies are difficult to detect because non-use does not necessarily mean a lack of ability to use. A speaker might avoid using the passive voice which might be detected by overuse of the active voice. Functional avoidance strategies result in its most serious form in avoidance of certain topics because of a lack of knowledge of vocabulary associated with it. A less serious example is the lack of use of certain appropriate words resulting in overuse of generalised terms, such as "thing."

According to Corder (1983), the two major CSs, risk avoidance strategies and risk-taking strategies, are essentially to do with the relationship between ends (message) and means (resources). The assumed ideal concept is that these factors are in balance as the speaker always has the linguistic means to express the messages s/he wishes to communicate. In fact, in second language (L2) communication, these are not in balance. Sometimes, L2 speakers wish to convey messages which their linguistic resources may not permit them to express successfully. Therefore, they have only two options to choose, use „risk-avoidance strategies" by tailoring the message to their available resources (adjust their ends to their means) or use „risk-taking strategies" by attempting to increase their resources by one means or other to realize their communication intentions (Corder, 1983: 17). Taxonomies in the risk-avoidance strategies are ordered according to a hierarchy from the most extreme to the least – „topic avoidance," „message abandonment," „semantic avoidance," and „message reduction." Corder (1983) pointed out that these strategies must not be regarded as admissions of failure. They are necessary from a social point of view to maintain interaction with interlocutors. The situation is different in regard to taxonomies involved in the risk-taking strategies. All risk-taking strategies run the danger of failure such as misunderstanding or communication breakdown. „Borrowing strategies" have been mentioned as an extremely risky venture as the speakers attempt to use invented or borrowed items which are more or less approximate to the rules of the target language structure as far as their interlanguage allows. „Switching" to another language is also included in the form of borrowing. Less dangerous risk-taking strategies include the use of „paraphrase" or „circumlocution" and the least risky is „paralinguistic" or „an appeal for help".

Nakatani"s (2005) taxonomy is considered a reflection of learners" behaviour. He emphasized that the reduction strategies present learners" negative behaviour as they

try to avoid solving communication problems whereas the achievement strategies reflect learners‟ active behaviour in repairing and maintaining interaction (Nakatani, 2005: 81). Nakatani‟s (2005) reduction strategies include „message abandon strategies,‟ „first language-based strategies‟ (using L1 lexical items when the speaker experienced communication difficulties), „interlanguage-based reduction strategies‟ (producing inappropriate word order based on their interlanguage system by cutting out some intended elements), and „false starts.‟ The achievement strategies are involved with „help-seeking strategies,‟ „modified interaction strategies‟ (the process includes confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarification requests), „modified output strategies‟ (the speaker rephrases an utterance in response to their conversation partners‟ signals for negotiation), „time-gaining strategies‟ (using fillers or filled pauses to give the speakers time to think), and „maintenance strategies‟ (consisting of providing active response and shadowing).

Other than the reduction-achievement distinction, there are four taxonomies (Tarone, 1977; Bialystok, 1983; Færch & Kasper 1983b; and Paribakht, 1985) that primarily rest on certain properties of the language devices concerned, such as the role of first language (L1) or the type of knowledge used in CS realization. Bialystok (1990) and the Nijmegen group considered descriptive categories found in these taxonomies were often over-detailed and psychologically unfounded. However, there are four taxonomies (Bialystock, 1990; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b; the Nijmegen group; Poulisse, 1993) that follow different organization principles. These are discussed below.

Regarding the Nijmegen group‟s taxonomy, the project on CSs was conducted at the University of Nijmegen, Netherlands by Kellerman, Bongaerts, and Poulisse in the 1980s. They criticized the early taxonomy that concentrated more on the linguistic form that results from a strategy as „product-oriented‟ rather than on the process itself that leads to the strategy use. Thus, they aimed to produce a context-free, process-based taxonomy of CSs that met three basic conditions: a) parsimony: fewer categories; b) generalizability: independent of variations across speakers, language, tasks, and levels of language proficiency; and c) psychological plausibility: the taxonomies replaced existing taxonomies (Kellerman & Bialystok, 1997; Kellerman et al., 1990). In an attempt to place CSs in a parsimonic cognitive framework, their compensatory strategies were divided into „conceptual‟ and „linguistic strategies.‟ On one hand,

conceptual strategies were used to manipulate the concept so that it became expressible through their available resources, either linguistic or mimetic (Kellerman, 1991: 149). There were two types of conceptual strategies, analytic (spelling out characteristic features of the original intended concept such as „a talking bird" for „parrot") and holistic (using a reference similar to the target item such as „chair" for „stool"). On the other hand, linguistic strategies were used when the speaker manipulated linguistic knowledge through either transfer (literal translation, foreignizing, and borrowing) or morphological creativity (grammar derivation).

The taxonomy of Bialystok (1990) emphasized the cognitive theory of language processing that intended to develop a psychologically plausible system like the Nijmegen group. Her taxonomy of CSs was conceptualized into two main classes. The first class was „analysis-based strategies" involving attempts "to convey the structure of the intended concept by making explicit the relational defining features" (ibid: 133). In other words, the speaker tried to manipulate the intended concept on the basis of its analyzed knowledge such as providing a definition. The other class was „control-based strategies" referring to "choosing a representational system that was possible to convey and that made explicit information relevant to the identity of the intended concept" (ibid: 134). The speaker held the original content and manipulated the means of reference used to express the concept such as using mime.

The taxonomies provided by the researchers are organized according to certain criteria, such as the choice of the students to reduce or achieve their goals, to consult different sources of information, or to use their conceptual/linguistic knowledge. The taxonomies of CSs represent two major perspectives, interactional and psycholinguistic (Nakatani & Goh, 2007). The interactional view of CSs emphasizes the process of interaction in the way that meaning is negotiated by one or both parties (for example, Tarone, 1980; Roat & Ross, 1991). On the other hand, the psycholinguistic view focuses on the students" problem-solving behaviors arising from gaps in their lexical knowledge (for example, Bialystok, 1983, 1990; Poulisse, 1990). Although these researchers have produced several different taxonomies with different structures, the underlying structure of their taxonomies is often the same (Rababah, 2001). What is referred to as "strategies of transfer" (Bongaerts & Poulisse, 1989) by one taxonomy is

classified as “literal translation,” “borrowing,” “foreignizing,” or “conscious transfer” in others (Tarone, 1977, 1983).

Poulisse (1993) modified the Nejmegen Group‟s taxonomy of compensatory strategies by the introduction of three strategy types: a) substitution strategies referring to changing or omitting features of a lexical chunk in search of a new lexical item, for example code switching, b) substitution-plus strategies occurring with the “out-of-the-ordinary application of L1 or L2 morphological and/or phonological encoding procedures” (Poulisse, 1993: 180), for example foreignizing, and c) reconceptualization strategies referring to changing the preverbal message that involves more than one chunk, for example circumlocution.

In 1997, Poulisse attempted to conceptualize CSs within a coherent model of speech production representing a detailed analysis of strategic behaviour. Following Levelt‟s (1989) model of language production, Poulisse (1997) summarized processes of communication including adopting a certain strategy when L2 speakers find it difficult to communicate their intended message. In the first step, speakers conceptualize a message adhering to general principles of communication and taking into account the situation, the preceding discourse, and the knowledge they share with their interlocutor(s). In the second step, they start the encoding of this message but run into problems. Then, they have two choices between giving up (for example using an avoidance strategy) and finding an alternative way to re-encode their message (for example using a compensation strategy). The latter option involves the process of re-planning the original message at the level of conceptualization and requires either an analytic conceptual strategy (a complete re-organization of the original plan) or a holistic conceptual/ transfer strategy (a change of some meaning or elements of language to allow for the selection of an alternative lexical item). In this step, the speakers seem to follow basic principles of communication and take the situation and the preceding discourse as in the first step. The above processes are illustrated as follows:

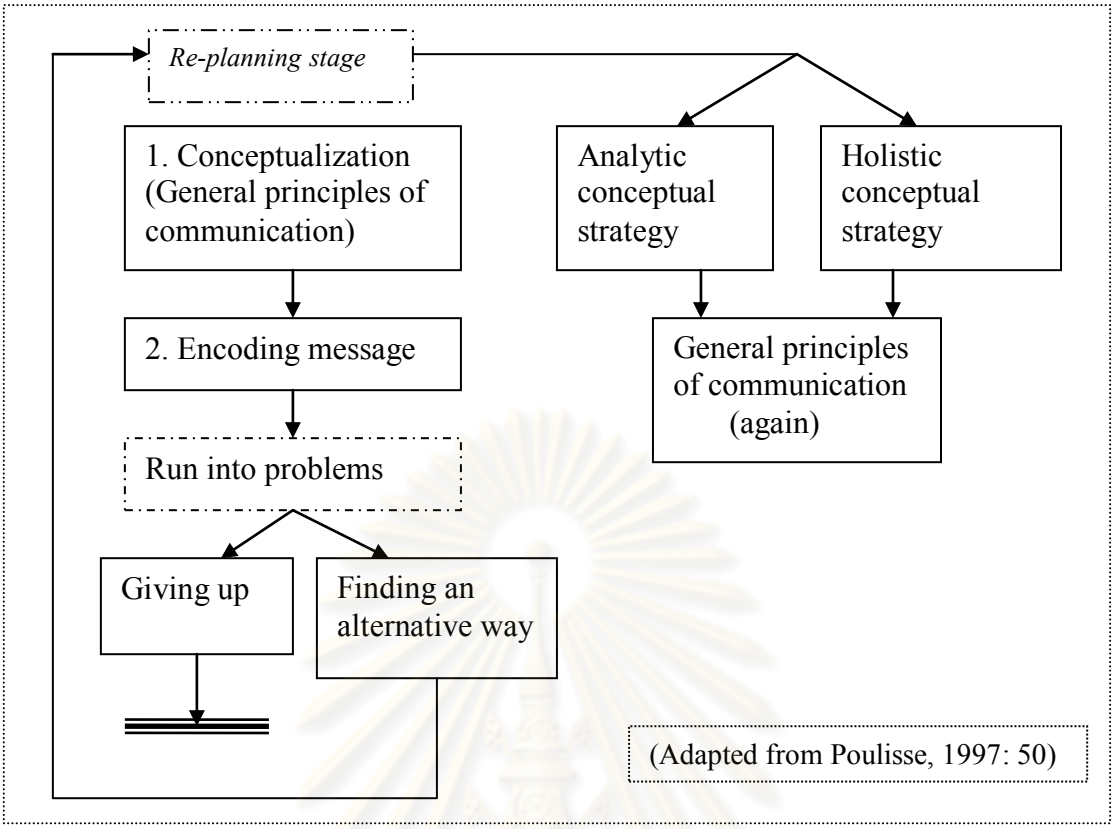


Figure 2.1: Model of Language Production and Communication Strategy Use

Dörnyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b) primarily classified the problem-solving strategies into three categories, direct, indirect, and interactional according to how CSs contribute to achieving mutual understanding and resolving conflicts. Direct strategies can be seen as problem-solving devices to provide alternative meaning structures such as word-coinage, circumlocution, and other most traditionally identified CSs. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, focus on facilitating the conveyance of meaning indirectly. The speaker creates the conditions for getting the meaning across, preventing communication breakdowns, and keeping the communication channel open (such as using fillers or strategy markers). As for interactional strategies, the speaker carries out trouble-shooting exchanges cooperatively, such as requesting and providing clarification. As a result, mutual understanding seems to be a function of the successful execution of both in the communication. Then Dörnyei and Scott (1995a, 1995b) related three main taxonomies to the four types of communication problems already labelled (resource deficit, processing time pressure, own-performance problems, and other-performance problems).

Nakatani (2006) termed taxonomy as strategies for coping with speaking problems during communicative tasks. These include „social affective strategies,“ „fluency-oriented strategies,“ „negotiation for meaning while speaking,“ and „accuracy-oriented strategies.“ The first of these occur when the speakers try to control their own anxiety, encourage themselves to use English, and avoid silence. The use of „fluency-oriented strategies“ is to pay attention to rhythm, intonation, pronunciation, and clarification of speech to improve the partner“s comprehension. Strategies for „negotiation for meaning while speaking“ are considered to be for checking the partners“ understanding of their intentions by giving examples or repeating their speech and „accuracy-oriented strategies“ are concerned with a desire to speak accurately. The speakers pay attention to forms and when they notice their mistakes, they seek grammatical accuracy by self-correction. Other strategies are similar to taxonomies in the majority of CS; such as „message reduction and alteration,“ „non-verbal strategies while speaking,“ „message abandonment,“ and „attempts to think in English“.

In the Thai context, Luangsaengthong (2002) adapted taxonomies of Tarone (1981), Bialystok (1990), and Dörnyei (1995), and classified them into five types (see Table 2.2, p.24). The study investigated and compared the use of CSs for oral communication of first year students at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. Sixty students were asked to describe the pictures in the CSs for Oral Communication Test in English. Then, their speeches were tape-recorded and transcribed. The results show that approximation strategy was used the most, followed by repetition strategy and language switching strategy the least.

Although the terminologies used and their levels of specificity vary, it can be seen that most taxonomies showed many similarities. Bialystok (1990) expressed this basic convergence around similar concepts that:

> the variety of taxonomies proposed in the literature differs primarily in terminology and overall categorizing principle rather than in the substance of the specific strategies. If we ignore, then, differences in the structure of the taxonomies by abolishing the various overall categories, then a core group of specific strategies that appear consistently across the taxonomies clearly emerges. (p.61)

Most existing taxonomies of CSs proposed focused on the two main concepts of CSs which were classified as being either product- or process-oriented. In this study, the researcher presented a two-strategy taxonomy based on the literature review. The two main taxonomies, risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies, were selected from Corder (1983) and the sub-categories were modified from Nakatani (2005, 2006) (for details see "Taxonomy used in this study", page 35**)**. This classification according to the factor of risk-taking is unique in that the tolerance of risk is one of the factors making individual language vary (Carton, 1966). The basis of the taxonomy was a consideration of the degree of risk-taking to reach the communicative goals on which the strategy was used. Referring to the use of risk-taking strategies, speakers may attempt to increase their resources to express their communicative intentions although it might be risky to fail in communication, for example using fluency-oriented, help-seeking, and circumlocution strategies. Risk-avoidance strategies are used when the speakers tailor their messages to their linguistic resources without being risky, for example message-abandonment, message-reduction and alteration, and time-gaining strategies.

In conclusion, there appears no consensus among researchers over taxonomy of CSs as they developed and proposed new taxonomies from time to time. The review of the literature reveals that a single sub-category of CSs might be renamed or even labeled under two or more different categories. Cook (1993) suggested that "if the lists were standardized, at least, there would be an agreement about such categories" (p.133). Future research into CSs might produce a standardized taxonomy.

2.2.5 Taxonomy used in this study

In terms of communicative language ability, there are four main competencies as described by Canale (1983), grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Bachman and Palmer (1996) separated strategic competence from language competence as the strategic competence is a non-linguistic factor enabling an individual to use available resources through cognitive processes (for example assessing the situation, planning what to do, and execution) to accomplish a communicative goal (Phakiti, 2008). CSs are essential in terms of the relationship between the ends and the means. It is ideally assumed that these are in balance in the native speakers in that they always have the linguistic means to express the messages they wish to communicate

(Corder, 1983: 17). However, these are not in balance in the L2 speakers. Sometimes they wish to convey messages that their linguistic resources do not permit them to express successfully. When they encounter this situation, they might have to make a decision from options open to them.

CSs have been generally categorized into two macro groups, achievement or compensatory strategies and reduction or avoidance strategies (see Willems, 1987; Dörnyei & Cohen, 2002; Nakanati, 2005). By using the former group, the speakers seek an alternative plan to reach their goal in communication by means of available resources while the use of the latter group allows the speakers to avoid solving communication problems and may lead to the abandonment of the conveyance of their messages.

The focus of this study, based on Carton (1966: 18), was the tolerance of risk as one of the influences on individual learners. The study adopted the framework of CSs from Corder (1983) that divided CSs into risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies. The term „risk-taking strategies" refers to speakers" attempt to increase their resources by one means or another to accomplish their communicative intentions that may run into danger or failure. Rubin and Thompson (1982) pointed out that risk-taking was an important characteristic of successful L2 learners and speakers. The speakers might be able to „gamble," be willing to try out their guess, and to take the risk of being wrong. The fact that the guess might be wrong does not disturb them as it can be quickly corrected in a subsequent context. The term „risk-avoidance strategies" relates to speakers who tailor messages to available resources and/or adjust the ends to the means to avoid communication breakdown. These strategies might be relevant to psychological determination in the sense that some speakers assume that linguistic correctness is a pre-requisite for communication success (Færch & Kasper, 1983: 40). However, good language speakers tend to use a combination of whatever knowledge they have and selected CSs to get their message across. Whichever strategies the speakers use are successful in communicating (Rubin, 1975: 47).

The terms „risk-taking" and „risk-avoidance" strategies might be assumed to have similar meanings to „achievement" and „reduction" strategies as the speakers have two choices – to take a risk to accomplish their communicative goal or abandon or

reduce their intended meanings to avoid failure. However, the terms risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies are preferred in this study as they convey their meanings more conclusively and convincingly. For example, some Thai children may be brought up to avoid loss of face by making a mistake so they may employ risk-avoidance strategies to maintain their conversation. In contrast, others may be brought up in an environment where people communicate naturally without worrying seriously about correctness. Therefore, when they have problems in communication, they tend to take risks to expand their resources to solve the problems.

The reviewed taxonomies are organized according to certain criteria, such as choice of the target groups whether to achieve or reduce their goal or to consult different sources of information. Even though different researchers constructed different taxonomies with different structures, the underlying strategies may often be the same. For example, „circumlocution" in one taxonomy may be classified as „exemplification" or „paraphrase" in others (for example Varida, 1973; Tarone, 1977; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Corder, 1983; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b).

The taxonomy used in the study is based mainly on those of Corder (1983), Dörnyei and Cohen (2002), and Nakatani (2005, 2006) as their taxonomies are organized in a similar way. For example, these studies reveal the way that speakers deal with problems or breakdown in oral communication by relying on achievement or reduction strategies. Dörnyei and Cohen"s (2002) taxonomy appeared to be a good summary of all the taxonomies available in recent CSs researches and they also introduced some new strategies, such as expressing non-understanding and interpretive summary. However, it seemed that there were some overlaps in referential meaning among their strategies such as between „appeal for help" and „expressing non-understanding" or between „circumlocution" and „approximation." Therefore parts, such as circumlocution, help-seeking, and time-gaining strategies, of their taxonomy were synthesized and selected to be the taxonomy of this study.

Under the framework of risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies, sub-strategies in the study are supplemented by CSs presented in the work of some mentioned researchers. The criteria of selecting those strategies was to serve the objectives of the Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI), an instrument of the study aimed

at examining types of CSs used by Thai students with different language abilities. Thus, a set of CSs in the taxonomy used in this study covers strategies which might possibly occur within the contexts of Thai students with high and low language ability. Moreover, this taxonomy is intended to be based on a psychological view of the CSs. The list of strategies in the study is not intended to be a final categorization of all existent CSs but it is simply provided to help clarify the notion of CS from another point of view.

Risk-taking strategies involves six strategies. Firstly, social-affective strategies are concerned with the speakers‟ affective factors in social contexts. To maintain a conversation, the speakers may try to control their own anxiety and enjoy the process of oral communication. For example, they may try to relax when they feel anxious or encourage themselves to use English with no fear of making mistakes. Moreover, as the strategies adopted by speakers depended upon their interlocutors (Corder, 1983), the speakers may behave in such a way as to give a good impression and avoid silence during the conversation. It can be seen that L2 speakers tend to have little experience speaking English in authentic interactional contexts and how they managed their feelings during oral communication is an essential aspect. Most studies rely more on linguistic consideration than affective consideration in a continuum. However, the affective domain should be considered to examine the use of CSs which related to psycholinguistic field. Brown (1994) suggested that the affective side of human beings provided an explanation of the use of language. Thus, social-affective strategies were constructed to bridge the gap evident in many previous studies or inventories of CSs that severely limited the number of strategies reflecting affective and social aspects.

Secondly, fluency-oriented strategies relate to speakers who tend to pay attention to the intonation, pronunciation, and clarity of their speech. They seem to try to speak clearly and make the conversation flow. Their speech is likely to be pronounced as clearly as possible. Most previous studies emphasized fluency as a strategy used in reading skills. This term was proposed only in Nakatani‟s (2006) study focusing on speaking strategies but information about the these strategies seemed to be little mentioned. However, fluency-oriented strategies are selected as one of sub-strategies in the taxonomy used in this study because „fluency‟ is highlighted as an essential function in language skills. Byrne (1986: 9) pointed out that the main goal in

teaching and learning the productive skill of speaking is oral fluency. Concerning the assessment of speaking skills, a speaker"s degree of oral fluency may be measured not as a perfect imitation of a native accent but simply as speech easily and comfortably comprehensible to listeners (Ur, 1996: 52).

Thirdly, accuracy-oriented strategies may be used when L2 speakers are likely to be concerned with a desire to speak English accurately. The speakers pay attention to forms of their speech and to seek grammatical accuracy by self-correcting when they notice their mistakes. Nakatani (2006) supported the idea of being conscious of accuracy in speech as an essential strategy for developing communication ability in a second language. Rubin (1975) mentioned that most of L2 learners are likely to be prepared to attend to form so when they try to use a second language they often look for patterns in that language. It may be because explicit grammar translation method has always been carried out and been very popular with many teachers despite being unfashionable in current language teaching (Hughes, 2002: 68).

In addition, non-verbal strategies seem to be effective devices when dealing with problems. When speaking English, eye contact may be used to attract the attention of the listeners. Gestures or facial expressions may also be used to give hints and help the listeners guess what they want to say. From the researcher"s experience as an English lecturer in a university, Thai students who are non-native speakers of English tend not to be fluent in English. They are likely to be unable to think of appropriate terms to describe what they want to mention and one of the strategies they employ is to use gestures considered as a lingua-franca. With regard to previous studies, these strategies seemed to be widely accepted by researchers in the field as they appear in most of the taxonomies. There are several terms used to convey the same meaning as non-verbal strategies, such as paralinguistic devices, mime, and the use of non-linguistic means (Dörnyei & Cohen, 2002; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995; Corder, 1983; Tarone, 1977). Neu (1990, cited in Lazzaraton 2002) further explained that second language learners stretch their linguistic competence by effectively using nonverbal behaviour. Non-verbal communication plays a critical role in conversational performance because such behaviour aids in the discourse management of topic initiation, topic maintenance, and turn-taking.

Next, help-seeking strategies may be used by speakers lacking the target language knowledge causing them to not fully understand what the interlocutor says. To successfully communicate it is not sufficient to pay attention to the grammar of the language or to the surface form of speech only. Speakers should also attend to meaning (Rubin, 1975: 47). This may lead to the situation that when the meaning of a message is not clear, the speakers may turn to the interlocutors for assistance, including the use of appeal for help, asking for repetition, asking for clarification, and asking for confirmation. In addition, they may elicit help indirectly like using rising intonation. In the study, help-seeking strategies are used as a cover term for these four characteristics, while Dörnyei and Cohen (2002) separated them and stated them as sub-strategies under the term of „interactional strategies." However, these components have been focused on the purpose of the speakers which may be looking for help, rather than ways of interaction. Therefore, as they are similar in meaning and aim of use, they are combined under the term „help-seeking strategies".

Lastly, circumlocution (paraphrase) strategies refer to ways of using more words than necessary, instead of being clear and direct. By using these strategies, speakers solve a problem in the planning phase by filling the gap in their plan with a construction that is well-formed (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Nakatani (2005) used the term „self-solving strategies" to convey the same meaning as paraphrasing. However, this term may be possibly interpreted in a wider range than Nakatani"s (2005) definitions. For example, by its meaning, solving strategies could be any devices that the speakers are able to use from their existing knowledge such as using self-correction, using gestures to drop a hint, or switching language to L1. As a result, the researcher decided to use the term „circumlocution strategies" instead, as these also referred to the meanings of approximation and word coinage. These strategies are considered as those of good language learners as they possess a strong drive to communicate or learn from communication (Rubin, 1975: 46). The language users may rather be willing to take risks than limit themselves to a particular word or sentence construction.

Focusing on **risk-avoidance strategies,** message abandonment relates to the strategy that the speakers tend to give up their attempt to communicate and leave the message unfinished when they face difficulties in executing their original verbal plan. Message reduction and alteration refers to the strategy by which the speakers reduce an

original message, simplify their utterances and/or use familiar words that they are confident with. It seems that some L2 speakers avoid taking the risk of using unfamiliar words even though they may realize that the utterance was far from their communication goal. These two strategies have been employed in the majority of taxonomies (Tarone, 1977; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Corder, 1983; Willems, 1987; Dörnyei & Cohen, 2002). In some studies, these two terms are classified into the more specific term of „functional reduction strategies".

Lastly, time-gaining refers to the strategy of speakers using fillers or other hesitation devices to gain time to think. Dörnyei and Cohen (2002) classified this term as a main strategy at the same level of achievement and reduction strategies. They claimed that these strategies are not problem-solving devices but they facilitate and provide conditions for achieving "mutual understanding, preventing breakdowns and keeping the communication channel open" (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997: 198). However, using fillers or other hesitation devices to gain time to think indicates that the speakers may be less confident to say what they want to say as they may be avoiding failure in their conversation. Therefore, „time-gaining strategies" should be classified under „risk-avoidance strategies".

However, it seemed that when researchers include „avoidance strategies" in their taxonomy, „topic avoidance" strategies are always classified under the avoidance strategies (for example Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002; Tarone, 1977; Corder, 1983; Færch & Kasper, 1983; and Willems, 1987). The reason for not including this type of CSs in the present taxonomy is that this is a very extreme strategy (Corder, 1983: 17) and is not likely to be used in the context of assessing oral communication ability. In this research, students" use of CSs is elicited from their conversation in the Oral Communication Test (OCT). During the process of interview, topic avoidance may be impossible to occur because of the nature of the task. For example, when the interviewees are asked to introduce themselves, there is less chance of them refusing the topic as they are being assessed.

Following Corder (1983), the researcher placed CSs in a degree of risks that speakers take to maintain the conversation or solve problems in their communication. Therefore, the taxonomy is classified into two categories; risk-taking strategies and

risk-avoidance strategies. The use of „risk-taking strategies" could include *social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, non-verbal strategies, help-seeking strategies, and circumlocution strategies (paraphrase),* while the application of „risk-avoidance strategies" involves *message abandonment strategies, message reduction and alteration strategies, and time-gaining strategies* (Adapted from Corder, 1983; Nakatani, (2005 & 2006). Descriptions of each sub-category are presented in the following section.

Table 2.4: Taxonomy Used in this Study

1. Risk-taking strategies	This refers to strategies that the speakers use to increase their linguistic resources, such as „resource expansion strategies" to achieve their communicative goals.
a.) Social-affective strategies	The speakers use these strategies to control their own anxiety and enjoy the process of oral communication and to maintain conversation. Thus, they are willing to encourage themselves to speak English and to take risks in making mistakes. They behave in such a way so as to give a good impression and try to avoid silence during interaction.
b.) Fluency-Oriented strategies	They involve strategies that the speakers use to pay attention to pronunciation, and emphasize clarity in their speech. They try to speak loudly and clearly to improve the listener"s comprehension.
c.) Accuracy-Oriented strategies	The speakers are concerned with a desire to speak English accurately. So, they pay attention mainly to the forms of their speech and when they notice their mistake they often seek grammatical accuracy by self-correcting. It seems that they have a desire to speak appropriately like a native English speaker even though this is not an easy goal.
d.) Non-Verbal strategies	This refers to describing whole concepts that are non-verbal. For example, the speakers use gestures or face-

	expression to give hints and help the listener guess what they want. Additionally, they may use eye-contact to attract the attention of their partners.
e.) Help-seeking strategies	The speakers turn to the interlocutor for assistance either directly or indirectly. They may ask an explicit question concerning a gap in their L2 knowledge. It might include asking for repetition, asking for clarification, and asking for confirmation. In addition, they may try to elicit help from their interlocutor indirectly, such as using rising intonation or pauses.
f.) Circumlocution strategies (paraphrase)	These refer to strategies when the speaker describes the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language items or structure. These also involve exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action.
2. Risk-avoidance strategies	The speakers try to adjust the message to match with the original linguistic resources in order to maintain communication or avoid communication breakdown.
a.) Message abandonment strategies	The speakers tend to give up their attempt to communicate by leaving the message unfinished when they encounter difficulties in producing their speech. Nakatani (2006) points out that these strategies are common among low-proficiency-level L2 speakers or the non-enthusiastic learners. These speakers seem to lack strategic competence and have no choice but to end the interaction.
b.) Message reduction and alteration strategies	These strategies are used when the speakers try to avoid a communication breakdown by reducing an original message, simplifying their utterance, or using similar expressions that they can use confidently. The speakers tend to use familiar words and avoid taking risks by using new or unfamiliar words even though they sometimes realize that the utterance is far from their

	communication goal.
c.) Time-gaining strategies	These refer to using gambits or fillers to fill pauses to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty. Examples range from very short structures such as *well, you know, okay, umm, uh,* to longer phrases; such as *it's a good question, this is rather difficult to explain, or actually.*

Figure 2.2 presents a conceptualized model of speech production embedded in the CSs taxonomies used in the study. The model is modified from Levelt"s (1989) model of speech production (cited in Poulisse, 1997). There are five main stages aiming at illustrating how taxonomies of CSs may occur in the course of communication as a conceptualized model.

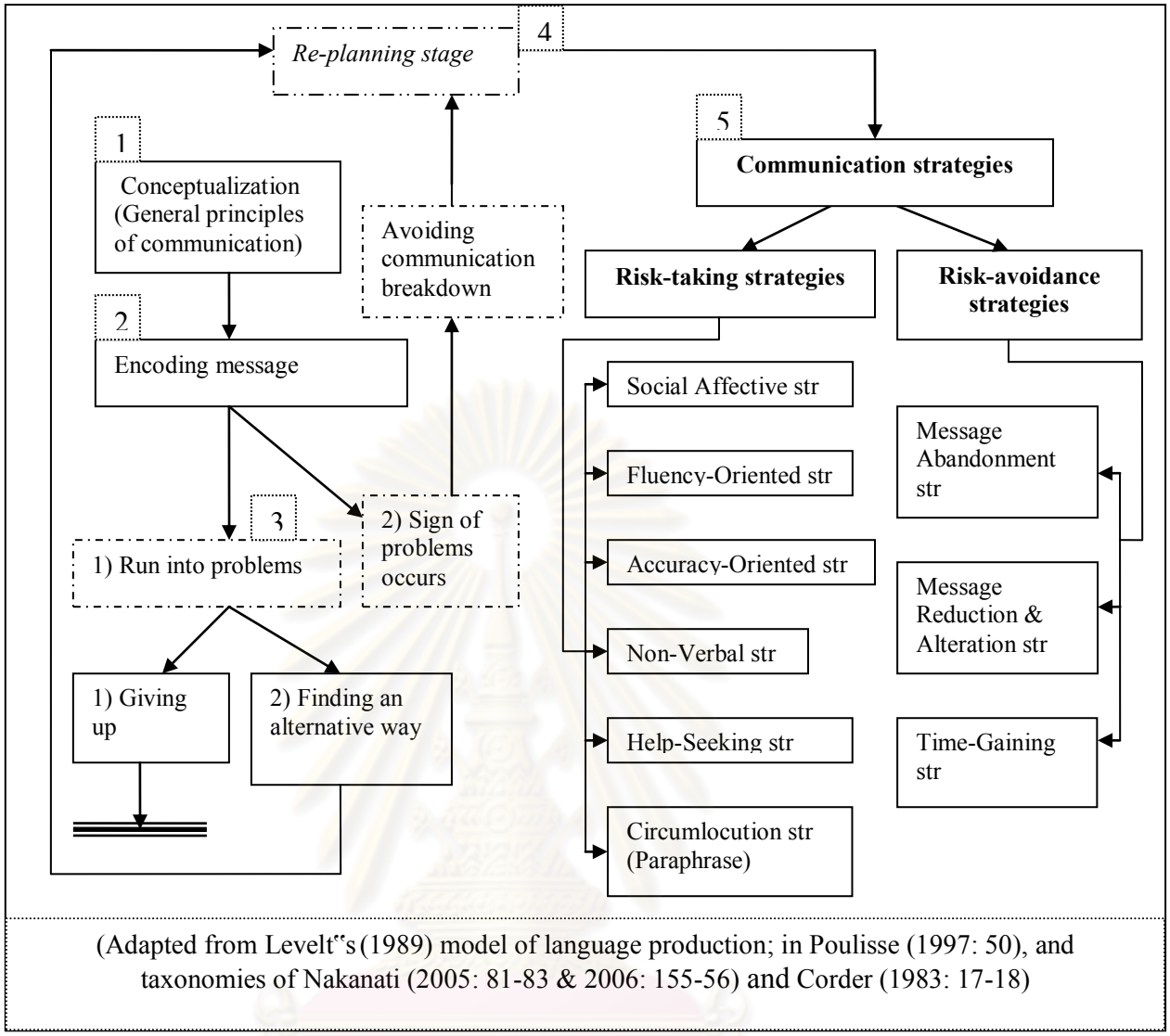


Figure 2.2: A Conceptualized Model of Speech Production and Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

Figure 2.2 shows that the course of communication begins with the speakers conceptualising a message by taking into account the situation. In the second stage, the speakers try to encode the message but run into problems. When they encounter difficulties during their communication, they have two choices, either giving up (finishing the conversation) or finding an alternative way (using CSs). The latter solution connects to the stage of re-planning to achieve the communicative goal. However, in the stage of encoding, problems may not always happen. There might be only a sign that problems may occur so the speakers can choose some of the CSs, such as „social-affective strategies" or „fluency-oriented strategies" to avoid communication breakdown or to reassure themselves that there will be few chances to let problems occur. This can also link to the re-planning stage. This stage involves reconsidering the

original message at the level of conceptualization, then planning to apply CSs such as the substitution of some meaning or language elements. While the speakers are planning the use of CSs, they seem to follow general principles of communication again.

2.2.6 Communication strategies and language proficiency

L2 speakers have been assigned various tasks in research into the use of CSs. Some of these have been picture description tasks (Tarone, 1977; Bongaerts et al., 1987; Bialystok, 1990; Luangsaengthoong, 2002), concept identification tasks (Paribakht, 1985), and interview, role-play or conversations (Poulisse, 1990; Haastrup & Phillipson, 1983) to examine their use of CSs and investigate relationships between the used CSs and language proficiency.

In 1985, Paribakht conducted a study relating to the use of CSs to the test-takers‟ proficiency level. The Persian participants‟ English proficiency levels were measured using the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency and the International Education Achievement Test of Proficiency. They were also assigned to describe concrete and abstract items to an interlocutor in English to elicit the identification of CSs used to solve particular problems they encountered during communication. It was found that there was a directional relationship between the use of CSs and proficiency level. The high-ability learners used more approximation strategies, using general or alternative words instead of specific ones, than the lower-level learners. The less competent group was found to rely more on their paralinguistic knowledge such as using non-verbal strategies such as gestures or facial expressions.

Poulisse (1990) investigated the relationship between the use of achievement strategies and the level of proficiency by assigning Dutch learners of English to complete four different tasks, a concrete picture description task, an abstract figure description task, a story retelling task, and an oral interview focusing more on vocabulary. The study revealed that the number of strategies used by the subjects varied in relation to their language ability level. The lower-ability learners used more achievement strategies such as approximation, circumlocution, and non-verbal strategies (Fulcher, 2003) than the higher-ability ones. Poulisse interpreted this as a

result of their limitation in L2 vocabulary which may be controlled by the lower-ability participants to cope with the problems. However, the higher ability group did not use more reduction strategies (risk-avoidance strategies) than the lower one.

Yoshida-Morise‟s (1998) study attempted to explore the relationship between the use of CSs and level of proficiency. The results indicated that the lower-ability subjects used more strategies than the higher-ability groups in order to compensate for their lack of L2 knowledge by using paraphrasing, creating L2-like words, and resorting to their L1 linguistic knowledge. It was also reported that the higher-ability group used more repair strategies, such as self-repetition, than those in lower levels. It may be interpreted that the high-proficiency participants seemed to have more ability to control and monitor their target language utterances because the greater L2 knowledge the speakers had, the better they could repair what they had said to get the message across.

A qualitative CS study conducted by Rababah (2001) determined which CSs were employed by Arab English major students at Yarmouk University in Jordan while they were communicating in L1 Arabic and L2 English. Thirty English major students were placed in three language proficiency levels according to their scores from an adapted TOEFL test. The students‟ CSs were identified from features of their performance, such as hesitation, pauses and repeats, from three communicative tasks. Then, these were classified according to the adopted taxonomy which was based on taxonomies in previous studies and the pilot study. The researcher found that the students made a wide use of CSs, especially L2-English based strategies, to communicate their intended meaning although their linguistic knowledge seemed to be limited. It also reported that there was a relationship between the students‟ use of CSs and their proficiency level in that L1-Arabic based strategies decreased as proficiency improved.

More recently, Nakatani (2006) studied the relationship between oral CS use and speaking ability level in a communicative task. The results were that there were three significant differences between the higher and lower oral proficiency groups. The higher oral proficiency group reported more use of social affective, fluency-oriented, and negotiation for meaning strategies than the lower group.

Luangsaengthong (2002) examined Thai students‟ use CSs for oral communication and compared their CS use with different English learning achievement. Sixty first-year students from Chulalongkorn University were classified into three groups according to their levels of English learning achievement, high, average, and low. The subjects were asked to describe pictures in English and their performances were analyzed and interpreted to identify the types of CSs used by these students. It was reported that Thai first year students with different levels of English learning achievement used CSs for oral communication differently and significantly at .05. The approximation strategy was employed the most, followed by „repetition strategy‟, and „language switch strategy.‟

2.2.7 Factors affecting communication strategies

According to research studies about CSs conducted in Thailand and other countries, it was found that there were many different factors that potentially influence speakers‟ choice of CSs, including language proficiency of the L2 speakers, the effect of L1, nationality, gender, age, and motivation.

A number of empirical studies reported that the target language proficiency may have an effect on CSs as the speakers with high and low language ability utilized strategies differently (Tarone, 1977; Corder, 1983; Paribakht, 1985; Poulisse, 1990; Purpula, 1999). This idea was supported by Yoshida-Morise (1998), Paribakht (1985), Huang and Van Naerssen (1985), and Wannaruk (2003). The results from most of the studies showed that the low language proficiency level learners used CSs more frequently than the high level learners because most of the high proficiency learners had adequate knowledge in the target language, including accuracy in vocabulary and grammatical structures. Therefore, even though they used CSs less frequently, they could still achieve the meaning they wanted to convey. On the other hand, the low proficiency learners had a limited knowledge of the target language, explaining why they used the strategies more often to achieve the same goal (Bialystok & Frohlich, 1980: 3-30; Ellis, 1994: 39-44; Paribakht, 1985: 132-146; Si-Qing, 1990: 161-172). The results also showed that high proficiency groups had the ability to employ target language-based strategies more than the low proficiency ones. On the contrary, low level learners employed L1-based strategies more repeatedly than high level ones

(Liskin-Gasparro, 1996). Research by Wannaruk (2003) and Khaopet (1990) revealed that medium and low proficiency learners used first language-switching strategy and literal translation strategy most often while the high proficiency learners used modification devices most often. Furthermore, topic avoidance strategies and message abandonment were least used by all three level learners, showing that language proficiency had an effect on the types of CSs used by the learners.

The L1 of the speakers may affect their use of CSs. The study of Rababah (2001) aimed at determining which CSs were used by Arab students of English while communicating in L1 Arabic and L2 English. One of the most interesting findings was the effect of the mother tongue (Arabic) which increased the variety of CS use. For instance, word coinage and literal translation were widely influenced by mother tongue interference. It was also found that the speakers of Arabic used several CSs when compared with speakers of other languages in CS research.

Yoshida-Morise (1998) noted that in addition to proficiency levels and the effect of L1, individual differences influenced one‟s CSs use, for example nationality, age, gender, and motivation.

There are a small number of studies of language learning strategies that produced findings on nationality-related differences. These findings can be generalized to the use of CSs. One of the earliest attempts to examine the effect of nationality was studies by Politzer and McGroarty (1985) and Takeuchi et al., (2007). They found that Asian students employed fewer of the strategies expected of „good‟ language learners than did Hispanic students. However, in terms of progress in English, the Asians made more progress than the Hispanics. O‟Malley (1987) suggested that the lack of success of Asian students might be due to their persistence with familiar strategies. Bedell and Oxford (1996) revealed that in a study of the use of learning strategies among Chinese, Puerto Rican, and Egyptian students a higher use of compensation might be typical of Asian students. Grainger (1997) reported that there were no significant difference between Japanese students from various ethnic backgrounds and the SILL scores (for learning strategies) but the study revealed that Asian-background students were better at managing the affective state, remembered more effectively, and compensated better than native English-background students. Griffiths (2003) argued that European

students employed learning strategies more frequently than did those from other backgrounds.

Although there are not many studies of the effect of nationality on CSs use, students from different national backgrounds did not always learn in the same ways (Griffiths & Parr, 2000; Pennycook, 1997; Pierson, 1996). For example, Japanese students were typically viewed as traditionally passive learners (Usuki, 2000). The study was conducted in a Japanese university using open-ended questionnaires. A number of strategies employed by the students were elicited relating to their behaviour both inside and outside the classroom such as looking at the teachers‟ lips and mimicking the way to pronounce. These kinds of national characteristics might affect the different ways students behave and interact in the teaching and learning context, and the kinds of learning strategies they employed.

Gender may be another variable affecting CSs (Bacon, 1992; Eisenstein, 1982; Farhady, 1982, Sunderland, 1998). Most studies in this area reported that women used more strategies than men although Tran (1988) discovered that there was fewer use of strategies by Vietnamese women. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) studied the use of language strategies of more than 1,200 university students and concluded that gender differences had a „profound influence‟ (ibid: 296). The study indicated that females used strategies significantly more than males and used them more often. Several research studies supported these findings, for example Ehrman and Oxford (1989, 1995); Hashim and Sahil (1994), and Green and Oxford (1995). Possible reasons for these findings may be that as women were often believed to be better language learners than men (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991) they were more likely to be “open to new linguistic forms” and tended to “rid themselves of interlanguage forms that deviated from target language norms” (Ellis, 1994: 202). However, it was noteworthy that there were some studies reporting considerably different findings from those presented above. For example, Wharton (2000) reported a study involving university students learning Japanese and French in Singapore that found that men used a significantly larger number of strategies than women. Interestingly, Griffiths (2003) and Nisbet et al. (2005) claimed that they found no significant difference among males and females in the use of learning strategies. The reason why some studies yielded significant

relationships between strategy use and gender while others did not may be the effect of the specific cultural contexts of learning (Nisbet et al., 2005).

Regarding age as a factor affecting CSs, the popular wisdom of „the younger the better" has led to a common belief that children are better at language learning than adults (Littlewood, 1984; Bellingham, 2000). Burt et al (1982) and Oyama (1976) stated that there were effects of age on language learning. When considering language learning strategy use according to age, Oxford (1989: 238) commented that "even there are „very few studies", older learners seemed to employ more „sophisticated" language learning strategies than younger learners". Victori and Tragant (2003) explained from a study of three age groups (10, 14, and 17 year olds) that the mean obtained from the youngest group of students was significantly different from that of the other two groups. For example, the older two groups reported much higher use of cognitively complex strategies than the youngest group, while the young learners reported higher use of social strategies. From this point of view, the factor of age may influence the use of CSs and it should be considered along with other factors such as background knowledge and cognitive factors. Thus, the findings might depend on the context where the studies were conducted.

In relation to motivation Mochizuki (1999) and Wharton (2000) found that highly motivated Asian university students used learning strategies more frequently than less motivated ones. Edna (2000) studied the effects of motivation and language proficiency on the use of CS among high and low ability English as a Second Language learners. The participants were students at the University of Puerto Rico. Questionnaires were used to indicate patterns of motivation and types of CSs used. It was found that motivation in learning and language proficiency has effects on types and frequency of CSs used.

In summary, it can be seen that the test-takers" characteristics such as language proficiency, nationality, gender, age, and motivation may affect the selection of CSs.

2.2.8 Approaches to study communication strategies

Numerous assessment methods had been used to elicit data needed to understand patterns of speakers‟ CS use. In this section four of those methods are described, oral interviews, written questionnaires, verbal reports, and observation.

Oral interviews and written questionnaires

These two approaches are placed in the same group as they share similar characteristics in that they elicit the test-takers‟ responses to a set of questions or probes (Cohen & Scott, 1996). There are three dimensions of oral interviews and written questionnaires, degree of structure, larger number of respondents, and formality.

The first dimension is the degree of structure in the questions. The questions could range from „structured questions‟ asking respondents for yes-no responses or indicating frequency in scales to „less structured questions‟ that ask them to describe or discuss some topics to elicit language strategy behaviour in detail. On one hand, highly structured interviews and questionnaires are a specific set of questions which are expected to be responded to in a set order like Oxford‟s structured language strategy questionnaire survey, „Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990). It facilitates the researchers‟ control of the questioning. In addition, the obtained data are uniformly organized and are much easier to analyze statistically. However, there is no opportunity for the test-takers to elaborate on the answer. On the other hand, less or unstructured questions usually ask the test-takers to discuss a certain area of personal interest with minimal guidance from the interviewer. Although the questions request certain information, the exact shape of the response is not predetermined. Thus, there may be various aspects of the response which have not been anticipated when drawing up the questions.

The number of participants is another dimension. In interviews, the researcher may conduct one-to-one and/or a group interview. Although group interviews may be a more efficient use of time and cost than individual interviews, problems may occur in a small group interview, such as social desirability affecting the response of the interviewees (Cohen & Scott, 1996). In a group interview, a participant may be fearful of responding in a socially unacceptable way. Additionally, if some interviewees are not

ready to volunteer to answer a question, there may be bias with the others who are more forthcoming in answering. In contrast, written questionnaires are able to be administered to a large group of respondents, useful in the generation and testing of hypotheses. However, a survey questionnaire should not be transferred from one setting to another due to culture differences in the way that the questionnaire was administered and differences in the way respondents interpret the items (Cohen & Scott, 1996; Oxford, 1996).

The degree of formality is another factor of concern including the setting and using of questions to encourage the respondents to relax and provide honest and accurate answers. The degree of formality may be affected by the rapport between the interviewer and the respondents but it is not relevant to the degree of structure (Cohen & Scott, 1996). In other words, the interviewer can conduct a highly structured interview in an informal or friendly manner and an unstructured interview can also be conducted in a highly formal manner. One point to be kept in mind is that the degree of formality should be considered appropriate and sufficient distance be maintained between the researchers and the test-takers to maintain objectivity and the ability to pursue topics. For instance, the test-takers may be reluctant to discuss if the interviewer is too formal in manner.

Verbal reports

The following three types of verbal reports seem to play a significant role in research studies on language learner strategies:

1). Self-report: the test-takers describe what they do, for example „I tend to be a speed reader."
2). Self-observation: this refers to the inspection of specific language behaviours either introspectively or retrospectively, for example „What I did was to skim to the incoming oral text as I listened, then picked out key words and phrases."
3). Self-revelation: this refers to „thinking aloud" stream-of-consciousness disclosure of thought processes while the information is being attended to, for example „What does the „they" refer to here?"

Cohen and Scott (1996) claimed that verbal reports provide the most feasible approach as a mean of obtaining empirical evidence of strategy use. This may be because questionnaire items, referring to general behaviour, elicited only the test-takers‟ belief about what they did, rather than what they actually did (Cohen, 1998). In a strategic language use study, such mentalistic data regarding cognitive processing seemed to be expected to more accurately reflect what the test-takers actually did than a response to an item of questionnaires as a description of generalized behaviour. This led to the major advantage of a verbal report in that using verbal protocols can reveal what information is attended in detail while performing tasks. Otherwise, some information may be lost to the investigation (Ericsson, 1988; Ericsson & Simon, 1993). However, Seliger (1983) critiqued that this approach could not provide information about cognitive processing in language and skill learning because this information was more likely to be unconscious. Furthermore, although the process appeared to be conscious, the approach may be considered too complex to capture in protocol and to overburden the test-takers‟ memory for them to report mental processing accurately.

Observation

That language use strategies are mentalistic means that behaviour is a major challenge to applying observational techniques to language learners. It is possible that the observer can observe and record the test-takers‟ non-verbal behaviour, such as facial expressions, gestures, and signs of alertness. As for planning an observational study, there are a variety of factors that should be considered. These include the number of observers and observed take-testers, the frequency and duration of observations, and the methods of collection and analysis of the observational data.

It is possible to use one observer or a group of observers. A more important factor is the number of test-takers to be observed. Waiting for one test-taker or a small group to elicit their use of strategies may not provide sufficient useful data and observing an entire class or several test-takers may be more profitable. Additionally, the frequency and duration of the observations is another factor. The number of observations should be determined over time. Sometimes, the observers may need to visit the same class over an extended period if the data are to be meaningful and reliability and validity need to be proved. However, if the goal of observation is limited then a limited observational framework is preferred (Cohen & Scott, 1996). Another

factor is the method of conducting the observation. Audio- and videotapes are commonly used to create a permanent record of what took place. They are useful, not only in the way that the observers are able to replay the tapes for analysis but also as an aid in the data collection of verbal reports. With regard to methods for recording strategy use while observation is processed, note-taking can be one option which is more or less structured. Another option is using an observation scale, checklist, and scheme such as „the class observation guide" – an observation scale that can be used for collecting learning strategy data (O"Malley, 1985).

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages of observation. Benefits include the fact that the data obtained appears to be uniform and is collected in a structured form, relating to the observation scale and checklist. A drawback of using observation is that it may be less able to produce descriptions of mentalistic strategies because many strategies may not be elicited in an obvious behaviour. Also, researchers seem to collect data only from the outspoken or extrovert students during the class session, meaning that others may be left out of the strategy descriptions even though their strategy use may be interesting. Bias can occur if the observer is affected by prior expectations and the observation checklist and scale may limit the perspective of the observer. Lastly, students" behaviour cannot be guaranteed to be appropriate.

2.2.9 Task-based approaches to study communication strategies

According to task-based approaches, picture description has been often used as a method of elicitation (Rababah, 2001). In the tasks, the restrictions seemed to be common because they may be imposed on both the speaker and the listener (Green, 1995: 56). For example, the speaker may be asked to communicate the items to their interlocutors without saying the exact word (Paribakht, 1985: 134) whereas the listener may not be allowed to ask the speaker for any clarification (Yule & Tarone, 1990: 186).

Bialystok (1990) found that L2 students, divided into pairs and given positions as „director" and „matcher," were asked to describe uncommon objects which may be abstract shapes. The director described the pictures on the board to the matcher so that the matcher was able to choose the matching pictures in the order given by the director.

Another common task used to elicit CSs is the description of a related series of drawings focusing on the speakers‟ narrative-like speech (Varadi, 1983; Lotfallah, 1983; Green, 1995) or speakers‟ telling of a story in L2 from what they heard in L1 (Bongaerts & Poulisse, 1989).

Giving a series of instructions for making things has been used by some researchers. Some examples were constructing a house from Lego blocks (Wagners, 1983) and setting up a Christmas tree on a stand (Yule & Tarone, 1990).

Role-playing has also been used to elicit CSs, for example an interview with native speakers (Poulisse, 1990), a role-play between a customer and waiter (Khanji, 1996), and a telephone call to a plumber to ask for help (Corrales & Emily, 1989).

2.2.10 Communication strategies and pedagogical implications

Although there are several tasks to elicit speakers‟ strategic behaviour effectively, some of them appear to be rather inappropriate for real-life communication. For this reason, some researchers attempted to emphasize the issue of authenticity of the test tasks. For example, many of them employed video-recording in a face-to-face conversation with native speakers in order to elicit data from the speakers.

However, it should be accepted that no test is as authentic as its referent meaning, it being difficult to set test tasks to be exactly the same as in the natural setting. Even if a researcher claimed that the tasks represented real-life communication, and the test-takers were facilitated to feel relaxed, they still would have the conscious feeling of being tested. This may affect their performance or oral production.

Another point to consider is that „no one size fits all‟ and that not all assessment methods are suitable for studying every type of language strategy use. Also, differences in assessment according to a particular language skill area being studied are an additional consideration (Cohen, 1998: 26). Therefore, it may be that selection of suitable methods of studying CS use depends on the aims and language skill areas of the study.

Recently, „Should CSs be taught?“ was one of the big issues concerning CSs. Færch and Kasper (1983) suggested that there may be no need to teach strategies if the meaning of teaching is only the passing of new information to students. However, if teaching means making students conscious about aspects of their behaviour, they should be taught about strategies, especially how to use and apply CSs most appropriately. Additionally, the choice of teaching methods should be considered. The teacher should emphasise what the relationship is between learner variables and learners‘ preference for strategies as well as the relationship between learners‘ preference for strategies and teaching methods or goals. Corder (1983) clarified this by giving an example that if the teacher gave high priority to correctness and penalized errors against the norm of L2, the learners would be induced to prefer reduction strategies although these are a result of achievement strategies.

This raises another issue of “Would it be feasible to encourage learners to engage in communicative situations in the classroom which required a more extensive knowledge of L2 than that which they could be expected to have?” Although there may be a risk of frustrating the learners by making too strong demands on their communication ability, they would gain considerably in learning how to compensate for insufficient linguistic resources by using their existing communicative resources creatively and appropriately.

Strategies of communication can be seen as devices which enable learners to bridge the gap between limited linguistic resources in classroom interaction and various communicative situations outside the classroom. In other words, learners can link the ends of the continuum between formal and informal learning situations and between pedagogic and non-pedagogic communicative situations.

It can be concluded that CSs should be taught to learners as part of good language teaching to encourage some kinds of achievement or risk-taking strategies by them (Corder, 1983).

Generally, language problems and difficulties appear to be a significant factor. As communication problems and difficulties occur at most levels, CSs seen as language devices are also created to handle these problems. In the past three decades, there have

been several research studies focusing on CSs leading to a range of definitions and taxonomies of and approaches to CSs.

2.3 Development of Speaking Test Tasks

2.3.1 Overview of speaking test tasks in second language acquisition

Luoma (2004) divided speaking tasks into two types, open-ended and structured. Open-ended tasks are designed to allow individuals to show their ability in a number of different ways such as by describing, instructing, explaining, justifying, and/or deciding a course of action. They can occur in one-on-one situations or in small group contexts. Role plays lend themselves to assessing the use of language in professional settings, such as the service industry, and in social situations, like making a speech at a wedding. These tests may be reasonably lengthy and involve professional/social conventions of speaking. Structured tasks are generally shorter and answers tend to be more restricted. They do not lend themselves to assessment of creative use of speaking but they are more reliable for comparison of results between examinees because of the use of standardised norms. For example, pronunciation is assessed by focussing on rhythms and intonation of speech in reading aloud, grammatical knowledge by sentence completion, and understanding by questions requiring short answers.

Other researchers stressed the use of test tasks that assessed the attainment of specific goals through the use of speech in social situations (Candlin, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Wright‟s (1987) model (in Fulcher, 2003) illustrated tasks as having features that are open (allowing a range of different answers) and closed (requiring pre-determined answers) at the same time as being skills-oriented (less structured) and content-oriented (more structured). Pica et al. (1993) emphasised tests that demand the use of speech between the participants for the purpose of exchanging information and the achievement of goals through this use of speech.

2.3.2 Characteristics of speaking test tasks

Fulcher (2003) cited the identification of characteristics of language tasks by Bachman and Palmer (1996). They listed characteristics of setting (participants and time), test rubrics (instructions, structure, time allotment, and scoring method), and input (format, language, and topics). These researchers intended their interpretation of characteristics to be general to language whereas Weir (1990) focused more on speaking test tasks such as processing under normal time constraints (silences and shared responsibility), purpose (reason), interlocutors (number, status, familiarity, and gender), physical setting, roles (friends/friends and students/teachers), medium used; complexity, and topics. Furthermore, Fulcher (2003) proposed a list of characteristics consisting of task orientation (open, guided, and closed), interaction (one-way, two-way, and multi-way), goal orientation, (none, convergent, and divergent), interlocutor status and familiarity (no interlocutor, higher, lower, and same), topics, and situations.

2.3.3 Types of speaking test tasks

There are a variety of types of test tasks depending on the purpose of the test, such as assessing language activities, ability to deal with specific speaking situations, and/or grammatical knowledge. Luoma (2004) highlighted tasks that were descriptive (describing a scene, picture, or person), narrative (telling a story based on a set of pictures), instructional (giving directions to a place or instructions about a process), comparing and contrasting (of pictures or ideas), explaining and predicting (of graphs and diagrams), decision-making (about courses of action), role-plays (involving two examinees or a examinee and a examiner), reacting to situations (responding in speaking to a variety of situations), and structured (reading aloud for pronunciation, and question-answer and react to statements for understanding).

Brown (2004) saw tasks in another way as imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and/or extensive. Imitative tasks are the simplest of these being tests of pronunciation only requiring a person to listen to a word or phrase and reproduce it. Intensive tasks involve short speaking sessions such as reading aloud, and sentence and dialogue completion. Responsive tasks are more demanding and include short conversations, small talk, and responses to prompts. Interactive tasks may be

transactional (an exchange of specific information) or interpersonal (an exchange that maintains social contact) and involve informal language and knowledge of rules of social conversations. Extensive tasks are formal presentations including speeches and telling stories.

Brown and Yule (1997) described task types as static, dynamic, and abstract. The first one deals with conversations of items of fixed relationships such as descriptions of scenes, instructions, and giving directions. Dynamic task types involve changes of location and time as in telling stories and giving accounts of events. The final type, abstract, contains expressions of opinions and arguments about decisions.

Weir (1990) made some comments about the advantages and disadvantages of a collection of speaking task types. In verbal essays, examinees are required to speak about one or more topics for a specified time. Weir pointed out the stressful nature of these often tape-recorded situations and the difficulties of assessment of responses to open-ended topics due to variables of speakers‟ backgrounds and levels of imagination. Oral presentations are similar to verbal essays but allow speakers more time to prepare. Again, there are problems of assessments of responses to general topics because of the existence of the same variables being present with verbal essays. Free interviews have the advantage of real-life conversations but they can be time-consuming and a lack of a set format can result in differences in the conduct of the interviews and the lack of comparable assessment over a range of examinees. These problems can be overcome by the use of controlled interviews in which procedures are fixed leading to more reliability in the assessment. Information transferred (questions-answers in relation to pictures) involves interpretations of visual stimuli and is especially effective with groups who are required to answer and comment on pictures. Finally, Weir (1990) concluded that role play can allow interaction as it occurs in real-life situations but difficulties exist due to disadvantages for introverted examinees and those unfamiliar with assuming roles.

2.3.4 Specifications of speaking test tasks

Test specifications are the written account of the purpose, definitions, and explanations of tasks and ratings. Davies et al. (1999) explained that it is the same as a

blueprint for test-writers. Specifications are necessary in the establishment of the test‟s construct validity, including information about the test purpose, the target population, test content, test format, and marking criteria.

Bachman (1990) presented the test specifications as a framework of test method facets that affect performance on language tests. There are five categories of test method facets: (1) facets of the testing environment such as familiarity of the place and equipment, personnel involved in the test, time of testing, and physical condition, (2) facets of the test rubrics, for example test organization, time allocation, and instructions, (3) facets of the input, for example format and nature of language (4) facets of the expected response such as format, nature of language, restrictions on response, (5) relationship between input and response, for example reciprocal, non-reciprocal, and adaptive (Bachman, 1990: 119). O‟Loughlin (2001) divided test specifications into eight aspects, nature of the test, content, levels, test structure, item type, language functions, task format, and scoring procedure. These aspects are used as the framework of the OCT‟s test specifications.

The value of writing test specifications is that it forces the test organisers to prepare all facets of the tests and hopefully eliminate problems before they occur. For example, it requires test-writers to consider the purpose of the tests before they are attempted by examinees, a factor that is difficult to complete once testing has commenced.

Luoma (2004) suggested a modular approach to writing and organising test specifications consisting of sections dealing with construct, task, and assessment. In addition, Fulcher (2003) stressed the necessity of producing a detailed record of how the specifications can be arrived at, including the details of design team personnel and examinees, pilot studies, supporting research, and limitations.

2.3.5 Practical issues in speaking task development

It was imperative that the design of the tasks matches the definition of the construct under consideration. Linguistically-oriented constructed must be related to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation of a particular context. Also, communication-

oriented constructs must involve communication activities such as telling a story or expressing an opinion. Finally, situation-based constructs are related to the task-based approach commonly used in professional contexts.

Luoma (2004) suggested that tasks should always be trialled before using in a test situation as a stage of the test validation. This provides valuable feedback about the appropriateness of the tasks. Often, they require modification over a period of time.

Additionally, pictures should be used in speaking tests as they stimulate ideas better than written task materials. This also means that they save testing time. However, the pictures need to be clear so that they serve the purpose of the task. The pictures in the test tasks should not require the test-takers‟ interpretation of complex graphics.

Another two issues are the semi-direct speaking test (tape-based tasks) and direct speaking test (live speaking tasks). There are both advantages and drawbacks to the use of both, for example, tape-based tasks allow a high degree of standardisation and this is not usually achievable in face-to-face tasks. In relation to natural communication, face-to-face tasks are full of reciprocity in the sense that speakers are able to accommodate their talk regarding previous turns in the discourse. Due to the lack of the reciprocity in the tape-mediated tasks, they may seem to be artificial to the test-takers. Moreover, from the practical view, tape-based tasks need to be carefully prepared to guarantee appropriate implementation, including a process of recording, editing, and trialling while face-to-face tasks require more time in training examiners and preparing scripts.

The instructional language in speaking tasks must be clear so that examinees can easily recognise what is required. This may involve the use of the examinees‟ first language in some cases. However, difficulties may arise for the developers to find solutions when the test-takers possess a variety of first languages, in which case lingua franca or an international language such as English can be used.

2.4 Oral Communication Ability

Before the 1980s, most ESL curricula emphasized writing over speaking (Ferris, 1998; Ferris & Tagg, 1996a, 1996b; Morita, 2002, 2004). Since then, there has been a dramatic shift to encourage active oral participation in the field of higher education, transforming the typical format from lecture to interactive discussion (Kim, 2006; Lucas & Murray, 2002; Meyers & Jones, 1993). This shift has had an impact on assessment trends as well, moving them from traditional to more authentic or performance-based assessments.

Nowadays, a good command of English oral communication ability in general and of the discourses of language learners‟ specific disciplines is considered to be desirable for academic and non-academic ESL success (Ferris, 1998; Less, 2003). Pragmatics have become a focus for oral communication due to the belief that true success in oral communications depends on using language appropriately within different social contexts (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1991).

2.4.1 Communicative competence

The theory of communicative competence is based on the interrelationship between linguistic form and social context as an integrating perspective on language use (Hymes, 1972, 1974). Recently, theories of communicative competence have been influential in the design of language tests (Canale & Swain, 1980; Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Canale and Swain‟s (1980) framework characterized a learner‟s language communicative competence into four aspects, grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. This framework helps test-writers realize what a speaker needs to know and do to achieve the goal of communication.

In the field of language testing, Bachman (1990) proposed a model of Communicative Language Ability (CLA) framework which was influential to language test development. Bachman (1990) (and later Bachman and Palmer, 1996) claimed that

CLA is a main one of four factors (the other three being the test-takers‟ personal characteristics, test-method factors, and random factors) affecting the variation of the L2 learners‟ test score. CLA is divided into 3 components, language competence, strategic competence, and psycho-physiological mechanisms. The first component, language competence, refers to the language features responsible for language communication and includes organizational competence consisting of grammatical and textual knowledge, and pragmatic competence consisting of illocutionary and sociolinguistic knowledge. Strategic competence includes a set of metacognitive strategies responsible as a compensating mechanism for inadequacies in language performance (Purpura, 1999; Devies et al., 1999). The final component, psycho-physiological mechanisms, refers to the neurological and psychological processes responsible for the actual execution of a language.

2.4.2 Semi-direct speaking testing

The term “semi-direct speaking testing” was defined by Clark (1979: 36) to describe the testing that elicits active speech from the test-takers through tape-recordings, test-booklets, or non-human‟ elicitation procedures rather than through face-to-face conversation with a live interviewer as in the direct testing. Davies et al. (1999) stated that a semi-direct speaking test is “a test of the spoken language in which for practical and reliability reasons the stimulus is pre-recorded or text-based, and the response by the candidate is recorded for distance rating” (Davies et al., 1999: 178). The best known example of the semi-direct test is the Stimulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) which is used as an alternative to the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), a direct speaking test.

The Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) is a face-to-face, relatively flexible, unstructured oral interview conducted with individual test-takers by a trained interlocutor who also assesses the test-takers using a global scoring scale (O‟Loughlin, 2001: 4). Some disadvantages of the OPI include the high costs, practical difficulties and effects of interlocutors. Therefore, the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) was developed to overcome these limitations. As a result, the SOPI is more cost efficient than the OPI, particularly when administered to several test-takers in a language lab, rather than as an individual test-taker (ibid: 5).

There are several empirical research studies on the comparability of the direct and semi-direct tests of oral proficiency. In most of these studies, the OPI was used as it served the function of the direct test while the SOPI was used as the semi-direct speaking test.

The OPI appears to be the most valid test as it is a face-to-face interview but the format of the SOPI is based on the tape-recorder. However, several studies proved that the SOPI is a valid and reliable surrogate to the OPI (Stansfield, 1991, 1993; Stansfield et al., 1990, 1992, 1993; Shohamy et al., 1989; O'Loughlin, 2001).

The Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) is similar to the OPI in terms of content, rating scales, and functions, and several studies found that the two tests have high concurrent validity (Shohamy, 1994; Shohamy et al., 1989; Stansfield & Kenyon, 1992; Koike, 1998). In other words, although the two tests measure the same constructs and the scores obtained are significantly correlated with one another, the SOPI is claimed to be more efficient in time and cost of administering and grading the test (ibid.). However, there are several points on which the SOPI differs from the OPI. In the first phase (warm-up), the SOPI consists of a series of set tasks asking simple personal background questions whereas the OPI has more open-ended questions and answer structures. The rest of the SOPI tasks rely on taped instructions and a test booklet. Unlike the SOPI, the tasks of the OPI are more demanding as the test continues, intending to probe a higher level of the test-takers' proficiency until the final phase, the „wind down" (asking simple questions). Shohamy (1994) stated that the SOPI is a more uniform test than the OPI as all of the SOPI's test-takers perform the same tasks and answer the same questions while the OPI's interlocutors ask some questions of increased difficulty until the test-takers seems to be unable to answer.

In addition, there are a number of advantages that the SOPI offers compared to the OPI. These include reliability, validity, practicality, and authenticity.

Reliability: A study by Stansfield (1991) about comparative characteristics of the OPI and the SOPI claimed that there are three reasons showing that the SOPI is more reliable than the OPI. Firstly, Stansfield stated that "the OPI requires that each examinee be given a unique interview, whereas the format and questions on the SOPI

are invariant" (1991: 202). Several raters said they found it easier to make a decision on a score in the case of the SOPI. Secondly, the greater length of the speech sample in the SOPI (20-23 minutes versus 15 minutes on the OPI) make for more accurate judgments because there are sufficient speech samples of the test-takers‟ performance for the rater to consider on the SOPI. Lastly, unlike the OPI in which the same interlocutor, not necessarily the most reliable and accurate rater, typically rated and scored the test, the SOPI could be assessed by the most reliable rater, even in the distance rating, because the SOPI was recorded.

Validity: One of the weak-points of the OPI is that the test-takers‟ performance may be affected by the skill of the interlocutor who is also a rater, while the SOPI offers the same quality of language input to each test-taker (Stansfield, 1991: 203). For example, in the OPI, if the interlocutor does not sufficiently challenge the test-takers by posing demanding questions, the test-takers may not be given a chance to present their language ability. In contrast, if the interlocutor asks questions that are too demanding, the test-takers obtain a lower score as their language skills appear to be faulty on the tasks. The naturalness is another issue about the SOPI‟s validity. The SOPI seems to be less natural than the OPI since the test is based on speaking into a tape recorder. However, Stansfiled (1991) argued that actually neither the OPI nor the SOPI is able to produce a „natural‟ or „real-life‟ conversation. Even in the OPI, although the test-takers speak to a human being directly, they are fully aware that they are being tested thus creating unnatural situations. Van Lier (1989) stated that the OPI is able to elicit only the test-takers‟ sample of language as it aims to have a successful interview, not be successful in conversation. Therefore, the OPI is not equivalent to a real conversation.

Several research studies (Stansfield, 1991; Shohamy et al., 1989; O‟Loughlin, 2001) found the degree of validity between the SOPI and the OPI appears to be equivalent, and the correlation between them is so high that it appears that both measures test the same abilities.

Practicality: As there is equivalence in validity and reliability between the SOPI and the OPI, the SOPI is more feasible to administer than the OPI in terms of cost, time of administration, and interlocutors. The SOPI may be less costly than the OPI. As the interlocutor of the OPI is also a rater, there may be a situation where the

training of interlocutors is a problem whereas the SOPI needs trained interlocutors who are teachers. Also, the SOPI is more time-efficient as it can be administered to a group of the test-takers while the OPI must be individually administered.

Authenticity: The interaction between the test-takers and the interlocutors makes the OPI more similar to „authentic" language use in real-life, but this interaction is different from the real-life context because it occurs only between two persons and the conversation is always guided by the interlocutors. The study by Hoejke and Linnell (1994) highlighted that in fact „authenticity" is not always guaranteed in an oral proficiency test, regardless of whether a direct or semi-direct format is adopted. They also emphasized that "the test must be „authentic" as well as statistically viable" (ibid: 122).

The semi-direct speaking test seems to be more practical and has high concurrent validation with the OPI. It is suggested that there is an equivalence of the semi-direct and direct speaking tests, in the aspects of validity, reliability, and authenticity. Therefore, as the semi-direct test is more practical in both time and cost, it is used as the test format of the Oral Communication Test (OCT) to elicit speech sample in assessing the test-takers" oral communication ability.

2.4.3 Definition of oral communication ability

Oral communication is the negotiation of meaning between interlocutors using both speaking and listening. Speaking and listening are typically accompanied by non-verbal gestures and occur across a range of different contexts which influence the effectiveness of oral communication. Successful oral communication requires not only knowledge of linguistic abilities (speech and language) but also an awareness of social mores. This requirement of knowledge and awareness makes special demands on oral communication assessment procedures.

Oral communication poses further difficulties for assessment because it possesses a number of linguistic and interactional features different from written communication. These features include the use of incomplete sentences, loose organizational structure, breaks in the flow of communication, repetition of words and

phrases, and variances due to age, gender, class, and location (O‟Malley & Pierce, 1996: 58). Speaking and listening consist of many culturally constructed structures specific to their social interaction orders (for example, question-answer and greeting-response). Also, oral communication is typically informal and immediate, allowing the participants little time to think or practice (Fulcher, 2003: 24).

Some researchers simplified the topic of oral communication by concentrating only on the speaking aspect of this process. For example, Fulcher (2003: 21-25) devoted his attention to the art of „learning to speak primary languages‟, „learning to speak a second language‟, and addressing the question „what is speaking?‟ by answering „speaking was the verbal use of language to communicate with others.‟ Such a focus on speaking neglects the importance of listening, gesture and context, all of which are crucial in the effective transference of intended meaning between speaker and listener.

These aspects must be included for successful communication. Listening is an active skill that demands the listener be involved in the communicative process. Gestures must be in agreement with the spoken words and must be interpreted correctly by the listener. The physical environment also plays a role as communication in a relaxed setting among supportive interlocutors may foster communication while stressful contexts and hostile interlocutors might inhibit it. In other words, communication may not be so effective when it occurs in stressful surroundings involving threatening personnel such as school teachers and police officers.

Oral communication ability is not only vital to academia but also to the business world. Genres of oral communication commonly used in business include staff meetings, personal discussions, presentations, telephone interactions, and informal conversations. Oral communication with those outside of the organization takes the form of face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, speeches, teleconferences, and/or videoconferences.

In applied linguistics, oral communication ability has long been considered an important aspect of performance in the workplace, a view supported by research in a number of different countries and contexts (Van Horn, 1995; Nielsen, 1998). Oral

communication in the workplace involves formal presentations, informal discussions, and participation in meetings as well as a wide variety of other communicative contexts encompassing social interaction. Newcomers to a workplace experience difficulties in understanding the methods and styles of communication within a given business structure, suggesting that there is more to speaking than language ability (Carnevale et al., 1990; Thomas, 1995; Nielsen, 1998). Difficulties arise due the status of personnel, the familiarity between personnel, emotive dimensions of communication, and incorporating the speaker‟s attitude. In the workplace, these difficulties are compounded by a wide range of ages, different genders, and divergent backgrounds among personnel leading to potential misunderstanding. For example, Tannen (1995) and Koonce (1997) considered differences in communication between males and females and found that the former used interpersonal communication to resolve problems while the latter used it to understand problems. Cultural variances in communication were investigated by Clyne (1994), Kaplan (1972) and Nguyen (1990). As business becomes an increasingly globalized enterprise operating across numerous borders, employees must develop skills that enable them to work within these broadened parameters.

Difficulties also arise due to the changing organizational structures of workplaces. Hierarchical structures are being replaced by such approaches as team work, allowing greater flexibility and interaction, and requiring different modes of communication between participants. One factor that influences nearly all business communication is the utilitarian discourse that stresses objectivity and rationality (Scollon & Scollon, 1995).

2.4.4. Factors that influence oral communication ability

Because the benchmark for successful oral communication is the ability to achieve pragmatic goals with other speakers across a variety of social contexts, successful oral communication requires both knowledge of linguistic abilities (speech and language) and an awareness of the social context (Brown, 2001). Fluency and accuracy are seen as internal goals in real-life communication in which the listener understands what the speaker means through both direct and indirect speech.

Not everyone is an effective communicator. However, effective oral communication skills can be learned to function successfully in the academic and professional worlds. Oral communication is composed of multiple elements enabling the success or failure of a given interaction. Hoy and Gregg (1994: 268-280) and Fulcher (2003: 25-42) presented this as follows:

1. Pronunciation refers to the production of the sounds of words

2. Intonation involves levels of pitch and stress used in pronouncing the words

3. Accuracy includes issues of correct/incorrect word order, omissions, and uses of pronouns, relative clauses, tenses, and prepositions

4. Fluency refers to a component of communicative competence distinguished from strategic competence in the way that the "strategic competence presupposes a lack of (accessible) knowledge, whereas fluency covered speakers‟ ability to make use of whatever linguistic and pragmatic competence they have" (Færch, Haastrup, & Phillipson 1984: 168). Although poor fluency may be characterised by slow or jerky speech, testing fluency is difficult and therefore, the following criteria for assessment were suggested:

> a) Hesitations consisting of pauses
> b) Repeating syllables or words
> c) Changing words
> d) Correcting the use of cohesive devices
> e) Beginning in such a way that the grammar predicts what comes next, but the speaker changes the structure of the utterance part way through.
>
> (Fulcher, 2003: p.30)

5. Strategies refer to techniques that speakers use to overcome deficiencies in language knowledge and skills. They involve achievement techniques such as approximation, and gestures. Non-achievement strategies include avoiding topics demanding unknown language and abandoning speech altogether

6. Speech structure deal with activities such as turn taking, adjacency pairs, conversation starts and finishes, and pragmatic appropriateness

7. Syntax refers to the combination of words in an accepted order to make a coherent sentence

8. Semantics refers to the meanings of words.

Most of the research in this area emphasizes speaking and all of the components above are to do with speaking. Only in the area of speech structure is any consideration given to the non-speaker in the interaction, but even there consideration is due to the non-speaker‟s efforts to become the speaker.

To consider each of these components in isolation is desirable from a teaching or beginner‟s perspective but it is unrealistic in terms of real oral communication because they occur simultaneously. Developing skills in real oral communication require the learner to use all of the components simultaneously in authentic contexts in which he/she is forced to deal with the uncertainty and immediacy of the experience.

Skills involved in listening are distinctly neglected in this typology of components of oral communication. Without effective listening, the negotiation of meaning is difficult to achieve, irrespective of whether the speaker possesses abilities in the above components. Effective listening involves the listener in “an interactive, dynamic, interpretive process” (O‟Malley & Pierce, 1996: 58). He/she does this successfully by identifying main ideas in the stream of speech, using previous knowledge of the topic, and interpreting the most likely meaning. Poor listeners tend to concentrate on the meanings of individual lexemes and become lost in the torrent of words.

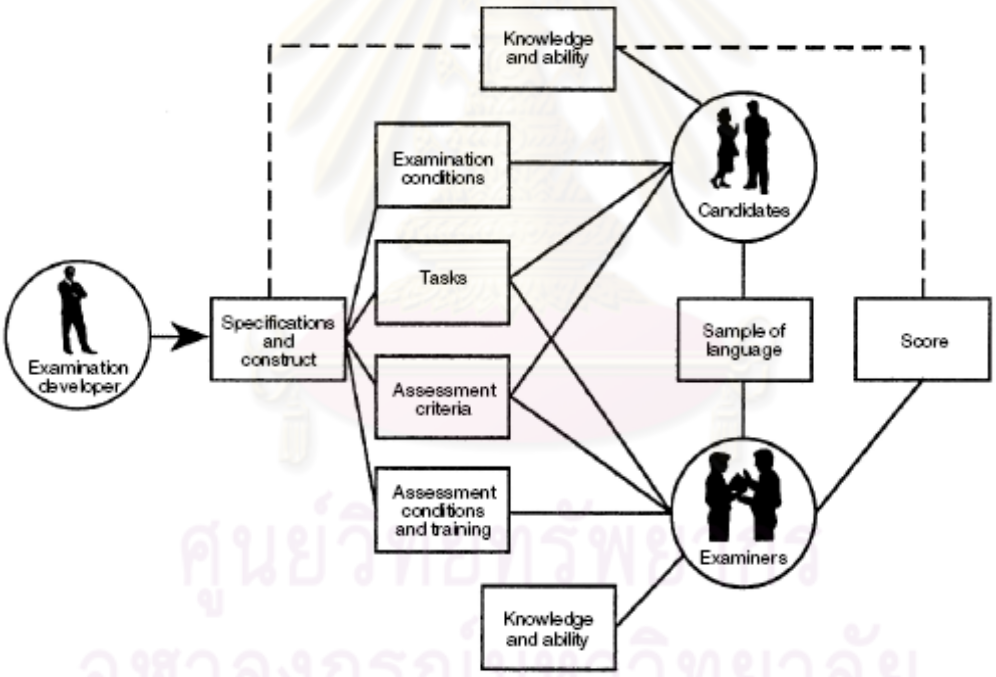
2.4.5 Assessing oral communication ability

Assessing oral communication should reflect the test-takers‟ “competence in oral communication as a gestalt of several interacting dimensions” (Taylor et al., 1989).

O‟Malley & Pierce (1996: 77) listed several types of assessments, including oral interviews, descriptions and/or stories resulting from pictorial stimulation, radio broadcasts of daily events, information gaps, story re-telling, role plays, oral reports, and debates. Hoy and Gregg (1994: 270), with a focus on special education, approached the assessment of oral communication from a non-verbal perspective, emphasizing gestures and facial expressions, as well as a verbal perspective including discourse, phonology, syntax and morphology, and semantics.

The test-takers‟ oral communication ability can be measured by focusing on three main issues, the nature of tasks (including roles and interaction requirements), the conditions that test-takers are required to perform, and the resources that the test-takers relate to the interaction (Butler et al., 2000).

Recently, O‟Sullivan et al. (2002: 35) adapted a framework by Milanovic and Saville (1996: 6) that provided an overview of the variables interacting in an oral communication test. Many factors must be considered when designing a test from which particular inferences about performances are drawn. All of the factors face potential problems in reliability and validity. The crucial elements of the framework, shown in figure 3 are the test-taker, the examiner or interlocutor, the scale or assessment criteria, the task, and the interactions between these elements.



(O‟Sullivan et al., 2002: 35)

Figure 2.3: A Conceptual Framework for Performance Testing

Assessment of oral communication ability needs to reflect the use of a wide range of skills and emphasize what students can do instead of identifying what they cannot do. This can be done individually and/or in group situations. However, students must be aware they are fulfilling diverse roles in group assessments. It is not necessary that the one who speaks most be the one who makes the most contribution to the group.

Peer assessment and self-assessment are contentious issues and this is especially true in second language contexts in which the students themselves sometimes struggle with their own oral communication, without having to worry about assessing their skills or those of others.

Any assessment of speaking ability must identify what is actually being measured. If it is linguistic knowledge then discrete factors of pronunciation, grammar, and fluency need to be assessed. But oral communication is more than these factors. It involves a negotiated meaning among interlocutors and involves speaking as well as gestures, all shaped by contextual constraints and the social/ interactional roles and previous knowledge of other participants. If a speaker delivers a superlative performance of speaking skills but the listener fails to understand the meaning due to his or her own lack of skills, how can the level of oral communication be assessed? Speaking and listening are human skills that involve all parties and to reduce them to discrete, impersonal skills is problematic. As Hughes (2002: 77) suggested, “speaking is not naturally language focused, rather it is people focused. Language testing is not naturally people focused but by its nature will tend to be language focused.”

Because of this interactional, human aspect in the negotiation of meaning, assessment of speaking ability is difficult. Assessment situations may be unnatural or stressful or there may be a significant difference in the perceived status between a tester and a test-taker, having an effect on the test-taker‟s communicative ability. The subject position of the tester must be considered in the assessment of speaking.

2.4.6 Problematic factors influencing oral communication assessment

As Nunan (1988) proposed, students‟ oral communication ability can be developed through activities simulating the target performance. This affects the teachers‟ decision-making on the types of activities and tasks to be taught and assessed. Therefore, “teachers or raters” may be one of the problematic factors related to oral communication ability as they work subjectively on grading and scoring. Speaking is a productive language skill and more productive formats like authentic assessment may be used (Une-aree, 2006). This is the reason for the issue of „assessor-related reliability‟ or „rater reliability‟ highlighted by Genesee and Upsher (1996). James Dean Brown

(interviewed by Sunga, 2003) explained that the problem of the rater reliability may occur due to the fact that most language teachers are not testing specialists and not trained in the field of assessment and evaluation. Genesee and Upsher (1996: 58-61) suggested the enhancement of the reliability of raters by using trained personnel and using more than one rater. This means that teachers should be trained in the conduct of oral language assessment and become reliable raters.

Apart from this factor, the terms “authentic assessment” and “performance assessment” are problematic. Authentic assessment may not be possible without the act of some forms of performance. However, not all forms of performance assessment are categorized as authentic assessment (Une-aree, 2006). An assessment is deemed „authentic“ if it addresses particular skills and abilities needed to perform real world tasks using various tools and activities, such as oral presentation, demonstrations, projects, simulations, and exhibitions (Custer, 1994; Lazar& Bean, 1991; Reif, 1995; O‟‟Malley & Pierce, 1996). O‟‟Malley and Pierce (1996: 4-6) suggested performance assessment includes portfolios, and student self-assessment as forms of authentic assessment. Performance assessment is one of the assessment forms of authentic assessment by which the test-takers constructed a response orally or in writing and the test is not necessary to be authentic (Feuer & Fulton, 1993; cited in O‟‟Malley & Pierce, 1996).

“Proficiency and practice of the test-takers” is another factor affecting oral communication assessment. A traditional saying is “if it cannot be tested, it is not worth teaching,” a phrase revised in the new paradigm to become “if it is worth learning, it is worth assessing.” This does not suggest that the assessment of content knowledge is no longer necessary but that skills and knowledge are integral to authentic assessment (Hart, 1994). Accordingly, the responses called for in performance assessment may involve complex thinking skills such as discussions and oral reports which some of the ESL or EFL students do not have a chance to practice, especially in English. Consequently, they find it difficult to respond to most tasks in oral communication assessment (Une-aree, 2006).

2.4.7 Scales or assessment criteria

In both general and specific-purpose testing, assessment criteria and scales are derived from the same theories of language knowledge and psychometrics (Douglas, 2001: 3). These criteria act as sources of implicit reference to a construct which with the object of measurement (McNamara, 1996: 19).

Most observational assessments use a variety of rating systems. The rating scale is a set of specific summary statements characterizing each level of the test taker‟s performance (Liskin-Gasparro, 2003) which provides a "frame of reference to describe achievement in a complex system in terms of being meaningful to all the different partners in or users of that system" (North, 1993: 6). In a speaking test, test takers express how well they can speak by using scores in the form of numbers. In addition to the score, a rating scale describes what each score means in the form of statements as one point of a continuum from the lowest to the highest level of performance (Luoma, 2004). In language for specific purposes testing, the scale supports the fundamentals of language needs assessments to determine a test taker‟s specific purposes in learning a language (Herzog, 2003).

Bachman (1990: 325) classified scales of language proficiency into two categories. The first one is the "real-life" or "behavioural" approach to assessment which gives a picture of what a student at a particular level can do in the real-world (North & Schneider, 1998). The other is an „interactive-ability‟ approach used for describing the aspects of the student‟s language ability being sampled. Alderson (1991: 71-76) focused on the purposes for which scales are written and used across three dimensions. The first, "assessor-oriented," refers to a scale intended to bring consistency to the rating process. This matches Bachman‟s „interactive-ability‟ approach. The second is „user-oriented‟ designed to give meaning to scores in reporting results. The third, linked to the second, is „constructor-oriented‟ which aims at providing guidance in the construction of tests. These last two types are defined in terms of Bachman‟s "real-life" approach.

Scales not only define students‟ proficiency across successive bands of ability but offer several other advantages as well. For example, scales provide guidelines for

test construction (Alderson, 1991) and equip “stereotypes” against which students compare their self-image and roughly evaluate their position (Trim, 1978; Oscarson, 1984). Furthermore, scales increase the reliability of ratings of subjective judgments thereby improving their standardization (Alderson, 1991).

The scale or rating scale is one of the crucial issues in assessment and one of the most difficult to develop. North (1996) and Luoma (2004) described the challenge of developing a rating scale. They referred to a scale as an attempt to describe complex phenomena in a brief, clear, definite, and comprehensible statement which served as substantial evidence for the level of one‟s performance (Council of Europe, 2001).

There are questions about the appropriate number of levels of performance. There is a common belief that the more levels, the more specific feedback is and the more details can be imparted. Conversely, a lower number leads to more consistent decisions by assessors. Luoma (2004) recommended a compromise of five to six levels.

Although the descriptions of proficiency provided in a particular scale appear to be accurate and balanced and that people are able to use such instruments with surprising effectiveness, it does necessary mean that what the scales say is valid (North & Schneider, 1998: 220).

2.4.8 Reliability of raters

Reliability of assessment is defined as “a quality of test scores which refers to the consistency of measures across different times, test forms, raters, and other characteristics of the measurement context” (Mousavi, 1999: 323). A number of factors affects reliability, such as student issues (illness, psychological stress), location issues (poor lighting, excessive noise, bad ventilation, extreme temperatures, poorly designed furniture), test issues (poorly phrased questions, a lack of clear criteria), and assessor issues (time pressure, being overworked, bias, inexperience, incompetence). A final factor is the subjective nature of the role of negotiation and the interpretation of meaning between the speaker and the listener that occurs in oral communication, apart from the difficulty in objectively assessing it.

Moskal and Leydens (2000) and Hughes (2002) examined the issue of consistency between different assessors (interrater reliability) and of the same assessor at different times (intrarater reliability). Moskal and Leydens (2000) suggested the use of scales with clearly state criteria for assessment. This avoids the possibility of different assessors marking to different assessment criteria. An agreed scale usually establishes a formal set of criteria complete with descriptions of score levels that any number of assessors can use in different places at different times and that the same assessor can revisit over a period of time. Kondo-Brown (2002) added a suggestion that using FACETS (Linacre, 1996) could help raters to judge the test-takers‟ performance based on a number of facets in the performance setting, including task difficulty, the test-takers‟ ability, and rater severity. Moreover, many studies in L2 suggest that rater training also reduces disparities in severity or leniency in judging performance which can cause bias (McNamara & Adams, 1991; McNamara, 1996).

The reliability of assessors is of crucial importance in assessments, especially those involving students from different cultural backgrounds from the assessors. In these contexts, a statement of explicit criteria to the students before the commencement of assessment is necessary so that students are aware of the expectations and assessors are clear about what they are assessing. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) attempts to achieve this by clearly outlining its assessment areas such as fluency and coherence, lexical resources, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation. There is also an attempt to reduce the chance of subjectivity by the quantification of assessment wherever possible. For example, in IELTS, the „…key indicators of grammatical accuracy are the number of grammatical errors in a given amount of speech…‟ (Hughes, 2002: 87).

Much time and effort is expended on the preparation of appropriate tests but it appears that in comparison to this, the preparation of assessors is neglected. Hughes (2002) emphasized the importance of using people who are experienced and well-trained in assessment. This involves thorough preparation of assessors in terms of content and in assessment procedures to ensure reliability. It also includes the constant checking of consistency of marking to the agreed criteria, the identification of assessors who are consistently generous or frugal in their marking, and the possible exclusion of

assessors who do not maintain acceptable standards. The use of more than one assessor to produce agreement or an average score is another way of promoting reliability.

Assessors themselves devise ways of increasing the reliability of their work. In addition to being actively involved in the formulation of criteria, the way in which they approach their task affects the quality of their work. Completing blocks of assessments (say 33%) of students‟ work before assigning any grades is a means of obtaining a „feel‟ for consistency in their efforts, and then the completion of a reverse order revision of assessments ensures an “even-handed judgment” (Brown, 2004: 21).

In summary, combinations of clearly stated criteria, properly trained assessors and raters, and an appropriate approach to the process of assessment are ways of achieving a high reliability of scores.

2.4.9 Validity

According to the definition of the test validity, a test is valid when the test measures what it claims to be measuring. There are three aspects of validity that need to be considered, content, construct, and concurrent validity (Brown, 1996: 231-249; Moskal & Leydens, 2000).

1. Content validity: Content validity is concerned with the extent to which the selection of test tasks is representative of the whole tasks of which the test is assumed to be a sample (O‟Sullivan et al., 2002). One way to validate the test task is that the researcher establishes a consensus of informed opinions about the degree of congruence between the test items and specific behaviour domain to be tested by those items. Typically, convening of a panel of expert judges who rate the item-to-content congruence according to some established criteria is required (Osterlind, 1998: 258). Then, the information found from this systematic study is used to examine and improve test items. However, sometimes the judgments from the language experts are not upheld by the professional informants (Hamp-Lyons, Hamilton, Lumley, & Lockwood, 2003). The test has content validity if it includes a proper sample of the relevant structures which depend on the purpose of the test (Mousavi, 1999).

2. Construct validity: According to Mousavi (1999), the word “construct” refers to any underlying ability hypothesised in a language theory. This type of validity assumes the existence of particular language learning theories or constructs underlying the acquisition of abilities and skills. However, if there seems to be a lack of an adequate language theory in use, O‟Sullivan et al. (2002) suggested that the researcher determines the construct validity of a proficiency test by relating to content validity more evidently, involving “content relativeness” and “content coverage” since content validity appears to be an almost completely overlapping concept with construct validity (Kelly, 1998). The researcher also uses descriptive terms to talk about the communicative construct.

3. Concurrent validity (also criterion-relatedness validity): This refers to the degree to which the test correlates with some other tests which aim at measuring the same skill for the same candidates taken at roughly the same time (Mousavi, 1999; Alderson et al., 1995).

In conclusion, the validity is dependent upon the purpose of the assessment and the use of test scores. When these are established, then tasks are designed to satisfy them. Any purposes and objectives not covered by the tasks need to be accommodated, and any tasks not relevant to the purposes and objectives need to be eliminated. All three types of validity mentioned above must be addressed and assessment tasks must be varied enough to cater for content, construct, and criterion.

2.4.10 Internal and external threats to the reliability and validity of the study

The section introduces the internal and external threats to reliability and validity. In the first part, the threats to reliability are presented, including the concept of reliability, internal and external reliability threats, and particular threats affecting the study. The second part half involves internal and external threats to the validity of the study.

2.4.10.1 Threats to reliability

The concept of reliability is concerned with the replicability and consistency of the methods, conditions, and results (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005: 9). It indicates the extent to which measurement instruments and procedures produce consistent results in a given population in different circumstances, such as differences in the form of the test, time, and raters (Dörnyei, 2007: 50; Bachman, 2004).

Wiersma and Jurs (2005: 9) distinguished between internal and external reliability. Internal reliability refers to the extent that data collection, analysis, and interpretations are consistent given the same conditions while external reliability deals with the issue of whether independent researchers can replicate studies in the same or similar settings. If research is reliable, a researcher using the same methods and conditions should obtain the results as those found in a prior study.

Bachman (1990) divided reliability into three groups, internal consistency, stability, and equivalence. The term „internal consistency" is concerned with "how consistent test takers" performances on the different parts of the test are with each other (ibid: 172)." Factors affecting internal consistency can be seen as sources of error from within the test and scoring procedures. It also includes the test method facets. These factors appear to be the internal threats to reliability as they occur from within the test itself. Secondly, „stability" or test-retest reliability refers to administrating the same instrument twice to the same group of test-takers after a certain time interval has elapsed (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990: 165). It provides an estimate of the stability of the test scores over time. There may be two sources of inconsistency, differential practice effects (remembering items) and changes in ability, causing the test-takers to perform differently the second time. Lastly, „equivalence" or parallel forms reliability is used to minimize the practice effect and involves administering two different but parallel forms of a test to the same groups of test takers at the same time.

Threats to reliability may be related to „measurement error" which is an error associated with all measurement of language that interferes with the attempt to determine the true score of the test-taker. There are several influential factors on the test-takers" performance in an oral test that in turn affect both the internal and external

reliability of a study. Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) categorized these factors into characteristics of tasks. They explained this by using the test method facets and characteristics of language test-takers, including attributes of individuals and random factors.

Test method facets are seen as the internal threats to the reliability. The characteristics of the test method used influences the test-takers‟ performance and include aspects of the testing environment (equipment used, time of administration, physical conditions), the test rubrics (test organization, time allowed, the nature of the instructions given), the input given to the test-taker (channel of presentation, design, nature of language used), the expected response (format, nature of language, constraints on response), and the test-taker‟s level of familiarity with the test method (Davies et al., 1999; Bachman, 1990). For example, performance on the parts of a reading comprehension test may be unreliable if the passages are obviously different in length and vary in terms of their lexical and syntactic complexity (facets of the input).

Attributes of individuals, including individual characteristics such as cognitive style and knowledge of a particular field, and group characteristics such as gender, race, and ethnic background, have an effect on the test-takers‟ performance. For example, members of an ethnic group may do better or worse on a given test than members of other groups. However, Davies et al. (1999) argued that this aspect seems to affect the validity rather than the reliability.

Random factors refer to the unsystematic variations of scores due to events during a test that affect a test-tester‟s score (Purpura, 1999: 2). They include unpredictable and temporary conditions such as anxiety, motivation, effort, or mood, and uncontrolled differences in test method facets, such as changes in the test environment from one day to the next day. For example, some test-takers are rested and mentally alert on the day of the test while others have stayed up too late.

In this study, the developed Oral Communication Test (OCT) was used as an instrument for measuring the test-takers‟ oral communication ability. If the reliability of the test scores is to be estimated, factors expected to affect the test scores need to be primarily concerned (Stanley, 1971: 362). To consider the errors of measurement,

sources of error based on the categories of the internal and external threats to the reliability of the study are identified below.

Focusing on the internal threats to reliability, Bachman"s (1990) test method facets are assumed to be the threats of this study while the external threats refer to unpredictable and largely temporary conditions, such as the test-takers" emotional state and uncontrolled differences in the test method facets, such as changes in the test environment. Both the internal and external threats to the reliability of the study are presented and described as follows.

Based on the test specifications of the study, several factors are considered to minimize the effect on reliability.

1. Testing environment: This is regarded as an external threat. For example, as the OCT was administered in the language laboratory, the reliability of the test scores may be reduced if the test-takers are not familiar with the equipment in the laboratory, such as tape-recorders. Personnel is a threat to the reliability as the test-takers may perform differently when tests are administered by familiar or unfamiliar persons. The time of testing needs to be considered as the test-takers may perform differently at different times, for example in the morning compared to late in the evening. Physical characteristics of the conditions are also involved, such as loud noise and lack of air-conditioning.

2. Test rubrics: These act as an internal threat because of factors from within the test. The OCT is a semi-direct test and instructions must be clear. Test-takers with lower language ability might find it difficult to understand instructions presented in the language being tested (English).Since the OCT is based on one-way communication test-takers are unable to ask for clarification about the test instructions. However, this threat is minimized by giving the instructions aurally and visually.

3. Input: The input format has an effect on the reliability of the study. As the input channel of the OCT is presented both aurally and visually, the form of presentation consists of a combination of language and non-language materials (pictures). If the language is ambiguous or the pictures are not clear, the test-takers may

not be able to understand the meaning of the presentation. Furthermore, the vehicle presentation of the study has „canned" human input (Bachman, 1990) as in a tape recording. This can be an internal threat as the degree of the test authenticity is low. The test-takers may feel uncomfortable to respond to the tape-recorder rather than to human beings.

4. Expected response: Restrictions on the channel and format of the OCT may affect the reliability of the test. Conversations in the semi-direct test are not carried out face-to-face and the responses of the test-takers may be less natural than expected.

Apart from the test method facets, random factors (unpredictable and temporary) are also considered to be sources of measurement error. The most important is response variation by the participants due to changes in physiological efficiency and/or in some psychological factors such as health, motivation, anxiety, and mood. These are external treats to reliability. Differences within and between raters may additionally affect reliability. The OCT measurement is subjective so a source of error is inconsistency in the rating. Although trained raters are required to rate the test-takers" performance on OCT, the aspects of inter-, and intra-rater reliability must still be concerned.

These factors have nothing to do with the participants" language ability but they affect the reliability of the test. The less these factors affect the test scores, the greater the reliability of language test scores obtained.

2.4.10.2 Threats to validity

Research in validity is categorized into internal validity and external validity (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Internal validity refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be interpreted accurately and with confidence (Wiersma & Jurs, 8th ed., 2005: 7). External validity refers to the extent to which research results are generalized to a larger group, to other contexts, and/or to different times (Dörnyei, 2007: 52).

There are a number of factors that are regarded as threats to validity. Most studies described threats to validity in terms of internal and external validity threats

(Isaac & Michael; 1981; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000; Gay & Airasian. 6th ed., 2000; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Wiersma & Jurs, 8th ed., 2005). In contrast, Dörnyei (2007: 53) did not divide them into categories because a flaw in the research design often has an effect on both aspects of research validity. However, the discussion that follows is based on the two categories so as to illustrate clearly threats to validity.

Internal validity threats involve the use of inadequate procedures or instruments, any unexpected problems occurring during the study, and/or any uncontrolled factors that significantly modify the results (Dörnyei, 2007: 53). Nine sources of threats to internal validity have been identified. These are "subject characteristics" (bias resulting from the differential selection of subjects for the comparison groups), "loss of subjects or mortality" (an effect due to subjects dropping out of the study), "location" (the particular locations in which collected data might create possible alternative explanations for results), "instrumentation" (an effect due to inconsistent use of the measuring instruments), "testing" (the effect of taking one test on the scores of a subsequent test, "history" (the occurrence of an event that is not part of the experimental treatment but that may affect performance on the dependent variable), "maturation" (processes operating within the subject as a function of time), "regression" (it may be presented whenever subjects are chosen because of unusually high or low performance on a pretest, they will score closer to the mean on a subsequent test), and "implementation" (the possibility that the experimental group may be treated in ways that are unintended and not a necessary part of the method, which give them an advantage of one sort or another).

The main threat to external validity in experimental studies involves any interaction between the treatment and some characteristics of the particular group of subjects which cause the experiment to work only in the study (Dörnyei, 2007: 53). In other words, the external validity threats are likely to limit the degree to which generalizations can be made from the particular experimental conditions to other populations or settings (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 170). There are three factors that jeopardize external validity, "interaction effects of selection" (it occurs when subjects are not randomly selected for treatments), "interaction effect of pretesting" (the pretest sensitizes subjects to aspects of the treatment and thus influences posttest scores), and "multiple-treatment interference" (when the same subjects received more than one

treatment, the effect of prior treatment could affect with later treatments, limiting generalizability) (Wiersma & Jurs, 8th ed., 2005: 105; Gay & Airasian, 2000: 377; Isaac & Michael, 1981: 62).

Possible internal threats to validity in this study may be loss of participants or mortality. No matter how carefully the participants are selected, it is common to lose some as the study progresses for a number of reasons, including illness and/or family relocation. However, the researcher tried to minimize the internal threat to the study by standardizing the conditions under which the study was conducted. For example, the data about the oral communication ability for every participant was collected in the language laboratory and identical instructions recorded on a tape and presented in the paper. This helped control location, instrumentation, and implementation threats. Other factors affecting internal validity can be controlled by choosing an appropriate test design.

There appeared to be no external threats affecting validity of the study. There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the participants in the study were always randomly selected so the interaction effect of selection was not seen as a threat. Secondly, the study did not involve a pre-test/post-test approach so the threat of the interaction effect of pre-testing was minimized. Lastly, since each participant in the study received only one treatment, as it was not a study of repeated measure design, the threat of multiple treatments did not interfere with the external validity.

In conclusion, although it is practically impossible to attain "perfect" internal and external validity in a study, researchers should attempt to attain a balance so that results can be interpreted with reasonable certainty and still have some generalizability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000; Dörnyei, 2007).

2.5 Previous related research utilizing communication strategies employed in assessing oral communication ability

Communication strategies (CSs) are defined as systematic communication-enhancing devices used to handle communication difficulties and avoid communication break down (Tarone, 1977, 1981; Corder, 1981, 1983; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Dörnyei,

1995). Pedagogically, some researchers have used the term „language learning strategies" in the classroom context instead of CSs (Oxford, 1996; Tarone; 1983; Cohen, 1990). Tarone (1980) suggested that CSs can be differentiated from language learning strategies in terms of their result that learning strategies result in learning while CSs resulted in achievement in communication. Cohen (1990) insisted that only conscious strategies are language learning strategies and that the learner must have a choice. Dörnyei (1995: 60) acknowledged that the difference between these two strategies is not clear. However, as these two terms are nearly synonymous, the studies about language learning strategies are also considered in this paper.

Considerable research studies have been devoted to understanding how the L2 speakers at different levels of English proficiency use CSs in communication. Most of them use either questionnaires or self-report forms as their instruments. However, there are some studies eliciting CSs through the assessment of oral communication ability. Implicit in those groups of research is the notion that high- and low-language ability speakers utilize CSs differently and that these differences may be related to the score variation.

For example, Yoshida-Morise (1998) analyzed the types of CSs used by 12 Japanese participants in the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The CSs employed in this assessing oral communication ability involve achievement strategies (approximation, paraphrase, interlingual transfer, restructuring, cooperative strategies, and non-linguistic strategies); reduction strategies (topic avoidance, message abandonment, and semantic avoidance); and other strategies, including repair, telegraphic, fillers, and change of role. The results indicated that low proficiency group use more strategies than other participants to compensate for their insufficient English knowledge. The findings also showed that the highest proficiency level group use more repair strategies than other groups, while the intermediate level students use reduction strategies and fillers more than others.

Poulisse (1990) conducted a study to investigate the effect of L2 learners" proficiency on CSs use in solving lexical problems. The CSs included conceptual and linguistic strategies. The participants were three groups of 45 Dutch learners of English with varied levels of proficiency. They were required to perform four speaking test

tasks and the results showed that the low proficient learners use more CSs than the more proficient ones.

Some other studies investigated CSs employed by native and non-native speakers (Ellis, 1994; Paribakht (1985); Tarone & Yule, 1989; Bongaert & Poulisse, 1989). For example, Paribakht (1985) compared the use of CSs by native and non-native speakers in a speaking test task which required the participants to describe concrete and abstract concepts. The study involved 60 persons including 20 native English speakers and two groups of 20 Persian learners of English with two different proficiency levels. The researcher concluded that, in general, all three groups employed similar types of CSs. However, the group of L2 speakers with lower language ability drew more on their other knowledge sources, such as mime and paralinguistic knowledge, than higher ability speakers of L2 group. This study indicates that CSs and L2 proficiency levels are related.

Focusing on the familiarity between test-takers and interlocutors, Katona (1998) explained how examiners who are familiar and unfamiliar with interlocutors" negotiated meaning when there was a communication breakdown in an oral proficiency test. The researcher reported the CSs which result in negotiation and grouped the negotiation exchanges containing those CSs into the helping sequence, the eliciting sequence, and the clarifying sequence. It was also found that there seemed to be a relatively strong relationship between familiarity of the examiners with interviewers and the sequence types used by the interviewers. The familiar examiners used mainly "help-based" strategies while the unfamiliar examiners used a combination of the other three.

Some studies sought to examine patterns of strategic behaviours from different kinds of speaking tests. For instance, Shohamy (1994) compared CSs used from direct and semi-direct speaking tests. The data showed the test-takers who took the semi-direct test seem to use paraphrasing more often than those who took the direct test, while language switches to L1 strategies occurred more frequently on the direct test. The researcher provided some reasons for the findings. On the direct test, the test-takers are more concerned with communication and the transmission of information so they immerse themselves in the conversation by using L1 as a strategy to ensure that the interlocutor comprehends the message. The more frequent use of paraphrasing on the

semi-direct test results from the fact that there is an absence of clues or signals from the interlocutor so it serves as an effective strategy to ensure that the answer is transmitted.

Huang and Van Naerssen (1985) studied the learning strategies for oral communication ability by examining the ten highest and nine lowest achievers of a group of 60 Chinese students. Their language proficiency scores were based on the test of oral interactions. The researchers then compared the similarities and differences of successful and unsuccessful learners in terms of strategy uses. The researchers focused on learning strategies of formal practice, functional practice, and monitoring in non-classroom situations. They found that there are no significant differences between the high and the low language ability groups regarding formal practice and monitoring but there are significant differences between the groups on functional practice strategies. This provides evidence of a relationship between learning strategy use and language performance.

In the Thai context, Ton (1989) studied CSs employed by Thai learners of English at Mahidol University in interaction with native speakers. The researcher used the picture cue technique for the subjects to describe the pictures to native speakers as a task in order to assess their oral communication ability. The data showed that the CSs that the students use are appeal, approximation, avoidance, borrowing, clarification, contextualization, code-switching, paraphrase, partialization, and mime. The results also showed that both high and low language proficiency students employ the same types of CSs but the frequency of CS use is different. The lower ability group used more borrowing or code switching and mime than the higher ability group.

Khaopet (1990) examined the frequency of CS use of grade 12 students in English speaking at a private school in a southern province of Thailand. Four speaking test tasks were used to collect data including a conversation, describing pictures, story telling, and describing vocabulary. The results showed that the students use all five CSs, avoidance strategies, L1-based strategies, target language-based strategies, modification devices, and non-linguistic strategies. The CS that the subjects used most was modification devices while avoidance strategies were used the least.

Luangsaengthong (2002) investigated the use of CSs for oral communication of 60 first year students at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand and compared their use of CSs with their English learning achievement. The researcher adapted taxonomies from Tarone (1981), Bialystok (1990), and Dörnyei (1995) and classified them into five types of CSs, avoidance strategy, target language-based strategy, L1-based strategy, modification devices, and nonlinguistic strategy. The findings revealed that the students employed approximation (in target language-based strategy) the most and language switching (in L1-based strategy) the least.

Wannaruk (2003) investigated the use of CSs of Thai university students through the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The results indicated that the most frequently used CS is the use of „modification devices" such as clarification request, pausing, and self-repair. The other strategies used in order of frequency are „non-linguistic strategies", „L1-based strategies", „target language-based strategies", and „avoidance strategies". The results also presented that students used different CSs with varying degrees according to their language levels.

From those two studies, it can be seen that the findings of Wannaruk (2003) supported the research results of Khaopet (1990). Therefore, it can be concluded that the CS that Thai students in both high school and university levels tend to employ most is „modification devices."

Most CSs used in the previous studies, especially those related to assessing oral communication ability, are based mainly on the CSs of Tarone (1977) and Færch & Kasper (1983), supplemented by strategies presented in the work of other researchers such as Bialystok (1983), Paribakht (1985), Dörnyei and Scott (1995), and Poulisse (1990). Most of sub-strategies of these CSs can be synthesized and classified into two main CSs, achievement strategies (used when speakers expand their sources to arrive at their communicative goals) and reduction strategies (used when the speakers face difficulties during the conversation).

It can be seen from research that there were many differences in the uses of CSs through assessing oral communication ability. Some researchers tried to differentiate the types of CSs used by the speakers with different language abilities (Yoshida-

Morise, 1998; Paribakht, 1985; Huang & Van Naerssen, 1985; Wannaruk, 2003) and others compared the CSs used between L1 and L2 speakers (Paribakht, 1985). Some research investigated the use of CSs to indicate whether familiarity between the interlocutor and the test-takers affects types of CS use (Katona, 1998) and some compared CS form used by L2 speakers in different kinds of tests (Shohamy, 1994).

It can be concluded that different researchers used different CSs according to the objectives of their studies. For example, Yoshida-Morise (1998) focused on achievement and reduction strategies, Poulisse (1990) used conceptual and linguistic strategies, Huang and Van Naerssen (1985) studied language learning strategies in terms of formal practice, functional practice, and monitoring in non-classroom contexts while Khaopet (1990) and Wannaruk (2003) employed the taxonomy of Tarone (1977) and Bialystok (1983) in their studies.

2.6 Effect sizes

During the past several decades, there has been a considerably increase in encouraging researchers to supplement their statistical tests with "simple, flexible, and graphical techniques" to allow the readers to understand the set of data in hand. The use of effect size is an often-recommended technique. Effect size is a term used to describe a family of indices that measure the magnitude of a treatment effect (Becker, 1999). This measure focuses on the meaningfulness of the results and allows comparison between studies, furthering the ability of researchers to judge the practical significance of presented results (Vaske et al., 2002; Huberty, 2002; Kotrlik & Williams, 2003). Statistical significance itself is the least interesting thing about the results unless the research reports the results in terms of measures of magnitude, not just whether a treatment affects people but how much it affects them. Thus, it appears to be necessary to provide estimates of effect sizes or strength of relationship in the result section so that readers of the research understand the importance of research findings and make comparisons among studies (Wilkinson & APA, 1999: 599; APA 5th ed., 2001: 5). The purpose of this section is to present an explication of the effect of size, including its definitions, type, strengths and limitations mentioned in previous studies. Finally, particular kinds of effect sizes used in this study are discussed.

2.6.1 What is an effect size?

When a researcher reports that there is a significant difference between two means of variables, it does not necessarily mean that it is big, important, or helpful in decision-making. It simply means the researcher can be confident that there is a true difference. Effect size estimates are used to further the test significance as they are designed to characterize results in more functional and meaningful ways by discussing the magnitude of an effect in addition to estimates of probability (Schuele & Justice, 2006: 15). The concept of an effect size can be explained through an example. If an alien from Mars who had no contact with humans one day visited England, how many people would the alien need to see before realizing that, on average, men are taller than women? The answer relates to the effect size of the difference in average heights between men and women. The larger the effect size, the easier it is to see that men are taller (Wikipedia, 2008).

The literature presents a variety of effect size definitions. Generally, an effect size includes a standardized value that estimates the magnitude of the differences between groups (Thomas et al., 1991), a standardized mean difference (Olejnik & Algina, 2000; Vacha-Haase, 2001), a measure of the degree of difference or association deemed large enough to be of "practical significance" (Morse, 1998), and the strength of relationship (APA, 2001: 25; Dörnyei, 2007: 211). Moreover, statistically speaking, this is a statistical term that refers to a simple way of quantifying the size of the difference between two groups by calculating the difference between two means divided by the standard deviation of the two conditions (Coe, 2002; Thalheimer & Cook, 2002). Among the numerous effect size definitions, the majority of them include the descriptors "standardized difference between means" or "standardized measure of association."

2.6.2 Types of effect sizes

There are numerous types of effect size measures, each type suited to particular research situations. Each type may also have multiple methods of computation. In general, for parametric analyses, there are two major classes of effect sizes, including

the standardized mean differences, and the correlation coefficient, while for non-parametric analyses, the odds-ratio may be used (Thompson, 2000).

1. Standardized mean differences: In the two-group mean comparison situation, the typical effect size index considered is a standardized mean difference which probably has more methods of calculation than any other effect size types such as Cohen"s d, Hedges"s g, and Glass"s Δ.

For example, Cohen"s d was proposed by Jacob Cohen in1962. "d" is defined as the difference between two means divided by the SD of either group, in the case where both samples are the same size. In practice, when the variances of the two groups are not homogeneous, the pooled standard deviation, SD_{pooled}, could be commonly used instead of SD which is the root mean square of the two SDs (Becker, 1999; Cohen, 1988: 4, Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996). Typically, when interpreting effect size indiced, researchers utilize Cohen"s (1988) criteria saying that the estimated effect sizes of .20, .50, and .80 indicate small, medium, and large differences between the two sample means being compared.

2. Correlation coefficient**:** The correlation between the independent variable classification and the individual scores on the dependent variable is called the "effect size correlation" (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996). Perhaps the simplest measures and reports of effect sizes exist for correlation because the correlation coefficient itself is a measure of an effect size (ES). Results are typically reported directly as a correlation (r) [ES = r]. The most commonly used statistics for parametric correlations are Pearson"s r, Spearman"s rho, and point bi-serial. The size of these correlation coefficients must be interpreted employing a set of descriptors for correlation coefficients.

Besides the previously mentioned studies of the effect size correlation, there is another type of correlation measured particularly in Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The effect size measures in ANOVA are measures of degree of the relationship between an effect such as a main effect and an interaction and the dependent variable. For calculating, there are four commonly-used measures of the effect size in ANOVA, Eta squared (η^2), Partial Eta squared (η_p^2), Omega squared (ω^2), and the Intraclass correlation (r_I) (Becker, 1999).

3. Odds ratio: The odds ratio is the odds of success in the treatment group relative to the odds of success in the control group. This is appropriate when both variables are binary or where an outcome is dichotomous, such as success or failure (Coe, 2002).

2.6.3 Strengths of effect sizes

Huberty (2002) stated that effect sizes are utilized in the context of testing wherein the researcher arrives at a referent distribution a probability (p) value, the probability that a test finds a statistically significant difference when a difference actually exists, and also determines an effect-size index value (e). After using the p value to decide whether an effect is obtained, the e-value determines how big the effect is. It can be concluded that if the p-value is small and the e-value is substantial, a real effect is obtained.

In practical situations, providing the magnitude of the relationship between two variables seems to be a main aim of using effect sizes.

Walberg (1984) reported that for cooperative learning studies the effect size is .76. This suggests that cooperative learning is a very effective instructional strategy (Walberg, 1984). In 1999, Walberg also reported that the effects of homework vary greatly depending on the feedback a teacher provides. Homework assigned but not graded generates an effect size of only .28. However, the effect size increases to .78 when homework is graded and to .83 when the teacher provides written comments. This indicates that homework produces a difference in achievement and that graded homework makes a substantial difference (Walberg, 1999; Gay & Airasian, 2000).

Another advantage of using an effect size is that when a particular experiment is replicated, the different effect size estimated from each study can easily be combined to give an overall best estimate of the size of the effect, as synthesizing several results into an average effect size estimate, known as „meta-analysis". Reporting effect sizes facilitates subsequent meta-analysis incorporating a given report (Thompson, 2000). An effect size is helpful for making decisions and summarizing the findings from a specific

area of research as it is the common currency of meta-analysis studies (Becker, 1999; Schuele & Justice, 2006: 14).

Dawson (2000) conducted six experiments to investigate the effects of time of day on learning, "Do children learn better in the morning (9am) or afternoon (3pm)?" A group of 38 children were included in each experiment. Four experiments were concerned with listening skills, one with mathematical skills, and one with a test of non-verbal reasoning. Altogether, 12 comparisons between morning and afternoon learning were generated. Of the 12 effect sizes, 11 favoured the afternoon group. Effect sizes ranged from 0.84 to -0.16, with an overall average of 0.26 (p=.01). Contrary to popular belief, these results suggested that children seem to do better when they are taught and tested in the afternoon than in the morning.

Smith and Glass (1977) used meta-analysis to investigate the broad question, "Does psychotherapy make a difference in the mental health of those receiving it?" A standard literature search located 1000 experiments focused on this topic. Experiments selected as appropriate for a complete analysis yielded a total of 833 effect sizes. The selected studies included ego, dynamic, behavioral, and humanistic treatment strategies, related experimentally to such outcome variables as self-esteem, adjustment, anxiety, and school performance. The average effect size was .68. Smith and Glass (ibid.) concluded that psychotherapy makes a difference.

As a result of meta-analysis, effect size estimates may create a literature in which subsequent researchers can formulate more specific study expectations by integrating the effects reported in related prior studies (Thompson, 2000).

In non-experimental studies, effect sizes can also be used in meta-analysis to integrate the findings of studies. Hyde et al. (1999) conducted a meta-analysis of 100 studies comparing male and female mathematics performance on a standardized test. For a total of 3,175,188 participants in these 100 studies, the researchers found that the average mean for males was .20 of a standard deviation higher than the mean for females. When the researchers excluded studies that represented samples selected for low performance or high performance, the average difference was significantly higher

for females. The researchers concluded that in general, gender differences in mathematics performance are small.

An important consequence of the capacity of meta-analysis using the effect size to combine results is that even small studies can make a significant contribution to knowledge. For example, the kind of experiments done by a single teacher in school may involve a total of fewer than 30 students. Unless the effect is huge, a study of this size is unlikely to get a significant result. However, if the results of such experiments are combined using meta-analysis, the overall result seems to be highly and statistically significant. Moreover, it has the important strengths of being derived from a range of contexts (therefore increasing confidence in its generality) and from real-life working practice (thereby making it more likely that the policy is feasible and could be implemented authentically) (Coe, 2002: Dörnyei, 2008: 212; Schuele & Justice, 2006: 15; Thalheimer & Cook, 2002).

2.6.4 Limitations of using effect sizes

Measures of effect sizes are affected by the research design used. If the researcher is not careful, serious errors in computing an effect size result. For example, the effect sizes may not be comparable across different designs and can lead to misinterpretations of the magnitude of the effects observed.

Cohen (1988) acknowledged the danger of employing terms like small, medium, and large out of context and stated that these conventions should be used with caution. What is a small effect in one context may be a large effect in another context (Coe, 2002; Thompson, 2000). For example, Rosnow and Rosenthal (1989) discussed a 1988 biomedical research study on the effects of taking a small, daily dose of aspirin. Each participant was instructed to take one pill a day. About half of the participants took an aspirin and the others took a placebo. The dependent variable was whether or not the participants had a heart attack during the study. In terms of a correlation coefficient, the effect size was r=.034. In other contexts, this may be considered a trivial effect but in this context it was so large that the researchers decided it was unethical to continue the study and contacted all of the participants who were taking the placebo and told them to start taking aspirins every day.

The range of treatments can increase or reduce the effect size. For example, if the levels of the treatment variable are narrowly defined (10, 20, 30, or 40 minutes of free reading time) the between-treatment variation in comprehension skills would be lower than in a study with a greater spread in the levels in free reading times (30, 60, 90, or 120 minutes). The increase variability of the latter design is likely to lead to a greater measure of effect (Fern & Monroe, 1996).

Subjectivity may be involved in the use of the effect size measured in meta-analysis. Different researchers use different criteria for selecting the studies to be summarized. They apply different review strategies and come to different conclusions. As the number of research studies available on a topic increases so does the difficulty of the reviewing task (Ary et al., 2006: 301).

Olejnik and Algina (2000) suggested that population heterogeneity reduces the magnitude of the effect size measure. In comparing effect sizes, the researcher needs to consider whether they relate to the same outcomes. For example, if one investigation studies high school freshman while a second study involves high school students from all grade levels, the measures of the effect size is not comparable. Moreover, because of the sensitivity of effect size estimates to reliability and range restriction, one should also consider whether those outcome measures are derived from the same or similar instruments and sufficiency in similar populations.

In this research study, the significant level of .05 was stated to test the null hypotheses. The main aim of using the effect size in the study was to provide the magnitude of the relationship between variables illustrated as follows.

To study the effects of English language ability and types of CSs on the oral communication ability of Thai university students, this study aimed to investigate:

1. Whether students with different language ability levels (high and low) had a significant effect on their oral communication ability. To find the statistical significance, the significant level was set at .05. Then, if the null-hypothesis was rejected, the effect size measured the magnitude of the differences present between a group of students with low language ability and a high ability group.

2. Whether types of CSs (risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies) had a significant effect on students‟ oral communication ability at the 0.5 level. Similarly, “If they do, how much is the effect size?”, therefore, the magnitude of the differences between the effect of students using risk-taking strategies on their oral communication ability and the effect of students using risk-avoidance strategies on their oral communication ability could be reported.

3. Whether there were interaction effects between students with different language ability levels and types of CSs on their oral communication ability at the significant level of .05. And if there were, how much was the effect size?

With regard to the study, effect size measures in Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), particularly partial Eta squared [$(\eta_p^2 = SS_{effect} / (SS_{effect} + SS_{error})$], are employed. The main reason for selecting this kind of effect size is based on the statistic tests used in the study.

As 2 x 2 ANOVA was used, the partial Eta squared was appropriate for factorial design in order to estimate the effect size in a sample (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The partial Eta squared was called an “alternative” computation of Eta squared and the researcher could interpret results by applying the same idea of the magnitude of r. Moreover, SPSS program could help to compute the partial Eta squared so it seemed to be more convenient rather than calculating the partial Eta squared or even Eta squared (not available for the SPSS program) by hand. For the aforementioned reasons, the partial Eta squared was the most appropriate way to measure the effect size of the study.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature and related research reviewed above have presented a recent body of research on the areas of CSs, speaking ability in second/foreign language speakers, and oral communication ability.

The main purpose of this research study is to investigate the effects of English language ability and two types of CSs, risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies, on oral communication ability of Thai university students.

In this study, the participants were grouped into two levels by their English language ability (high and low ability groups). With regard to the reviewed literature, the target language ability was an independent variable in several studies such as that of Paribakht (1985), Poulisse (1990), and Nakatani (2006).

As the research has found, there are several factors affecting the CSs used by L2 speakers, such as the test-takers‟ personality, learning situation, and differences between L1 and L2 speakers (Tarone, 1977; Haastrup & Phillipson, 1983; Bongarets et al., 1987). Proficiency level was another main factor which had interrelationship with CSs (Paribakht, 1985; Poulisse, 1990).

Paribakht‟s (1985) study found that the lower language proficiency group often rely on their paralinguistic knowledge such as using gestures or face-expressions while the higher group tend to use alternative words instead of the specific words (approximation strategies) more than the lower group. Paribakht concluded that there is a directional relationship between types of CSs used and the test-takers‟ language proficiency levels. Five years later, Poulisse (1990) reported that the achievement strategies are used by the low language ability speakers more than the higher ones, except for the use of the approximation strategies which are used by the high language ability speakers. It can be interpreted that the higher language ability the speakers possess, the greater the capacity to deal with a larger number of L2 vocabulary items they are able to present.

Yoshida-Morrise (1998) claimed that, in general, the test-takers with low language ability level use more strategies than the higher groups in order to compensate for their lack of L2 knowledge. In 2006, Nakatani who investigated the relationship between CSs and speaking ability levels, found that the higher speaking ability group report more use of three sub-strategies of the achievement strategies (social-affective, fluency-oriented, and negotiation for meaning strategies).

The theoretical interest in the mental processes of language learning, testing and use is not new, as there are several studies considering the relationship between the test-takers‟ cognitive background variables and language use in order to describe the nature

of their second language proficiency. However, only a handful of research studies have considered the extensive body of literature in the test-takers‟ CSs and their oral communication ability. In other words, as previous studies indicated that there is a directional relationship between the use of CSs and levels of proficiency, it is necessary to investigate further whether there is relationship between types of CSs used and the test-takers‟ oral communication ability.

Regarding speaking test-task development, Weir (1993) identified the characteristics of speaking test tasks including purposes, interlocutors, procedures, and, etc. Ten years later, Fulcher (2003) pointed out the characteristics in a synthesized way by listing task orientation, ways of interaction, goal orientation, interlocutor status and familiarity, topics, and situations. To develop a task, test-specifications are essential to allow the test-writers to clarify the constructs of the test, such as purposes, target population, content, format, and criteria. Bachman‟s (1990) framework of the test specifications consisting five facets is the best known in terms of specifying test specifications.

In the field of education, there is a considerable shift from typical formats like lecture to encouraging more oral participation like interaction discussion. Oral communication ability is highlighted in both academic and non-academic success. This shift also has an impact on the assessment area moving from traditional tests, paper and pencil, to more performance-based assessment. To design a performance-based test, theories of communicative competence have been influential as a framework supporting construct validity. They can be a guideline for test-designers to realize what a speaker needs to know and do to achieve communicative goals. Canale and Swain (1980) characterized communicative competence into four sub-competences, grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. A decade later, Bachman (1990) proposed a framework called a model of Communicative Language Ability (CLA) which has more details and seems to be more complicated. The model includes three main components, language competence, strategic competence, and psycho-physiological mechanisms.

To elicit the test-takers‟ speech samples to measure their oral communication ability, the semi-direct speaking test is more practical in the way that it can be based on

non-human elicitation procedures by using tape-recording and test-booklets. So it can save the costs spent on the administration procedures and the interlocutor expenses. It also saves time as it can be administered to a group of the test-takers. Although the direct speaking test appears to be more authentic as there is an interaction between interlocutors, there are research studies presenting that the quality of the semi-direct speaking test is equal to the direct speaking test in terms of validity, reliability, and authenticity (Shohamy, 1994). As the semi-direct speaking test is more practical and gives the same quality of the result as the direct test, the semi-direct speaking test is used as a model of developing the Oral Communication Test (OCT) in this study.

The researcher believes that test-takers‟ oral communication ability is influenced not only by their target language ability but also by strategies used in their communication. To study these influences, several studies supported using both quantitative and qualitative approaches as a mixed research method (Dörnyei, 2007) such as two-way analysis of variance (2x2 ANOVA) and content analysis. Therefore, studying the effects between the test-takers‟ English language ability levels and types of CSs on their oral communication ability were investigated in this study. Specifically, the following research questions were examined:

1. Do different language ability levels have a significant effect on students‟ oral communication ability? And if they do, how much is the effect size?

2. Do types of CSs have a significant effect on students‟ oral communication ability? And if they do, how much is the effect size?

3. Is there any significant interaction effect between different language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication ability? And if there is, how much is each effect size?

4.What are types of CSs used by students with different language ability levels?

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research procedures

In this study, mixed methods approach (Dörnyei, 2007; Creswell, 2003; and Creswell et al., 2003) combining quantitative and qualitative methods were applied with the randomized block research design. The mixed approach was aimed at validating the research findings.

As the major objectives of the study were to examine the effects of the students‟ English language ability and the types of CSs on their oral communication ability, and to investigate the CSs of students with different language ability levels, it was essential to develop the Oral Communication Test (OCT) and the Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI), as the instruments of the study.

Therefore, in order to develop valid and reliable test and inventory, the research procedures in this study were illustrated as follows:

1. Develop and validate the research instruments.
2. Select the population and sample.
3. Carry out the pilot study.
4. Conduct the main study.
5. Analyze the data
6. Report the findings.

3.2 Population and subjects

The target population in this study were the third-year English major students, enrolled in the speaking course in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) in the second term of the academic year 2008. The total number of population was 300 students. The participants were homogeneous in terms of nationality and background knowledge as they are all Thai students in the same faculty and university. The Grade Point Averages (GPA) they obtained ranged

from 2.00 to 4.00. The students enrolled in the speaking course, and their grades for this course were between A to D+. Most of them were about the same age ranging from17 to 23 and it could be assumed that they had similar culture and educational background. The subjects in this study were classified into two groups: the subjects for the pilot study and those for the main study (See 3.2.1 and 3.2.2).

The 300 third year students‟ name lists including their average grades of the grades of a speaking course, the highest and the lowest grades that they received in their previous English courses from the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) were obtained. Then, the students were categorized into two groups: High and Low ability group, according to the average grades of the three courses. The high language ability group were those who obtained the average grades above the +1 S.D., while the low language ability group were those who obtained their average grades lower than the -1 S.D.

3.2.1 Participants for the pilot study

Totally, 50 samples were used in the pilot study. Twenty samples were randomly selected from the population to be the test-takers in the pilot study of the OCT, while 50 samples (20 samples from the OCT pilot study plus another 30 samples) were randomly selected to participate in the pilot study of the SUSTI, but the rate of returned questionnaires of the SUSTI were 41.

3.2.2 Participants for the main study

After the process of the pilot study, the rest of the students in the population (250 students; as 50 students were used in the pilot study) were required to take the OCT to examine their oral communication ability, and right after finishing the test, they completed the Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) to investigate their CSs use. After interpreting the results of the SUSTI, the students were assigned into four groups according to their language ability groups and types of CSs, and were randomly selected for quantitative data analysis purposes. In each group, 25 students were randomly selected in order to examine the relationship between the language ability and types of CSs, as follows:

- High ability & Risk-taking strategies (25),
- High ability & Risk-avoidance strategies (25),
- Low ability & Risk-taking strategies (25),
- Low ability & Risk-avoidance strategies (25).

The reason why only 100 were selected is that, as a rule of thumb, “in the survey research literature a range of between one per cent to ten per cent of the population is usually mentioned as the magic sampling fraction, with a minimum of about 100 participants…” (Dörnyei, 2007: 99). The rough estimates of sample sizes for multivariate procedures are at least 100 participants as well (ibid: 100). However, the sample size in this study could not be more than 100 because of the study‟s research design called the randomized block design, and the set criterion of above +1 and below -1 S.D of students‟ language ability. Two hundred and fifty students with mixed language abilities were needed to classify their levels of language abilities. Therefore, 50 students in each group of high ability and low ability were randomly selected.

Meanwhile, another group of 100 students (50 high-ability students and 50 low-ability students) was randomly selected from the population in order to focus on the result of the SUSTI solely. This could lead to the findings whether there was any significant difference between the CSs use of students with different language ability levels.

The procedure for sample selection is illustrated in the following figure.

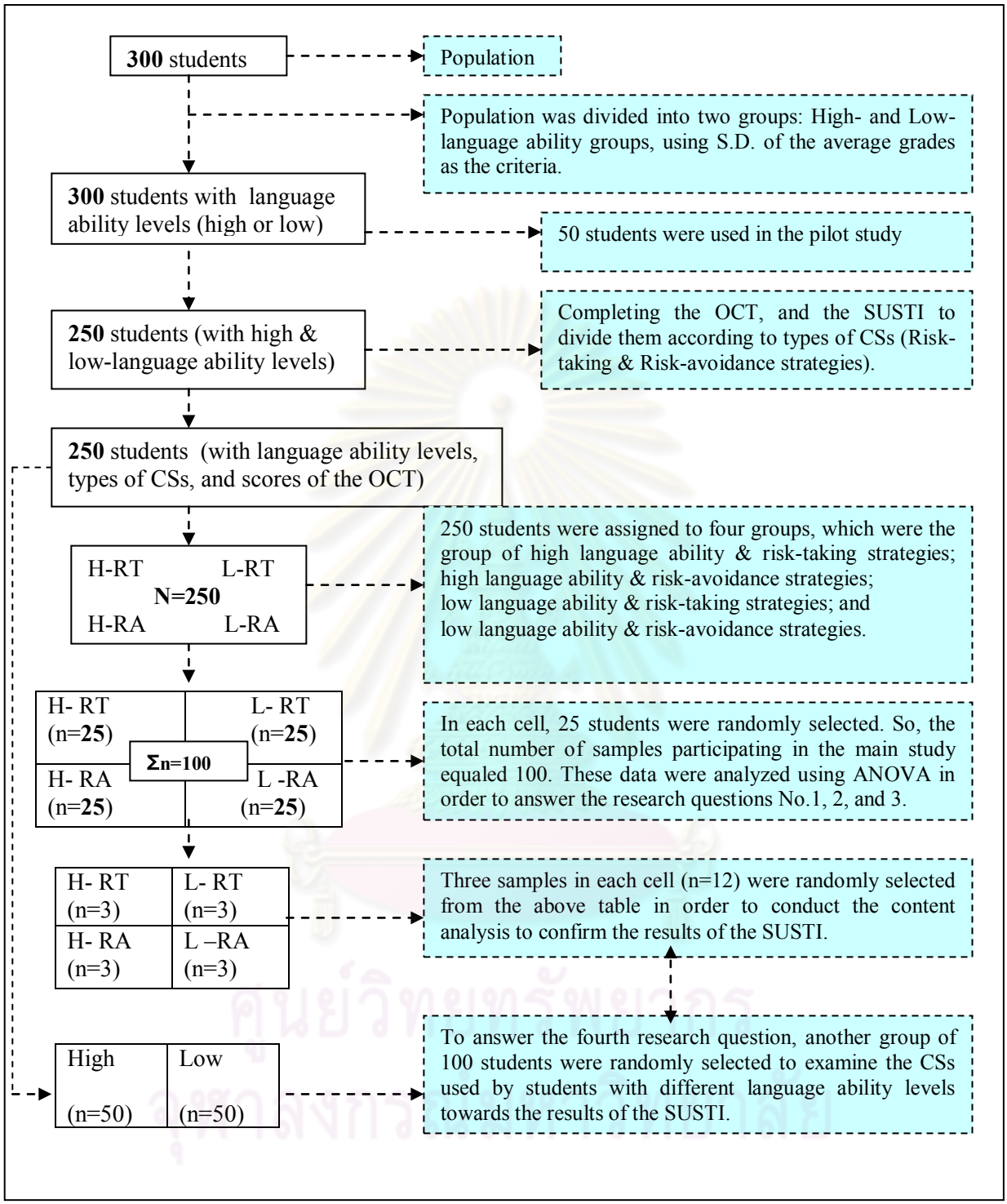


Figure 3.1: The Procedure of Sample Selection

The following table 3.1 illustrates the number of samples randomly selected and participating in each stage of the study.

Table 3.1: The Number of Samples Participating in the Study

1. Developing Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI)	
1.1 Pilot the questionnaire	Samples = 41 students
1.2. Main study	100 students (randomly selected from the population)
2. Developing the Oral Communication Test (OCT)	
2.1. Pilot study	Samples = 20 students (randomly selected from 1.1)
2.2. Main study	100 students (assigned and randomly selected from the population)
3. Conducting a qualitative approach: Content analysis	
3.1. Pilot study	Samples = 4 students (randomly selected from the group of 1.2)
3.2. Main study	12 students (randomly selected from the group of 1.2)

3.3 Research instrumentation

In order to develop each instrument, there were several stages to complete, including stages of instrument validation. It required not only the pilot study, but also the consultancy with the experts in the field. These needed to be done to assure that the instruments had sufficient degree of the reliability and the validity in both content and construct. The following was the instruments used in this study.

3.3.1 Oral Communication Test (OCT)

The new speaking test was developed to be used as a tool for measuring the test-takers‟ oral communication ability in the area of general English. Regarding the test specification development stage, a needs assessment, based on the literature review and documentary analysis, had been conducted in order to obtain crucial information to be used and applied in developing the OCT (See Appendix H).

As the semi-direct speaking test seemed to be more practical and feasible in terms of time-consuming, reliability of interlocutors, and cost, it was suitable to be selected as the format of the OCT. The OCT consisted of four sub-tasks: a warm-up task, an interview task, a description task, and a problem-solving task. All tasks focused on the real-approach of oral communication occurring in students‟ daily lives. The

semi-direct speaking test used in this study contextualized all tasks to make sure that they appeared as authentic as possible. In addition, the students‟ oral discourse was elicited through the use of recorded and visual task stimuli and their oral responses were recorded as suggested by Malone (2000) and Shohamy (1994: 100). The test administration took about 15 minutes including a thinking gap and time allotted for the students to figure out the answer for each sub-task.

The OCT administration materials included a booklet and a master test tape, including the audiotape of all test instructions and tasks. The test-takers‟ responses were recorded by tape cassette and observed by the assessors. Directions to all tasks were presented in English in the test tape and in the test booklet. The directions provided the context of each task, including what the situation was, whom the test-taker was addressing, and any other relevant information. After reading and listening to the directions, the test-takers heard a record of an English native speaker who made statements or asked questions relevant to the task described. Then, the test-takers performed the task. After that, the records of their responses were assessed by three trained raters. The overall score was obtained by averaging analytic scores. Moreover, the test-takers‟ speech records and an observation of their non-verbal language used, were evaluated in the phase of conducting content analysis (see details in 3.3.3).

Validation process

With regard to instrument validation, there were two main stages in order to validate the OCT (adapted from Weir et al., 2000) as follows.

1. Priori validation

1.1. Specifications of the constructs: The specifications of the test tasks, rubrics, and scales were developed based mostly on the review of literature. Apart from the literature review, the contents of the test were obtained from informal interviews with the lecturers of the speaking course and the researcher‟s observation in the speaking class.

With regard to content and construct validation, three experts, specializing in the area of language assessment and educational evaluation, were asked to rate the test tasks by using the IOC index.

1.2. The pilot study: 20 students were randomly selected to participate in the pilot study to investigate their oral communication ability. A pilot version of the OCT was produced to try out the instrument and analyse the test specifications in order to:

- decide on the most appropriate format in relation to operations;
- ensure intelligibility of rubrics;
- empirically establish timing;
- consider the order of questions/ process dimension;
- check the layout;
- trial on small samples, then produce the first draft of the mark scheme; and
- revise the tasks.

2. Posteriori validation:

After the stage of developing the first draft, five experts were invited to review and rate the first draft of the OCT using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) index. After that, the first draft was revised and was ready for the main study. Then, the test results were analysed in order to measure the test validity and reliability.

Regarding the analysis of the test, descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. Moreover, the reliability of scoring the students‟ scores was examined. Three independent experts in the field of English teaching were assigned to score, based on the scale. Each rater was asked to watch the video and to rate the students‟ performance. There was no halo effect because the raters were not given any students‟ information about their English proficiency. The inter-rater reliability of the test was estimated by using Spearman Rank Order, as a number of the subjects were less than 30. The inter-rater reliability coefficients among the three raters ranged from .70 to .85.

The following was the test specifications of the OCT which illustrated the content areas to be covered by the test to ensure its content validity (Anastasi, 1990; Bachman & Plamer, 1996). This included the characteristics that pertain to the structure of the test, and the task specifications for each type of task that was to be included in the test.

Test specifications of the Oral Communication Test (OCT)

1. Nature of the test

The Oral Communication Test (OCT) was a tape-mediated test of speaking proficiency. The purpose of the OCT was to evaluate the English oral communication ability of persons whose native language was not English. All contents of the OCT items were based on the speaking proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The test was presented to the test-takers via a test booklet and a master tape.

During the test administration, the test-takers listened to the instructions for speaking tasks from a master tape. The instructions were also provided. As the test-takers responded to each task, their speaking performance was audio-recorded on a separate response tape. This tape was later evaluated by three trained raters who score the performance based on the rating scales modified from the descriptions of the ACTFL proficiency scale.

2. Task characteristics (Test method facets)

2.1. Characteristics of the setting

Physical characteristics	Location: Language laboratory
	The noise level: Very low
	Temperature: Air-conditioning, comfortable
	Lighting: Enough to read clearly
Participants	A test-taker, and an examiner
Time of task	Approximately 10 minutes (four tasks)

2.2. Characteristics of the test rubrics

Instructions	Explicit: The test-takers can read the instructions, and they can listen to the audio-tape.
	Language: The target language (English)
	Channel: Oral, aural and visual
Structure	Number of tasks: 4 tasks
	Sequence of tasks: Fixed sequence (Tasks 1 to 4)
	Relative importance of tasks: Related
Time allotment	Task 1: 1 minutes; Task 2: 2 minutes
	Task 3: 2 minutes; Task 4: 3 minutes
Scoring method	Criteria by using holistic scoring

2.3. Characteristics of the input

Format	Channel: aural and visual
	Form: Both language and non-language (pictures)
	Language: Target language (English)
	Length: Short
	Type of input: Spoken questions, visual stimuli, and prompts
	Degree of speediness: Generally unspeeded
	Vehicles: Canned human input
Language of input	-Language characteristics:
	Organizational characteristics
	- Grammatical: Vocabulary: General and technical
	Morphology and syntax: Standard English
	- Textual: Cohesion: Cohesive throughout
	Rhetorical: Organizational patterns
	Pragmatics characteristics:
	- Functional: ideational, imaginative, and manipulative
	- Sociolinguistic: Variety/ dialect: standard
	Register: Moderately formal
	Naturalness: Natural
	Cultural references: events
	- Topical characteristics: *Types of information*: Related to business field

2.4. Characteristics of the expected response

Format	Channel: Oral
	Form: Both language and non-verbal language
	Language: Target language (English)
	Length: Short
	Type of output: Spoken language
	Degree of speediness: Generally unspeeded
	Vehicles: Canned
Language of expected response	-Language characteristics:
	Organizational characteristics
	- Grammatical: Vocabulary: General and technical
	Morphology and syntax: Standard English
	- Textual: Cohesion: Cohesive throughout
	Rhetorical: Organizational patterns
	Pragmatics characteristics:
	- Functional: ideational, imaginative, and manipulative
	- Sociolinguistic: Variety/ dialect: standard
	Register: Moderately formal
	Naturalness: Natural
	Cultural references: events and procedures
	- Topical characteristics: *Types of information*: Related to business field

2.5. Relationship between input and response

Reactivity	Reciprocal tasks
Scope of relationship	Narrow scope test tasks
Directness of relationship	Direct

3. Contents

The contents of the semi-format of the OCT were related to a variety of simulated "authentic" contexts, obtained mostly from the literature review, the informal interview with the lecturers, and the researcher"s observation. The contexts reflected those encountered by adults in Thailand in the course of their everyday lives. These tasks involved both transactional and interactional uses of language.

Possible topics

Task 1: Greeting, and name

Task 2: Personal information related to educational background, or particular interest

Task 3: Familiar topics such as family and friends

Task 4: Controversial issues and social problems

4. Test structure

There were four parts of the OCT which were described below:

Task 1: Warm-up task

The test began with a warm-up task which might help the test-takers relax and became accustomed to speaking in response to the master tape. Therefore, there were no scores given for this task.

Task 2: Interview task

The test-takers were required to give some personal information including three questions.

Task 3: Description task

The test-takers had to describe in details about a concrete topic such as family or friends.

Task 4: Problem-solving task

The test-takers were placed in real-life situations and were asked to respond to them in a socially and linguistically appropriate manner about controversial issues and social problems. This task required the test-takers to give advice to solve problems.

5. Item type/ discourse form

The formats of the test consisted mainly of one-way exchanges (monologue) where the test-takers were required to communicate information in response to the tape-recorder. Some examples of the format were the interview, the description, and the problem-solving.

6. Language functions

Speaking tasks of the test required the test-takers to use a range of language functions and sub-skills; such as describing, interpreting, narrating, explaining, speculating, making suggestion and giving opinions.

7. Task format

The format was tape-mediated and administered in a language laboratory.

Task-stimuli

A variety of stimuli were used; such as a set of questions, and recorded dialogue.

Task-structure

A. Unplanned / Planned tasks

- Planned and unplanned activities were included.
- Planned tasks allowed planning time, and were designed to elicit more complex language.
- Unplanned tasks were designed to elicit spontaneous language.

B. Open/ Closed tasks

- Open tasks referred to those which were open ended with a range of possible solutions and closed tasks referred to tasks which had a restricted set of responses.

8. Scoring procedure

Each test-taker‟s tape was marked by three trained raters in Thailand. Individual tasks were assessed using appropriate scoring criteria such as fluency, grammatical

structures, vocabulary, comprehension and cohesion. Each of these criteria was accompanied by a set of six descriptors. All scoring was carried out on a Likert scale of one to six (very poor to excellent). The rating scales of the OCT were provided in Appendix F. After the raters finished rating in each category, they were required to rate the overall score based on the given results and the provided descriptors. This was the final score informed to the test-takers. These levels could be broadly defined using holistic scales (adapted from O'Loughlin, 2001, and Schaefer, 2008) as follows:

Level 6 *(Effective English communicator)*: The test-taker can communicate effectively in spoken English in a range of social and work situations. Communication is appropriate with a degree of fluency. Language is grammatically accurate most of the time with a wide range of vocabulary which is used effectively in most situations.

Level 5 *(Good English communicator)*: The test-taker can communicate adequately in spoken English to handle everyday communication in social, educational and work situations. Despite some grammatical inaccuracies, the test-taker can communicate with a fair degree of fluency. Vocabulary is wide enough to express most ideas, particular in familiar situations.

Level 4 *(Competent English communicator)*: The test-taker can communicate general information in spoken English in most everyday social situations. Basic grammatical structures are used although inaccuracies are frequent. Although vocabulary is limited, most common concepts can be expressed.

Level 3 *(Limited English communicator*: The test-taker can communicate only general meaning in very familiar situations. There is a limited control of basic grammatical structures. Vocabulary is limited to common words and phrases.

Level 2 *(Extremely limited English communicator)*: The test-taker communicates with difficulties. There are some problems in understanding and expression. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.

Level 1 *(Non English communicator*): The test-taker's ability to communicate in spoken English is very low. It seems to be no practical speaking ability in English beyond possibly a few isolated words.

The following table was the summary grid illustrating the overall construct of the OCT. It involved test structure, different types of task, and language functions.

Table 3.2: The Overall Construct of the OCT

Parts	Tasks	Functions	Topics	Activities	Time
1	**Warm-up task** (No points)	- This task can help the test-takers relax and become accustomed to speaking in response to the master tape.	- Greetings - Name	After greeting, the test-takers answer questions like "What's your full name?" in order to be familiar with the equipment and adjust it.	1 min
2	**Interview task**	The test-takers can: - Handle uncomplicated tasks and social situations; - Answer questions related to simple situations of daily life; - Express himself by using appropriate tenses (past, present, and future).	- Personal information related to educational background, or particular interest	The test-takers are required to give some personal information. There are three questions in this part. The test-takers have about 10 seconds to prepare for each question and 30 seconds to answer each question.	2 mins
3	**Description task**	- Describe about a concrete and familiar topic.	- Concrete and familiar topics such as family and friends	The test-takers have 30 seconds for preparation and one and a half minute for description about a familiar topic	2 mins
4	**Problem-solving task**	- Deal with unfamiliar topics; - Give advice to solve a problem - Express opinions.	Controversial issues and social problems	The test-takers are placed in real-life situations and are asked to respond to them in a socially and linguistically appropriate manner. This task	3 mins

				requires the test-takers to give advice to solve problems. They have 45 seconds for preparation and two minutes for answering the question.	

3.3.2 Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI)

Based on the review of literature (Tarone, 1980; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Canale, 1983; Bialystok, 1990; Poulisse, 1987, 1993; Dörnyei, 1995; Dörnyei & Scott, 1995; and Nakatani, 2005, 2006), a Likert-type of questionnaire was developed to assess the degrees and types of strategies which students use in oral communication. Participants were asked to respond on the five-point Likert scale ranging from one (never or almost never true of me) to five (always true of me). All items in the questionnaire were written in Thai to avoid the language problem. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part 1: Demographic information and Part 2: CSs (see Appendices A and B).

The researcher examined the validity, reliability, and the effects of types of CSs on oral communication ability. The nature of the students‟ CS use and the nature of oral communication ability measured by the students‟ previous speaking were first investigated. Then, the researcher explored how the strategic process was related to the students‟ oral communication ability. Finally, the effects of speaking strategies used on students‟ oral communication ability across high and low-ability levels of students were examined. However, it should be noted that, in the main study, the validated SUSTI was used to assess the nature of students‟ strategies used in speaking tasks, and the students‟ ability in oral communication was assessed by using the developed Oral Communication Test (OCT), instead of using the grade of a speaking course.

The rating scale of the SUSTI was chosen because of its validity, reliability, practicality and the lack of social desirability response bias.

Validation process

Regarding the validation of the SUSTI which was done in the pilot study, two main stages were performed:

1. Priori validation:

With regard to the SUSTI‟s preliminary study conducted in January-February 2008, a Likert-type questionnaire was developed, as the first draft used in the pilot study, to assess the degrees and types of strategies which students used in oral communication, and it included 35 test items. Participants were asked to respond on the five-point Likert scale ranging from one (never) to five (usually). All items in the questionnaire were written in Thai to avoid any comprehension problem. The questionnaire in the pilot version of the test consists of two parts (see Appendices A and B):

Part 1: Demographic information	8 questions (Filling in the form)
Part 2: Communication Strategies	27 questions (5-choices)
Total	35 questions

Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index was used to improve the content and construct validity. The IOC index was considered by three independent experts in the field of language teaching who matched each item with the specific behaviour domain to be observed. The criteria of selecting the experts were that all experts were related to the field of language teaching as mentioned and had some background knowledge in educational evaluation. They are English lecturers at the university level.

2. Posteriori validation:

According to the judgement and comments of the three experts on the content and construction of the SUSTI, the results of the SUSTI‟s Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index were presented as follows:

Regarding the content validity of the SUSTI, the experts highly agreed that the content of the SUSTI reflected the objectives of the questionnaire. However, one of the experts suggested that the non-verbal communication aspects should be considered

because they were somewhat skewed by cultural issues, and less valid (though interesting). Furthermore, the experts believed that the SUSTI was appropriate to measure CS use of the third year undergraduate students majoring in English. They also strongly agreed that specific language used in the SUSTI could be found in real conversation when speakers encounter language difficulty. The format of the SUSTI was accepted by the experts that it was appropriate, straightforward, not too laborious, and not over-complex. Finally, there were some experts‟ comments e.g., the researcher should clarify the criteria of the scale one (usually) to five (never). For example, „usually‟ could be defined as the context exactly true for me (100%). The SUSTI seemed to measure what it claimed to measure, and thus it might be concluded that the content validity of the SUSTI was satisfactory.

With regard to the construct validation, the result of IOC analysis indicated that the average IOC index of the SUSTI was 0.56. Additionally, 68.57% of the test items had an IOC index equal to or more than 0.7., which means that this 68.57% of the test items were accepted and were retained. That was because they were congruent with the test objectives and could measure what the test was intended to measure. On the other hand, the rest of test items with the IOC index of less than 0.7, should be revised or rejected as they had unsatisfactory ability to measure what the test intended to measure (see the IOC tally sheet and calculation in Appendix D). To sum up, the construct of the SUSTI seemed, in general, to be accepted by the experts. Most of the items were retained and used in the main study, while two items (No.13 and 14) were rejected, and another item (No.6) was revised.

From the previous information, it could be concluded that both construct and content validity of the SUSTI were satisfactory, meaning that it could measure what it claimed to measure.

After the pilot study of the SUSTI had been done, the revised version of the SUSTI was developed. In the first part, question number one was rejected; and in the second part two items (No.13 and 14) were rejected, and another item (No.6) was revised. Thus, there are seven questions in Part 1, and 25 questions in Part 2.

With regard to the second part of the SUSTI, Table 3.3 presents a taxonomy of the CS types represented in each item.

Table 3.3: A Taxonomy of the Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) (25 items)

1. Risk-Taking strategies (RT)		**Items used**
- Social affective strategies	5 items	2, 13, 17, 19, 22
- Fluency-oriented strategies	2 items	1, 9
- Accuracy-oriented strategies	4 items	3, 6, 14, 20
- Non-verbal strategies	3 items	4, 18, 25
- Help-seeking strategies	3 items	7, 11, 21
- Circumlocution strategies	1 item	15
2. Risk-Avoidance strategies (RA)		
- Message abandonment strategies	2 items	8, 10
- Message reduction & Alteration strategies	3 items	5, 16, 23
- Time-gaining strategies	2 items	12, 24
	Total: 25 items	

Summary of the SUSTI quality

Test validity of the SUSTI

According to the definition of the test validity, a test is valid when the test can measure what it claims to be measuring. There are three aspects of validity that should be considered, including content, construct, and concurrent validity (Brown, 1996: 231-249). After the pilot study of the SUSTI was done, the revised version of the SUSTI was developed and validated again using the index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) for the aspects of content and construct validity. The results of the validation were illustrated as follows.

1). Content validation: In order to validate the content of the test, the researcher should establish a consensus of informed opinions about the degrees of congruence between the test items and specific behaviour domain to be tested by those items.

Typically, convening of a panel of expert judges who rate the item-to-content congruence according to some established criteria is required (Osterlind, 1998: 258).

The content validity of the SUSTI was estimated by means of needs analysis, based on the literature reviews, and content analysis. Additionally, three experts in the field of language teaching were asked to review the SUSTI by using the Item-Objective Congruent Test Validating Form. After that, the index of the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was analysed.

With regard to the results of content validity of the SUSTI, there were consensus agreements among the three experts as the following aspects. Firstly, the content of the SUSTI could reflect the specific descriptions of the domain that was intended to be tested. Secondly, both content and format were appropriate to measure communicate strategies used for the third year Thai undergraduate students majoring in English. Moreover, the specific language used in the SUSTI could be found in real conversation. This aspect can be connected to the high degree of authenticity.

According to the previous information, it could be concluded that the content validity of the SUSTI was satisfactory which means that the test could measure what it claimed to measure.

2) Construct validity: According to Mousavi (1999), the word „construct" refers to any underlying ability which is hypothesised in a language theory. Thus, a test will have construct validity if it can be demonstrated that it measures the ability it is supposed to measure. This type of validity assumes the existence of particular language learning theories or constructs which are underlying the acquisition of abilities and skills. A good example given from Mousavi (1999) is that if a course has adopted a communicative approach to language teaching and learning, a test comprising multiple-choice items will lack construct validity. In conclusion, the construct validation may answer the question, „What does this test really measure?".

With regard to the SUSTI, the construct validity was estimated by consulting the experts in the field of language teaching applying the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index. Regarding the interpretation of the IOC index, if the IOC index of a test item is

equal or more than 0.7, it was accepted regarding at least two experts agree with the congruence. It means that the test item has acceptable degree of congruence with the objective as it can measure what it is expected to be measuring. On the other hand, if the IOC index of a test item is less than 0.7, it should be revised or rejected. The results shows that the average IOC index of the SUSTI was 0.92. All of the test items had the index equal to or more than 0.7, which means that these items were accepted and to be kept. To sum up, the construct of the SUSTI seemed to be satisfied by the experts. Thus, there was a degree of construct validity.

Reliability

Mousavi (1999) defined that reliability is one of qualities of test scores referring to the consistency of measures across different times, raters, test forms, and other characteristics of the measurement context. For example, the test scores cannot be considered reliable indicators of one‟s individual if a student receives a high score on the test one day and a low score on the same test two days later. The degree of reliability of the test scores can be estimated by several methods.

Regarding the SUSTI, the researcher decided to use Cronbach‟s alpla method to estimate the internal consistency of the test. This method is appropriate to be applied when the test items are not scored as right or wrong, such as multiple choice tests. It, moreover, is good for the item score taken on the range of values such as a Likert-scale, and also for the test given only once.

The received reliability value of the SUSTI was at 0.80, meaning that there was a high degree of reliability in the SUSTI. The test results would be consistent no matter how many times it was repeated.

Summary of stages in the research procedures

The following table was the summary of stages in the research procedures.

Table 3.4: Stages in the Research Procedures

Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI)	**Oral Communication Test (OCT)**
A PRIORI VALIDATION	
Stage 1: Test specifications of the constructs	
- Literature review - Needs analysis (based on the review)	- Literature review - Needs analysis (based on the review)
Stage 2: First Draft	
- Item setting - Small piloting - IOC index (experts‟ judgement for content and construct validity)	- Task selection - Scale development - Small piloting - IOC index (experts‟ judgement for content and construct validity)
A POSTERIORI VALIDATION	
Stage 3: Pilot study	
- Piloting the questionnaire (n=41) - Estimating reliability (Cronbach‟s alpha) - Obtaining experts‟ judgment - Revising the instrument	- Piloting the OCT (n=20) - Estimating reliability (inter-rater reliability) - Obtaining experts‟ judgment - Revising the OCT
Stage 4: Main study	
- Main study (n=100) - Test administration - Test results for investigating CSs (using SUSTI) and oral communication ability (OCT) - Quantitative data analysis (2x2 ANOVA), used to examine the effects of the independent variables -Qualitative data analysis (Content analysis), used to investigate students with different language abilities and communication strategies	

3.3.3 Content analysis: a qualitative approach

Twelve speech samples of students performed in the OCT were analysed using content analysis. Three speech samples were randomly selected from each cell. Then, in order to conduct the content analysis, the test-takers‟ speech records were transcribed, and the observation of their non-verbal language used was considered. This was done

to triangulate the results from the SUSTI, and presented types of CSs used by students with different language ability levels.

3.4 Data collection

There were 100 students randomly selected from 300 third year English major students in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC), participating in the main study. The process of the test administration was done approximately within two months, between November and December 2008.

In the main study, samples were assigned into four groups according to their language ability and types of CSs, and 25 students in each cell were randomly selected in order to examine the effects of each variable (language ability levels and types of CSs) and the interaction effects between them on their oral communication ability. Table 3.5 presents the four groups of the sample.

Table 3.5: Four Groups of the Sample Assigned and Randomly Selected to Participate in the Main Study

		Language ability groups	
		High ability level	*Low ability level*
	Risk-Taking (RT)	$\bar{X}1$ **(H-RT)** **(n= 25)**	$\bar{X}2$ **(L-RT)** **(n= 25)**
Strategies			
	Risk-Avoidance (RA)	$\bar{X}3$ **(H-RA)** **(n=25)**	$\bar{X}4$ **(L-RA)** **(n= 25)**

Next, the qualitative data was collected from 12 subjects by using content analysis, three samples were randomly selected from each cell. The test-takers‟ speech records from the OCT and the observation focusing on non-verbal language used were considered. The findings were considered with the results of the SUSTI. Table 3.6 shows the four groups of subjects used in the content analysis.

Table 3.6: Four Groups of the Sample Randomly Selected to Participate in the Content Analysis

	Language ability groups	
	High ability level	*Low ability level*
Risk-Taking (RT) **Strategies**	**H- RT** (n=25) ↓ **(n=3)**	**L- RT** (n=25) ↓ **(n=3)**
Risk-Avoidance (RA)	**H- RA** (n=25) ↓ **(n=3)**	**L –RA** (n=25) ↓ **(n=3)**

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Data analyses for research questions 1, 2, and 3

According to the first three research questions: (1) Do different language ability levels have a significant effect on students‟ oral communication ability? And if they do, how much is the effect size?; (2) Do types of CSs have a significant effect on students‟ oral communication ability? And if they do, how much is the effect size?; (3) Is there any significant interaction effect between different language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication ability? And if there is, how much is each effect size? The data analysis for these three questions was the two-way analysis of variance (2x2 ANOVA) which was used to examine the following main effects and interaction effect:

1. The effect of language ability groups: high and low ability groups, on students‟ oral communication ability;
2. The effect of CSs: risk-taking (RT) and risk-avoidance strategies (RA), on students‟ oral communication ability;
3. The interaction effect between students‟ language ability and types of CSs on their oral communication ability.

To answer the hypotheses, the F-ratio of the estimates of the between group and within-group variances was first calculated. Then, the value of the F-ratio in a table of

F-values was considered in order to determine whether it was statistically significant or not. If it is statistically significant, it means that the overall differences among the groups are not due to chance. Therefore, the null-hypotheses are rejected and the effect size was estimated (Bachman, 2004).

In conclusion, to answer the first, second, and third research questions regarding the main effects of students‟ language ability levels and types of CSs, and the interaction effect between them on their oral communication ability, the 2x2 ANOVA was used to compare the means of the students‟ OCT scores.

3.5.2 Data analysis for research question 4

To answer the fourth research question, the independent t-test and descriptive statistics were computed to examine whether there was a significant difference between the students with high and low abilities in terms of using types of CSs towards the SUSTI report. Content analysis using the data obtained from the audio-recorded OCT was conducted to confirm and cross validate the findings from the questionnaire analysis.

According to the coding system used in this study, the transcriptions of students‟ speech samples were analysed for the obvious features elicited from each type of CS in order to differentiate between high- and low ability students in terms of the types of CS used**.** For example, social-affective strategies have clear features of controlling anxiety and avoiding silence to communicate smoothly. So, number of words produced was compared with periods of silence. Moreover, as speakers use fluency-oriented strategies to increase the clarity of their speech, there was a comparison between the number of words produced and the number of unclearly pronounced words. Another example involves message-abandonment strategies tin which speakers give up on their attempts to communicate by leaving messages unfinished. The use of such strategies was detected through a comparison between the number of words produced and the number of unfinished sentences in the response. The following table shows the coding system of content analysis in this study**.**

Table 3.7: Content Analysis for the Obvious Features Elicited from Each Type of Communication Strategies

Types of CSs	The use of such strategies detected through the comparison between the number of words produced and
Risk-taking strategies	
1. Social-affective strategies	Periods of silence.
2. Fluency-oriented strategies	The number of unclearly pronounced words resulting from slips of the students‟ tongues.
3. Accuracy-oriented strategies	The number of failures or grammatical mistakes, and attempts at self-correction.
4. Non-verbal strategies	Conducting the observation instead.
5. Help-seeking strategies	Frequency of pauses.
6. Circumlocution strategies	The number of indirect and unclear sentences.
Risk-avoidance strategies	
1. Message-abandonment strategies	The number of unfinished sentences.
2. Message-reduction and alteration strategies	The number of familiar words used to replace the target words.
3. Time-gaining strategies	The number of fillers or hesitations.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presented the results and discussions of the research entitled "The Effects of English Language Ability and Types of Communication Strategies on Oral Communication Ability of Thai University Students". The purposes of this study were:

- to examine the effect of language ability levels on their oral communication ability, and to investigate the effect size;
- to examine the effect of types of communication strategies (CSs) on students‟ oral communication ability, and to investigate the effect size;
- to investigate the interaction effect between students with different language ability levels and types of communication strategies (CSs) on their oral communication ability, and to investigate the effect size; and
- to investigate types of communication strategies which are used by students with different language ability levels,

with the following research hypotheses:

- HO_1: There is no significant effect of students with different language ability levels on their oral communication abilities.
- HO_2: Types of CSs have no significant effect on students‟ oral communication abilities.
- HO_3: There is no significant interaction effect between language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication abilities.

Regarding the proposed hypotheses, it was found that there were two rejected hypotheses and one accepted hypothesis. The details were provided in this chapter.

The data were presented in tables and figures and the interpretations of them were done in prose. The data were presented and discussed in four sections as follows:

Section one: Discussion about students‟ English language ability

Section two: Results of students‟ oral communication ability towards the OCT

Section three: Results and discussions of the main effects of, and interaction effects between language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication ability; including their effect sizes

Section four: Results of students‟ communication strategies used in speaking tasks towards the SUSTI and reports of content analysis of using CSs towards the speech samples of the OCT

Section one: Discussion about students' English language ability

As students‟ English language ability was one of the examined variables, 300 students were categorized into two groups, high and low abilities, based on their average grades of their English speaking course, the highest and the lowest grades that they received in their previous English courses. So, the two groups of language ability levels referred to the overall language ability, rather than the speaking ability. Standard deviations were used to divide the students into two groups: the high and low ability groups. The high ability group consisted of the students who obtained average grades above the +1 S.D. in their English courses and the low ability group contained the students whose grades were lower than -1 S.D. from the courses.

The mean of the 300 students‟ average grades and the S.D. were calculated and presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of the Students' Average Grades

Summary of Students' Average Grades	
Mean	**3.13**
Standard Error	0.02
Median	3.13
Mode	3.10
Standard Deviation	**0.36**
Sample Variance	0.13
Range	2.17
Minimum	1.83
Maximum	4.00
Count (n)	300

After computing, the mean of the students‟ average grades was equal to **3.13**, while the S.D. was 0.36. Therefore, +1 S.D. is **3.49** and -1 S.D. was **2.77**. It might be concluded that the high-English language ability group could be defined as the students who obtained the average grade more than **3.49**, while the low ability group was the students whose average grade was lower than **2.77**.

Section two: Results of students' oral communication ability towards the OCT

In order to investigate the students‟ oral communication ability, the students had to be assessed through the Oral Communication Test (OCT). The OCT comprised four sub-tasks: a warm-up task, an interview task, a description task, and a problem-solving task. As it was a semi-direct speaking test, the test-takers were required to communicate information in response to the tape-recorder. After that, their speech records were rated by three trained raters and the average scores were obtained as the overall score.

According to the OCT scales (modified from O‟Loughlin, 2007; and Schaefer, 2008; see Appendix F), it seemed to be effective because the scales were related to one another and also distincted enough so that each scale provided information about a unique aspect of a test-taker‟s oral communication ability. Because of these qualifications of the scales, Sawaki (2007) pointed out that convergent validity and discriminant validity of the scales are provided.

After rating, the results show that there were no students who reach level 6. The majority of the students‟ oral communication ability scores were in the range from level 3 to 5, whereas the minority of the group is classified in level 2 and level 1. As it can be seen from Table 4.2, there are 8.80% (22 from 250 students) who are in level 2, and 5.20% (13 students) who are classified as level 1.

Table 4.2: Results of Students' Oral Communication Ability

Level	No. of students	Percentages
Level 6	0	0
Level 5	44	17.60
Level 4	98	39.20
Level 3	73	29.20
Level 2	22	8.80
Level 1	13	5.20
n= 250		

It seemed that the test-takers might be able to fairly communicate general information with spoken English, especially in familiar situations. Some limitations of their spoken English use occurred due to the fact that there was a limited control of basic grammatical structures, and a lack of vocabulary in their word-banks. In spite of some limitations, it appeared that almost all of the students were able to express common concepts or ideas that the task requires.

Section three: Results and discussions of the main effects, interaction effects and their effect sizes between language ability levels and types of CSs on students' oral communication ability

After 250 students were identified by their language ability level (high or low ability level), by types of CSs (risk-taking or risk-avoidance strategies) reported from the SUSTI, and by their oral communication ability (scores from the OCT), they were assigned into four groups. The four groups consisted of the groups of students with: (1) high language ability level & risk-taking strategies, (2) high language ability level & risk-avoidance strategies, (3) low language ability level & risk-taking strategies, and (4) low language ability level & risk-avoidance strategies. When these 250 students were assigned into four groups, 100 samples (25 in each group) were randomly selected to participate in the main study.

Language ability groups

	High ability level (H)	*Low ability level (L)*	
Risk-taking (RT)	$\bar{X}1 = 4.40$ (H-RT) **(n= 25)**	$\bar{X}2 = 2.52$ (L-RT) **(n= 25)**	$\bar{X}_{RT} = 3.46$
Strategies			
Risk-Avoidance (RA)	$\bar{X}3 = 4.16$ (H-RA) **(n=25)**	$\bar{X}4 = 2.00$ (L-RA) **(n= 25)**	$\bar{X}_{RA} = 3.08$
	$\bar{X}_H = 4.28$	$\bar{X}_L = 2.26$	

Figure 4.1: ANOVA Sample Means

According to Figure 4.1, the data shows that the mean scores of the Oral Communication Test (OCT) for both groups of high language ability students were higher than those for low language ability students and the average performance for students using risk-taking strategies was higher than that of the students using risk-avoidance strategies.

In order to answer the first, the second, and the third research questions, the analysis of ANOVA was conducted. As regards the effects of language ability and types of communication strategies on the OCT scores (based on the students‟ oral communication ability) of Thai university students, the effects of language ability (refers to high and low ability groups) and types of communication strategies (refers to risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies) are presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: ANOVA for Gains in Oral Communication Ability Related to Types of Communication Strategies (CSs) and Language Ability Levels

Source	SS	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
LANGUAGE ABILITY	102.010	1	102.010	235.408**	.000	.710
TYPES OF CSs	3.610	1	3.610	8.331**	.005	.080
ABILITY* TYPES OF CSs	.490	1	.490	1.131	.290	.012
Error	41.600	96	.433			
Total	1217.000	100				
Corrected Total	147.710	99				

** $p \leq .01$

Regarding the ANOVA, the first consideration was the ratio between SS (error) and SS (total) which was regarded as the needed assumption. This must be considered before moving to the conclusion of the hypothesis testing. If this condition was neglected and the researcher rushed to the conclusion of the hypothesis testing results, it might lead to erroneous conclusions.

According to Table 4.3, the SS (error) in this study was equal to 41.6 while the SS (total) was 147.71. It could be seen that SS (error) value was very little compared with SS (total) value. It means that this research was well controlled from the effect of other external variables. It could be implied that most of the variations were caused by the change of the factors within the research study itself.

When examining the F- value of the SS of the language ability level factor, it could be seen that its value was much more than the value of the types of strategies. It means that when changing the value of the language ability level while focusing on the same group of the types of strategies, it affected the output (oral communication ability) more than the change of the types of strategies of the same language ability group.

Regarding the hypothesis testing of this research study, there were three hypotheses which were tested using ANOVA. They were:

HO_1: There is no significant effect of students with different language ability levels on their oral communication abilities.

HO_2: The types of CSs have no significant effect on students‟ oral communication abilities.

HO_3: There is no significant interaction effect between language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication abilities.

To answer the hypotheses, if the F-ratio of the estimates between groups and within-group variances is larger than the F-critical, it means that the overall difference among the groups is not due to chance. Therefore, the null-hypotheses are rejected (Bachman, 2004). According to the results from the ANOVA report (Table 4.3), the observed values of F would be compared with their critical values. The critical value of

F is 3.94 for the .05 level, so the first and second null-hypotheses of this study were rejected, while the third one was accepted.

Focusing on the first hypothesis: the main effect of the factor of language ability levels on students‟ oral communication ability (Table 4.3), the F-calculated was 235.41 which was larger than the F-critical (3.94) for the .05 level. Therefore, it could be concluded that the difference in language ability levels (High and Low language ability levels) had a significant effect on the students‟ oral communication ability, $F(1, 96) = 235.41$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.71$. The high language ability group outperformed the low language ability group. Figure 4.2 illustrates that the students with high language ability were likely to have high ability in oral communication, while students with low language ability might have low ability in oral communication. The high language ability students performed significantly better than those from the low language ability group. The mean of the first group was 4.28, but the mean of the second one was 2.26.

With regard to the effect size, the partial Eta squared [$\eta_p^2 = SS_{effect} / (SS_{effect} + SS_{error})$], was employed. According to Hopkins (2002), the effect size was very large ($\eta_p^2 = 0.71$) which means high language ability students and low language ability students were very different in their oral communication abilities.

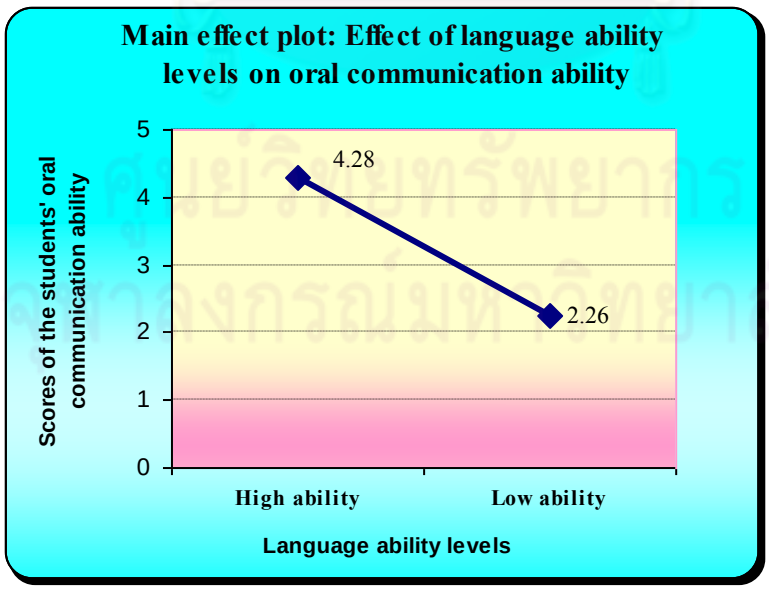


Figure 4.2: The Effects of Language Ability Levels on Oral Communication Ability

From the analysis, it could be concluded that language ability had an effect on the oral communication ability observed from the OCT scores. The findings revealed that the OCT could significantly distinguish the students with high language ability from those with low language ability. In other words, the two high language ability groups (high/RT and high/RA) performed better than the two low language ability groups (low/RT and low/RA), no matter what types of CSs they employed. This might indicate that the factor of English language ability levels had a stronger effect on the success in the OCT performance than the factor of types of CSs. This finding did not go beyond the expectation that students with higher language ability could have higher ability in oral communication. It was in agreement with the study of Chen (1990) stating that the high ability students obtained a mean score significantly higher than the score achieved by the low ability ones in terms oral communication ability. This might also reinforce the idea of Brown (2001) that successful oral communication required enough degree of knowledge of linguistic abilities.

Focusing on the second main effect, types of CSs on students‟ oral communication ability, the result from Table 4.3 shows that the F-calculated of this variable was 8.33 which was larger than 3.94 at the .05 level. Thus, it might be concluded that the different types of communication strategies the students use (risk-taking strategies and risk-avoidance-strategies) affect their oral communication ability, $F(1, 96) = 8.33$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.08$. In other words, there was a significant effect of types of CSs on students‟ oral communication ability. It could be seen from Figure 4.3 that the students who used risk-taking strategies performed significantly better in oral communication than the students applying risk-avoidance strategies. The mean of the former was **3.46**, while the mean of the latter was **3.08**. (see Figure 4.3).

However, the partial Eta squared value ($\eta_p^2 = 0.08$) indicated that this was a relatively small effect size (Hopkins, 2002), which means the students using risk-taking strategies and those using risk-avoidance strategies were a little different in performing the OCT.

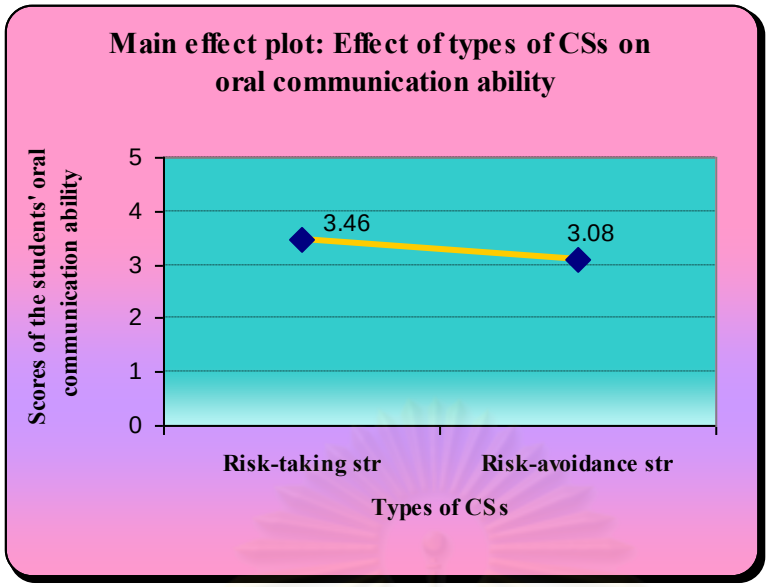


Figure 4.3: The Effects of Types of CSs on Oral Communication Ability

The findings show that the OCT was able to distinguish between the students using risk-taking strategies and those using risk-avoidance strategies, even though there was not much difference between the means of the two groups. The reasons underlying this finding might be attributed to the constructs of the test. The Oral Communication Test (OCT) was intentionally developed with the format of a semi-direct speaking test to avoid bias from interlocutors. It was possible that the human interlocutors might introduce a threat to reliability here (Stansfield, 1991; Stansfield & Kenyon, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c; cited in Fulcher, 2003). The OCT tasks required the test-takers to speak into a microphone after being given a prompt to speak, so the tasks seemed to be less interactive as a monologic speech. Therefore, some CSs used e.g., help-seeking strategies and non-verbal strategies might not be elicited clearly from the semi-direct test. Thus, the interaction appeared to be the heart of testing speaking (Fulcher, 2003). This rarely occurred in the semi-direct speaking test although it contained more situations leading to elicit more functions (Luoma, 1997). With less interactive tasks, the test-takers seemed to be unenthusiastic to rely heavily on the use of CSs. The high and low-proficiency students thus made the maximum use of their available linguistic skills. That was why the mean score of risk-taking strategies group was not greatly different from that of risk-avoidance strategies group. This suggests that the degree of interaction played an important role in the speaking test. O'Loughlin (2001: 169) supported that despite the problem of interlocutor variability, the face-to-face speaking

test was to be preferred in most situations where practical considerations allowed one to be used. However, further research studies directed specifically to this issue were needed. The computer-mediated tests might be applied to bridge the gap between the direct- and semi-direct speaking tests.

With regard to the interactional effect between CSs and language ability levels, the result shows that there was no significant interaction effect on the oral communication ability, $F(1, 96) = 1.13$, $p > .05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$. For better understanding, the best way to interpret the interaction was to plot the means of the groups. The figure could make it easier for the researchers and the readers to understand what had happened between the levels of the factors (Hatch & Farhady, 1982). Figure 4.4 yields the result, illustrating that both CSs and language ability levels affected the oral communication ability in the same direction.

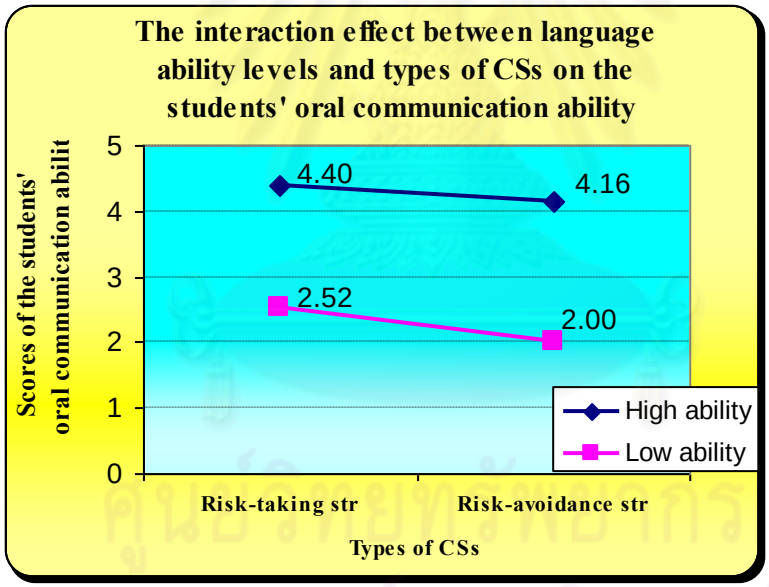


Figure 4.4: The Interaction Effect between Language Ability Levels and Types of CSs on the Students' Oral Communication Ability

To answer the third hypothesis, Figure 4.4 indicates that there was no significant interaction effect between CSs and language ability levels on the students‟ oral communication abilities. Therefore, the null hypothesis stated that there was no significant interaction effect between language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication abilities was accepted. However, from the graph it could

be said that the students with the high language ability level who used risk-taking strategies performed better than the students with the same level who used risk-avoidance strategies. The mean of the former was 4.40 while that of the latter was 4.16. Similarly, the students from the low ability group who used risk-taking strategies could gain slightly higher scores in the oral communication test than those from the risk-avoidance strategy group. The means were 2.52 and 2.00 respectively. It might be concluded that both language ability groups were better in their communication abilities when they used risk-taking strategies.

The finding indicates that there was no significant interaction effect between language ability and types of CSs on the OCT scores. The reasons which probably explain this finding were as follows:

Language ability, as the criteria set in this study at or above +1 standard deviation for high language ability students and at or below -1 standard deviation for low language ability students, possibly had a weak relationship with types of CSs. The range between -1 S.D. and +1 S.D. might not constitute a large enough gap to distinguish high and low language ability students. From this point, it was possible to conclude that the students might not have been as proficient as expected or had very low language ability. As a result, no interactional effect between language ability and types of CSs could be found in this study.

In addition, no training of using CS for the students might lead to no significant interaction. That was why the scores of OCT between the H/RT group and H/RA, and between the L/RT and the L/RA were not much different. Especially, the poor students who might not know what CSs look like should be at least introduced about the CSs before the test administration. Giving the students a picture of CSs and raising their awareness of strategies that they might use to solve communication problems could develop their oral communication ability (Nakatani, 2005). However, the degree of the oral proficiency development was still mainly based on the students'' potential language ability.

Section four: Results of students' communication strategy used in speaking tasks towards the SUSTI and reports of content analysis of using CSs towards the speech samples of the OCT

In order to answer the fourth research question, there was no significant difference in types of CS used by students with different language ability levels, a hundred students (50 high language ability students, and 50 low ones) were randomly selected from 250 third-year students studying at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce between January and February 2009. These samples were required to complete the questionnaire (SUSTI) right after they finished the speaking test (OCT).

Once collected, the data from the SUSTI were transferred to databases (Excel and SPSS) which enabled the data to be analysed. The following steps were employed.

1. The frequency of each strategy statement and the overall frequency of the CSs that the students used were calculated.

2. The data were examined for patterns of strategy use across all students. Also, the students were grouped according to their language proficiency levels.

3. And independent *t-test* was used in order to investigate whether there was any significant difference in the reported frequency of communication strategies (CSs) used by high and low- language ability students.

Focusing on the overall report frequency of strategy use across all students, the results of the SUSTI were analysed. Table 4.4 presents the demographic information of 100 test-takers. It was found that there were 18 males and 82 females, who filled out the questionnaire. Most test-takers were aged between 20-22 years old and were third-year students at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, their Grade Point Average (GPA) ranged from 2.00 to 4.00. They had enrolled in the speaking course, and their grades for this course ranged from D+ to A. Most of them (86%) received Grade A and B+ as the highest grade from their previous English courses, while the lowest grade they received seem to be various ranging from B+ to F. Furthermore, there were eight test-takers who had taken the TOEFL test before; two had taken the IELTS; 36 students had taken the TOEIC test; and other six had taken more than one standardized test. However, the majority of the test-takers, 48 per cent, have not taken any standardized tests before.

Table 4.4: The Test-takers' Information towards the SUSTI

Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) (English Version)

Part One: Demographic Information

Background	**Total/ Per cent**
1. Gender:	
Male	18
Female	82
2. Age:	
Less than 17	0
17-19	1
20-22	94
More than 23	5
3. GPA:	
Less than 2.00	0
2.00-2.50	19
2.51-3.00	33
3.01-3.50	29
3.51-4.00	19
4. The grade you received in the speaking course:	
A	29
B+	22
B	22
C+	14
C	10
D+	3
D	0
F	0
5. The highest grade you received in a previous English course:	
A	60
B+	26
B	10
C+	3
C	1
D+	0
D	0
F	0
6. The lowest grade you received in a previous English course:	
A	0
B+	11
B	14
C+	25
C	26
D+	10
D	10
F	4

7. Standardized tests taken

TOEFL	8
IELTS	2
TOEIC	36
Never taken any standardized tests	42
Others	6
CU-TEP+TOEIC	2
TOEFL+TOEIC	4

n = 100

Table 4.5 illustrates the test-takers‟ communication strategy used in the SUSTI. The 25 items were in Part Two of the SUSTI. The test-takers were required to rate their use of communication strategy when they communicate in English. The criteria were ranged from Usually (5) to Never (1). However, in order to be more precise and to make it easier to interpret and understand, the items of Part Two were rearranged according to the ranking of the mean.

Table 4.5: The Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and the Interpretation of the Frequency of Students' Communication Strategies Used in the SUSTI

During a communication in English, ……..

No.	Questions	5 Usually (%)	4 Mainly (%)	3 Some-Times (%)	2 Rarely (%)	1 Never (%)	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Inter-preta-tion
5	I use words which are familiar to me. *(Message-reduction strategies)*	70	30	0	0	0	**4.71**	0.46	Usually
18	I use gestures if I cannot express myself. *(Non-verbal strategies)*	32	54	12	2	0	**4.19**	0.71	Mainly
14	I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake. *(Accuracy-oriented strategies)*	29	54	15	2	0	**4.17**	0.67	Mainly
21	I ask for repetition; such as „pardon?“, or „could you say it again?“, when a message is not clear to me. *(Help-seeking strategies)*	37	39	22	2	0	**4.12**	0.84	Mainly
4	When I am talking, I try to make eye-contact. *(Non-verbal strategies)*	27	59	14	0	0	**4.10**	0.66	Mainly
2	I try to relax when I feel anxious. *(Social-affective strategies)*	20	61	16	3	0	**3.97**	0.69	Some times

13	I try to enjoy the conversation. *(Social-affective strategies)*	29	54	15	2	0	**3.97**	0.91	Some times
16	I reduce the message and use simple expressions. *(Message-reduction strategies)*	15	61	24	0	0	**3.93**	0.61	Some times
23	I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent. *(Message-reduction strategies)*	20	51	29	0	0	**3.93**	0.84	Some times
22	I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say. *(Social-affective strategies)*	20	46	29	5	0	**3.88**	0.84	Some times
7	When the message is not clear, I ask my participants for clarification directly. *(Help-seeking strategies*)	19	41	38	2	0	**3.85**	0.94	Some times
15	I describe the characteristics of the object instead of using the exact word when I am not sure. *(Circumlocution strategies)*	12	64	22	2	0	**3.83**	0.63	Some times
20	I pay attention to grammar and word-order. *(Accuracy-oriented strategies)*	10	41	41	8	0	**3.63**	0.77	Some times
9	I pay attention to the intonation and pronunciation. *(Fluency-oriented strategies)*	20	37	31	10	2	**3.63**	0.94	Some times
12	I use fillers; such as „well, you know, okay, umm, or uh‟ when I do not know what to say. *(Time-gaining strategies)*	22	44	24	8	2	**3.63**	1.02	Some times
17	I encourage myself to use English even though this may cause mistakes. *(Social-affective strategies)*	10	46	44	0	0	**3.61**	0.67	Some times
19	I give a good impression to the listener. *(Social-affective strategies)*	10	44	46	0	0	**3.61**	0.63	Some times
25	I use facial expressions if I cannot express what I want to say. *(Non-verbal strategies)*	27	27	34	12	0	**3.54**	0.95	Some times
1	I pay attention to the conversation flow, and avoid silence. *(Fluency-oriented strategies)*	10	36	47	7	0	**3.49**	0.78	Some times
6	I think of what I want to say in Thai, then construct the English sentence. *(Accuracy-oriented strategies)*	10	41	30	19	0	**3.39**	0.92	Some times

3	I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned. *(Accuracy-oriented strategies)*	3	32	60	5	0	**3.32**	0.61	Some times
11	I try to elicit help from my interlocutor indirectly; such as using rising intonation. *(Help-seeking strategies)*	2	22	61	10	5	**3.02**	0.79	Some times
10	I give up expressing a message if I cannot make myself understood. *(Message-abandonment strategies)*	5	17	39	32	7	**2.78**	0.96	Rarely
8	If I face some language difficulties, I will leave a message unfinished. *(Message-abandonment strategies)*	2	12	46	28	12	**2.63**	0.91	Rarely
24	I use some phrases; like „it is a good question." or „it is rather difficult to explain", in order to gain more time to think what I should say. *(Time-gaining strategies)*	2	12	37	27	22	**2.41**	0.95	Rarely

n= 100

The average reported frequency of the CSs use was calculated across all students for each strategy, as presented in Table 4.5. It seemed that the trend of using communication strategies were likely to be at the high-end of the continuum. There were five out of 25 items (20%) that were selected by the test-takers as these strategies were used "mainly"; 17 items (68%) were stated as these strategies were used "sometimes"; and three items (12%) were reported as these strategies were used "rarely".

The most frequent communication strategy that the test-takers used during their communication in English was „using familiar words". The test-takers usually used this strategy ($\overline{X}_5$= 4.71). This item was under message-reduction strategies, which was a sub-strategy of risk-avoidance strategies. It might be interpreted that most students, no matter what levels of their language ability were, tend not to select words or structures they were unfamiliar with as to avoid making mistakes.

In addition, the second rank of students" communication strategy use went to non-verbal strategies. The students reported in Item 18 that they mainly used gestures to

enhance their communication ($\overline{X}_{18}$= 4.19). It seemed that they employed this kind of strategies as behaviour aids to verbal output (Lazaraton, 2002).

The third rank came to Item 14, the students mainly corrected their utterances when making mistakes in conversation ($\overline{X}_{14}$= 4.17). As this item was under accuracy-oriented strategies, it seemed that the students were willing to be conscious with the correctness of their utterances. If they noticed the mistakes, they were not reluctant to correct them with new utterance they thought it was more accurate or appropriate than what they had just said. In fact, students with low language ability level might not notice the mistakes produced, thus they might use accuracy-oriented strategies less than the higher language proficiency students. This topic was further discussed in the section of content analysis (Page 148).

Moreover, the fourth rank goes to Item 21 which was under help-seeking strategies. It shows that the students mainly asked for repetition when a message was not clear for them ($\overline{X}_{21}$= 4.12). The result indicates that the students tended to be active and not to be afraid of losing face when turning to others for help.

Corresponding with Item 18 which was under non-verbal strategies, the students also reported in Item 4 that they mainly made eye-contact with their participants ($\overline{X}_{4}$= 4.10). It can be seen that the students believed that non-verbal strategies were effective in helping them enhance the communication breakdown.

Considering Items 2 and 13, the test-takers reported that they sometimes used these social-affective strategies. The results show that when the students felt anxious, they tended to manage their anxiety with relaxation ($\overline{X}_{2}$= 3.97), and tried to enjoy the conversation ($\overline{X}_{13}$= 3.97).

Interestingly, the bottom three strategies that the students use least were under risk-avoidance strategies, which were “giving up expressing a message” ($\overline{X}_{10}$=2.78), “leaving a message unfinished” ($\overline{X}_{8}$=2.63) (Message-Abandonment strategies), and “using some phrases, like „It‟s a good question” to gain more time to think ($\overline{X}_{24}$=2.41) (Time-Gaining strategies).

Focusing on Item 24 which was under time-gaining strategies, the students sometimes used this type of strategies ($\overline{X}_{24}$= 2.41). They tended not to use some phrases, like „it is a good question", to gain more time to think what to say. It might be because this pattern of the strategies might relate more to the Western culture than Eastern culture. Thus, students might be reluctant to use sentences like this to gain thinking-time. Meanwhile, regarding Item 12 "using fillers" which was under the same strategies, the test-takers tended to use this strategy much more frequently, as the mean value was 3.97. It might be inferred from this information that although the two patterns were under the same strategy, the test-takers might select some that they were familiar with or they though it was the most effective.

In order to investigate the differences in types of CSs used by students with different language ability levels (high and low levels), the reported frequency of strategy use towards SUSTI by these two groups of students were focused. This was done in order to answer the fourth research question. Additionally, the results of content analysis of 12 speech samples performed in the OCT were aimed to conduct the qualitative analysis in order to obtain the information in depth, and triangulate the results of the SUSTI here.

After dividing the sample into two groups (high and low ability), their reports on the use of communication strategies were analysed by comparing the mean of the frequency they used in each sub-strategy. The results of t-test and descriptive statistics of the low and high English language ability groups using communication strategies towards the SUSTI are illustrated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: The Nine Communication Strategies (CSs) Employed by the Low and High English Proficiency Groups towards the SUSTI

Categories	High proficiency Mean (n=50)	SD	Low proficiency Mean (n=50)	SD	*t*-value	Mean Comparison
Risk-taking strategies						
1. Social-affective strategies	3.84	0.38	3.33	0.52	**5.17*****	H>L
2. Fluency-oriented strategies	3.97	0.63	3.41	0.51	**4.54*****	H>L
3. Accuracy-oriented strategies	3.64	0.47	3.52	0.37	**1.44**	NS
4. Non-verbal strategies	3.97	0.40	3.85	0.50	**1.34**	NS
5. Help-seeking strategies	3.85	0.49	3.41	0.53	**5.40*****	H>L
6. Circumlocution strategies	4.00	0.78	3.67	0.74	**2.23***	H>L
Total	3.88	0.14	3.53	0.19	**4.43****	H>L
Risk-avoidance strategies						
1. Message-abandonment strategies	3.06	0.59	3.00	0.45	**0.61**	NS
2. Message-reduction and alteration strategies	4.07	0.53	3.86	0.93	**1.37**	NS
3. Time-gaining strategies	2.82	0.56	3.22	0.51	**3.65****	L>H
Total	3.32	0.66	3.36	0.45	**0.09**	NS

H = high language ability students, L = low language ability students, NS = no significant difference

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

A t-test was performed on the comparison of the means of CSs used by the two groups. The results in Table 4.6 indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups in the employment of risk-taking strategies. The high ability group employed risk-taking strategies significantly more than the low ability group. The *t*-value was 4.43. When examining the sub-categories, the high ability students used social-affective, fluency-oriented, help-seeking, and circumlocution strategies significantly more frequently than the low ability students, the *t*-values being 5.17, 4.54, 5.40, and 2.23 respectively.

In the overall risk-avoidance strategies, there was no significant difference between the two groups. The *t*-value was .09. However, it was interesting to find that the low ability students used time-gaining strategies more frequently than their

counterparts, the *t*-value being 3.65. This was probably because time-gaining strategies were surface strategies which did not involve making connections between known and unknown knowledge (Leaver et al., 2005). It was possible that the low ability students who had more difficulties due to their limited L2 knowledge had to resort to using this type of strategies more frequently to compensate for their limitations (Qingquan et al., 2008). Also, the use of time-gaining strategies did not need much effort and time and it contributed less to language learning (Leaver et al., 2005).

The explanations underlying the findings might be as follows. Although the students exploited similar sources to compensate for their insufficient knowledge of the target language, the proportion of the sources they drew upon might differ, based on their language ability levels. It could be seen that the high ability students who had a greater formal control over the target language, and were therefore in a better position to rely upon their knowledge of the target language, would certainly prefer to choose risk-taking strategies which were more active, enthusiastic, and meaningful CSs.

As for the low ability students, their limited language ability prevented them from relying upon linguistic-based CSs because these CSs drew heavily on students‟ formal knowledge of the target language. Thus, they tried to compensate for this by drawing upon their world knowledge instead. As a result, they tended to employ risk-avoidance strategies, especially time-gaining strategies.

The last reason might relate to the cultural characteristics. Unlike the Western, the stereotypes of Thai students tended to be more passive and silence-oriented (Kirtikara, 2000). Therefore, the low ability students were more comfortable to employ risk-avoidance strategies, outstandingly using hesitations and unfinished sentences, to solve problems in communication.

Considering each sub-strategy, it might be pointed out that message-reduction and alteration strategies were outstanding because this type of communication strategies were used most in both groups of students (The means are 4.07 and 3.86). It could be inferred that either the students were in the high or low-proficiency group, they generally tended to use familiar expressions that they could use confidently in order to avoid a communication breakdown. They might try to avoid taking risks by using new

or unfamiliar words, even though they sometimes realized that their utterances were far from their communication goal.

With regard to types of risk-taking strategies, there was a significant difference in the use of social-affective strategies, and fluency-oriented strategies between the two proficiency groups. The high language ability group reported that they were likely to use these two strategies in order to enhance their communication. This finding corresponded to the study of Nakatani (2006) showing that there were significant differences between high and low language proficiency groups in reporting the use of social-affective strategies and fluency-oriented strategies. The results might indicate that students who recognized their use of these two types of strategies might be higher level English speakers as they were aware of using strategies for controlling some affective factors, and they also realized the use of strategies for keeping the conversation flow. The reasons for the high language ability students reported more use of these strategies might be that the higher-ability group tended to take more risk in actively encouraging themselves to express what they wanted to say, even though this could cause mistakes. When they felt anxious, they also tried to relax, therefore, the stress cannot interfere with their communication.

Regarding the significant difference in employing social-affective strategies, it could be inferred that the students with high ability level often take a positive attitude towards English while the low ability ones were not likely to do so. It plausibly indicates that the high ability students knew better how to regulate their emotions by coping more efficiently with occurred emotional problems and tended to intentionally seek out opportunities to interact with the target language communicatively in order to enhance their proficiency of the target language than their low ability students (Stern, 1983; Qingquan et al., 2008).

For using fluency-oriented strategies, a significant difference was found between the two groups. This seemed to support the idea that the higher level group might emphasize keeping the conversation flow, and also avoid silence which could lead to a conversation ending. They attempted to speak clearly with correct pronunciation and intonation as they were able to do so. This reflected an awareness of

the communicative nature of the language. They might also have their confidence in their ability to manage any communication breakdown.

With regard to using accuracy-oriented strategies, the use of this kind of CSs, involving noticing and correcting English mistakes, required a positive attitude towards mistakes and the ability to monitor the language production which leads to accuracy in language use (Qingquan et al., 2008). In other words, the use of such strategy needed a certain level of language ability. Therefore, the high ability students who reached that level of language ability were able to be aware of their mistakes and correct them. However, the SUSTI result shows that there was no significant difference in employing this kind of CSs between the two groups.

Although no significant difference between the two groups was found, non-verbal strategies were reported at a high level in the frequency of using this kind of strategies by both groups of the students (The means are 3.97 and 3.85). This means that Thai students were likely to use their gestures and the facial-expressions in coordination with their utterances in order to help them express what they wanted to say. The finding corresponds with the study of Chen (1990), showing that non-verbal strategies produce no significant difference between the two groups. The high ability students might employ this kind of CSs to express their emotions, providing an effective backup to their communication. For example, eye-contacts might be used in order to attract the attention of the participants. In contrast, the more frequent use of the strategy by the low ability students indicates that they had fewer language resources at their disposal that enabled them to communicate, so they had to resort more frequently to using gestures to help them express ideas.

Another point that should be focused on is the students‟ use of circumlocution strategies. It was reported that among risk-taking strategies, circumlocution strategies were employed most by the high language ability students (the mean is 4.00). This result corresponded with the study of Luangsaengthong (2002), stating that Thai university students use approximation, paraphrasing or circumlocution strategy the most. The reason might be that the high language ability students had a greater repertoire of English resources for circumlocution and were more likely to be risk-takers trying to use whatever resources of the target language available rather than

leaving the message unfinished. For instance, as the high ability students had more stock of vocabulary-items in their word-banks than the low ability students, when they got stuck on a word in communication, they could change to use the others to express what they wanted to say.

Regarding SUSTI results about help-seeking strategies, the high ability students‟ more frequent use of this kind of CSs indicated that they were more active and tended not to be afraid of losing face when turning to others for help. The low ability students, on the other hand, might be unwilling to look foolish and afraid that others would regard their questions as silly and laugh at them (Qingquan et al., 2008).

Focusing on risk-avoidance strategies, it was found that there was no difference in the use of message-abandonment strategies between the two ability groups. Nakatani (2006) explained that although this type of strategies was very common among low-proficiency foreign language speakers, it might be sometimes used by all foreign language proficiency levels of speakers when they immediately lacked strategic competence or had no choice.

However, it was interesting to note that the low language ability group reported more use of time-gaining strategies than the high ability group. This might be because the limitations in language proficiency of the low-proficiency group might cause them to use some fillers such as „umm‟, „uh‟,and „okay‟, in order to gain more time to think what to say. This finding supported the study of Yoshida-Morise (1998) in that the lower-language proficiency students significantly used fillers more than the higher-language proficiency ones.

Overall, it might be concluded that the language ability affected types of CSs selected. This result agreed with a number of studies e.g., Poulisse (1990), Purpula (1999), Yoshida-Morise (1998), and Wannaruk (2003), who found that the students with high and low language ability utilize CSs differently. In the light of what researchers such as Green and Oxford (1995) had already discovered regarding the use of language learning strategies among high language ability students, it was not a surprise to discover that the high ability group of students in this study reported higher frequency of risk-taking strategy use than the low ability group did. The means were

3.88 and 3.53 respectively. There was also a significant difference between the two groups ($t= 4.43$, $p\leq.05$). This result appeared to support the belief of Nakatani (2006) that, in general, students with more proficiency in language reported using risk-taking strategies more frequently than less proficient students. Considering risk-avoidance strategies, although there was no significant difference between students with high language ability level and students with low ability level in the use of risk-avoidance strategies, it can be seen that the low language ability students tended to utilise this type of strategies a bit more frequently than the high ability students. The mean of the low ability group was 3.36 and that of the high ability group was 3.32. The result corresponds with the research done by Chen (1990), supporting that risk-avoidance strategies produced no significant difference between the two groups.

In summary, the analysis of the results shows that the students with different language ability levels drew upon different sources of knowledge to solve their communication problems. The high ability students relied more upon linguistic knowledge of the target language, as they tended to use risk-taking strategies such as social-affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, help-seeking strategies and circumlocution strategies, whereas the low ability students seemed to highly depend upon world knowledge, as they used time-gaining strategies in risk-avoidance strategies. This phenomenon could probably be explained by the background of language resources. The high ability students were equipped with more knowledge of the target language and had relatively richer resources to draw upon in communication. When some communication problems occurred, they were able to bring those resources to enhance their communication. However, as the CSs were aimed to serve as a compensation for the inadequacies in the target language, the limited knowledge of low ability students seemed to be an obstruction to their use of CSs. Although they really needed to compensate more, their language ability did not reach the level to do so. Therefore, it can be seen that the low ability students preferred to employ time-gaining strategies, since this type of strategies needed the least language knowledge to apply.

The following part deals with the content analysis of using CSs towards the speech samples of the OCT. When looking at specific types of CSs used by students with different language ability levels, the content analysis was considered along with the results of the SUSTI. Three speech samples of students performed in the OCT were

randomly selected from each cell, so there were totally 12 students participating in the qualitative analysis. Figure 4.5 illustrates four groups of speech samples who participated in the content analysis.

	Language ability groups		
	High ability level (H)	*Low ability level (L)*	
Risk-Taking	**(H-RT)** **n=3 (selected from 25)**	**(L-RT)** **n=3 (selected from 25)**	(RT)
Strategies	**(H-RA)**	**(L-RA)**	
Risk-Avoidance	**n=3 (selected from 25)**	**n= 3 (selected from 25)**	(RA)

Figure 4.5: Four Groups of Speech Samples Participating in the Content Analysis

Regarding communication strategies (CSs) used in this study, nine CSs for coping with speaking problems during communication were outlined, based on the categories of Corder (1983), risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies, and the categories modified from taxonomies of Nakatani (2005 & 2006), i.e. social-affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, non-verbal strategies, help-seeking strategies, circumlocution strategies, message-abandonment strategies, message-reduction and alteration strategies, and time-gaining strategies. In this section, these nine strategies were used as guidelines to analyse the test-takers‟ speech production in taking the OCT. The analyses were performed on the transcriptions of 12 recorded Oral Communication Test (OCT), categorized into four groups (see Table 4.7). Using the conversation analysis transcription system, basic features and symbols were used in this study like in the classical system explicated by several books such as Atkinson & Heritage (1984), Ochs et al., (1996), and Lazaraton (2002). A list of symbols and full versions of the transcription can be found in Appendix G.

Based on the results from the questionnaire and the content analysis, the results and discussions were focus on the nine strategies.

1. Social affective strategies: The students might try to control their own anxiety and enjoy the process of oral communication in order to communicate smoothly. Thus, they might be willing to encourage themselves to use English and to take risk in making mistakes. They behave in such a way as to give a good impression and avoid silence during the test. Therefore, the attempt to control their periods of pauses were used as a feature to elicit the strategies used by comparing the number of words produced and periods of silence in responding to the description task, "Please describe a person who is important to you" (see Table 4.7). In this study, the word referred to "Number of words produced" refers to "a unit of language which means something" (Oxford dictionary 2003). Thus, incomplete words were not counted.

Table 4.7: Number of Words Produced and Periods of Silence When Using Social-Affective Strategies

Categories	**Number of words produced**	**Periods of silence**	**Average No. of words produced/ average period of silence**	**Average percentage between No. of words produced and period of pausing time**
High/RT	(1) 104 words (2) 144 words (3) 112 words	(1) 11seconds (2) 6 seconds (one pause) (3) 10 seconds	120 words/9 sec.	7.50% (9x100/120)
	$\overline{X}$ = 120 words	$\overline{X}$ = 9 seconds		
High/RA	(1) 110 words (2) 105 words (3) 103 words	(1) 18 seconds (2) 4 seconds (one long pause) (3) 4 seconds	106 words/8.67 sec.	8.18% (8.67x100/106)
	$\overline{X}$ = 106 words	$\overline{X}$ = 8.67 seconds		
Low/RT	(1) 55 words (2) 61 words (3) 79 words	(1) 19.5 seconds (2) 16 seconds (3) 29 seconds	65 words/21.50 sec.	33.07% (21.50x100/65)
	$\overline{X}$ = 65 words	$\overline{X}$ = 21.50 seconds		
Low/RA	(1) 32 words (2) 20 words (3) 58 words	(1) 17 seconds (2) 5 seconds (3) 35.5 seconds	37 words/19 sec.	51.35% (19x100/37)
	$\overline{X}$ = 37 words	$\overline{X}$ = 19 seconds		

Following are examples of four utterances, the first one is the student with high level of English ability using risk-taking strategies (High/RT), the second one is the student with high level of English ability using risk-avoidance strategies (High/RA, the third one is the students with low level of English ability using risk-taking strategies (Low/RT), and the last one is the student with low level of English ability using risk-avoidance strategies (Low/RA).

High/RT(2): the most important person to me is mother (.) because she work really hard in order to take care of me and actually I might say she work really hard to take care of the whole family and she is the ideal of a tough women uh a strong woman and::: she taught me everything how to be a good guy how to be ah how to live live in a in a world happily and yeah I might say she has a great influence on me(6.0)and I know that she works very hard every day she will be tired she will be exhausted when she came home and even though I know this point I I I am not afraid to be like my mother I know that what I did is worth is worth to the loved one or the whole family

High/RA(2): first my mother is the most important she is the most important person to me and he she is the pretty all the time I'm I say I say love her everyday and I see she knows everything that I want and always respond to me all the time and another person she is my close friend that she stays in the same room who is the roommate nowadays he is a give me give me all of give me a favor::: that umm in the time that I need it (0.5) I I I and my friend are mate ten years ago since since since (long pause) oh I miss (indescribable sounds)

Low/RT(1): for me there are many people very the person who is important for me is my mother (1.0) because she gives me everything she gives me love (2.0) education and best care for me (3.0) she really understands me (.5) everything (6.0) she gives everything of my life (7.0) and in the future when I have a job I will give everything like she give to me

Low/RA(3): my: mom, father euh grandmum grandparent euh she's too. when I gave something her (1.0) she

(.5) she gave everything that I met she…(4.0) she take care me (.5) in everything (1.0) gave money? (4.0) when I sick she(5.0) she (1.0) she take care me (5.0) she gave (2.0) money (2.0) love (1.0) she love me I love my parent (1.0) very euh the most. (7.0) I am stay… I am stay in J (.5) now because she…(laugh)

Notes

( ) refers to a pausing time when a silence appears

(.) refers to a micropause when a silence of less than .2 seconds occurs

: refers to a lengthened sound, and more a prolonged stretch is illustrated by one more colon

(see Appendix G for the complete scripts of the four groups.)

Table 4.7 shows that the group of High/RT students used social-affective strategies the most when comparing between the number of words they produced and the attempt to control their period of pauses. On average they produced 120 words and the average pausing time was 9 seconds. In order to compare with the students in the other groups, the average percentage was used. It can be seen that the average percentage between the period of pausing time and the number of produced words was 7.50% (9x100/120) which means that there were 7.50 seconds of pausing time per 100 words the students produced. Similarly, in the group of High/RA students also employed this type of CSs. On average they produced 106 words and the average time of pausing was 8.67 seconds. When converting to percentage (8.67x100/106), the average pausing time was 8.18 seconds (8.18%). The two groups of high ability students appeared to utilise social-affective strategies much more than the other two groups of low ability students. The high ability students might cope more efficiently with emotional problems and intentionally seek out opportunities to interact with the target language use communicatively so they spent less time (Qingquan et al., 2008). Since the lower ability groups were poor in knowledge of the language, they were able to produce only less numbers of words and leave such a long period of pauses quite often. On average the Low/RT group produced 65 words and the average pausing time was 21.50 seconds. The average percentage was 33.07 (21.50x100/65) which means that the students paused totally 33.07 seconds when they produced 100 words. While the average number of words that the Low/RA group produced was 37 words and the average pausing time was 19 seconds. The percentage was 51.35 (19x100/37), meaning that the period of pausing time was 51.35 seconds per 100 words produced.

The result is consistent with the report of the SUSTI in that the high ability group reports more use of social-affective strategies. Moreover, the students using risk-taking strategies employed this type of CSs more than those using risk-avoidance strategies. It matches with the expectation that as this type of CSs was under risk-taking strategies, the students who were risky, especially the high ability ones, were able to utilize them effectively. It can be seen that the higher-ability group tended to take more risk in actively encouraging themselves to express what they wanted to say, even though this could cause mistakes. When they felt anxious, they also tried to relax, therefore the stress could not interfere with their communication. The finding also corresponds with the studies of Nakatani (2006) and Nakatani & Goh (2007) stating that when the reception problems occurred, there was a greater use of social-affective strategies by the high ability students in order to react smoothly as in a conversational shadowing for maintaining their interaction. The above examples of students‟ transcripts from High/RT group and Low/RA group presented clearly that there was an obvious difference between the two groups focusing on taking risks to use English while trying to keep a smooth conversation.

The reason behind these findings might be explained as follows. The studies of Grainger (1997) and Wharton (2000) revealed that Asian background students such as Chinese and Thai, were better at managing their affective state, leading to their preferences in the use of social-affective strategies. Especially the higher ability ones, they could control their target language use, so they might share the attention to the psychological aspect of the strategy use such as making themselves feel at ease to speak English. In contrast, because of the limitations of the lower ability students about the knowledge of the target language, they had to concentrate mostly on the content of their utterance prior to focusing on selecting some strategies.

2. Fluency-oriented strategies: The students pay attention to their pronunciation and emphasise clarity in their speech, they try to speak clearly and take their time in order not to send inappropriate messages (Nakatani 2006). Table 4.8 shows a comparison between the number of words produced and the number of unclearly pronounced words resulting from slips of the students‟ tongues in response to the test question about their plans to use English in the future.

Table 4.8: **Number of Words Produced and Unclearly Pronounced Words When Using Fluency-Oriented Strategies**

Categories	Number of words produced	Number of unclearly pronounced words	Average No. of words produced/average No. of unclearly pronounced words	Average percentage between No. of words produced and No. of unclearly pronounced words
High/ RT	(1) 76 words (2) 70 words (3) 60 words $\overline{X}$ = 68.67 words	(1) None (2) 2 (3) 1 $\overline{X}$ = 1	68.67/1	1.45% (1x100/68.67)
High/ RA	(1) 49 words (2) 72 words (3) 87 words $\overline{X}$ = 69.33 words	(1) None (2) 3 (3) 4 $\overline{X}$ = 2.30	69.33/2.3	3.32% (2.30x100/69.33)
Low/ RT	(1) 32 words (2) 37 words (3) 36 words * (2)&(3) repeated the same words many times $\overline{X}$ =35 words	(1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 2 $\overline{X}$ = 1.67	35/1.67	4.77% (1.67x100/35)
Low/ RA	(1) 16 words (2) 21 words (3) 22 words $\overline{X}$ = 19.67 words	(1) 3 (2) 1 (3) 3 $\overline{X}$ = 2.33	19.6/2.33	11.85% (2.33x100/19.67)

Following are examples of four utterances. The first one is the student with high level of English ability using risk-taking strategies (High/RT), the second one is the student with high level of English ability using risk-avoidance strategies (High/RA), the third one is the student with low level of English ability using risk-taking strategies (Low/RT), and the last one is the student with low level of English ability using risk-avoidance strategies (Low/ RA).

High/RT(1): I think (2.0) I'm gonna move myself to (1.0) foreign country like (2.0) Canada or America so in those country I can use my English so good

(1.0) and every time I want to (0.5) besides using English in daily life I will use it in my future career as I really want to work in a five star hotel overseas (0.5) that is why I have to practise and improve my English speaking skill as much as possible before going there

High/RA(2): in a very short plan I will use it I will use it urhh to find the information that I want to know like searching them from the internet and in my career I will I think I will I will (4.0) use it in my career (0.5) I would like to work in urh human resource department in a company (0.5) if I have excellent English skills I might have a high position there

Low/RT(2): My plan to use English in the future is uhm I want to study uhr oversea or maybe (2.0) I would like to work in a in America maybe because I I went there before and I have friend there

Low/RA(3): I think that.. major (1.0) major I study (1.0) can help me good job or high salary (1.0) and maybe (.5) [unidentified phrase] umm I ca::n study in abroad

Notes

: refers to a lengthened sound, and a prolonged stretch is illustrated by one more colon

hhh refers to an exhalation

(see Appendix G for all scripts of the four groups.)

Regarding the issue of attention to pronunciation, the result indicates that the High/RT group of students was markedly more likely to attend to pronunciation than the others. It shows that the average number of unclearly pronounced words was only one word when the students produced 68.67 words. On average there were only 1.45% of unclearly pronounced words, which means that if the students produce 100 words, there would be 1.45 unclearly pronounced words. Focusing on High/RA group, the students tended to be aware of their pronunciation. It can be seen that 3.32% of unclearly pronounced words appeared (2.30x100/69.33). On the contrary, the Low/RA group appeared to employ fluency-oriented strategies least. Comparing with the other groups, the average percentage of unclearly pronounced words produced by the Low/RA students was 11.85 (2.33x100/19.67), indicating that the Low/RT students

were more likely to focus on the pronunciation than those of Low/RA group. The Low/RT students produced 4.77% of unclearly pronounced words (1.67x100/35).

Table 4.8 presents that the higher-ability students in both groups employed fluency-oriented strategies more than the lower-ability ones. This finding is in line with Nakatani (2006), who revealed that the high ability group used this type of CSs more than the low ability students. However, when considering the number of words produced and unclearly pronounced words, it was found that the High/RT group and the High/RA produced similar number of words in their utterances, but there were more unclearly pronounced words produced by the High/RA. It might be concluded that at the same level of language ability, the students who took a risk tend to pronounce less unclear words than those who avoided risk taking to keep conversation flow.

Focusing on the transcripts, the high ability students tended to avoid silence and keep the conversation flowing by pronouncing words clearly. Apart from the issue of language ability, extroverted personality types and confidence in the use of language were factors which might promote the use of this strategy (Takeuchi et al., 2008). In general, higher ability students tended to be more confident with their ability, so they are able to speak more comfortably and produce smoother conversation. However, many slips of the tongue might arise due the high-pressure environment of the test, leading to words being uttered improperly or pronounced incorrectly.

Another reason for their attempt to pronounce properly might be the higher status of the interlocutor. They were conscious that the person they are talking to is not their friend and they are being assessed, so they tried hard to speak as perfectly as possible. This effect is called the „Hawthorne effect“ referring to the students who perform differently if they realize they are being studied (Dörnyei, 2007: 53). However, it is possible that some high ability students might unclearly pronounce words because they pay too much attention to their fluency (see Appendix G). It can be seen that when they got struck on some words, vowels and consonants, they started worrying about how to pronounce them. On average the low ability students from both groups produced less number of words than the two groups of high ability students. This might be due to their low level of language proficiency leading to discontinued utterances. Nevertheless, another point that should be noted was that, although they were poor in their language

ability, they seemed to be confident enough to at least pronounce the utterance and carried on the conversation rather than to abandon it.

3. Accuracy-oriented strategies: Students who desire to speak English accurately paying attention to speech forms and seeking to improve grammatical accuracy by self-correcting when they notice mistakes (Nakatani 2006). Table 4.9 presents a comparison between the number of words the students produced, the number of failures or grammatical mistakes, and the number of attempts at self-correction in students‟ responses to the problem-solving task, “Your close friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don‟t want to miss the party and also don‟t want to fail the test. What should you do?”.

Table 4.9: Number of Words Produced, Failures or Grammatical Mistakes, and Attempts at Self-Correction by Students When Using Accuracy-Oriented Strategies

Categories	Number of words produced	Number of failures/ grammatical mistakes	Number of attempts at self-correction	Average percentage between No. of words produced and No. of failures	Comments
High/ RT	(1) 107 words (2) 249 words (3) 163 words	(1) None (2) 1 (3) 1	(1) None (2) 1 (3) 1	0.39% (0.67x100/173)	The speech is generally correct. Students noticed the mistakes, and corrected them.
	$\bar{X}$ = 173 words	$\bar{X}$ = 0.67	$\bar{X}$ = 0.67		
High/ RA	(1) 192 words (2) 124 words (3) 166 words	(1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 1	(1) None (2) 4 (3) None	0.83% (1.33x100/161)	(1)&(3): There are some simple mistakes that SS do not notice them. (2): The student attempted to correct three times per one mistake.
	$\bar{X}$ = 161 words	$\bar{X}$ = 1.33	$\bar{X}$ = 1.33		
Low/ RT	(1) 74 words (2) 77 words	(1) 4 (2) 1	(1) None (2) None	3.90% (3x100/77)	There are many serious mistakes. But

	(3) 80 words $\overline{X}$ = 77 words	(3) 4 $\overline{X}$ =3	(3) None $\overline{X}$ = 0		the students failed to correct them.
Low/ RA	(1) 53 words (2) 43 words (3) 56 words $\overline{X}$ = 51 words	(1) 1 (2) 1 (3) 6 $\overline{X}$ = 2.67	(1) 2 (2) None (3) None $\overline{X}$ = 0.67	5.24% (2.67x100/51)	(2): There is a big mistake that the student failed to correct. (3): Several grammatical and structural mistakes occurred in a very short response. The student did not notice the mistakes.

The examples of four utterances representing the use of the strategies of the students in each category are provided below.

High/RT(2): if my close friend invite me to his birthday party but I have a final examination tomorrow so I need to prepare for the examination tomorrow and what I need what I will do is to inform my friend that I have a test tomorrow so I need the time to read a book so I will ask him to postpone the:: party maybe the next week we can go to the party again and because you know studying is the most important thing for me therefore I think the party is just a little factor that we should take it for granted if we have something more important thing to do more important task to do if especially in the studying and if he if that person is really your close friend he had to he has to understand you because he should think that studying is the most important thing for him as well so maybe I would ask him to postpone the party or in case he cannot postpone the party what I will do is to cancel the party immediately because I know that I like mention so far the most important thing for me is studying so there is no need to to fooling around other than keep reading book um because I want to get I'm going to get a high score for the test tomorrow so therefore I will ask him to postpone or even he cannot I will cancel the party

High/RA(2): I don't want I don't to miss the party:: and I don't want to fail a test so the thing I I I will do would be the *I'll (6.0) I I must (5.0) I have to* I have to prepare the test now (4.0) and .hhh umm (6.0) and fook and read urh read the book for the prepare the examination now and I gotta cancer I I I will not cancer the party because my friend is important to me I think I I can to find the explanation well (1.0) now if if if take urh occur if it will occur tomorrow now I must I have to uhm study hard to prepare the examination now (4.0) suddenly umm (3.0) certainly

Low/RT(3): Okay:: if my friend invite me to the party hhh we'll give he a::: the answer is accept because I very enjoy with the party hhh but hhh if I have an examination in the morning I will preparing myself about the exam hhh uh such as reading a book a lot hhh and uh ask my friend about the::: exam and (2.0) uhm preparing my myself first .hhh before go to the party .hhh and .hhh tell my friend (2.0) I will come back home before the party::: .hhh finish because I have exam (1.0) in the morning .hhh I think my friend uhh don't be angry me because he::: .hhh should understand about my exam in the morning .hhh and I think I can both better because .hhh I (3.0) know myself (1.0) uhm I (3.0) I try to::: .hhh do both better .hhh for exam and the birthday party (3.0) I don't wanna miss::: a thing hhh!

Low/RA(3): I call (1.0) I call girlfriend is name Daring (2.0) err I will talk with her: err Daring (1.0) I (1.0) can't birthday party? with you: (1.0) because (1.0) tomorrow I will (.5) test and I don't (2.0) I don't know this exam (3.0) is difficult? to (2.0) examination (1.0) and I don't read (4.0) please please please angry me (1.0) next day I will I will do anything for you that you that you want I can I promise. If I go to birthday party err I I will fail exam because: so (5.) umm I regret I sorry (3.0) to tell you (1.0) but hope you understand me? (4.0) um I think I love you (9.0) hhh! ok?

Notes

: refers to a lengthened sound, and a prolonged stretch is illustrated by one more colon

.hhh refers to an inhalation
hhh refers to an exhalation
? indicates the rising intonation, and may or may not signal an actual question

(see Appendix G for the transcriptions of all students.)

Table 4.9 shows that the high ability students using risk-taking strategies employed this type of strategies the most effectively. Comparing with the words they produced, grammatical mistakes rarely occurred (less than 1 mistake occurred per 100 words produced). On average the High/RT students produced 173 words and the average number of failures was 0.67, so the average percentage was 0.39% (0.67x100/173). On average the High/RA students produced 161 words and the average number of failures was 1.33, or 0.83% (1.33x100/161). Moreover, all mistakes occurring in high ability students‟ conversations were corrected as soon as they were noticed. In contrast, the low ability students, especially the students using risk-avoidance strategies, tended not to use this type of CSs. The example provided above illustrates some of the problems of many major grammatical mistakes in a very short response and the respondents not noticing their own mistakes. On average the Low/RA students made mistakes 2.67 times per 51 words produced, or 5.24% (2.67x100/51) and the average number of failure the Low/RT students made was three per 77 words produced, or 3.90% (3x100/77).

The finding is in line with Yoshida-Morise (1998) and Lee (2004), who discovered that the high ability students self-correct more than those in a low ability level. It seemed that the greater English L2 knowledge speakers possess, the more chance they have of noticing and correcting the mistakes while trying to get their message across. This could be interpreted that the higher group had more ability to control and monitor their target language utterances than the lower ones. Lee (2004) explained that the high ability students were able to estimate their linguistic knowledge they had at their disposal. They were more aware of the limitations of their target language resources and are more accurate in the prediction of the problems they might face during the conversation. Thus, in most cases, they tended to solve the communication problems in the planning process by repairing and correcting their grammatical mistakes, and choose more appropriate utterances. However, as the language ability levels influence the use of accuracy-oriented strategies, the low ability

students tended not to employ this type of strategies because of their limitations in the target language. It can be seen that they did not even notice the mistakes they made. In conclusion, although accuracy-oriented strategies could not provide new information, they allowed the students to concentrate on the form by checking the grammatical structures of the utterances. Thus, it might be inferred that the students employing this type of CSs were effective and enthusiastic language learners.

4. Non-verbal strategies: When students face communicative problems, they might use nonverbal language to express themselves, using gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact to give hints (Nakatani 2006).

As this type of strategies was about non-verbal language, content analysis could not be used to illustrate the strategies the students used. Therefore, observation was conducted instead. It was found that the students tended not to use non-verbal strategies during taking the OCT although this type of strategies was reported from the SUSTI at high level in the frequency of using by both groups of students. There were 22% of the students using gestures in the description task, and it corresponded with the results of the SUSTI in that the high ability group employed these strategies only 2% more than the lower ones. The former used 12% while the latter used 10%. However, the observation shows that when making gestures some students might not mean to give hints, but to express their emotions. For example, they moved their hands speedily to indicate their rush or nervousness to respond to the test task.

Although non-verbal strategies are behaviour aids to verbal output (Lazaraton 2002), no significant difference was found between the two groups thus supporting the findings of Chen (1990), with the result that there was a similar degree of use of non-verbal strategies although most studies asserted that less competent groups relied more heavily on paralinguistic knowledge (Paribakht 1985; Fulcher 2003; Nakatani 2006). In the present study, both groups used non-verbal strategies sparingly.

However, in this study, it was observed that the high ability students were a bit more prone to using non-verbal strategies than the low ability ones. It might be because the higher group seemed to be more confident, thus they appeared more casual in communication, so it was easier for them to elicit non-verbal communication.

The reason explaining this finding might be as follows. It might be because the format of the OCT is a semi-direct speaking test, thus the students consciously realized that they were interacting with the tape-recorder, rather than with human beings. Therefore, they might be reluctant to present their facial expressions and gestures, or have eye contact with the tape-recorder.

Additionally, the observation of the students‟ use of non-verbal strategies indicates that there is a very low degree of frequency in the use of this category of strategies in both groups. Thai students infrequent use of nonverbal strategies may be explicable in terms of Chamot‟s (2004) idea that cultural values influence choice of CS as Thai culture considers many gestures impolite. In the Thai culture, younger people are considered impolite if they wave their hands as a gesture of denial or refusal. Such things are supposed to be expressed verbally, e.g., by saying “no.

5. Help-seeking strategies: These are seen in situations where speakers try to solve communicative problems by asking for assistance either directly or indirectly. Not only may they ask for repetition, clarification, and confirmation, they might also use rising intonation or pauses to signal a need for help form their partners (Nakatani 2005).

As the semi-direct interview employed in this study did not indicate the students‟ direct help-seeking, the frequency of pauses may suggest indirect signs of help-seeking. Table 4.10 presents the number of words produced and the frequency of pauses in response to the test instruction “What do you like most about studying English?”

Table 4.10: Number of Words Produced and Frequency of Pauses in Using Help-Seeking Strategies

Categories	Number of words produced	Number of pauses	Average No. of words produced/ no. of pauses	Average percentage between no. of words and no. of pauses
High/ RT	(1) 40 words (2) 42 words (3) 50 words	(1) 7 (Micropauses) (2) 2 (3) 4	44 words/ 4.33 pauses	9.84% (4.33x100/44)
	$\overline{X}$ = 44 words	$\overline{X}$ = 4.33		
High/ RA	(1) 57 words (2) 42 words (3) 43 words	(1) 5 (Micropause) (2) 1 (3) None	47.33 words/ 2 pauses	4.23% (2x100/47.33)
	$\overline{X}$ = 47.33 words	$\overline{X}$ = 2		
Low/ RT	(1) 19 words (2) 34 words (3) 45 words	(1) 4 (2) 3 (Long pauses) (3) 5	33 words/ 4 pauses	12.12% (4x100/33)
	$\overline{X}$ = 33 words	$\overline{X}$ = 4		
Low/ RA .	(1) 2 words (2) 16 words (3) 20 words	(1) None (2) 4 (Micropause) (3) 5 (Micropause)	13 words/ 3 pauses	23.08% (3x100/13)
	$\overline{X}$ = 13 words	$\overline{X}$ = 3		

The following are examples of four utterances, the first one is the student with high level of English ability using risk-taking strategies (High/RT, the second one is the student with high level of English ability using risk-avoidance strategies (High/RA), the third one is the students with low level of English ability using risk-taking strategies (Low/RT), and the last one is the student with low level of English ability using risk-avoidance strategies (Low/RA).

High/RT(1): what I do like most about study English I think (.) conversation or speaking is (1.0) what I do (1.0) like most about studying English (.) because I am allowed to speak everything (.) I want to (1.0) and I can use my American accent (1.0) fluently

High/RA(3): I like to communicate with each ah with other people I'm when I start ah when I worked three

years ago I ever work with foreigners and I think I love to communicate with people so I choose to study in English major

Low/RT(1): umm I like speaking (1.0) reading (3.0) listening (1.0) because most of (2.0) most of this skill is really useful for study English

Low/RA(3): I(.5) like… I like to most think(.) think (.) think about speaking umm partish for (1.0) foreign language (1.0) I like to learn (unidentified phrase)

(see Appendix G shows the rest of the transcriptions)

It can be seen from Table 4.10 that there was no obvious difference in the frequency of help-seeking strategy use among the four groups of students. On average the High/RT group produced 44 words and the average frequency of pauses was 4.33, or 9.84% (4.33x100/44). The average percentage between the number of produced words and the frequency of pauses of the High/ RA group was 4.23% (2x100/47.33). On average the Low/RT students produced 33 words and the average frequency of pauses was four times, or 12.12% (4x100/33), while on average the Low/RA students paused three times per 13 words produced, or 23.08% (3x100/13). It can be seen that there was a similar degree in the use of this type of CSs. Although the low ability group seemed to employ this kind of strategies more than the higher ones, most of all pauses the lower group produced to seek help were micro-pauses. However, the high ability group reported in the SUSTI that they employed this type of strategies quite often. The reason behind their reports might be that as the students perceived that their language proficiency was high, they were confident to use English by asking for clarification or confirmation when they had enquiries.

The result did not correspond with the students‟ report from the SUSTI that the students in the high ability group employed this type of CSs more than those with low language ability. This might be because the tasks of the OCT did not require the students to interact with the participants. Since it was unlikely to elicit the students‟ use of this type of CSs from the OCT performance, the possible way might be counting the number of pauses the students produced which the researcher assumed that pauses may represent of the sign of help-seeking.

As Kirtikara (2000) suggested, Thai students with any level of proficiency seemed not to have individual thoughts and questioning minds, even tertiary-level students. Generally, they did not appear to be inquisitive, being rather passive and lacking in enthusiasm instead, so they rarely asked for clarification or confirmation. Another explanation might be that language teaching and learning encourages individual competition, so students who were competitive and wanted to reach their goals might prefer the types of CS that allowed them to think and work alone rather than collaborate with others (Chamot 2004). That is the reason why the students might not appeal for help, and might lead to the preference of the use of „non-interactive" CSs in this assessment.

This part of the present study strikes the researchers as inadequate because using pauses to study help-seeking strategies seems both unusual and superficial and, furthermore, no evidences support the idea that pauses signify the use this type of strategy. To check this, a follow-up interview was conducted after the test had been administered. The researcher contacted 10 of the original 12 students to be interviewees and asked them "When you paused at that time, what were you thinking about?" Seven students responded that they had paused because they needed someone to assist them by providing something like clarifying sentences. The rest of the students needed time to think but were not seeking help. Therefore, one might conclude that pauses do not constitute an appropriate measure of help-seeking strategies in this study.

6. Circumlocution: Students try to approach relevant linguistic items or expressions using paraphrase and approximation (Nakatani, 2005). Paraphrasing takes the form of exemplification in describing characteristic properties or functions of the intended term. In using approximation, students use alternative expressions with semantic features similar to those of the intended term. These two techniques may result in indirect and unnecessary utterances. Table 4.11 compares the number of words produced and the number of indirect and unclear sentences given in response to the test prompt "Please describe a person who is important to you."

Table 4.11: Number of Words Produced and Unnecessary Sentences Used in Circumlocution Strategies

Categories	Number of words produced	Number of unnecessary sentences used or repeated sentences	Average No. of words produced/ average No. of unnecessary sentences	Average percentage between No. of words produced and No. of repeated sentences
High/ RT	(1) 104 words (2) 144 words (3) 112 words $\bar{X}$ = 120 words	(1) None (2) 4 sentences (3 None $\bar{X}$ = 1.33 sentence	120 words/ 1.33 sentence	1.11% (1.33x100/120)
High/ RA	(1) 110 words (2) 105 words (3) 103 words $\bar{X}$ = 106 words	(1) None (2) 2 sentences (3) 3 sentences $\bar{X}$ = 1.67 sentences	106 words/ 1.67 sentences	1.58% (1.67x100/106)
Low/ RT	(1) 55 words (2) 61 words (3) 79 words $\bar{X}$ = 65 words	(1) 4 sentences (2) 2 sentences (3) 5 sentences $\bar{X}$ = 3.67 sentences	65 words/ 3.67 sentences	5.65% (3.67x100/65)
Low/ RA	(1) 32 words (2) 20 words (3) 58 words $\bar{X}$ = 37 words	(1) None (2) None (3) 4 sentences $\bar{X}$ = 1.33 sentence	37 words/ 1.33 sentence	3.59% (1.33x100/37)

The examples of four utterances representing the use of the strategies of the students in each category are given below.

High/RT(2): the most important person to me is mother (.) because she work really hard in order to take care of me and actually I might say she work really hard to take care of the whole family and she is the ideal of a tough women uh a strong woman and::: she taught me everything how to be a good guy how to be ah how to live live in a in a world happily and yeah I might say she has a great influence on me(6.0)and I know that she works very hard every day she will be tired she will be exhausted when she came home and even though I know this point I I I am not afraid to be like my mother I know that what I did is

worth is worth to the loved one or the whole family

High/RA(1): Well, umm (4.0) the most important person for my life is have gotta be my mom. Because my dad and my mother got divorced when I was young (1.0) and you know nowadays she raises me all by herself (long pause) yeah here I am today having up to twenty two studying here in the university (long pause) and yeah she raised me good and all (1.0) not like (2.0) most of the parents who let their kids do what they want but you know I still in control so I know (1.0) what is ah should do when you study here (2.0) you play hard (3.0) and you study hard (long pause) … what else can I say? (4.0) yeah that's pretty much yeah?

Low/RT(1): for me there are many people very the person who is important for me is my mother (1.0) because she gives me everything she gives me love (2.0) education and best care for me (3.0) she really understands me (.5) everything (6.0) she gives everything of my life (7.0) and in the future when I have a job I will give everything like she give to me

Low/RA(3): my: mom, father euh grandmum grandparent euh she's too. when I gave something her (1.0) she (.5) she gave everything that I met she…(4.0) she take care me (.5) in everything (1.0) gave money? (4.0) when I sick she(5.0) she (1.0) she take care me (5.0) she gave (2.0) money (2.0) love (1.0) she love me I love my parent (1.0) very euh the most. (7.0) I am stay… I am stay in err(.5) now because she…(laugh)

Notes

: refers to a lengthened sound, and a prolonged stretch is illustrated by one more colon

(see Appendix G for the responses of the other students.)

It seemed that the students' language ability influenced the use of circumlocution strategies to clarify, paraphrase and exemplify for the sake of better communication and expression. Table 4.11 presents that the low ability students, especially the group of Low/RT students, utilised this type of CSs much more than the others. The finding corresponds with several studies' results (Fulcher, 2003; Yoshida-

Morise, 1998; and Poulisse, 1990) which claimed that in order to compensate for the lack of L2 knowledge, the low ability students use description or alternative words instead of the specific ones more than the high ability students do. Poulisse (1990) explained that because of their limited English L2 vocabulary, the low ability students found it difficult to cope with the problems. In contrast, the high ability students could select the appropriate words to express themselves, so it was not necessary for them to add clarification.

Although the finding of the content analysis did not fully support the SUSTI result, the reliability of the SUSTI was assured. This was because according to the SUSTI report, there was a high degree in the use of circumlocution strategies from both high and low ability students (see Table 4.6), and this corresponds with Laungsaengthong (2002) study, stating that circumlocution strategies were employed most by Thai university students with all levels of English learning achievement. To sum, although circumlocution strategies were utilised by every group of subjects, the group of Low/RT students used this type of strategies more than the others due to their lack of the target language knowledge.

7. Message-abandonment strategies: The students tend to give up their attempt to communicate by leaving the message unfinished when they encounter difficulties in their speech production. They seem to lack strategic competence, and have no choice but to end the interaction. Table 4.12 shows the use of message-abandonment strategies, comparing the number of words produced with the number of unfinished sentences in response to the task "Describe the person who is the most important in your life."

Table 4.12: Number of Words Produced and Unfinished Sentences in Message-Abandonment Strategies

Categories	Number of words produced	Number of unfinished sentences	Average no. of words produced/ no. of unfinished sentences	Average percentage between no. of words produced and no. of unfinished sentences
High/ RT	(1) 104 words (2) 144 words (3) 112 words $\overline{X}$ = 120 words	(1) None (2) None (3) 1 sentence $\overline{X}$ = 0.33 sentence	120 words/ 0.33 sentence	0.28% (0.33x100/120)
High/ RA	(1) 110 words (2) 105 words (3) 103 words $\overline{X}$ = 106 words	(1) None (2) 1 sentence (3) None $\overline{X}$ = 0.33 sentence	106 words/ 0.33 sentence	0.31% (0.33x100/106)
Low/ RT	(1) 55 words (2) 61 words (3) 79 words $\overline{X}$ = 65 words	(1) 1 sentence (2) None (3) 1 sentence $\overline{X}$ = 0.67 sentence	65 words/ 0.67 sentence	1.03% (0.67x100/65)
Low/ RA	(1) 32 words (2) 20 words (3) 58 words $\overline{X}$ = 37 words	(1) 2 sentences (2) None (3) 2 sentences $\overline{X}$ = 1.33 sentence	37 words/ 1.33 sentence	3.59% (1.33x100/37)

The following are examples of four utterances, the first one is the student with high level of English ability using risk-taking strategies (High/ RT), the second one is the student with high level of English ability using risk-avoidance strategies (High/ RA), the third one is the students with low level of English ability using risk-taking strategies (Low/ RT), and the last one is the student with low level of English ability using risk-avoidance strategies (Low/ RA).

High/RT(3): well for me there are many people very important to me like a:: (1.0) the first one is my parents I think they always support me to study English (1.0) and from uhm every way and from every situation (1.0) so I need a second one I think (3.0) she is a singer who is like a Britney Spears when I was young I was used to (1.0) her song and I would like to know the

meaning and the third one is David Beckham who is my favourite (1.0) football player I wait for him I want to saw he football match (2.0) in London so I must to speak English if I want to go to London

High/RA(3): umm a person who is important to me is my mother (2.0) she did everything for me and she last time she did everything for me and the future and present she do everything for me too she took care me she gave me money every day she spend time with me when I have problem in my life and I would like to be like her she's a very very good person she can do everything that umm a man can do (2.0) I think she's a perfect person in my life and I would to be like her this is my answer thank you

Low/RT(2): for me there are many people very the person who is important for me is my mother (1.0) because she gives me everything she gives me love (2.0) education and best care for me (3.0) she really understands me (.5) everything (6.0) she gives everything of my life (7.0) and in the future when I have a job I will give everything like she give to me

Low/RA(1): my (3.0) my puh.. my important (4.0) my important person are my parents (1.0) my father is a soldier (1.0) he's:: (3.0) take care of me all the time and my mom (3.0) she (1.0) she's nice kind (2.0) and best (1.0) of

(see Appendix G for the transcripts of all students.)

Table 4.12 shows that there was a dramatic use of message-abandonment strategies by the group of Low/RA students, unlike the result of SUSTI. On average, when they produced 37 words, there was about an unfinished sentence. Comparing with the high ability groups, both groups of High/RT and High/RA rarely had unfinished sentences (less than a sentence per 100 words produced). Three instances of breakdowns were identified in the data. As shown in the transcripts, the student High/RT(3) started the conversation "There are many people very important to me like a" – and stopped there. It seemed that the student got stuck and decided to begin a new sentence again. The other two examples were from the low ability students. The Low/RT(2) started the utterance with "for me there are many people very" – and

stopped. This student might think that what she was starting to say was inappropriate and did not know how to convey the message with the correct structures. The Low/RA(1)‟s unfinished utterance “my….my puh…”, suggested that the student knew the word „person‟, but might not have been confident enough to use that word. In this case, the student preferred to start a new sentence. As the examples of breakdown, the low ability students seemed to lack strategic competence and had no other choice but to end the interaction.

The results of content analysis support the study of Nakatani (2006) and Khanji (1996) which claimed that this type of CSs was common among students of low-proficiency level or low enthusiastic. With regard to the results of the content analysis and the SUSTI, they were similar in the way that the high ability students also appeared to produce unfinished sentences although they seemed to control their target language knowledge.

However, in general, message-abandonment strategies were less used by the students with any language ability levels. This statement confirmed the results of Wannaruk‟s (2003) and Khaopet‟s (1990) studies. Compared with the results of the other types of CSs, the frequency of message-abandonment strategies used was low. This might be because the students might have been more conscious of their target language use as they were in the assessment setting and might fear of losing face. Hence, they attempted to avoid silence as much as they could although their language ability might not support their thinking.

8. Message reduction and alteration strategies: It consists of speakers tending to use familiar words and avoiding the risk of using new or unfamiliar words even though they may realize that the utterance is far from their communicative goal (Nakatani 2006). Students try to enhance their communication by reducing the original message, simplifying the utterances, and using similar expressions they can use confidently. Table 4.13 illustrates the use of this type of CSs by comparing the number of words produced with the number of familiar words used to replace the correct words in response to the short question “When did you begin studying English?”

Table 4.13: Number of Words Produced and Number of Familiar Words Used to Replace Correct Words in Message-Reduction and -Alteration Strategies

Categories	Number of words produced	Number of familiar words used to replace correct words	Average no. of words produced/ no. of substituted words	Average percentage between No. of words produced and No. of substituted words
High/ RT	(1) 29 words (2) 53 words (3) 20 words $\overline{X}$ = 34 words	(1) None (2) None (3) None $\overline{X}$ = 0	34 words/ 0 substitutions	0% (0x 100/ 34)
High/ RA	(1) 20 words (2) 51 words (3) 32 words $\overline{X}$ = 34.33 words	(1) 1 (2) None (3) 1 $\overline{X}$ = 0.67	34.33 words/ 0.67 substitutions	1.95% (0.67x 100/ 34.33)
Low/ RT	(1) 14 words (2) 10 words (3) 45 words $\overline{X}$ = 23 words	(1) None (2) None (3) None $\overline{X}$ = 0	23 words/ 0 substitutions	0% (0x 100/ 23)
Low/ RA	(1) 6 words (2) 23 words (3) 11 words $\overline{X}$ = 13.33 words	(1) None (2) 2 (3) 1 $\overline{X}$ = 1	13.33 words/ 1 substitutions	7.50% (1x 100/ 13.33)

The examples of four utterances representing the use of the strategies of the students in each category are given below.

High/RT(2): well, as far as I know, I began studying English (1.0) when I was in secondary school (.) it is quite strange for students in Bangkok that I didn't start learning English since primary school (.) but it is usual for students studying in school far from civilization (0.5) like my southern province

High/RA(3): I started to study English mmm maybe about ten years ago or more than when I study in (3.0) maybe kinder.. um primary school I think that maybe grade grade two or three

Low/RT(2): I have studied English since I'm six year years old.. (silence until the time is up)

Low/RA(2): I began studying English in (2.0)grade: er year five (1.0) five primary school (2.0) um eleven year old it's very inter. umm it's very (1.0) exciting

(see Appendix G for the complete scripts of the 12 subjects.)

It can be seen from Table 4.13 and the transcripts that the group of Low/RA students employed the message reduction and alteration strategies the most, and the second rank went to the group of High/RA students. Interestingly, the students in both groups of using risk-taking strategies (no matter what language ability levels are) did not use this type of CSs frequently. Therefore, only the limitations in L2 vocabulary might not fully explain the finding. The reason behind might be the main types of CSs (risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies). As the message reduction and alteration strategies were under the main strategies of risk-avoidance, obviously the students who reported themselves in the SUSTI as being risk-avoiders employed more message reduction and alteration strategies. These students tended to use familiar words, or even change their expressions to the ones they were more confident with. For instance, the High/RA(3) student tried to simplify the unfamiliar word of "kindergarten" with the word "primary school". The Low/RA decided to change from using "grade five" to more simple words "year five".

The reason why the students from both levels of language ability employed the message reduction and alteration strategies might be due to the format of the semi-direct test of the OCT. If the students were not familiar with the topic or do not know the vocabulary in the target language, they were more likely to be in an uncomfortable position throughout the task leading to problems in communication (Stansfeild et al., 1990; cited in Cohen, 1998). Therefore, they used simple expressions to convey their intended meaning.

From time to time, some students could not use their own words so they used the vocabulary and expressions of the prompt as an aid to production. It can be seen

from most of the transcripts that these students used the phrase "begin studying English" to start describing the situation.

9. Time-gaining strategies: The students use fillers, gambits, and other hesitation devices to gain time to think. The strategies might be useful to keep the communication channel open and maintain the discourse at times of difficulty. Table 4.14 presents a comparison between the number of words produced and the number of fillers or hesitations in response to the problem-solving task "Give some advice to your friend to solve the problem." (see Appendix C for the situation of the task).

Table 4.14: Number of Words and Fillers or Hesitations Produced in Time-Gaining Strategies

Categories	**Number of words produced**	**Number of fillers or hesitations produced**	**Average no. of words produced/ no. of fillers or hesitations**	**Average percentage between no. of words produced and no. of hesitations**
High/ RT	(1) 107 words (2) 249 words (3) 163 words	(1) 1 (2) 1 (3) 4	173 words/ 2 words	1.16% (2x100/173)
	$\overline{X}$ = 173 words	$\overline{X}$ = 2		
High/ RA	(1) 192 words (2) 124 words (3) 166 words	(1) 9 (2) 6 (3) 4	161 words/ 6.33 words	3.93% (6.33x100/161)
	$\overline{X}$ = 161 words	$\overline{X}$ = 6.33		
Low/ RT	(1) 74 words (2) 77 words (3) 80 words	(1) None (2) 2 (3) 6 (plus a lot of inhalations and exhalations)	77 words/ 2.67 words	3.47% (2.67x100/77)
	$\overline{X}$ = 77 words	$\overline{X}$ = 2.67		
Low/ RA	(1) 53 words (2) 43 words (3) 56 words	(1) 6 (2) 4 (3) 6	51 words/ 5.3 words	10.45% (5.33x100/51)
	$\overline{X}$ = 51 words	$\overline{X}$ = 5.33		

The examples of four utterances representing the use of the time-gaining strategies of the students in each category are provided below.

High/RT(1): okay. (1.0) I don't give a damn about (1.0) the examination I'm gonna go to the party hang out with my friend and celebrate with them (2.0) of course I was joking (1.0) actually (1.0) I'm gonna (2.0) step by (1.0) over there and say hi and (1.0) say happy birthday (.5) and give them some present and then (2.0) and then leave the place and go back to my house and (2.0) continue (2.0) read (1.0) the book (1.0) or (2.0) repeat my (1.0) lesson (2.0) and then go to the bed (1.0) and hopefully tomorrow I'll get a good mark good point whatever thank you

High/RA(3): I will tell her directly that I can't (2.0) umm go to the party go to her party (2.0) because I have I have the exam tomorrow morning and I want to prepare my exam and I want to do (1.0) it (2.0) my best (2.0) and I I I think (1.0) she she have to understand and (1.0) and don't blame me that I can't go to her party (3.0) if she is my true friend (.5) she (1.0) she want me to (1.0) to to (1.0) to do to be that I want to to to do (3.0) I think she not she not blame me exactly and she have understand (1.0) umm umm (3.0) but (3.0) and I will give her a gift (1.0) before her party tonight (1.0) that night and give her some umm some good words that will that will make her feel good that I can't go to her party I will do like this thank you very much

Low/RT(3): okay:: if my friend invite me to the party hhh we'll give he a::: the answer is accept because I very enjoy with the party hhh but hhh if I have an examination in the morning I will preparing myself about the exam hhh uh such as reading a book a lot hhh and uh ask my friend about the::: exam and (2.0) uhm preparing my myself first .hhh before go to the party .hhh and .hhh tell my friend (2.0) I will come back home before the party::: .hhh finish because I have exam (1.0) in the morning .hhh I think my friend uhh don't be angry me because he::: .hhh should understand about my exam in the morning .hhh and I think I can both better because .hhh I (3.0) know myself (1.0) uhm I (3.0) I try

to::: .hhh do both better .hhh for exam and the birthday party (3.0) I don't wanna miss::: a thing hhh!

Low/RA(1): umm:I will buy the er present for her (1.0) and give it (1.0) hhh to her before party and I don't er I don't come to I don't go to (1.0) her birthday party hhh (4.0) I want to take the time for reading for my examination tomorrow (4.0) yeah I know she will understand me

Notes

: refers to a lengthened sound, and a prolonged stretch is illustrated by one more colon

.hhh refers to an inhalation
hhh refers to an exhalation

(see Appendix G for the transcriptions of all students.)

It can be obviously seen from Table 4.14 that the low ability students using risk-avoidance strategies (Low/RA) employed time-gaining strategies the most (10.45 fillers per 100 words produced). The second rank went to the high ability students with risk-avoidance strategies (High/RA). The finding indicates that the groups of risk-avoiding students used more fillers or hesitation devices to gain time to think because they might be less confident to utter what they wanted to say and they might want to avoid failures in their conversation. Therefore, the students in both language ability groups using risk-avoidance strategies appeared to employ time-gaining strategies more than those in risk-taking strategies groups.

Focusing on the factor of language ability solely, the result shows that there was a high degree in the frequency of using this type of strategies by the low ability students. It can be seen from Table 4.14 that the average percentage of the low ability students was 6.96 (3.47%+10.45%/ 2), and the average percentage of the high ability students was 2.55 (1.16%+ 3.93%/2). This corresponds with the SUSTI report in that it was the only type of strategies that the low ability students employed more frequently than the high ability students. Cohen (1998) supported that although some test-takers might use a limited number of strategies like the low ability students in this study, they were more likely to use this type of CSs and used them well for most part of the conversation.

The reason explaining this finding might be that Thai students, like other Asian students, tend to engage in convergent thinking which leads them to focus on the production of a single right answer (Chen, 1990). The limitations in language proficiency of low ability groups may cause them to use fillers to gain more time to think of what to say next. In addition, fillers provide students with a sense of security by allowing them to manipulate in time of difficulties (Dörnyei, 1995). Moreover, this concept is reinforced by Western cultures where it is often regarded as better to utter something to appear more polite and less embarrassed than to keep silent. This may be the reason why the low ability Thai EFL students are likely to use time-gaining strategies instead of trying alternative ways or giving up.

Regarding the discussion about the findings concerning CSs used by the students, it shows that most of the CSs they used could be elicited from their performance in the OCT. Most of the results confirmed the SUSTI reports, which might indicate that the SUSTI had construct validity and reliability. Table 4.15 presents the summary of ranking of all types of CSs used among the four groups of students.

Table 4.15: Ranking of all types of CSs used among the four groups of students.

Types of CSs	High/RT	High/RA	Low/RT	Low/RA	Summary
1 Social-affective strategies	1	2	3	4	High/RT
2 Fluency-oriented strategies.	1	2	3	4	High/RT
3 Accuracy-oriented strategies	1	2	3	4	High/RT
4 Non-verbal strategies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5 Help-seeking strategies	3	4	2	1	Low/RA
6 Circumlocution strategies	4	3	1	2	Low/RT
7 Message-abandonment str.	4	3	2	1	Low/RA
8 Message-reduction strategies	3	2	3	1	Low/RA
9 Time-gaining strategies	4	3	2	1	Low/RA

In order to answer the fourth research question “What are the CSs used by the students with different language ability levels?”, the results of the SUSTI reports and the content analysis were synthesized and discussed as follows.

Table 4.15 illustrates the overall picture, revealing that the groups with high language ability used more risk-taking strategies than those with low language ability, while the low ability groups employed risk-avoidance strategies more than the high ability ones.

The reason explaining this finding was that high language ability students employed most of risk-taking strategies such as accuracy-oriented and fluency-oriented strategies because of their proficiency in English. Additionally, with their high degree of cognitive flexibility, the high ability students were likely to apply social-affective strategies to manage their feelings during the oral communication assessment. On the contrary, the low proficiency in English of low language ability students led them to utilize risk-avoidance strategies i.e., time-gaining strategies, which relied more on their world-knowledge.

Another point from the finding was that the difference in frequencies of CSs used depends upon the types of the students, whether they were risk-takers or risk-avoiders. For example, if they tended to be risk-takers, there was a tendency that they employed risk-taking strategies. This was because the students who dare to take a risk in their speaking have developed more risk-taking strategies.

Summary

This chapter reported the results of the findings. Descriptive statistics and the *t-test* analysis of the data were presented. The frequency counts from the SUSTI were analysed to reveal the types of the CSs that the students from the high and low- ability groups used. Two-way ANOVA and partial Eta squared were employed to answer the first, second, and third research questions. The result of content analysis concerning the types of CSs used by the students with different language ability levels was presented. Each part ended with discussions based on the findings and the review of literature.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Five presented the research summary, followed by the summary of the findings. It also showed the conclusions including implications for the areas of language assessment and evaluation, and language instruction. Subsequently, the recommendations for future research were provided in the last section.

5.1 Research Summary

This study focused on the examination of the two independent variables, language ability and types of communication strategies (CSs) on oral communication ability. Furthermore, the CSs used by the students with different language abilities were explored and compared.

In this study, the Oral Communication Test (OCT), and the Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) tailored for the third-year students at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC), Thailand were developed. As there had not been a tailored test to meet the need for assessing oral communication ability focusing on general English at the UTCC, the OCT was developed to fulfill this demand. Also, the test could be used as an instrument for self-assessment to practice and improve the students‟ oral communication ability. In addition to this, it provided guidelines for educators to design an in-house instrument to assess students in different aspects. Regarding the SUSTI, it was developed to investigate the students‟ CSs. The self-report questionnaire illustrated whether the students tended to employ more risk-taking strategies or risk-avoidance strategies. Before the OCT and the SUSTI were conducted in the main study, the two instruments went through a validation process.

With regard to language ability and types of CSs, there were three reasons for selecting these two independent variables. Firstly, it could be seen from previous research in oral language tests that these variables could have a crucial influence on both language use and oral communication performance. Secondly, there was a potential to design a speaking test in which the two variables facilitated rather than impeded the students‟ performance. Thirdly, there were not many studies about the

effects of language ability and types of CSs on the oral communication ability of Thai students at the university level.

The investigation of the CSs use of the students with different levels of language ability was another focus in this study. Types of CSs used by high ability students and low ability students were also examined. In sum, this study attempted to answer the following four research questions:

1 Do different language ability levels have a significant effect on students‟ oral communication? And if they do, how much is the effect size?

2 Do types of CSs have a significant effect on students‟ oral communication ability? And if they do, how much is the effect size?

3 Is there any significant interaction effect between different language ability levels and types of CSs on students‟ oral communication ability? And if there is, how much is each effect size?

4 What are the CSs used by students with different language ability levels?

The population was 300 third-year English major students, enrolled in the speaking course in the Faculty of Humanities in the second term of the academic year 2008 at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC). The subjects participating in the main study were 100 students. The 300 third year students‟ name list including their average grades of a speaking course, the highest and the lowest grades that they received in their previous English courses from the Faculty of Humanities, UTCC were obtained. Then, the students were categorized into two groups: high and low ability groups, based on their average grades of their previous three English courses. The high language ability group was made up of students who obtained average grades above the +1 S.D. in these courses and the low ability group contained the students whose grades were lower than the -1 S.D. As fifty students were used in the pilot study, the rest of them (250 students) were asked to take the OCT to examine their oral communication ability, and directly after finishing the test, they completed the Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) to investigate their

CSs use. After interpreting the results of the OCT and the SUSTI, the students were divided into four groups according to their language ability groups and types of CSs. After assigning the students into four groups, 25 students in each group were randomly selected in order to examine the effects of their language ability and types of CSs on their oral communication ability. The four groups are given below:

- High ability & Risk-taking strategies (High/RT, n = 25);
- High ability & Risk-avoidance strategies (High/RA, n = 25);
- Low ability & Risk-taking strategies (Low/RT) (n = 25);
- Low ability & Risk-avoidance strategies (Low/RA) (n = 25).

Meanwhile, 50 high-ability students and 50 low-ability students were randomly selected from the population in order to focus on the result of the SUSTI solely. The findings were used to confirm whether there is any significant difference between the CSs use of students with different language ability levels.

Research instruments consisted of the OCT, and the SUSTI. The OCT was used to assess students‟ oral communication ability and to elicit the use of CSs of the students in the qualitative study. It focused on authentic oral communication in students‟ daily lives. The OCT was a semi-direct speaking test consisting of four tasks: a warm-up task, an interview task, a description task, and a problem-solving task. The students‟ oral performances were elicited through the use of a tape recorder. The SUSTI was a self-report Likert-scaled questionnaire to assess the frequency of CSs used by the students in their oral communication. Thirty-two items were drawn from systematic lists of two major types of CSs, which are risk-taking strategies and risk-avoidance strategies.

To answer the first three research questions, two-way ANOVA was carried out to observe the effects of the two independent variables, in both main effects and the interaction effect. Additionally, the effect size of the treatment was measured using partial Eta squared.

The study used the SUSTI to classify the students into two groups of risk-taking strategies and risk-avoidance strategies. Items included were drawn from two

systematic lists of two major types of CSs. One list was made up of „risk-taking strategies" referring to strategies speakers used to expand their linguistic resources to achieve communicative goals. These included:

1) social-affective strategies for dealing with emotions and attitudes
2) fluency-oriented strategies for emphasizing speech clarity and pronunciation
3) accuracy-oriented strategies for paying attention to forms of the speech
4) non-verbal strategies for giving hints by using gestures and facial expressions
5) help-seeking strategies for asking for repetition, clarification and confirmation
6) circumlocution strategies for paraphrasing or describing the properties of the target objects.

The other list was made up of „risk-avoidance strategies" consisting of the strategies speakers used to adjust the message to match with their original linguistic resources. These included:

1) message abandonment strategies for leaving a message unfinished
2) message reduction and alteration strategies for using familiar words
3) time-gaining strategies for using gambits or fillers to fill pauses to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse in times of difficulty.

To answer the fourth research question, descriptive statistics and the *t-test* were conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between the students with high and low ability in terms of using different types of CSs. The content analysis using the data obtained from the audio-recorded OCT was performed to confirm the finding of the questionnaire SUSTI analysis.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

Regarding the first research question, the results obtained from two-way ANOVA indicated that there was a significant main effect between students with high language ability level and low language ability level on their oral communication ability, $F(1, 96) = 235.41$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.71$. The high language ability group performed significantly better than those from the low ability group. The mean of the former was 4.28 and that of the latter was 2.26. According to Hopkins (2002), the effect size was

large (0.71) which means high language ability students performed very differently and significantly from low language ability students on the OCT test.

Focusing on the second research question, there was a significant main effect between students using risk-taking strategies and those using risk-avoidance strategies on their oral communication ability, $F(1, 96) = 8.33$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.08$. The students who employed risk-taking strategies performed significantly better in oral communication than those applying risk-avoidance strategies. The mean of the former was 3.46 while that of the latter was 3.08. However, the partial Eta squared value (0.08) indicated a relatively small effect size (Hopkins, 2002). The students using risk-taking strategies and those using risk-avoidance strategies were a little different in performing the OCT.

Concerning the third research question, two-way ANOVA revealed that there was no significant interaction effect between language ability and types of CSs on the OCT scores, $F(1, 96) = 1.13$, $p > .05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a significant interaction effect between the two variables on the OCT scores was not supported by the findings. However, both language ability and CSs affect the oral communication ability in the same direction.

As for the fourth research question, the content analysis shows that most of the CSs the students used which were elicited from their performance in the OCT confirmed the SUSTI reports. The findings obtained from the frequency counts and the SUSTI reveal that the groups with high language ability significantly used more risk-taking strategies such as social-affective, fluency-oriented, help-seeking, and circumlocution strategies than those with low language ability whereas the low ability groups significantly employed more risk-avoidance strategies like time-gaining strategies.

5.3 Conclusions

As both language ability and CSs play significant roles in assessing oral communication performance, this study attempted to investigate the effects of these

variables on students‟ oral communication ability. In addition to study only the main effect of each variable, the interaction effect was also considered. This study compared the students‟ language ability between high and low language ability groups, and explored the effect of types of CSs used on their oral communication ability. Regarding the qualitative study, the content analysis of the students‟ OCT speech recorded was conducted. The findings agreed with the results of the SUSTI and could differentiate types of CSs used by students with different levels of language ability.

It was also found that there was no significant interaction effect between language ability levels and types of CSs on the OCT scores. Each variable, however, was found to be significantly different.

5.4 Implications of the study

The implications from the findings of this study are presented as follows:

1. As for theoretical contribution, the findings provide further insights into the oral communication processes in relation to the use of communication strategies by the high and low language ability groups. In this case, although language ability has a greater effect on oral communication performance than types of CSs, no significant interactional effect between these two variables was found. However, the students in the high and low language ability groups differed in both risk-taking and risk-avoidance strategies. The former used more risk-taking strategies than the latter. This suggests the need to provide risk-taking strategies to the low language ability group. The finding reveals that the high ability students preferred risk-taking strategies while the low ability ones tended to employ more risk-avoidance strategies. The types of CSs employed by the high ability students helped them to be more successful in oral communication. Therefore, their use of risk-taking strategies was more effective in conveying the meaning or the concept since all necessary and appropriate information was provided in a clear and direct way. Therefore, emphasis should be given to how to increase the use of risk-taking strategies among low ability students in order to improve their performance in oral communication.

2. Regarding pedagogical contribution, the question of whether CSs should be taught‟ is a contentious one. The results of this study suggest that it might be profitable

to teach students not only linguistic knowledge but also communication strategies which they can use to promote more effective language learning. As Rubin (1990) has stated:

> Often poor learners don‟t have a clue as to how good learners arrive at their answers and feel they can never perform as good learners do. By revealing the process, this myth can be exposed. (p. 282)

In addition, there is a belief that, if students do not select strategies related to tasks, skills, and goals, they might not easily find the most appropriate strategies and be successful language learners (Gu 2003; Oxford et al. 2004; Rubin 2005, Rubinet al. 2007). Hence, more effectiveness could be obtained if both process and product were integrated in the teaching methods (Rubin et al. 2007). Consequently, strategic competence and language skills development can be supported by a particular learning system in which students can foster their ability to select appropriate strategies and be more successful (Rubin et al. 2007).

Students should be introduced to CSs and the kinds of strategies that can be used, as suggested by Cohen (1998), Chamot et al. (1999), Macaro (2001), and Cohen & Macaro (2007). In higher education, one possible way to help low ability students improve their oral communication may be to introduce them to the use of risk-taking strategies employed by high ability students. Cohen et al. (1998) and Dörnyei (1995) have claimed that communicative skills can be improved by developing specific CSs and raising low ability students‟ awareness of strategies for solving potential communication problems, leading to the development of their oral communication ability. These suggestions are supported by Nakatani (2005), who has stated that trained participants significantly improved their oral proficiency test scores and their success partly due to an increased awareness of CSs. More importantly, a focused and explicit program of CSs teaching and/or training is needed (Dörnyei 1995; Rubin et al. 2007) and should be designed specifically for implementation in a Thai context. For example, the teacher should be selective in giving appropriate strategies to different types of students. As Thai students seem to be passive and shy, they may reluctant to present themselves like showing off in order to ask for help, or use gestures. Therefore, it might be better if the teacher suggests some types of CSs related to their thinking process such

as social-affective, fluency-oriented, and accuracy-oriented strategies, in their communicative tasks.

Apart from that, especially for lower levels of education, language teachers can also motivate students to apply CSs as greater motivation relates to higher frequencies of strategy use. According to a statement of Graham (1997: 89), concepts for CSs involve the aim of decreasing anxiety and increasing participation. There are several effective ways to fulfill this goal such as the English corner, English speaking contest, short play performance, and other sorts of activities. These should be popularized in line with the specialties of different schools. Furthermore, there should be an effort to improve the situation that CSs still do not feature in many L2 syllabuses in Thailand. It might be better if (1) local educational organizations highlight their students‟ communicative competence in English rather than their testing scores; (2) authentic materials in English teaching and learning such as textbooks, and audio/video tapes should be developed; (3) appropriate English teaching methodologies should be applied, and communicative language teaching should be emphasized rather than grammatical translation methods; and (4) authentic testing system should be created to accord with the requirements of fluent oral English. Lastly, without the improvement of all teachers‟ own practice in language teaching, these aforementioned will be no use.

3. Concerning practical contribution, since the Oral Communication Test (OCT) and the Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) received a high rating from the experts in the field in terms of congruence with the objectives and the appropriateness of content, it suggested that the results of the OCT and the SUSTI were valid and reliable. In addition to that, in order to meet the high standard, the results of the study were triangulated using the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

3.1 As for the quality assurance in high standard universities, to see whether their graduating students have adequate English oral communication ability to enter competitive job markets or not, the OCT might be needed in order to assess their ability. The SUSTI can be employed to investigate their communication strategies used in the strategic process together with their linguistic knowledge.

3.2 The OCT can tell the levels of oral communication ability of the students and identify their gaps between their present levels and their target levels of being successful English speakers. In addition, the SUSTI can be used to elicit the students‟ responses related to their communication strategies used.

3.3 Related-research participants such as educators, graduating students, employers, staff, and other interested people can benefit from the study‟s instruments and results since the findings can:

3.3.1 provide the guidelines for educators to design intensive, on-going or post-sessional courses after the students are diagnosed with points to be improved in oral communication ability. The students should have more chances to practice the speaking skill in the university.

3.3.2 provide frameworks and procedures for educators and language assessors to design and develop speaking tests. In the real learning situation, it was found that reading and listening tests are more available and emphasized, while speaking and writing tests are less evaluated although these two skills also play significant roles in their future tasks. The universities and educators should consider developing their own tests, especially the tests focusing on oral communication or interaction.

3.3.3 be used by employers to assess the candidates‟ ability in oral communication before the main procedures in the recruitment.

3.3.4 be used as self-assessment among university students in any fields in order to practice and improve their oral communication ability at their pace.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Following are some recommendations for future research.

1. As mentioned in the earlier chapter, there were limited budget and time constrains in conducting this study. The researcher could not develop tests on the other three language skills; reading, listening, and writing. In addition, in order to establish standards for new tests, there may be a need for more test administrations and a larger number of subjects. To achieve the standards, the new tests may need a number of reviews and revisions. Regarding the replications of this study, the researchers should

1.1 use more subjects with a wider range of language ability levels such as high, average, and low.

1.2 extend the range of the standard deviations from the range of -1S.D. to +1S.D. to that of -1.5 S.D. to +1.5 S.D. in order to obtain more obvious different language ability levels.

1.3 increase the number of speaking interactions in the oral communication test tasks, so that the students can respond more naturally in communicative events.

1.4 change the format of the OCT from the semi-direct oral interview to the direct oral interview; in this way some CSs such as non-verbal and help-seeking strategies can be directly examined. Also, being tested in a number of oral interactions by different testers or interlocutors offers the students more than one opportunity to demonstrate their oral communication abilities. For example, a student who may not be successful in one assessment will be given another chance to be assessed by another evaluator. This will help reduce their anxiety.

1.5 observe strategies used in different tasks, and in different language skills so that more types of strategies used by students to achieve their communicative goals in all four language skills can be obtained.

2. The integrated OCT tasks should be developed to examine the types of strategies used. The results can be compared with this study to find similarities and differences in using communication strategies.

3. The SUSTI may be used to compare types of CSs used by the students in this study with those from other universities that have students with similar characteristics.

4. Apart from language ability levels and types of CSs, other variables related to oral communication performance such as students‟ characteristics, types of exposure to communicative tasks, and types of training should be investigated.

5. Training and giving more exposure to a wider range of oral communicative tasks as well as communication strategies which are more closely related to the oral language used in real lives should be provided to students at different levels.

6. Since some types of CSs used by the high and the low language ability groups were not significantly different, more studies to investigate the use of these types of CSs focusing on students‟ individual differences such as the students‟ anxiety, learning styles, and gender should be carried out.

7. Other research designs integrating multiple factors affecting students‟ oral communication ability and communication strategies used such as motivation, career, orientation, and culture should be explored.

8. The explorations of other communicative components such as strategic competence, pragmatic competence and discourse competence should be studied so that language teachers and material designers can gain benefits from the results of these studies.

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APPENDIX A: Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (English Version)

Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) (English Version)

Part One: Demographic Information

Please put a ✓ in front of the item you choose and write required information.

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female
2. Age: _____
3. GPA: _____
4. The grade that you received in the speaking course:

____A	____B+	____B	____C+	____C	____D+	____D	____F

5. The highest grade that you have received in previous English courses:

____A	____B+	____B	____C+	____C	____D+	____D	____F

6. The lowest grade that you have received in previous English courses:

____A	____B+	____B	____C+	____C	____D+	____D	____F

7. Which of the following standardized tests have you taken?

_____ **TOEFL**	_____ **CU-TEP**
_____ **TOEIC**	_____ **TU-GET**
_____ **IELTS**	
_____ **Others**, please specify_____	
_____ I have never taken any standardized test before.	

Part 2: Communication strategies used in speaking tasks

Please put a ✓ in front of the item you choose.

5 = Usually
4 = Mainly
3 = Sometimes
2 = Rarely
1 = Never

During a communication in English, ……..

No.	Questions	5 Usually	4 Mainly	3 Some-times	2 Rare-ly	1 Never
1.	I pay attention to the conversation flow, and avoid silence.					
2.	I try to relax when I feel anxious.					
3.	I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.					
4.	When I am talking, I try to make eye-contact.					
5.	I use words which are familiar to me.					
6.	I think of what I want to say in Thai, then construct the English sentence.					
7.	When the message is not clear, I ask my participants for clarification directly.					
8.	If I face some language difficulties, I will leave a message unfinished.					
9.	I pay attention to the intonation and pronunciation.					
10.	I give up expressing a message if I cannot make myself understand.					
11.	I try to elicit help from my interlocutor indirectly; such as rising intonation.					
12.	I use fillers; such as „well, you know, okay, umm, or uh“ when I do not know what to say.					
13.	I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.					
14.	I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I do not know what to say.					
15.	I try to enjoy the conversation.					
16.	I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.					
17.	I describe the characteristics of the object instead of using the exact word that I am not sure.					
18.	I reduce the message and use simple expressions.					
19.	I encourage myself to use English even though it may risk making mistakes.					

20.	I use gestures if I cannot express myself.					
21.	I give a good impression to the listener.					
22.	I pay attention to grammar and word-order.					
23.	I ask for repetition; such as “pardon?”, or “could you say it again?”, when a message is not clear to me.					
24.	I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.					
25.	I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent.					
26.	I use some phrases; like „it is a good question.“ or „it is rather difficult to explain“, in order to gain more time to think what I should speak.					
27.	I use facial expressions if I cannot express what I want to say.					

APPENDIX B: Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (Thai Version)

แบบสอบถามหลักการพูดในการสนทนาภาษาอังกฤษ

Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) (ฉบับภาษาไทย)

ส่วนที่ 1: ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

โปรดใส่เครื่องหมาย ✓ หน้าข้อที่คุณเลือกและกรอกข้อมูลในช่องว่าง

1. เพศ: ☐ ชาย ☐ หญิง

2. อายุ: ☐ ต่ำกว่า 17 ปี ☐ 17-19 ปี

☐ 20-22 ปี ☐ 23 ปีขึ้นไป

3. เกรดเฉลี่ยสะสม: ☐

4. เกรดที่ได้จากวิชา Speaking:

____A ____B+ ____B ____C+ ____C ____D+ ____D ____F

5. **เกรดสูงสุด**ที่เคยได้ในการเรียนวิชาภาษาอังกฤษในระดับมหาวิทยาลัย:

____A ____B+ ____B ____C+ ____C ____D+ ____D ____F

โปรดระบุชื่อวิชา_____

6. **เกรดต่ำสุด**ที่เคยได้ในการเรียนวิชาภาษาอังกฤษที่ในระดับมหาวิทยาลัย:

____A ____B+ ____B ____C+ ____C ____D+ ____D ____F

โปรดระบุชื่อวิชา_____

7. แบบทดสอบมาตรฐานวัดระดับความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ ที่คุณเคยสอบ:

(ไม่รวมการสอบกลางภาค ปลายภาค และ การสอบย่อยต่างๆ ในหลักสูตรที่เรียนของมหาวิทยาลัย)

_____ TOEFL **_____ CU-TEP**

_____ TOEIC **_____ TU-GET**

_____ IELTS

_____ อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)_____

_____ ฉันไม่เคยสอบวัดระดับความสามารถการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเลย นอกจากการสอบตามหลักสูตรของมหาวิทยาลัย

ส่วนที่ 2: หลักการพูดในการสื่อสารโดยใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ

<u>โปรดอ่านข้อความและทำเครื่องหมาย ✓ ในช่องที่คุณเลือก</u>.

5 = สม่ำเสมอ
4 = ส่วนใหญ่
3 = บางครั้ง
2 = นาน ๆ ครั้ง
1 = ไม่เคยเลย

➔ระหว่างที่ข้าพเจ้าสนทนาเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ, ……..

ข้อ	คำถาม	5 สม่ำเสมอ	4 ส่วนใหญ่	3 บางครั้ง	2 นานๆ ครั้ง	1 ไม่เคยเลย
1.	ข้าพเจ้าสนใจบทสนทนาและหลีกเลี่ยงความเงียบระหว่างการสนทนา					
2.	ข้าพเจ้าพยายามผ่อนคลายเวลาที่ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกกังวลใจในการสนทนา					
3.	ข้าพเจ้าใช้สำนวนและประโยคถูกต้องตามหลักไวยกรณ์ที่เคยเรียนมา					
4.	ข้าพเจ้าสบตาคู่สนทนาระหว่างที่ข้าพเจ้าพูด					
5.	ข้าพเจ้าใช้คำศัพท์และสำนวนที่ข้าพเจ้าคุ้นเคย					
6.	ข้าพเจ้าคิดในสิ่งที่อยากจะพูดเป็นภาษาไทยแล้วเปลี่ยนเป็นภาษาอังกฤษในประโยคสนทนา					
7.	เมื่อข้อความที่สื่อสารไม่ชัดเจน ข้าพเจ้าจะถามคู่สนทนาเพื่อความกระจ่างในทันที					
8.	ถ้าหากข้าพเจ้าเผชิญความยากลำบากทางภาษา ข้าพเจ้าจะจบการสนทนาทันที ซึ่งอาจจะพูดไม่จบประโยค					
9.	ข้าพเจ้าให้ความสนใจโทนเสียงและการออกเสียง					
10.	ข้าพเจ้าล้มเลิกความตั้งใจในการอธิบายข้อความหากข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถเข้าใจเป็นภาษาอังกฤษได้ก่อน					
11.	ข้าพเจ้าขอความช่วยเหลือจากคู่สนทนาในทางอ้อมเมื่อการสื่อสารไม่ชัดเจน เช่น การออกเสียงสูงท้ายประโยค					

12.	ข้าพเจ้าใช้คำเติมแต่งบทสนทนา เช่น „Well, You know, Okay, Umm, or Uh“ เมื่อข้าพเจ้าไม่รู้จะพูดอะไร					
13.	ข้าพเจ้าพยายามพูดให้ชัดเจนและดังพอเพื่อให้คู่สนทนาสามารถได้ยินสิ่งที่ข้าพเจ้าพูด					
14.	เมื่อข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถคิดคำศัพท์ที่ต้องการพูดได้ ข้าพเจ้าจะล้มเลิกความคิดนั้นและ ใช้คำอื่นแทน					
15.	ข้าพเจ้ารู้สึกสนุกกับการสนทนา					
16.	ข้าพเจ้าพยายามแก้ไขคำที่ผิด เมื่อข้าพเจ้ารู้ตัวว่าพูดผิด					
17.	ข้าพเจ้าอธิบายลักษณะของสิ่งที่ข้าพเจ้าต้องการพูดถึงแทนที่จะใช้คำศัพท์ที่เฉพาะเจาะจง เมื่อข้าพเจ้าไม่แน่ใจในคำศัพท์นั้น					
18.	ข้าพเจ้าตัดทอนหรือเปลี่ยนข้อความในการสนทนาโดยใช้สำนวนง่าย ๆ เพื่อให้เข้าใจง่าย					
19.	ข้าพเจ้าพยายามใช้ภาษาอังกฤษถึงแม้ว่าจะเสี่ยงกับการพูดผิดก็ตาม					
20.	ข้าพเจ้าใช้ท่าทางประกอบการพูดหากข้าพเจ้าอธิบายไม่ถูก.					
21.	ข้าพเจ้าพยายามสร้างความประทับใจที่ดีต่อผู้ฟัง					
22.	ข้าพเจ้าให้ความสนใจกับหลักไวยากรณ์และการเรียงลำดับคำ					
23.	ข้าพเจ้าขอให้คู่สนทนาทวนคำพูดซ้ำอีกครั้ง เช่น Pardon? หรือ Could you say it again? เมื่อข้อความในการสนทนาไม่ชัดเจน					
24.	ข้าพเจ้าให้กำลังใจตัวเองในการอธิบายสิ่งที่ข้าพเจ้าต้องการจะพูด					
25.	ข้าพเจ้าใช้ข้อความอื่นแทนข้อความเดิมที่ต้องการสื่อ เพราะรู้สึกว่าไม่สามารถอธิบายข้อความที่คิดออกมาได้					
26.	ข้าพเจ้าใช้สำนวน เช่น „It is a good question.“ หรือ „It is rather difficult to explain.“ เพื่อเพิ่มเวลาในการคิดสิ่งที่ข้าพเจ้าต้องการจะพูด					
27.	ข้าพเจ้าแสดงออกทางสีหน้า หากข้าพเจ้าไม่สามารถอธิบายสิ่งที่ข้าพเจ้าต้องการจะพูด					

APPENDIX C: Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) Index

Name: _____

SECTION ONE: Construct Validation

Instructions: Read the item objectives in Part One below. Then, read each item in the SUSTI, and consider carefully the degree to which the item is congruent, and related with the objective. Rate the congruence according to the scheme.

H means there is **high degree of congruence** between the item and the objective.
M means there is **medium degree of congruence** between the item and the objective.
L means there is **low degree of congruence** between the item and the objective.

If you would like to comment on the congruence of the test item, please write the comments in the space provided. After you have finished with this part, proceed to the second part and rate each in the same manner.

Part One: Put a ✓ in the rating box (H, M, L) according to your opinion, and specify comments for each item (Eight items).

Main Objective: The objective of this part is to obtain the test-takers' background in both personal information and academic information regarding their language proficiency.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

<u>Part Two</u>: Put a ✓ in the rating box (H, M, L) according to your opinion, and specify comments for each item (27 items).

<u>Main objective</u>: The objective in this part is to assess the degree and types of strategies which the test-takers use in their oral communication.

<u>Taxonomy of Communication strategies use</u>

1. Risk-taking Strategies: This refers to strategies that the speakers use for increasing their linguistic resources, as „resource expansion strategies", in order to achieve their communicative goals.

a.) Social-affective strategies: The speakers use these strategies to control their own anxiety and enjoy the process of oral communication, to maintain conversation. Thus, they are willing to encourage themselves to speak English and to take risk in making mistakes. They behave in such a way as to give impression and try to avoid silence during interaction.

b.) Fluency-oriented strategies: They involve strategies that the speakers use to pay attention to pronunciation, and emphasize on clarity of their speech. They try to speak loudly and clearly to improve the listener"s comprehension.

c.) Accuracy-oriented strategies: The speakers are concerned with a desire to speak English accurately. So, they pay attention mainly on forms of their speech, and when they notice their mistake, they often seek grammatical accuracy by self-correcting. It seems to be that they have a willing to speak appropriately like a native English speaker even though this is not an easy goal.

d.) Non-verbal strategies: Referring to describing whole concepts non-verbal. For example, the speakers use gestures or face-expression to give hints and help the listener guess what they want. Additionally, they may use eye-contact in order to attract the attention of their partners.

e.) Help-seeking strategies: The speakers turn to the interlocutor for assistance either directly or indirectly. They may ask an explicit question concerning a gap in their L2 knowledge. It might be include asking for repetition, asking for clarification, and asking for confirmation. In addition, they may try to elicit help from their interlocutor indirectly; such as rising intonation, or pause.

f.) Circumlocution strategies (Paraphrase): They refer to strategies that the speaker describes the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language items or structure. These also involve exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action.

2. Risk-avoidance strategies: The speakers try to adjust the message to match with the original linguistic resources.

a.) Message abandonment strategies: The speakers tent to give up their attempt to communicate by leaving the message unfinished, when they encounter difficulties producing their speech

b.) Message reduction and alteration strategies: These strategies are used when the speakers try to avoid a communication breakdown by reducing an original message, simplifying their utterance, or using similar expressions that they can use confidently. The speakers tend to use familiar words and avoid taking risks by using new or unfamiliar words, even though they sometimes realize that the utterance is far from their communication goal.

c.) Time-gaining strategies: These refer to using gambits or fillers to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty. Examples range from very short structures such as *well, you know, okay, umm, uh,* to longer phrases; such as *it's a good question, this is rather difficult to explain, or actually.*

Objective 1: To measure the degree of test-takers' social affective strategies used in controlling their own anxiety and enjoy the process of oral communication in order to maintain conversation.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. I try to relax when I feel anxious.				
2. I try to enjoy the conversation.				
3. I encourage myself to use English even though it may risk making mistakes.				
4. I give a good impression to the listener.				
5. I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.				

Objective 2: To measure the degree of test-takers' fluency-oriented strategies used in emphasizing on pronunciation, and the clarity of their speech.

Item No.	Special Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. I pay attention to the conversation flow, and avoid silence.				

2. I pay attention to the intonation and pronunciation.				
3. I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.				

Objective 3: To measure the degree of test-takers' accuracy-oriented strategies use whether they are concerned with a desire to speak English accurately.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.				
2. I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.				
3. I pay attention to grammar and word-order.				

Objective 4: To measure the degree of test-takers' non-verbal strategies used; such as using gestures or face-expression to give hints and help the listener guess what they want.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. When I am talking, I try to make eye-contact.				
2. I use gestures if I cannot express myself.				
3. I use facial expressions if I cannot express what I want to say.				

Objective 5: To measure the degree of test-takers' help-seeking strategies used whether they turn to the interlocutor for assistance either directly or indirectly.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. When the message is not clear, I ask my participants for clarification directly.				
2. I try to elicit help from my interlocutor indirectly; such as rising intonation.				

3. I ask for repetition; such as "pardon?", or "could you say it again?", when a message is not clear to me.				

Objective 6: To measure the degree of test-takers' circumlocution strategies used as they describe the characteristic or elements of the object instead of using the appropriate target language items.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. I describe the characteristics of the object instead of using the exact word that I am not sure.				

Objective 7: To measure the degree of test-takers' message abandonment strategies used as they tent to give up their attempt to communicate by leaving the message unfinished when they encounter difficulties producing their speech.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. If I face some language difficulties, I will leave a message unfinished.				
2. I give up expressing a message if I cannot make myself understand.				
3. I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I do not know what to say.				

Objective 8: To measure the degree of test-takers' message reduction and alteration strategies used as they try to avoid a communication breakdown by reducing an original message, simplifying their utterance, or using similar expressions that they can use confidently.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. I use words which are familiar to me.				
2. I think of what I want to say in Thai, then construct the English sentence.				

3. I reduce the message and use simple expressions.				
4. I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent.				

Objective 9: To measure the degree of test-takers' time-gaining strategies used by using gambits or fillers to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at time of difficulty.

Item No.	Specialist Opinion			Comments
	H	M	L	
1. I use fillers; such as „well, you know, okay, umm, or uh" when I do not know what to say.				
2. I use some phrases; like „it is a good question." or „it is rather difficult to explain", in order to gain more time to think what I should speak.				

SECTION TWO: Content Validation

Instructions: Please consider the attached questionnaire (SUSTI) and put a ✓ in front of the answer YES or NO and specify the comments according to your opinion.

1. The content of the SUSTI reflects the main objective of the questionnaire.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments:

2. The SUSTI is appropriate to measure communication strategies use of the 3rd year undergraduate students majoring in English.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments:

3. The specific language used in the SUSTI can be found in real conversation when the speaker encounters with language difficulty.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments:

4. The format of the SUSTI is appropriate.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments:

5. Other comments:

Thank you for your kind attention.

Suttinee Chuanchaisit

APPENDIX D: IOC Tally Sheet and Calculation

Number of experts: 3

1 Yajai Chuwicha, Ph.D., Dean of the Faculty of Humanity, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

2 Pornpan Bunyapattanaporn, Senior lecturer, Faculty of Humanity, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

3 Gerard Sharpling, Ph.D., Senior Language Tutor in English for Academic Purposes, University of Warwick

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{n}$$

$\sum R$ = Total score from the three raters (experts)

n = Total number of the raters (experts) = 3

Congruence between the item and its objective:

H = +1

M = 0

L = -1

Interpretation: If the IOC index of a test item is equal or more than 0.7, it will be accepted regarding at least two experts agree with the congruence. It means that the test item has acceptable degree of congruence with the objective as it can measure what it is expected to be measuring. On the other hand, if the IOC index of a test item is less than 0.7, it should be revised or rejected.

Results:

- The average IOC Index of the SUSTI was 0.56
- There was 24 out of 35 test items (68.57%) that could be kept.

Section One: Construct Validation

Part One: Items no. 1-8

Item No.	Expert No.1	Expert No.2	Expert No.3	IOC	Results
1	-1	1	-1	-0.3	X
2	-1	1	1	0.3	X
3	-1	1	1	0.3	X
4	-1	1	1	0.3	X
5	0	1	1	0.7	✓
6	0	1	1	0.7	✓
7	0	1	1	0.7	✓
8	0	1	1	0.7	✓

Note: Meaning of the results ✓ = accepted; X = revised or rejected

Part Two: Items no. 1-27

Item No.	Expert No.1	Expert No.2	Expert No.3	IOC	Results
1	1	-1	0	0	X
2	1	1	1	1	✓
3	0	1	1	0.7	✓
4	0	1	1	0.7	✓
5	1	1	1	1	✓
6	-1	-1	0	-0.7	X
7	1	1	1	1	✓
8	1	1	1	1	✓
9	0	1	1	0.7	✓
10	1	1	0	0.7	✓
11	0	0	1	0.3	X
12	1	1	1	1	✓
13	-1	1	1	0.3	X
14	0	-1	0	-0.3	X
15	1	1	1	1	✓
16	1	1	1	1	✓

17	1	1	1	1	✓
18	0	1	1	0.7	✓
19	1	1	1	1	✓
20	0	1	1	0.7	✓
21	0	1	1	0.7	✓
22	1	1	1	1	✓
23	1	1	1	1	✓
24	1	0	1	0.7	✓
25	1	1	1	1	✓
26	1	-1	1	0.3	X
27	0	0	1	0.3	X

Note: Meaning of the results ✓ = accepted; X = revised or rejected

Section Two: Content Validation

Item	**Expert No.1 & comments**	**Expert No.2 & comments**	**Expert No.3 & Comments**
1. The content of the SUSTI reflects the main objective of the questionnaire.	Yes. I would argue that the non-verbal communication aspects are somewhat skewed by cultural issues, and less valid (though interesting).	Yes. Some questionnaire items should be revised in order to reflect the strategies; such as No. 8, 2, 14, or 27.	Yes.
2. The SUSTI is appropriate to measure communication strategy use of the 3rd year undergraduate students majoring in English.	Yes. Probably, yes, on the basis of the questionnaire, though I don't know enough about what 3rd year undergrad students in Thailand are like to be able to say for sure.	Yes.	Yes.
3. The specific language used in the SUSTI can be found in real conversation when the speaker encounters with language difficulty.	Yes. The language seems to be mostly part of real conversation so this probably adds to the reliability and authenticity of the responses. Some metalanguage such as	Yes.	Yes.

	„interlocutor" and „elicit" are part of teacher talk and seem to stray rather high in terms of register???		
4. The format of the SUSTI is appropriate.	Yes. (Insofar as it is straightforward, not too laborious, not over-complex, etc).	Yes.	Yes.
5. Other comments	An interesting and well-constructed research tool – should yield interesting results. I will be interested to see how this is followed up with other tools/instruments later.	---	The researcher should clarify the criteria of the scale one (always) to five (never). For example, „always" can be defined in this context as „every time that I speak English".

APPENDIX E: Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (Revised Version)

Strategies Used in Speaking Task Inventory (SUSTI) (Revised Version)

Part One: Demographic Information

Please put a ✓ in front of the item you choose and write required information.

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female
2. Age: _____
3. GPA: _____
4. The grade received in the speaking course:

____A	____B+	____B	____C+	____C	____D+	____D	____F

5. The highest grade received in a previous English course:

____A	____B+	____B	____C+	____C	____D+	____D	____F

6. The lowest grade received in previous English course:

____A	____B+	____B	____C+	____C	____D+	____D	____F

7. Which of the following standardized tests have you taken, please write your scores?

_____ **TOEFL**	_____ **CU-TEP**
_____ **TOEIC**	_____ **TU-GET**
_____ **IELTS**	
_____ **Others**, please specify_____	
_____ **Never taken any standardized test.**	

Part 2: Communication strategies used in speaking tasks

Please put a ✓ in front of the item you choose.

5 = Usually
4 = Mainly
3 = Sometimes
2 = Rarely
1 = Never

During a communication in English, ……..

No.	Questions	5 Usually	4 Mainly	3 Some-times	2 Rare-ly	1 Never
1.	I pay attention to the conversation flow, and avoid silence.					
2.	I try to relax when I feel anxious.					
3.	I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.					
4.	When I am talking, I try to make eye-contact.					
5.	I use words which are familiar to me.					
6.	I think of what I want to say in Thai, then construct the English sentence.					
7.	When the message is not clear, I ask my interlocutors for clarification directly.					
8.	If I face some language difficulties, I will leave a message unfinished.					
9.	I pay attention to the intonation and pronunciation.					
10.	I give up expressing a message if I cannot make myself understood.					
11.	I try to elicit help from my interlocutor indirectly; such as using rising intonation.					
12.	I use fillers; such as „well, you know, okay, umm, or uh“ when I do not know what to say.					
13.	I try to enjoy the conversation.					
14.	I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.					
15.	I describe the characteristics of the object instead of using the exact word when I am not sure.					
16.	I reduce the message and use simple expressions.					
17.	I encourage myself to use English even though this may cause mistakes.					
18.	I use gestures if I cannot express myself.					
19.	I give a good impression to the listener.					
20.	I pay attention to grammar and word-order.					
21.	I ask for repetition; such as „Pardon?“, or „Could you say it again?“, when a message is not clear to me.					
22.	I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.					
23.	I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent.					
24.	I use some phrases; like „It is a good question.“ or „It is rather difficult to explain“, in order to gain more time to think what I should say.					
25.	I use facial expressions if I cannot express what I want to say.					

APPENDIX F: Rating scales

Category	Level and Description	Given score (Each category)
❶Comprehension - Is comprehension consistently accurate in nearly all contexts?	Level 6- Excellent Level 5- Good Level 4- Fair Level 3- Barely adequate Level 2- Poor Level 1- Very poor	
❷Fluency - Is the speaker able to speak at length with a natural and effortless flow? - Is the speech fragmented because of hesitations, pauses or false starts?	Level 6- Excellent Level 5- Good Level 4- Fair Level 3- Barely adequate Level 2- Poor Level 1- Very poor	
❸Grammar - Is the grammar correct and nature? - Do grammatical errors interfere with meaning?	Level 6- Excellent Level 5- Good Level 4- Fair Level 3- Barely adequate Level 2- Poor Level 1- Very poor	
❹Vocabulary - Are vocabulary range and accuracy sufficient to communicate effectively on a variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics?	Level 6- Excellent Level 5- Good Level 4- Fair Level 3- Barely adequate Level 2- Poor Level 1- Very poor	
❺Cohesion and Coherence - Are cohesive and coherent devices used and managed effectively?	Level 6- Excellent Level 5- Good Level 4- Fair Level 3- Barely adequate Level 2- Poor Level 1- Very poor	

After you (as a rater) finish rating in each category, please rate the overall score based on the results above and the given descriptors. This is the final score informed to the test-taker.

Level 6 *(Effective English communicator)*: The test-taker can communicate effectively in spoken English in a range of social and work situations. Communication is appropriate with a degree of fluency. Language is grammatically accurate most of the time with a wide range of vocabulary which is used effectively in most situations.

Level 5 *(Good English communicator)*: The test-taker can communicate adequately in spoken English to handle everyday communication in social, educational and work situations. Despite some grammatical inaccuracies, the test-taker can communicate with a fair degree of fluency. Vocabulary is wide enough to express most ideas, particular in familiar situations.

Level 4 *(Competent English communicator)*: The test-taker can communicate general information in spoken English in most everyday social situations. Basic grammatical structures are used although inaccuracies are frequent. Although vocabulary is limited, most common concepts can be expressed.

Level 3 *(Limited English communicator*: The test-taker can communicate only general meaning in very familiar situations. There is a limited control of basic grammatical structures. Vocabulary is limited to common words and phrases.

Level 2 *(Extremely limited English communicator)*: The test-taker communicates with difficulties. There are some problems in understanding and expression. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.

Level 1 *(Non English communicator*): The test-taker"s ability to communicate in spoken English is very low. It seems to be no practical speaking ability in English beyond possibly a few isolated words.

Final score	

APPENDIX G: Transcriptions

Transcription notation symbols (from Atkinson & Heritage, 1984)

1. **Unfilled pauses or gaps** – periods of silence, timed in tenths of a second by counting „beats" of elapsed time. Micropauses, those of less than .2 seconds, are symbolized (.); longer pauses appear as a time within parentheses: (.5) is five tenths of seconds.
2. **Colon (:)** – a lengthened sound or syllable; more colons prolong the stretch.
3. **.hhh** – an inhalation
4. **hhh** – an exhalation
5. **A question mark (?)** – the rising intonation
6. **IN** – an interviewer
7. **TT**- a test-taker

The high language ability student using risk-taking strategies No.1

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: hi my name is Koonpheum Ledchana
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: I couldn't remember (.5) the exact time because it seems to be long time ago I think (1.0) I began (1.0)studying English when I was in first grade (.) I was pretty young

IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: what I do like most about study English I think (.) conversation or speaking is (1.0) what I do (1.0) like most about studying English (.) because I am allowed to speak everything (.) I want to (1.0) and use my American accent (1.0) pretty well
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: I think (2.0) I'm gonna move myself to (1.0) foreign country like (2.0) Canada or America so in those country I can use my English so good (1.0) and every time I want to (0.5) besides using English in daily life I will use it in my future career as I really want to work in a five star hotel overseas (0.5) that is why I have to practise and improve my English speaking skill as much as possible before going there
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: a person who is very important to me is in my family (0.5) can you guess who (.) she's gotta

be tough and strong (1.0) and also she can lead me (1.0) in every way (1.0) and (1.0) also can teach me to do everything (1.0) correctly (2.0) and help me to find my path (1.0) of course (1.0) that person is (1.0) my mother the reasons for selecting my mom is that she is the only one person who always stands by me (0.5)in every situation (0.5) when I am in trouble she s likely to help me figure it out and also if I achieve my goal she seems to be more happy than me

IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?

TT: okey. (1.0) I don't give a damn about (1.0) the examination I'm gonna go to the party hang out with my friend and celebrate with them (2.0) of course I was joking (1.0) actually (1.0) I'm gonna (2.0) step by (1.0) over there and say hi and (1.0) say happy birthday (.5) and give them some present and then (2.0) and then leave the place and go back to my house and (2.0) continue (2.0) read (1.0) the book (1.0) or (2.0) repeat my (1.0) lesson (2.0) and then go to the bed (1.0) and hopefully tomorrow I'll get a good mark good point whatever thank you::::

The high language ability student using risk-taking strategies No.2

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: my name is Krisada Pongphiphat
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: well, as far as I know, I began studying English (1.0) when I was in secondary school (.) it is quite strange for students in Bangkok that I didn't start learning English since primary school (.) but it is usual for students studying in school far from civilization (0.5) like my southern province
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: um, what I like most about studying English (1.0) is the challenging when I use English in my real life you know language is (2.0), is, is so challenging because you you can find definite answer how each word is used in each context
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: before talking about my plan… uh for using English in the future I have to mention my dream career first (0.5) my dream career is the teacher. So I… I really want to be a teacher in an international school so the way I will use I need to talk English every day (0.5) I'll teach my student in English subject that is all my plan to use English in the future
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: the most important person to me is mother (.) because she work really hard in order to take care of me and actually I might say she work really hard to take care of the whole family and she is the ideal of a tough women uh a strong woman and::: she taught me everything how to be a good guy how to be ah how to live live in a in a world happily and yeah I might say she has a great influence on me(6.0)and I know that she works very hard every day she will be tired she will be exhausted when she came home and even though I know this point I I I am not afraid to be like my mother I know that what I did is worth is worth to the loved one or the whole family
IN: your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?

TT: if my close friend invite me to his birthday party but I have a final examination tomorrow so I need to prepare for the examination tomorrow and what I need what I will do is to inform my friend that I have a test tomorrow so I need the time to read a book so I will ask him to postpone the:: party maybe the next week we can go to the party again and because you know studying is the most important thing for me therefore I think the party is just a little factor that we should take it for granted if we have something more important thing to do more important task to do if especially in the studying and if he if that person is really your close friend he had to he has to understand you because he should think that studying is the most important thing for him as well so maybe I would ask him to postpone the party or in case he cannot postpone the party what I will do is to cancel the party immediately because I know that I like mention so far the most important thing for me is studying so there is no need to to fooling around other than keep reading book um because I want to get I'm going to get a high score for the test tomorrow so therefore I will ask him to
postpone or even he cannot I will cancel the party

The high language ability student using risk-taking strategies No.3

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: yes, I'm Prisaree Raksakaew
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: well, I think (.5) I study English when I was young it's about (1.0) four (.5) or five years old
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: well the most I like (.) to study English is about speaking and listening (1.0) because I think the sound is very sexy for me to speak (2.0) and I would like to speak like a (1.0) original sound language
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: for me in my plan (.5) to use English in the future I think is about work .hhh umm well I'd like to get a good salary (1.0) so anyway must to have (1.0) a good speak English literature and anyway I think English is very important for the futures (1.0) and I'm using it in my work or my job something like this
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: well for me there are many people very important to me like a:: (1.0) the first one is my parents I think they always support me to study English (1.0) and from uhm every way and from every situation (1.0) so I need a second one I think (3.0) she is a singer who is like a Britney Spears when I was young I was used to (1.0) her song and I would like to know the meaning and the third one is David Beckham who is my favourite (1.0) football player I wait for him I want to saw he football match (2.0) in London so I must to speak English if I want to go to London
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: well for this situation (1.0) if I were in here I I think I want (1.0) I must to worry like to give for my friend for my close friend I mean uhh like a card I will do myself or::: I lost some weight or anyway I must something worry her life like a ring back something like this (1.0) and I give to her so I need to and I I will call

her that I can't join with her party because I have a midterm test .hhh (2.0) so anyway if she if she's my close friend I think she will she will understand me what what I should do yes I think she will support my idea that (1.0) that everything that I do so anyway (2.0) .hhh I would told her that I can't join her party and I will give her some (2.0) gift for yes (3.0) so anyway I think (1.0) she will understand me

The high language ability student using risk-avoidance strategies No.1

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: hhh My name is Poomchai Peungboonnaipayang
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: Oops (1.0) …ah yeah… I began studying in English in..ah.. kindergarten school hhh (2.0) mmm kindergarten (2.0) … hhh right.
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: Oh (1.0) yeah I think what I like about studying is umm (.) you know the language when you communicate with people is different their accent so (.) that's the most interesting part of American accent and British accent so (1.0) you know (.) that's what I like you know hhh that's a very weird question ok
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: Well, ah:: (1.0) my plans (1.0) in the future is ah… I think nowadays my English is (1.0) O.K. you know but maybe I might go working as a translator umm hhh something like that or a guide so like to the give tourists advice something like that hhh
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: Well, umm (4.0) the most important person for my life is have gotta be my mom. Because my dad and my mother got divorced when I was young (1.0) and you know nowadays she raises me all by herself (long pause) yeah here I am today having up to twenty two studying here in the university (long pause) and yeah she raised me good and all (1.0) not like (2.0) most of the parents who let their kids do what they want but you know I still in control so I know (1.0) what is ah should do when you study here (2.0) you play hard (3.0) and you study hard (long pause) … what else can I say? (4.0) yeah that's pretty much yeah?
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: (clear throat) Well as for me I I I don't think there'll be any problems to solve here (.5) because for me uh:: (1.0) I'm kinda like a night guys so I don't get don't get much sleep so you

know even though I have exam in the morning I could still party tonight with you know the birthday party so after the party over and I'll get back home and I'll study (1.0) hard till the morning (2.0) so yeah that's the answer to it uh mm (1.0) it's like I don't sleep much yeah I don't need a lot of a rest so you know (1.0) another people might give you different answer but for me this is like (2.0) yeah this is what I am so it's like giving you the fact here (1.0) but I'm doing like nowadays I look like a zombie you know (2.0) most of the Thai people prefer panda you know but my eyes just turn black (2.0) just a couple minutes (talking to the phone) hope this isn't like a serious test you know (2.0) otherwise man I'm screwed I'm in trouble for (1.0) like saying whatever

The high language ability student using risk-avoidance strategies No.2

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: .hhh my name's Titi Daoreung
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: I've always been interested in the other language for some time .hhh I (3.0) practice myself I begin when I begin to I study I study begin study English when I was child I'm interested in English .hhh in magazine .hhh or::: news I want to (3.0) I want to use English with (Time up)
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: (.)hhh I I see ah::: I see English is uhh the most important language communication nowadays I I I like I like English because it has a difficult structure and I will practice it in many times I practice it many times
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: in a very short plan I will use it I will use it urhh to find the information that I want to know like searching them from the internet and in my career I will I think I will I will (4.0) use it in my career (0.5) I would like to work in urh human resource department in a company (0.5) if I have excellent English skills I might have a high position there
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: first my mother is the most important she is the most important person to me and he she is the pretty all the time I'm I say I say love her everyday and I see she knows everything that I want and always respond to me all the time and another person she is my close friend that she stays in the same room who is the roommate nowadays he is a give me give me all of give me a favor::: that umm in the time that I need it (0.5) I I I and my friend are mate ten years ago since since since (long pause) oh I miss (indescribable sounds)
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: I don't want I don't to miss the party:: and I don't want to fail a test so the thing I I I

will do would be the *I'll (6.0) I I must (5.0) I have to* I have to prepare the test now (4.0) and .hhh umm (6.0) and fook and read urh read the book for the prepare the examination now and I gotta cancer I I I will not cancer the party because my friend is important to me I think I I can to find the explanation well (1.0) now if if if take urh occur if it will occur tomorrow now I must I have to uhm study hard to prepare the examination now (4.0) suddenly umm (3.0) certainly

The high language ability student using risk-avoidance strategies No.3

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: Yes, o.k. my name Patcharin Sophasing umm (2.0) I'm Thai
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: I started to study English mmm maybe about ten years ago or more than when I study in (3.0) maybe kinder.. um primary school I think that maybe grade grade two or three
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: I like to communicate with each ah with other people I'm when I start ah when I worked three years ago I ever work with foreigners and I think I love to communicate with people so I choose to study in English major
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: umm to be honest I I I would like to be a guide or or or something that I can I can use English in my job in the future (2.0) um um as I ve mentioned that the skill of English that I like most is communication or speaking skill (0.5) to be a guide is the way that I can use my skills and knowledge in my career (0.5) the um the real guide that I want to be is a guide uh guide yes
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: umm a person who is important to me is my mother (2.0) she did everything for me and she last time she did everything for me and the future and present she do everything for me too she took care me she gave me money every day she spend time with me when I have problem in my life and I would like to be like her she's a very very good person she can do everything that umm a man can do (2.0) I think she's a perfect person in my life and I would to be like her this is my answer thank you
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: I will tell her directly that I can't (2.0) umm go to the party go to her party (2.0) because I have I have the exam tomorrow morning and I want to prepare my exam and I want to do (1.0) it (2.0) my best (2.0) and I I I think (1.0) she

she have to understand and (1.0) and don't blame me that I can't go to her party (3.0) if she is my true friend (.5) she (1.0) she want me to (1.0) to to (1.0) to do to be that I want to to to do (3.0) I think she not she not blame me exactly and she have understand (1.0) umm umm (3.0) but (3.0) and I will give her a gift (1.0) before her party tonight (1.0) that night and give her some umm some good words that will that will make her feel good that I can't go to her party I will do like this thank you very much

The low language ability student using risk-taking strategies No.1

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: Hello my name's Jurarat Sukgade now I study in University of The Thai Chamber Commerce major English for Business Communication in years three
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: I begin study English when I was eight year. (1.0) er eight years old
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: umm I like speaking (1.0) reading (3.0) listening (1.0) because most of (2.0) most of this skill is really useful for study English
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: I plan to use English for my work in the future (2.0) I I want to work (1.5) about (1.0) about (.5) for use in English (1.0) anything because I would like to improve my English skill
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: for me there are many people very the person who is important for me is my mother (1.0) because she gives me everything she gives me love (2.0) education and best care for me (3.0) she really understands me (.5) everything (6.0) she gives everything of my life (7.0) and in the future when I have a job I will give everything like she give to me
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: I will go to the party but early one hour and after that I will come I will come home and read the book to prepare for the exam (2.0) because I think (3.0) birthday party (3.0) can it can meet a lot of friend (5.0) and I need a time to relax (7.0) after (2.0) after I went to the party I will I will read the book (5.0) because it's very important

The low language ability student using risk-taking strategies No.2

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: My my name is Papawarin Veerasaranakit
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: I have studied English since I'm six year years old
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: I like the most about study English is (2.0) conversation class because (2.0) I I want to learn more:: practice English and I I want I want to speak it out and try to understand (2.0) people
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: My plan to use English in the future is uhm I want to study uhr oversea or maybe (2.0) I would like to work in a in America maybe because I I went there before and I have friend there
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: A person who is very very important for me is my mom (2.0) because I only have one mom uhm in family because uhr (2.0) my my my dad already die like a fifteen years ago (4.0) and I want I want to be good girl for her (5.0) and I love her so much now (3.0) I want to be a good girl
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: uhh I will go to her birthday party (2.0) but (1.0) just only few um I mean I will go to her birthday party and give her present and then come back to read a book (2.0) for my exam in the morning (3.0) and I will I'll tell her about my exam it's very important for me more than her birthday and (5.0) and then (2.0) I I think she will understand me (3.0) that's it

The low language ability student using risk-taking strategies No.3

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: My name is Appirak Atkamat
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: I think (2.0) umm I start studying English (2.0) from the high school (1.0) because I love English very much I like to talk in English (1.0) and then I am want to expert (1.0) more than this and I'm going (1.0) I will to start English from the high school.
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: The most about studying English ahh:: (2.0) listening (1.0) speaking because I very enjoy with the (2.0) international song I love to listen (3.0) umm international song and I love to (2.0) speak English with my friend and talking with the foreigner
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: My plan (2.0) …ah… because in the future I (1.0) would like to be a business man and work for my parents' business (1.0) the parent business is ah hotel and tourism (.5) and then I would like to use English for the (1.0) for my job at the (1.0) at my hotel
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: Everybody (2.0) uh very important for me but (1.0) the first (2.0) important people is my mother and my father because they give me a birth (1.0) and my aunt my aunt also important (1.0) because she always (1.0) concern about me she alway, always help me for .hhh study hhh for the (3.0) um she always help me about the daily life hhh umm (3.) she (5.0) care:::: about me very much hhh (4.0) but everybody important for me .hhh and your friend friends is very important for me too because we have a lot hhh (1.0) I have a lot of problem hhh (2.0) some problem I can't to tell the parents but hhh (2.0) I can tell my friend and my friend can help me hhh (1.0) for the some problem that I can't tell my parent hhh hhh!
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?

TT: Okay:: if my friend invite me to the party hhh we'll give he a::: the answer is accept because I very enjoy with the party hhh but hhh if I have an examination in the morning I will preparing myself about the exam hhh uh such as reading a book a lot hhh and uh ask my friend about the::: exam and (2.0) uhm preparing my myself first .hhh before go to the party .hhh and .hhh tell my friend (2.0) I will come back home before the party::: .hhh finish because I have exam (1.0) in the morning .hhh I think my friend uhh don't be angry me because he::: .hhh should understand about my exam in the morning .hhh and I think I can both better because .hhh I (3.0) know myself (1.0) uhm I (3.0) I try to::: .hhh do both better .hhh for exam and the birthday party (3.0) I don't wanna miss::: a thing hhh!

The low language ability student using risk-avoidance strategies No.1

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: hhh Tanchanok
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: when I was three years old
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: foreign teacher
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: I would like to (1.0) use my English skill language (1.0) in my career (1.0) like a (3.0) a:: teacher.
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: my (3.0) my puh.. my important (4.0) my important person are my parents (1.0) my father is a soldier (1.0) he's:: (3.0) take care of me all the time and my mom (3.0) she (1.0) she's nice kind (2.0) and best (1.0) of
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: umm:I will buy the er present for her (1.0) and give it (1.0) hhh to her before party and I don't er I don't come to I don't go to (1.0) her birthday party hhh (4.0) I want to take the time for reading for my examination tomorrow (4.0) yeah I know she will understand me

The low language ability student using risk-avoidance strategies No.2

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: hello my name is Acharaporn Phaphun
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: I began studying English in (2.0) grade: er year five (1.0) five primary school (2.0) um eleven year old it's very inter. umm it's very (1.0) exciting
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: I'm like speaking (.5) English but I do not well (1.0) I'm try to improve my (2.0) speaking skill (1.0) very much
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: I would like to use English in my career I would be a(.) air hostess but today I'm start English not well
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: all person in my family is important with me and (1.0) my friend in my university is important with me too
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: I think um: I send the gift to my close friend and I tell her tomorrow err I I have I have exam I must to I must I must read a book and ahh prepare for the exam umm and I think she understand me

The low language ability student using risk-avoidance strategies No.3

IN: hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?
TT: hello, my name is Wararat Iamtrisri
IN: when did you begin studying English?
TT: I…I start (.5) studying English when I:: (1.0) element: emm primary school
IN: ok(.) and (0.5) what do you like most about studying English?
TT: I (.5) like… I like to most think.. think…think about speaking umm partish for (1.0) foreign language (1.0) I like to learn (unidentified phrase)
IN: what is your plan to use English in the future?
TT: I think that.. major (1.0) major I study (1.0) can help me good job or high salary (1.0) and maybe (.5) (unidentified phrase) umm I ca::n study in abroad
IN: please describe a person who is important to you
TT: my: mom, father euh grandmum grandparent euh she's too. when I gave something her (1.0) she (.5) she gave everything that I met she…(4.0) she take care me (.5) in everything (1.0) gave money? (4.0) when I sick she(5.0) she (1.0) she take care me (5.0) she gave (2.0) money (2.0) love (1.0) she love me I love my parent (1.0) very euh the most. (7.0) I am stay… I am stay in err(.5) now because she…(laugh)
IN: Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?
TT: I call (1.0) I call girlfriend is name Daring (2.) err I will talk with her: err Daring (1.0) I (1.0) can't birthday party? with you: (1.0) because (1.0) tomorrow I will (.5) test and I don't (2.0) I don't know this exam (3.0) is difficult? to (2.0) examination (1.0) and I don't read (4.0) please please please angry me (1.0) next day I will I will do anything for you that you that you want I can I promise. If I go to birthday party err I I will fail exam because: so (5.) umm I regret I sorry (3.0) to tell you (1.0) but hope you understand me? (4.0) um I think I love you (9.0) hhh! ok?

APPENDIX H: Oral Communication Test (OCT)

The Oral Communication Test

This test consists of four tasks, including warm-up, interview, description, and problem-solving. The first task begins with a simple question. There is no score given in this task. The second task is the interview about your personal background. You are required to answer three questions. Next task is the description which you have to describe in detail about a topic like family and friends. Last task is the problem-solving which requires you to give advice to solve problems.

Task One: Warm-up task, Please respond to this question.

Hello, could you tell me your name in full, please?

Answer (15 seconds)

Now, let"s move to the second task. There are three questions. You have 10 seconds to prepare for each question and 30 seconds to answer each question. When you hear this sound (🔔), it means that you have to start answering.

When did you begin studying English?

Think (10 seconds)
Now, your thinking time is up, please start answering after hearing this sound (🔔)
Answer (30 seconds)

OK. And, what do you like most about studying English?

Think (10 seconds)
Now, your thinking time is up, please start answering after hearing this sound (🔔)
Answer (30 seconds)

What is your plan to use English in the future?

Think (10 seconds)
Now, your thinking time is up, please start answering after hearing this sound (🔔)
Answer (30 seconds)

Thank you. Next is the description task. You have 30 seconds for preparation and one and a half minutes for the description after hearing this sound (🔔).

Please describe a person who is important to you.

Think (30 seconds)
Now, your thinking time is up, please start answering after hearing this sound (🔔)
Answer (1.5 min)

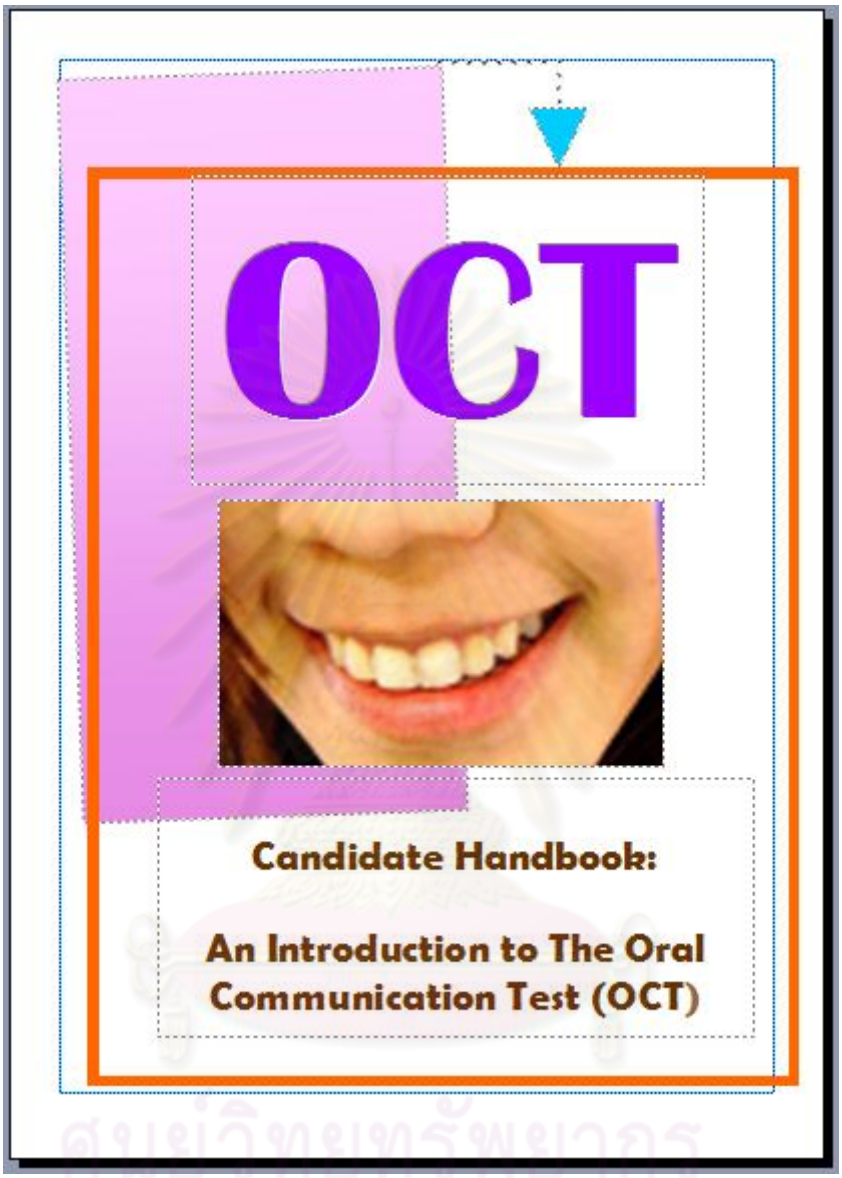
Thank you. Let‟s go on to the last task that you have to give some advice to solve the following problem. You have 45 seconds for preparation and two minutes for answering the question after hearing this sound (🔔).

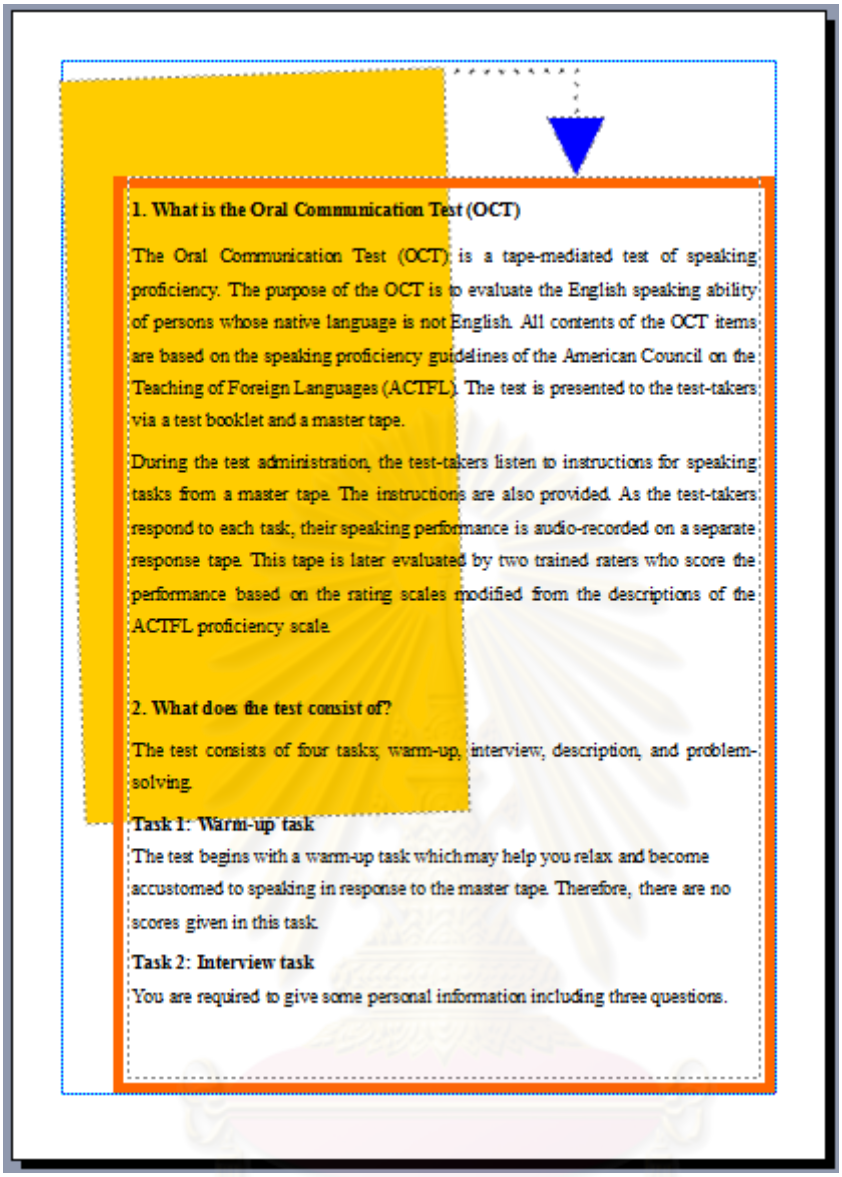
Your closed friend just invited you to his or her birthday party tonight. Unfortunately, you will have a final examination tomorrow morning, so you need time to prepare for the exam. You don't want to miss the party and also don't want to fail the test. What should you do?

Think (45 seconds)
Now, your thinking time is up, please start answering after hearing this sound (🔔)
Answer (2 min)

Thank you very much. This is the end of the speaking test.

APPENDIX I: A handbook: An introduction to the Oral Communication Test





1. What is the Oral Communication Test (OCT)

The Oral Communication Test (OCT) is a tape-mediated test of speaking proficiency. The purpose of the OCT is to evaluate the English speaking ability of persons whose native language is not English. All contents of the OCT items are based on the speaking proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The test is presented to the test-takers via a test booklet and a master tape.

During the test administration, the test-takers listen to instructions for speaking tasks from a master tape. The instructions are also provided. As the test-takers respond to each task, their speaking performance is audio-recorded on a separate response tape. This tape is later evaluated by two trained raters who score the performance based on the rating scales modified from the descriptions of the ACTFL proficiency scale.

2. What does the test consist of?

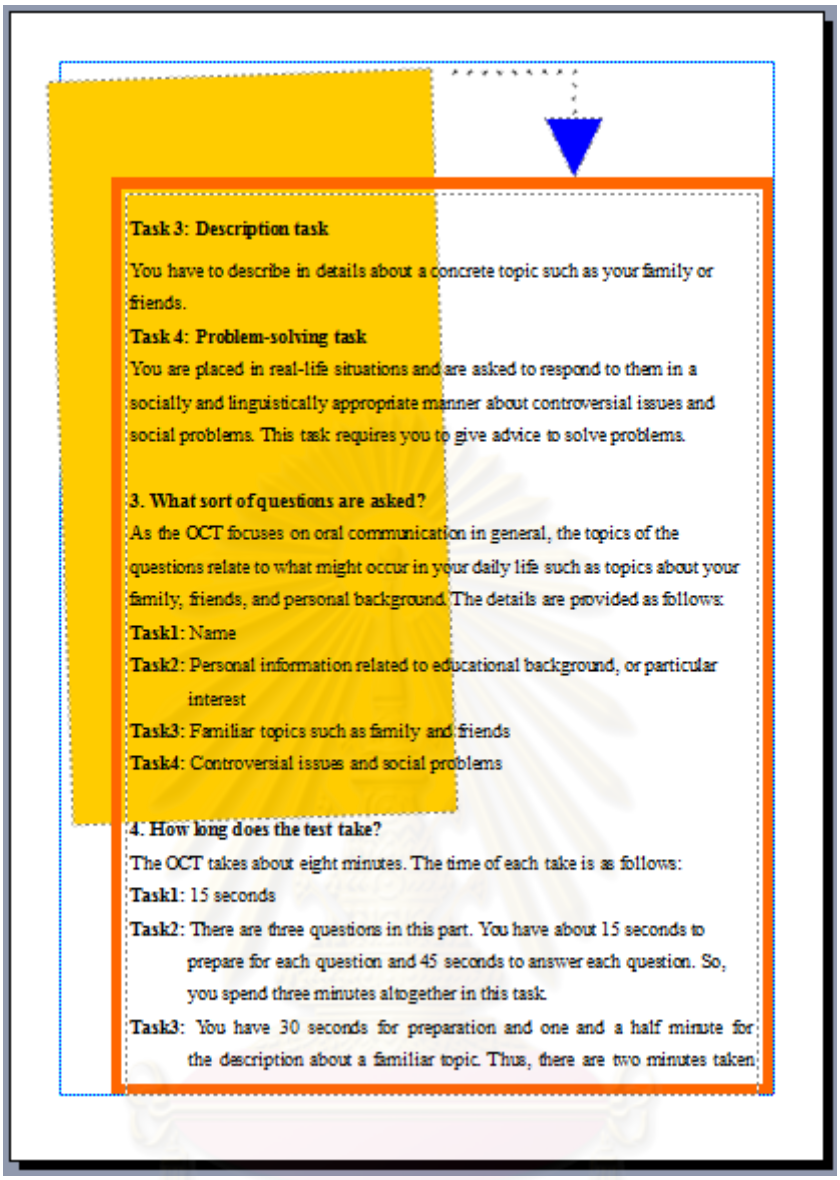
The test consists of four tasks; warm-up, interview, description, and problem-solving.

Task 1: Warm-up task

The test begins with a warm-up task which may help you relax and become accustomed to speaking in response to the master tape. Therefore, there are no scores given in this task.

Task 2: Interview task

You are required to give some personal information including three questions.



Task 3: Description task

You have to describe in details about a concrete topic such as your family or friends.

Task 4: Problem-solving task

You are placed in real-life situations and are asked to respond to them in a socially and linguistically appropriate manner about controversial issues and social problems. This task requires you to give advice to solve problems.

3. What sort of questions are asked?

As the OCT focuses on oral communication in general, the topics of the questions relate to what might occur in your daily life such as topics about your family, friends, and personal background. The details are provided as follows:

Task1: Name

Task2: Personal information related to educational background, or particular interest

Task3: Familiar topics such as family and friends

Task4: Controversial issues and social problems

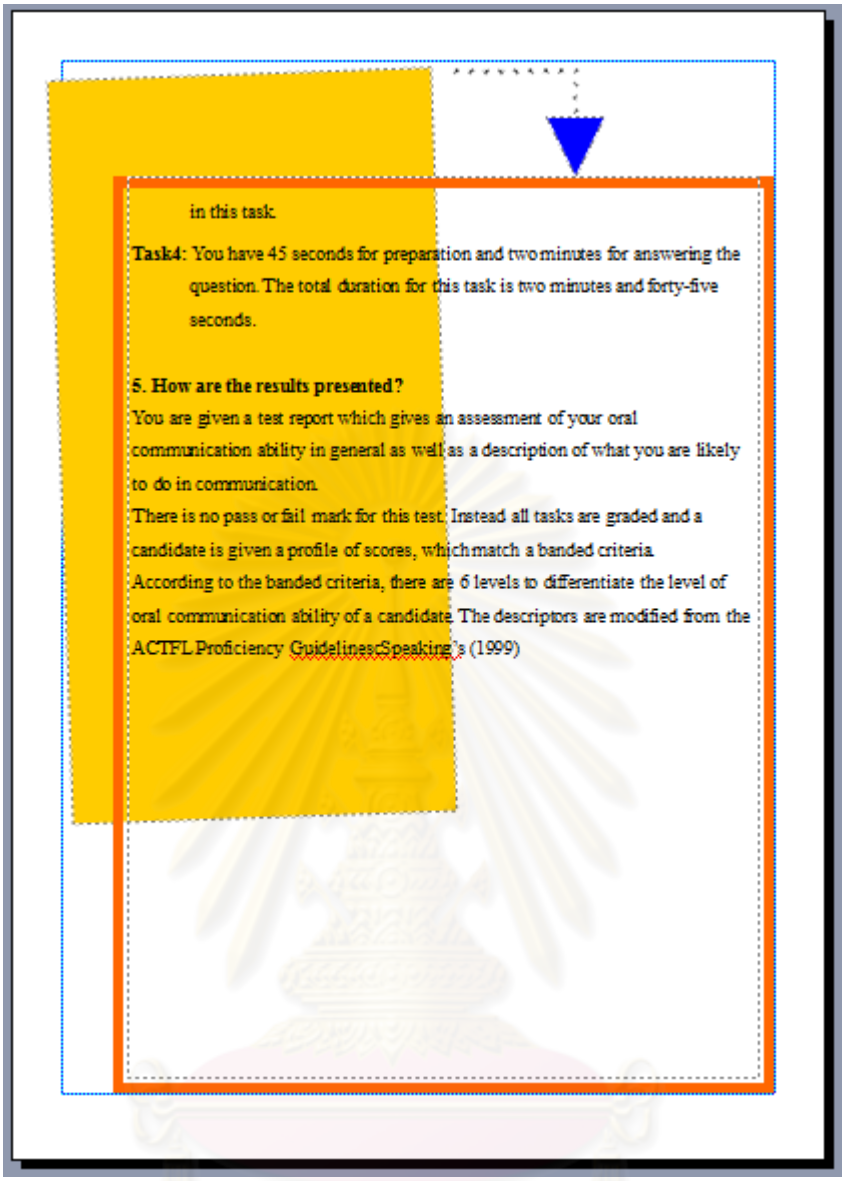
4. How long does the test take?

The OCT takes about eight minutes. The time of each take is as follows:

Task1: 15 seconds

Task2: There are three questions in this part. You have about 15 seconds to prepare for each question and 45 seconds to answer each question. So, you spend three minutes altogether in this task.

Task3: You have 30 seconds for preparation and one and a half minute for the description about a familiar topic. Thus, there are two minutes taken;



in this task.

Task4: You have 45 seconds for preparation and two minutes for answering the question. The total duration for this task is two minutes and forty-five seconds.

5. How are the results presented?

You are given a test report which gives an assessment of your oral communication ability in general as well as a description of what you are likely to do in communication.

There is no pass or fail mark for this test. Instead all tasks are graded and a candidate is given a profile of scores, which match a banded criteria.

According to the banded criteria, there are 6 levels to differentiate the level of oral communication ability of a candidate. The descriptors are modified from the ACTFL Proficiency GuidelinesSpeaking's (1999)

Biography

Ms. Suttinee Chuanchaisit, the researcher, is Thai, 29 years old. She earned a Bachelor‟s degree in Education, majoring in English, with second class honours from the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University in 2002 and a Master‟s degree in English language studies and methods from the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom in 2004. She has been working as an English lecturer since then in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce in Thailand. Her areas of interest are language assessment and evaluation, English oral communication and communication strategies, and learning autonomy.