



Universidad de Concepción
Dirección de Postgrado Facultad de Educación
Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y Evaluación del Inglés

Reducing EFL Learners' Code-Switching and Supporting their Oral L2 Use Through Game-Based Circumlocution Oral Strategy Training

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Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza, Aprendizaje y Evaluación del Inglés.

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2022

Acknowledgements

Conducting and writing this action research study and report was in every way a group effort, and many people must be acknowledged. First and foremost I would like to thank my participants without whom none of this would have been possible. Thank you so much Participant 1 and Participant 2 for agreeing to take part in this study, for your enthusiasm, for giving me your time, for trusting me, for taking risks, and for openly reflecting upon your learning. Working together on this study, and with the two of you in our English classes over the years, has been an enormous joy and privilege. I am truly impressed with the young women you are becoming.

Next, with enormous gratitude and humility, I wish to acknowledge my thesis advisors, Professor Maria-Jesus Inostroza Araos, and Professor Nataly Telles Quezada, whose careful guidance and meticulous input allowed me to complete this project. Thank you so much for accepting me as your student and mentee, and for your serious and professional consideration of my study and this report. I am very appreciative for your detailed reading and commentary on the different drafts of this text, as well as for our fruitful and stimulating meetings. I learned so much with regard to conducting, writing, and disseminating qualitative research from our collaboration, and know that your efforts and patience are largely responsible for my evolution as an academic.

Thank you so much to Professor Cecilia Cisterna Zenteno for taking the extra time to help me define and write my research objectives, and to Professor Claudio Díaz Larenas for critically annotating and validating my data collection instruments. I would also like to acknowledge and thank all of the professors and secretaries who worked hard to successfully adapt this program to the sudden and unusual conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Your dedication to providing quality higher education no matter the circumstances is truly admirable.

An enormous thank you to my classmates Miguel Agurto Gajardo and David Julien for working with me time and again on different projects and assignments throughout the course of this program. I learned so much from both of you through our critical collaboration, plus you made working on this degree a lot of fun! I also send a special thanks to Miguel for his encouragement and input during these past two years of study.

On a more personal note I must acknowledge my high school language arts teachers, Jennifer Gold, Alan Kahn, and Dean Ferguson, who lovingly and intensively taught me how to think, read, write and express myself critically through language. The education you gave me forms the bedrock of my intellectual life, and my academic achievements subsequent to being your student are all thanks to you. Your commitment to exceptional public education is inspirational.

To my family back in Seattle, my mother Margo Rogers, My father Wesley Rogers, and my sister Sarah Rogers, thank you so much for the constant reassurance and support you have given me while working towards this master's degree. The family life you worked hard to provide is the fertile soil which allowed me to grow and take on challenges such as this program, and for that I am truly grateful. That despite being separated by time, huge distances, and global disease I still feel the power of your love and belief in me is truly special. I miss you all terribly.

Most importantly, I wish to thank my husband, Maximiliano Leyton Alvarez, the central pillar of my life and my tower of strength. They say the smoothest path is full of stones, therefore I can sincerely say that without your support and assistance throughout the course of this master's program my journey to this point would have been quite painful. Thank you so much for your devotion, it is my biggest blessing. Any words of mine are simply inadequate at truly expressing what you have meant to me during this process, therefore I dedicate these classic lines to you: "If ever two were one, then surely we./If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;/If ever wife was happy in a man,/Compare with me ye women if you can./I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,/Or all the riches that the East doth hold./My love is such that rivers cannot quench,/Nor ought but love/from thee give recompense./Thy love is such I can no way repay; /The heavens reward thee/manifold, I pray./Then while we live, in love let's so persevere,/That when we live no more we may live ever." -Anne Bradstreet, 1678

Contents

Abstract	1
Chapter I: Introduction	2
Chapter II: Conceptual Framework	5
2.1 Communicative Competence, Strategic Competence, and Circumlocution . . .	6
2.2 Over Reliance on Code-Switching	7
2.3 Explicit Teaching of Speaking Strategies, Including circumlocution	8
2.4 Games and Improved Oral communicative and Strategic Competence	10
2.5 Young EFL learners as L2 speakers	11
2.6 Metacognition and Metacognitive Protocols in EFL	12
Chapter III: Method	15
3.1 Type of Research	16
3.2 Participants	16
3.3 Research Question and Objectives	17
3.4 Research Problem	17
3.5 Stages of the Action Research	18
3.6 Data Collection Techniques	20
3.6.1 Video Recording and Transcription:	21
3.6.2 Participant Lesson Observation Forms:	21
3.6.2.1 Stimulated Recall:	21
3.6.2.2 Semi-Structured Interview:	22
3.7 Data Analysis Techniques	23
Chapter IV: Findings	24
4.1 Specific Objective 1: To describe any changes in learners' L1 and L2 use during in class English language speaking activities that occurred after the implementation of circumlocution lexical picture description games.	25
4.1.1 Changes in Hourly L1 Usage Rate Pre Versus Post intervention	25
4.1.2 Changes in the Manner of L1 Use Pre Versus Post Intervention	26
4.2 Specific Objective 2: To explore why any changes in learners' L1 and L2 use during in class English language speaking activities occurred as a result of the implementation of circumlocution lexical picture description games . . .	27
4.2.1 Changes in L2-Based Oral Strategy Use Pre Versus Post Intervention	27
4.2.2 Changes in Abandonment of Message in the L2 Pre Versus Post Intervention	28
4.2.3 Code-Switching Due to an Under-Developed Strategic Competence Pre-Intervention	29
4.2.4 L2 Use Due to Increased Strategic Competence Post Intervention . .	30
4.2.5 Novel Perseverance when Speaking in the L2 Post Intervention . . .	31
4.2.6 Emergence of a Diverse Range of Lexical Descriptions During and Outside of Intervention	33

4.2.7 Emergence of Spontaneous Excess L2 Interactions During and Post Intervention	34
4.2.8 Observed Progress Regarding L2-based Oral Strategy Use During Intervention	35
4.3 Specific Objective 3: To explore learners' perceptions of circumlocution lexical picture description games on their use of the L2 during speaking activities.	36
4.3.1 Intervention Described as Useful	38
4.3.2 Intervention Design an Effective Means of Oral Strategy Training	38
4.3.3 Intervention Perceived and Observed as Leading to Progress in Terms of L2 Speaking and Oral Strategy Use	39
4.3.4 Internalization of Circumlocution	40
4.3.5 Intervention Facilitates Exclusive L2 Use	41
Chapter V: Discussion	42
5.1 Intervention Supports Oral L2 Use and Reduces Code-Switching Through Improved L2-Based Oral Achievement Strategy Use	43
5.2 Intervention Modifies Oral L1 Use to Support and Provoke excess Oral L2 Use	45
5.3 Intervention as a Useful Means of L2-Based Oral Achievement Strategy Training	46
5.4 Implications	47
5.5 Limitations	48
Chapter VI: Conclusions	49
6.1 Summary of Main Findings and Related Recommendations	50
6.2 Personal Reflections and Further Recommendations	50
References	53
Appendices	58
Appendix A: Sample Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Lexical Virtual Playing Cards	59
Appendix B: Participant Lesson Observation Forms 1 and 2	60
Appendix C: Stimulated Recall for Pre, During, and Post Intervention Footage	65
Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Procedure, Dimensions, and Final Script	74

List of Figures

1	Figure 1: Hourly L1 Usage Rate Pre and Post Intervention	25
2	Figure 2: Changes in the Manner of L1 Use Pre Versus Post Intervention	26
3	Figure 3: L2-Based Achievement Strategy Use Pre Versus Post Intervention	28
4	Figure 4: Abandonment of Message Pre and Post Intervention	29
5	Figure 5: Learners' Perceptions of Circumlocution Lexical Description Games	37

List of Tables

1	Table 1: Action Research Stages	19
2	Table 2: Examples of Changes in the Manner of L1 Use	26
3	Table 3: Unsuccessful Versus Successful L2-Based Oral Achievement Strategy Use Pre Versus Post Intervention	28

List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a foreign language

L1: First language

L2: Second language

GO: General objective

SO1: Specific objective 1

SO2: Specific objective 2

SO3: Specific objective 3

Abstract

This action research study addresses Chilean EFL learners' over reliance on code-switching by examining how oral strategy training in circumlocution, using lexical description games, effects their oral L1 and L2 use. Two Chilean EFL 12/13 year-olds received training in circumlocution via lexical description games, while before and after participating in speaking activities, to describe the effects of the training on their oral L1 and L2 use. Their pre and post intervention utterances were processed with quantification to examine changes in oral production. Lesson observation, stimulated recall, and semi-structured interviews were completed and analyzed via thematic analysis to determine why these changes occurred, and to analyze the participants' perceptions of the intervention. Findings show that the learners' L1 use notably decreased post intervention, while their L2 use increased, and their L1 use changed to facilitate the L2. Successful use of oral L2-based achievement strategies increased as their use of reduction strategies decreased. This is attributed to improved L2-based strategic competence. L2 affinity, and perseverance gained through circumlocution games, which were perceived as effective at strategy training. It is possible to conclude that game-based training in circumlocution supports learners' L2 use while reducing code-switching, implying that oral strategy training is effective.

Key-words: Circumlocution, code-switching, EFL Learners, games, oral strategy training

Chapter I: Introduction

Given that English is the principal global language, Chilean students should be adept English speakers, and the Chilean Ministry of Education agrees. Education in English as a Foreign Language is compulsory for all students beginning in grade 5 (age 10), and is offered to students in many educational institutions beginning in kindergarten. Oral expression for communicative purposes is highlighted as a foundational element of the national EFL curriculum, and the Chilean Ministry of Education organizes initiatives which promote facilitating EFL learners' ability to comprehend and participate in oral interactions which take place exclusively in the L2 (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2015).

This prioritization of L2 use in Chilean EFL classrooms is consistent with international policy for teaching EFL. Students have few other opportunities for L2 oral interactions during the course of their education (Nation, 2003), and speaking has been rated the most important English language skill in eight industries, and the second most important skill in 12, according to Cambridge English (2016). It is also in line with the oral proficiency guidelines of organizations such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2012b), which state that candidates should have the capacity to communicate exclusively in the L2. Hence, Chilean EFL students ideally develop speaking competencies that allow them to continue speaking in the L2 even when they struggle to deliver their message.

However, the reality is falling short of this ideal. While the Chilean national curriculum includes English for communicative purposes as one of its cornerstones, in accordance with a communicative approach which renders greater oral abilities in L2 speakers (Savignon, 2017), Chilean EFL learners rate their speaking capabilities as being particularly poor. When surveyed, they attributed this first and foremost to an infrequent use of the skill, while a significant minority fault curricular practices for not placing enough of an emphasis on speaking (British Council, 2015). This is illustrated by Yilorm (2016), who describes the gap between the National Curriculum and classroom practices as they exist in Chile with regards to speaking. Here, Yilorm (2016) details how these practices focus on the repetition of grammatical structures and vocabulary as opposed to true oral communicative competence. Consequently, the teacher-researcher has observed, in her own primary and lower secondary teaching practice, that EFL learners over-rely on code-switching to the L1 and reduction strategies when they struggle during L2 speaking activities, demonstrating an inability to persevere in speaking in the L2. This results in unsatisfactory L2 production in class.

Nonetheless, this problem could be addressed by explicitly training EFL learners in circumlocution by way of lexical picture description games. Circumlocution is defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2012b) as using language one does know in order to explain unknown lexical items by speaking around them. Circumlocution training via lexical picture description games would equip EFL learners with an oral achievement strategy grounded in their emerging L2 system, giving them a means to continue with the delivery of their message in the L2, addressing young EFL learners' frequent inability to cope with gaps in vocabulary (Al Hosni, 2014). As circumlocution by its very nature necessitates extended L2 use, this training would also re-prioritize L2 oral communication in the EFL classroom, resulting in improved oral communicative competence overall, as well as an amplified use of the L2, and would facilitate more authentically communicative EFL classes (Savignon, 2017). Such strategy

training is also consistent with the guidelines of organizations such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2012a), which advocate fostering the ability to continue speaking in the L2 by way of strategies such as circumlocution and rephrasing. Circumlocution training by way of games has long been promoted by many authors including Arteaga & Llorente (2012), Berry-Bravo (1993), Chen (2006), and Willems (1987). Furthermore, learning through games is particularly beneficial to young learners as it is a medium with which they are naturally inclined (Tang, 2011). Therefore this action research study seeks to explore how explicitly teaching lower secondary EFL learners circumlocution by way of lexical picture description games changes their oral use of the L1 and L2 during English language speaking activities.

Chapter II: Conceptual Framework

2.1 Communicative Competence, Strategic Competence, and Circumlocution

Communicative competence can be defined as one's ability to use language for authentic communication (Savignon, 2017), and therefore obtaining communicative competence is foundational to an individual's ability to live a functional life as a member of society (Rickheit et al., 2008). Given this, obtaining communicative competence is fundamental not only in one's L1, but in any additional languages one acquires, given that it is the means through which language becomes communication (Canale & Swain, 1980). Therefore, communicative competence is fundamental to the teaching and learning of languages.

In order to endow language learners with communicative competence, it is imperative to understand its components. Broadly speaking these are: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991). Grammatical competence refers to the speaker's knowledge of a language's codes and their ability to use those codes accurately. Sociolinguistic competence is comprised of sociocultural components, related to appropriacy of language use, while discourse competence is one's ability to use language in different modes, for example academic, social, or religious. Finally, strategic competence makes reference to a language speaker's ability to bridge breakdowns in communication occurring due to a variety of variables. These include insufficient linguistic knowledge, their interlocutor, and environmental factors (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991). According to Canale & Swain (1980), strategically competent speakers are able to negotiate communication breakdowns, successfully transmitting their message to their interlocutor despite difficulties.

Although strategic competence has often been neglected in favor of grammatical competence, mastering strategic competence is vitally important to foreign language learners' abilities to fully achieve communicative competence. Grammatical knowledge on its own is simply not sufficient to allow most foreign language speakers to negotiate authentic communication in the L2. However speakers with a strong strategic competence are often able to communicate adeptly with even a limited vocabulary. Furthermore, strategic competence provides L2 users with a sense of security, while also developing creative linguistic abilities (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991).

Similar ideas are supported by Savignon (2017). This scholar details how foreign language learners trained in spontaneous communication, and equipped with strategies for speaking around lapses inherent in such communication, outperformed those who were trained using drills. Moreover, they suffered little to no loss of grammatical accuracy (Savignon, 2017). Canale & Swain (1980) also underscore the importance of strategic competence as a component of communicative competence for foreign language learners. They also point out the importance of these learners mastering strategic competence early in order to best achieve communicative competence. Therefore strategic competence training should be considered crucial for young EFL learners, and strategic competence is integral to communicative competence in the L2.

Communication strategies are the tools used to obtain strategic competence (Tarone, 1981). They are mechanisms second language speakers must have at their disposal to bridge the gaps in understanding which inevitably occur in communicative situations due to the limitations of their L2 linguistic abilities (Tarone, 1981). Circumlocution,

which is defined as the language speaker's use of descriptive characteristics of a lexical concept as opposed to the exact word or phrase (Paribakht, 1985), is considered within the taxonomy of speaking strategies on which a strategically competent L2 speaker can rely (Canale & Swain, 1980), (Paribakht, 1985). It therefore exists under the umbrella of strategic competence. An example of circumlocution is referring to a dog as a four legged domestic animal which barks. As can be seen from the example, circumlocution involves describing lexical items using many words to elicit it. In their exploration of strategic competence and ways to teach it, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1991) describe circumlocution as being an advantageous achievement strategy to include in the foreign language classroom. Circumlocution is also included in the speaking proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2012a), (Chen, 2006). The strategy has been shown to be an aspect of secondary EFL learners' strategic competence, allowing for the successful compensation of unknown lexical items in the L2 (Campillo, 2006).

2.2 Over Reliance on Code-Switching

According Rickheit et al. (2008), more than just a knowledge of grammatical codes, and phonological, morphological, and syntactic competence is needed to work out effective speech. Effectiveness and appropriacy are also crucial elements to skilled communication as language use must be practical as well as technical. Effectiveness refers to the speaker's ability to use the target language towards achieving their desired communication goal, taking into account their interlocutors, while appropriacy is the speaker's use of language in accordance with the social and environmental norms.

Both concepts underscore the strong social component of competent language use, and the necessity of being "other oriented" when communicating so as to use language in a meaningful way (Rickheit et al., 2008). Hymes (1972) underscores this, stating that a communicatively competent speaker knows how to use language in a socially appropriate manner, and in order to do so speakers must understand two of the five links connecting communicators: partner knowledge and the physical and social situation (Rickheit et al., 2008).

Adequate knowledge of one's communication partner and environment so as to achieve socially effective and appropriate language use often indicates the necessity of delivering messages in the L2, without relying on one's first language. This thus precludes code-switching to the L1. Code-switching can be defined as the speaker switching languages during the same utterance (Auer, 2013). Given the social/practical aspects of language use, an over-reliance on code-switching to the L1 as a speaking strategy simply will not serve L2 speakers in the long run in many communicative situations. They therefore must develop other strategies to cope with communication gaps while speaking. Aljoundi (2013) agrees. This scholar highlights the usefulness of code-switching when it serves to clarify meaning between interlocutors who understand the codes. yet she also recognizes that in the long term a dependence on code-switching will hamper learners' abilities to communicate in an effective manner in many conversational situations, rendering them less communicatively competent. Thus, teachers are cautioned to avoid facilitating an over-reliance on this speaking strategy.

In regard to school age learners, Al Hosni (2014) affirms that code-switching in EFL

speaking contexts among young learners often occurs due to a lack of L2-based strategic competence, and is not their preferred way of communicating given the communicative situations in which they find themselves. However they have no other strategies at their disposal, so they therefore fall back on the L1.

Considering all of the above, the importance of achieving strategic competence via communication strategies grounded in the L2 is made clear. This is especially relevant for the EFL context where learners are cited as struggling to find the language necessary for communicating in situations that primarily necessitate L2 use because they lack the methods with which to do so (Al Hosni, 2014). L2-based achievement strategy training would therefore be effective in that it would give EFL learners the means with which to use the L2 effectively in a variety of social contexts where code-switching is not necessarily fitting. Circumlocution training would be particularly useful to these ends as it is an achievement strategy which requires extended L2 use. This is because circumlocution is an approach for speaking around unknown lexical items by relying creatively on the L2 language already at one's disposal. Moreover, when using circumlocution speakers are not required to deviate from their original intended meaning, and the L2 systems and lexical items they have already internalized are bolstered.

2.3 Explicit Teaching of Speaking Strategies, Including circumlocution

The effectiveness of the explicit teaching of speaking strategies as a means of improving foreign language learners' strategic competence has long been established in the literature. L2 learners have been shown to come to the classroom with an already well established sense of strategic competence in their L1 (Paribakht, 1985), and given that strategic competence is demonstrated to exist autonomously from other elements of communicative competence (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991), it makes sense that it can be easily cultivated and taught on its own in foreign language learning environments (Paribakht, 1985). O'Malley et al. (1987) concurs, emphasizing that many communication strategies are easily taught in class, and doing so holds the potential to improve the communicative abilities of entire groups of learners.

Various more recent authors continue to support explicitly teaching speaking strategies, including circumlocution, to EFL learners, demonstrating its effectiveness at improving their oral communicative abilities. Among them are Burns (2019), Rabab'ah (2015), and Teng (2012). Burns (2019), for example, includes communication strategies in her combinatorial view of the nature of speaking, and includes an explicit focus on speaking skills and strategies as an essential component of a successfully executed teaching speaking cycle in the EFL classroom. Additionally, Rabab'ah (2015) details that explicit strategy training helps improve Jordanian EFL learners' speaking abilities in the L2. This researcher found that after receiving 14 weeks of explicit strategy training, including training in circumlocution, the experimental group, consisting of 80 EFL learners, far outperformed the control group on a post-treatment IELTS speaking test. Teng (2012) similarly finds that systematic strategy instruction renders statistically significant improvements in the oral competencies of Taiwanese EFL students. This scholar details how these learners were able to remain in conversation in the L2 post strategy training, whereas before they

tended to abandon the conversation altogether (Teng, 2012).

Regarding circumlocution specifically, Rabab'ah (2015) found circumlocution training to be particularly beneficial to the experimental group in that it led to increased mutual understanding between interlocutors conversing in English language settings. Likewise, Teng (2012) reports that circumlocution was the strategy preferred by the Taiwanese English majors who participated in the study during post intervention examinations. Similarly, research on self efficacy and the use of compensatory strategies among Turkish EFL learners reports that circumlocution is one of the top two strategies most used by the participants (Mutlu et al., 2019). Learners' preference for circumlocution implies explicitly teaching the strategy.

Arteaga & Llorente (2012) also promote teaching and practicing circumlocution in the L2. These scholars underscore the importance of helping Spanish language learners master strategic competence by way of circumlocution as this allows them to avoid breakdowns in communication with native speakers and speakers who must rely on neutral terms within a language. This therefore increases overall communicative competence (Arteaga & Llorente, 2012).

Likewise, Berry-Bravo (1993) emphasizes the importance of explicitly teaching and practicing circumlocution in the L2, and on the relevance of the strategy as a means of achieving better communicative competence. In regard to the latter, the author points out that L2 instructors do their students no favors by acting as walking dictionaries on which they can rely upon encountering lexical gaps. She points out that no one can possibly know or remember all the lexical items they may need. Berry-Bravo (1993) expounds upon the importance of circumlocution in terms of allowing foreign language learners to achieve communicative competence that will serve them in authentic communicative situations by citing the experiences of a student of hers while abroad. Here, the student reported that obtaining the ability to be self-sufficient in the L2 via circumlocution was her most valuable L2 asset. This scholar also underscores that in many authentic communicative situations interlocutors will be unwilling or able to wait while speakers search for words, and are often unequipped to translate. She therefore writes that learners must gain and become adept at using strategies in order to survive as competent speakers in communicative situations (Berry-Bravo, 1993). Berry-Bravo (1993) also argues that circumlocution allows a course to become more communicative by focusing on message as opposed to form.

Regarding the necessity of explicitly teaching the strategy, Berry-Bravo (1993) emphatically supports the notion, advocating for L2 teachers to instruct their students in circumlocution, and facilitate circumlocution training. In addition, the scholar argues that while speakers have experience compensating for unknown lexical items in their L1 in a natural manner, this is rarely practiced in the L2. Yet, the author states, without practicing and obtaining this capability in their additional language, many students find it difficult to advance in their L2 education (Berry-Bravo, 1993). Arteaga & Llorente (2012) also agree that circumlocution should be explicitly taught to L2 learners. In expounding upon this, the scholars point out that L2 text books rarely include circumlocution lessons and materials, therefore teachers must expressly instruct their students in the strategy, and should take an active role in facilitating circumlocution activities during class time.

Both Arteaga & Llorente (2012), and Berry-Bravo (1993) advocate teaching simple description formulas as a means of training students in circumlocution. Berry-Bravo (1993),

outlines a process in which students identify items first in terms of being a person, place, or thing, using this as the cornerstone from which they build their descriptions. Arteaga & Llorente (2012) expand upon this idea, proposing a slightly more complex model in which students are taught certain phrases with which they begin describing lexical items in terms of category and function. Berry-Bravo (1993) suggests that students practice the speaking strategy in pairs, describing visual stimuli using the formula. Arteaga & Llorente (2012) propose similar activities in which students work in pairs to match cards containing lexical items given their partner's use of circumlocution. The current study's pedagogical intervention includes training and ludic circumlocution activities which mirror these scholars' approach to training L2 learners in the strategy.

Finally, Ogata (2005) found circumlocution to be an effective means of avoiding breakdowns in communication which result from Japanese EFL learners falling into meaningless silences. Based on these results, circumlocution proved to be a useful strategy for improving L2 communicative abilities and overcoming oral communicative difficulties in EFL learners across varying disciplines (Ogata, 2005).

Concerning young EFL learners specifically, the literature demonstrates oral strategy training to be effective and important in their contexts. In her examination of the speaking difficulties facing grade 5 learners, Al Hosni (2014) concluded that an explicit emphasis must be placed on speaking in the EFL curricula. Rastegar & Gohari (2016) concur, arguing that speaking strategy training focusing on language output is crucial in allowing secondary EFL learners to achieve oral autonomy in the L2. In the same manner, Lam (2005, 2006) found that oral communication strategy training leads to increased strategy awareness in young EFL learners, and those learners who received explicit oral strategy training out-performed those who did not. Sabnani and Goh (2021), as well as (Sato & Lam, 2021) support heightening young EFL learners' strategy knowledge through strategy training. Furthermore, Sabnani and Goh (2021) showed that when given explicit guidance, self awareness regarding speaking and oral strategies leads to more effective oral output in these learners. Sato & Lam (2021), also found that young EFL learners who receive meta-cognitive oral strategy training, increase their utterances during L2 speaking activities.

In regard to circumlocution specifically, Campillo (2006) found that secondary EFL learners' oral communication was enhanced through acquiring procedural vocabulary with which to paraphrase as opposed to attempting to memorize extensive lists of L2 vocabulary. This scholar found that these learners were capable of employing circumlocution in EFL contexts successfully, and therefore argues for circumlocution teaching and training to be included in secondary EFL curricula. Furthermore, Mattsson & Norrby (2013) describe the benefits and effectiveness of using paraphrases and systems of lexical items familiar to young EFL learners in terms of helping them remember new words and overcome gaps in vocabulary.

2.4 Games and Improved Oral communicative and Strategic Competence

Dewi et al. (2016) demonstrate that communicative games, which can be defined as playful activities which stimulate communication (Dewi et al., 2016), lead to speaking improvements and increased motivation in Indonesian seventh grade EFL learners. These

scholars report that the participants gradually improved their speaking skills thanks to the introduction of communicative games which focus on meaning as opposed to form, as is a goal of circumlocution.

Wang et al. (2011) found games to be effective at improving sixth grade EFL learners' English language proficiency, as well as being highly motivating and anxiety reducing in terms of speaking. They also found that games improved learners' oral competencies in terms of proficiency levels and vocabulary retention and acquisition (Wang et al., 2011). Moreover, Hernández-Chérrez et al. (2021) found that games enhance secondary learners' oral use of the L2, aligning with Rabbani et al.'s (2016) findings, which demonstrate that the integration of games into the EFL classroom improved 7th graders' speaking performance. Communicative language tasks and content based games are shown to be particularly effective (Castro & Mora, 2020; Legak & Wahi, 2020).

Regarding circumlocution description games, Chen (2006) reports that practicing circumlocution by playing Chinese character description games allowed intermediate Chinese language learners to think extensively in the L2. This ultimately resulted in the learners becoming more communicative in the target language, experiencing less breakdowns in communication. The study's participants had a highly positive response to circumlocution strategy training using games, and they indicated that more class time should be dedicated to such activities. Circumlocution description games were therefore deemed an effective means of strategy training (Chen, 2006). Dörnyei & Thurrell (1991) also promote using circumlocution description games in the EFL context. They suggest group and paired games involving guessing lexical items from students' descriptions of those items using circumlocution.

Finally, both Berry-Bravo (1993), and Willems (1987) promote the use of paraphrase games which incorporate visual stimuli as a means of training students in circumlocution. Berry-Bravo (1993) advocates the use of description games using visual items in which one student is presented with visual stimuli, and must describe that item in the L2 using circumlocution, while their classmates guess the item. Willems (1987) suggest playing similar description games, having learners work in pairs. Therefore there is a strong precedent for oral communication, strategy, and circumlocution training via games generally, and lexical picture games specifically.

2.5 Young EFL learners as L2 speakers

For this study, young EFL learners are understood per Nunan's (2010) definition as being between the ages of 3-15. These learners can roughly be divided into the categories of younger and older. Younger refers to those learners in their first years of school who possess limited reading and writing skills, and limited abilities to think abstractly about language, while older refers to learners who are well established in school, with developed reading and writing skills, and who possess greater abilities to think analytically about language (Nunan, 2010).

Young EFL learners have special challenges, including struggling with feelings of reluctance to speak in the L2 stemming from a fear of ridicule from their peers, and difficulties with vocabulary, which manifests itself in an over-reliance on the L1 (Al Hosni, 2014). Pratama & Awaliyah (2015) partially agree, stating that lack of vocabulary and

reluctance to speak are important challenges faced by these learners.

Other challenges facing young EFL learners include motivation and possessing limited attention spans, which is inherent in most learners under the age of 15 (Al Hosni, 2014), (Nunan, 2010). Young EFL learners' difficulties with motivation stem from feelings that their efforts at learning the L2 are not paying off, that they are not progressing in the language, and that the language feels irrelevant to them, in part due to course content that is not relatable. Challenges with attention span and motivation could also contribute to EFL students under-performing in terms of speaking in the L2, as they may lack the concentration necessary for participating in, and connection to, most speaking tasks presented to them.

All of these challenges can be overcome with a more explicit focus on speaking in the EFL classroom, by EFL teachers prioritizing the use of the L2 in their own utterances, by integrating communicative tasks into speaking lessons (Al Hosni, 2014), and by making tasks lively and entertaining (Fitria, 2013). Nunan (2010) suggests addressing young EFL learners' struggles with motivation while learning L2s by selecting content relatable to learners in younger age groups, offering opportunities for collaborative group learning, and making sure that class activities are well scaffolded, and have clear, relatable goals. The latter two suggestions also endow learners with a sense of progress and achievement. Young EFL learners' attention and interest can be maintained during lessons by varying activities in class (Nunan, 2010).

To these ends, communicative games concentrating on speaking strategies such as circumlocution, which endows learners with the language necessary to continue communicating despite difficulties with vocabulary, are helpful. Furthermore, generally speaking games and game-based activities include scaffolding of the content for the players, especially games whose aim is working through a series of increasingly complex levels, as does the game used in the current study's pedagogical intervention. Communication games are by their very nature collaborative, goal-oriented, and give learners a sense of accomplishment and progress in terms of L2 content when completed successfully, thus addressing young learners' lack of motivation, as described by Nunan (2010). They are therefore very well suited for younger EFL learners. Similarly, games have the added benefit of assuaging the social anxieties faced by young learners when speaking in the L2 because they are natural to them (Tang, 2011).

2.6 Metacognition and Metacognitive Protocols in EFL

Metacognition can be defined as one's awareness of, and ability to analyze and control one's own learning (Aglina et al. , 2018). Fostering metacognitive awareness in the classroom, as well as the use of metacognitive protocols such as stimulated recall, has been shown to be beneficial to EFL learners in terms of speaking, and to scholars conducting research within the field of EFL education. It is therefore applicable in their contexts.

Due to its ability to raise learners' awareness, oral strategy training with a metacognitive component comprising explicit oral strategy instruction has the capacity to improve L2 use when speaking (Nakatani, 2005). With regards to the development of L2 learners' oral communicative abilities and strategy use, metacognitive activities have also

proven beneficial, allowing them to move forward with strategy use (Aglina et al. , 2018). For example, in their investigation on the effects of metacognitive communication strategy training (which included the examination of video recordings of oral activities, as does the current study) on 61 Indonesian EFL undergraduate students' oral communicative abilities, Aglina et al. (2018) found that the experimental group, displayed significant improvements (Aglina et al. , 2018). The same investigation also concluded that cultivating metacognitive awareness in the EFL classroom reinforces ways in which communication strategies can be applied.

Nakatani's 2005 study also showed that participants in the experimental group significantly improved their oral proficiency test scores after receiving metacognitive training paired with explicit training in the use of speaking strategies. The participants in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group in terms of oral test scores. They also used more achievement strategies, to which category circumlocution belongs, as opposed to reduction strategies, such as abandonment of message in the L2. This would therefore augment the oral use of the L2 in the EFL classroom. The metacognitive component of the strategy training proved particularly beneficial to the participants in the experimental group in terms of their oral competencies and use of achievement strategies. Therefore, students lacking metacognitive skills and training must learn to become conscious of their interlanguage system, and the ways in which it can be used and manipulated to remain in conversation in the L2 (Nakatani, 2005).

Metacognition in young EFL learners' contexts has proven advantageous in terms of L2 oral communication. Sato & Lam (2021) found that after receiving metacognitive instruction centered on oral communication, primary school learners demonstrated improved knowledge of oral communication, and their L2 oral production in the classroom increased as well.

Stimulated recall and think aloud techniques, which serve as meta-cognitive tools in the EFL classroom, can be defined as procedures in which learners verbalize their thought processes concurrent to completing an activity (Cowan, 2017), (Bai, 2018). According to Cowan (2017), these think aloud techniques have great potential in educational action research as they reveal the perceptions and significant feelings of the learners with regard to certain tasks and topics, and foster deeper understandings on the part of teachers and learners of critical stages in students' learning. Cowan (2017) writes "simple think-aloud protocols...can unearth unexpected and welcomed information about learning that has occasioned radical and immediate changes in learning and teaching. Teachers have been surprised to learn of difficulties encountered by their learners, and have readily responded constructively for the benefit of future learners." (p.8)

Investigations taking place in EFL contexts have demonstrated the power of these protocols in terms of rendering relevant data regarding English language learners' strategy use, as well as their cognitive and metacognitive processes. Ghavamnia et al. (2013), for example, successfully examined the reading strategies used by Iranian EFL learners of different proficiency levels by way of think-aloud protocols. The protocols used by these researchers involved the learners reading an L2 text while at the same time verbalizing their thoughts and internal processes.

With respect to younger learners, these protocols have also proven fruitful in terms of collecting data regarding strategy use. For instance, Bai (2018) successfully

led Singaporean primary school students in a protocol similar to that of Ghavamnia et al. (2013), in which the participants wrote a picture composition while thinking out loud. This allowed the researcher to explore the meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies used by younger learners of varying competencies, and also led the researcher to conclude that young learners are capable of successfully completing such metacognitive protocols in an EFL context.

Chapter III: Method

3.1 Type of Research

This is an action research study within a qualitative, interpretivist model. It is qualitative in that it describes a non-rigid social phenomena occurring within the natural educational setting, aiming to give an integrative explanation of a group phenomena in a systematic yet flexible manner (University of Texas Arlington, 2021). The study conforms to an interpretivist research paradigm in that it attempts to understand the subjective experiences of the participants with, and the subsequent effects and functioning of, the intervention (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

In addition, this investigation can be defined as Action Research. It has been undertaken by a practitioner of the profession with the aim of methodologically intervening in her classroom, while systematically collecting data so as to address and improve a problem of immediate concern occurring within the educator's teaching context (Burns, 2010), namely the over-reliance on code-switching as a speaking strategy, leading to the breakdown of messages in the L2. In this study the educator simultaneously acted as teacher and researcher, assuming the identity of "teacher-researcher", critically exploring her own teaching context, another defining feature of Action Research in education (Burns, 2010). The investigation adheres to the Mills' four step action research process: identifying an area of focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, and developing an action plan (Mills, 2000, 2003). It can be categorized as participatory in that hierarchies were broken down between the researcher and participants, creating collaboration between both camps as they unite to find solutions and give rise to increased knowledge within the field of education (Jacobs, 2016).

3.2 Participants

This study's sampling corresponds to a convenience, judgmental, sampling of two Chilean female students, who are siblings, aged 12 and 13, attending a private educational institution, studying English in a private capacity outside of the institution, three hours per week, in a virtual context given the COVID-19 crisis. The participants are studying English of their own volition, and this private English instruction is the only instruction in the language they receive. It is in this context that this action research was conducted. The students have also validated the Chilean *exámenes libres* (exams given in Chile for students studying outside of the regular system so as to allow them to validate the academic year) for English. The participants are confident, intermediate English speakers, able to function independently in a variety of English language communicative situations, thus their English level corresponds to level B1 as per the Common European Framework of References for Languages. The sample used for this research was chosen due to the following criteria, therefore defining it as a convenience and a judgmental sampling:

1. The participants' availability and willingness to participate in the study, thus corresponding the sample to one of convenience (Taherdoost, 2016).
2. The participants being intermediate English speakers, enthusiastic about in-class, oral exercises, which corresponds to a purposeful selection made by the teacher-researcher given these specific characteristics possessed by the participants necessary to complete the study as per the research objectives.

3. The teacher-researcher's own knowledge of the restricted number of participants available to her, therefore defining the sample as judgmental (Maxwell, 2012).
4. The participants' willingness and ability to reflect critically on their own learning, in-class progress, and speaking performance, which also demonstrates a purposeful selection of participants made by the teacher-researcher based on both specific characteristics they possess, and her own knowledge of the restricted number of participants available, once more defining the sample as judgmental (Maxwell, 2012).

3.3 Research Question and Objectives

This study's research question is as follows:

How does the explicit teaching of circumlocution by means of lexical picture description games affect lower secondary EFL learners' use of the L1 and L2 during speaking activities?

This action research is guided by one general objective and three specific objectives, presented here:

GO: To describe the contribution of circumlocution training via circumlocution lexical picture description games on young English language learners L1 and L2 use during English language speaking activities.

SO1: To describe any changes in learners' L1 and L2 use during in class English language speaking activities that occurred after the implementation of circumlocution lexical picture description games.

SO2: To explore why any changes in learners' L1 and L2 use during in class English language speaking activities occurred as a result of the implementation of circumlocution lexical picture description games.

SO3: To explore learners' perceptions of circumlocution lexical picture description games on their use of the L2 during speaking activities.

3.4 Research Problem

Given the role of English as a principal lingua franca it is imperative that Chilean learners become proficient therein, and speaking has long been considered one of the most important of the four language skills. This emphasis on speaking is reflected in the recent history of education in modern languages, when in the mid 20th century, in the wake of increasing globalization and global conflict, the audio-lingual method replaced a strict focus on grammar-translation so as to intensively train language learners in speaking via memorization and drilling of sample dialogues (Savignon, 2017). However this method came to be seen as deficient in terms of endowing L2 learners with communicative competence. Instructors of modern languages thus began favoring training students in spontaneous oral communication, whilst giving them strategies for negotiating meaning in the L2. This method yields greater results in terms of learners' abilities to perform unscripted communicative tasks (Savignon, 2017), and commitment to this method demonstrates a continued strong emphasis on speaking in the field of education in foreign languages.

The Chilean National Curriculum for English as a Foreign Language reflects this view on the importance of mastering speaking for authentic communicative purposes. It states, in part, that Chilean EFL learners should be able to use the L2 spontaneously in a variety of situations (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2015). However, studies on Chilean EFL curricular practices show that in reality teachers still rely heavily on grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods for teaching EFL, which have long been considered obsolete (Yilorm, 2016). As a result, many Chilean EFL learners are unable to communicate in English (Yilorm, 2016). Similarly, the current teacher-researcher has noted in her own EFL practice her students' inability to persist in the L2 during extemporaneous speaking activities which emulate authentic communicative situations. This leads to them over-relying on code-switching as a speaking strategy, leading to the breakdown of messages in the L2, and insufficient oral L2 production given the Chilean EFL curricular goals. This over-reliance on code-switching exists to the detriment of the learners' developing L2-based achievement strategies which would allow them to negotiate meaning in the L2 in an array of situations during which errors inevitably occur (Savignon, 2017), and during which they cannot rely on the L1 (Berry-Bravo, 1993).

However explicitly training lower secondary EFL learners in circumlocution using lexical picture description games would address this problem. In so doing, learners would be given an L2 based achievement strategy suitable for spontaneous communication, as advocated by Savignon (2017) in her explanation of communicative competence and communicative language teaching. Giving students this strategic competence would facilitate the use of authentic, spontaneous communicative tasks as opposed to drilling/rote-learning, which have been shown to render greater results in terms of oral L2 competence (Savignon, 2017). Furthermore, circumlocution and L2 conversation activities which naturally necessitate the use of circumlocution are very easily learner-led, as speakers must search for their own language to deliver their messages, thus helping to reconnect learners to the L2 in more meaningful ways, as advocated by Yilorm (2016).

3.5 Stages of the Action Research

This study took place virtually via Zoom, lasting 13 sessions, two to three times a week, during June/July, 2021. The pedagogical intervention consisted of explicitly teaching and training the participants in increasingly complex circumlocution using a lexical picture description game over four sessions.

To complete the pedagogical intervention, the participants were first taught circumlocution, and ways to implement the strategy mimicking Arteaga & Llorente's (2012), and Berry-Bravo's (1993) methods. Then, to play, they used L2 circumlocution to describe lexical items with increasingly sophisticated definitions, leading their partner to guess items on virtual playing cards. The participants worked as a team, first guessing basic, then intermediate, then advanced lexical items on their cards, deducing the items from their partner's use of circumlocution. The lexical items were depicted in the L1, the L2, and with images, and while the circumlocution had to occur in English, the participants were allowed to guess the items in either the L1 or L2. This facilitated game-play and simulated authentic situations in which circumlocution is used. See Appendix A for game material.

The intervention sessions were recorded and transcribed, and participant lesson

observation forms were completed for each session, describing changes in the participants' L1 and L2 use, and exploring why those changes occurred. An identical speaking activity, a structured conversation, centered on "The Godfather" film trilogy, was conducted, recorded, and transcribed during three pre and three post intervention sessions to measure changes in the participants' language use post intervention. Participant lesson observation forms were completed for these sessions, describing changes in the participants' L1 and L2 use during these activities post intervention, and exploring why these changes occurred. Finally, the participants completed stimulated recall and participated in a semi-structured interview to further explore why changes in L1 and L2 use occurred during and post intervention, and to clarify the stimulated recall data. The above described stages have been summarized in Table 1 here:

Table 1
Action Research Stages

Session	Actions	Data collection instruments	Specific objectives
1	Conduct, record and transcribe a structured L2 speaking activity, complete participant lesson observation form 2.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 2	SO1
2	Conduct, record and transcribe the same structured L2 speaking activity, complete participant lesson observation form 2.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 2	SO2
3	Conduct, record and transcribe the same structured L2 speaking activity, complete participant lesson observation form 2.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 2	
4	Teach participants circumlocution, train them in the lexical picture description game, record and transcribe the session, complete participant lesson observation form 1.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 1	
5	Play the lexical picture description game, using basic and intermediate lexical items, record and transcribe the session, complete participant lesson observation form 1.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 1	

6	Play the lexical picture description game using intermediate and advanced lexical items, record and transcribe the session, complete participant lesson observation form 1.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 1	
7	Play the lexical picture description game, using advanced lexical items, record and transcribe the session, complete participant lesson observation form 1.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 1	
8	Conduct, record and transcribe the same pre intervention structured L2 speaking activity, complete participant lesson observation form 2.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 2	
9	Conduct, record and transcribe the same pre intervention structured L2 speaking activity, complete participant lesson observation form 2.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 2	
10	Conduct, record and transcribe the same pre intervention structured L2 speaking activity, complete participant lesson observation form 2, train participants in stimulated recall protocols.	Video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation form 2	
11	Conduct, record and transcribe stimulated recall with Participant 2.	Video recording and transcription, stimulated recall	S02
12	Conduct, record and transcribe stimulated recall with Participant 1.	Video recording and transcription, stimulated recall	S03
13	Conduct, record and transcribe the semi-structured exit interview with both participants.	Video recording and transcription, semi-structured exit interview	

3.6 Data Collection Techniques

Four data collection instruments were used in this study: video recording and

transcription, participant lesson observation forms, stimulated recall, and a semi-structured exit interview. A description of each of them can be found here:

3.6.1 Video Recording and Transcription:

Video recording and transcription was used as a means of examining and quantifying the participants' L1, L2, and oral strategy use during speaking activities pre and post intervention for comparison, in correspondence with specific objective 1. Video recording and transcription was also used during all pedagogical intervention sessions, as well during the stimulated-recall and semi-structured interview to facilitate the analysis of these instruments in correspondence with specific objectives 2 and 3. All sessions were recorded and saved by way of Zoom's recording function.

3.6.2 Participant Lesson Observation Forms:

Two participant lesson observation forms, forms 1 and 2 (see Appendix B), were used after sessions 1- 10 to ascertain why any changes in L1 and L2 use, as well as strategy use occurred during and post intervention, and to examine instances of the participants' L1 and L2 use during and post intervention, in accordance with specific objective 2.

This tool was chosen because participant observation of educational settings is a powerful data collection tool as it allows the researcher to contextualize and understand the forces at play with regards to particular issues in a manner that is simple and natural for researchers and participants. This is especially true when occurring within the context of participatory action research as the educational routine encounters minimal disturbances given the pre-existing dynamic which exists between all parties (Clark et al., 2020).

Form 1's elicitations (used in sessions 4-7), focus on the participants' progression-stagnation-regression, understanding and confusion with regards to the speaking strategy, as well as their use of the language targeted by the intervention. Here, progression is understood as the participants' ability to successfully complete the different levels of the lexical picture description game, as well as their demonstrations of accelerated abilities to maintain interactions in the L2 while successfully employing speaking strategies. Understanding and confusion are respectively understood as the participants' ability to grasp, retain, and actively use content (Perkins, 1992), versus inconsistencies between the content and their knowledge and use of that content (Craig, 2012). The elicitations on form 2 (sessions 1-3 and 8-10), focus on the participants' use of the L1 and L2, and their strategy use during the structured speaking activities pre and post intervention.

The field notes completed using the forms consisted of detailed descriptions of salient events, analytic notes exploring those events, and subjective reflections on the observations for deeper scrutiny, as per Lune and Berg's (2017) model. Video recording and transcription was employed to ensure that both participant lesson observation forms were completed accurately (Lune & Berg, 2017).

3.6.2.1 Stimulated Recall:

Stimulated recall (see Appendix C) was used to identify why any changes in the participants' language use occurred post intervention, as well as to explore their

perceptions of the intervention, in correspondence with specific objectives 2 and 3. The participants were shown video footage of the pre, during, and post intervention sessions to prompt their recollections and verbalizations of their cognitive processes during these stages of the study, as well as their posterior observations (Calderhead, 1981). This instrument was chosen as think aloud techniques have great potential to reveal the perceptions and significant feelings of learners, and to foster deeper understandings of critical stages in students' learning (Cowan, 2017). They are also an effective means of eliciting meta-cognitive responses within younger learners, given the proper orientation (Donker & Markopoulos, 2002).

The stimulated recall protocols used in this study were designed using a three part warming up/training session, comprising explanation, modeling, and supervised practice, as outlined by Church & Bereiter (1983). The participants first participated in an orientation which included an explanation of stimulated recall, and a modeling of the meta-cognitive narrations and observations it involves. Then, after completing a short warm-up so as to avoid a negative cold-start effect (Charters, 2003), the participants watched selective footage of themselves participating in the structured speaking activities and playing the lexical picture description game. Here, they made verbal, metacognitive reflections regarding their speaking performance, L1 vs. L2 use, and their use of speaking strategies as they related to the videos, as well as any other observations. The importance of using any language with which they felt most comfortable was emphasized (Lavadenz, 2003) (both participants preferred to complete their protocols in the L2), and the participants were free to pause the footage at any point to verbalize their thoughts. The stimulated recall sessions were completed with absolute minimal verbal input from the teacher-researcher so as not to contaminate the data (Charters, 2003). The protocols were completed and recorded virtually using Zoom, for later transcription and analysis.

3.6.2.2 Semi-Structured Interview:

A semi-structured interview (see Appendix D) was conducted with both participants as a means of obtaining information regarding their language and strategy use pre, during, and post intervention, as well as their perceptions of the intervention as per specific objectives 2 and 3. The interview also served to clarify utterances made by the participants during the stimulated recall, as well as to validate the teacher-researcher's interpretations of those utterances (Davis & Bistodeau, 1993; Qi, 1998). The interview is characterized as semi-structured as its questions were planned, yet flexible and open ended (Given, 2008), with the script organized in a broadly thematic way. This was done to allow for dynamism between the researcher and the participant to best ascertain their thoughts and perceptions. The dimensions targeted by the interview, aside from clarifying and interpreting the stimulated recall, were the use of the L2 during speaking activities, perceptions of the intervention, and the effect of the intervention on speaking and strategy use while speaking, as per the research question and objectives guiding this study. The interview was designed to include a pre interview briefing and a post interview debriefing so as to both clarify its purpose and ensure that the participants were able to fully express themselves (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis, applied in conjunction with frequency quantification, and rate/percent calculation were used to analyze this study's data. The participants' combined L1 usage rate per hour was obtained by dividing the number of L1 utterances made during the pre and post intervention speaking activities by the number of hours they spoke so as to determine changes in their L1 and L2 use. Then, the difference between the pre and post intervention values was divided by the original value and multiplied by 100 to determine the percent decrease in instances of L1 use per hour pre vs. post intervention. The participants' strategy use, as well as salient instances in the manner of their L1 use, were quantified pre and post intervention, and this same percent calculation was applied to those values to further describe changes in their language use.

Thematic analysis was applied to the data obtained from the participant lesson observation forms, stimulated recall, and semi-structured interview. Here, Braun & Clarke's (2006) five-step model was followed:

1. Familiarization with the data.
2. Coding the data into initial categories.
3. Organizing the data into larger themes across instruments.
4. Reviewing the themes.
5. Defining and renaming the themes.

Chapter IV: Findings

The findings presented in this chapter have been gathered using the previously described data collection instruments, those being: video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation forms, stimulated recall (completed by each participant individually), and a semi-structured interview (completed with both participants together). The findings have been organized, across instruments, per specific research objective.

4.1 Specific Objective 1: To describe any changes in learners' L1 and L2 use during in class English language speaking activities that occurred after the implementation of circumlocution lexical picture description games.

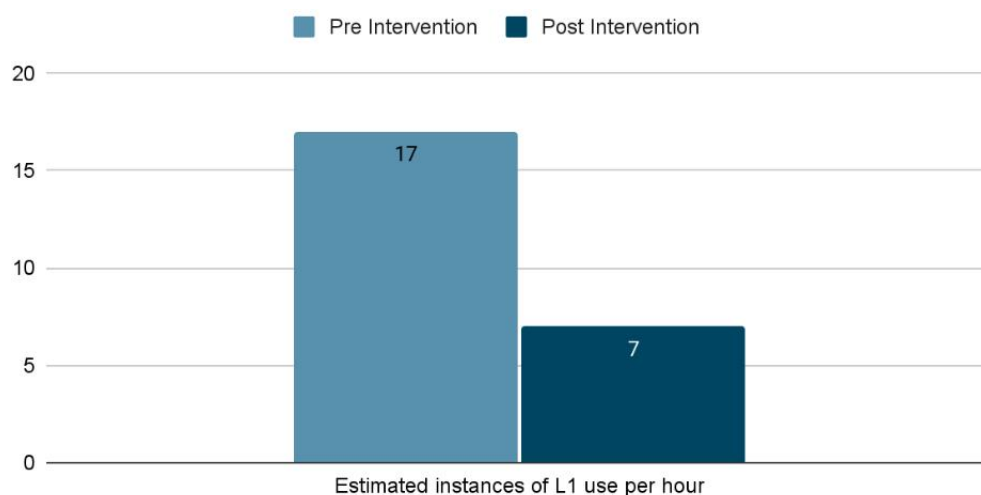
The findings which correspond to Specific Objective 1 were gathered using video recording and transcription and participant lesson observation forms. They are categorized by theme, and described in the sub-sections below.

4.1.1 Changes in Hourly L1 Usage Rate Pre Versus Post intervention

After reviewing the footage and transcripts of the pre and post intervention sessions (structured English language conversations on a topic discussed in class, consisting of two 90 minute sessions and one 30 minute session), 32 instances of L1 use were noted during the pre intervention L2 speaking activities and 11 were noted during the post intervention L2 speaking activities. This corresponds to an L1 usage rate of approximately 17 instances of L1 use, or code-switching, per hour pre intervention, reduced to approximately 7 instances of L1 use per hour post intervention, comprising a 58% decrease. These changes in L1 usage rate during the pre vs. post intervention sessions can be seen on Figure 1 here:

Figure 1

Hourly L1 Usage Rate Pre and Post Intervention

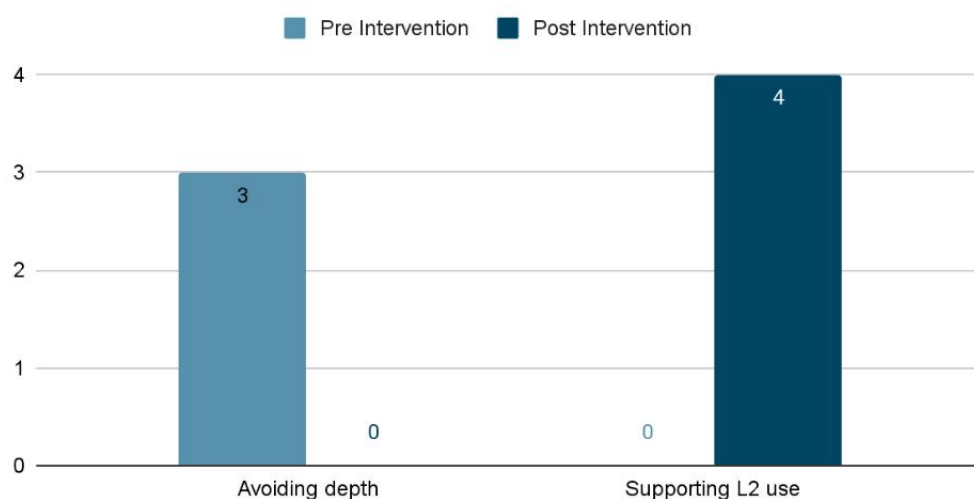


4.1.2 Changes in the Manner of L1 Use Pre Versus Post Intervention

Notable changes in the way the participants employed their L1 during the pre versus post intervention speaking activities were observed. The data shows that instances of the participants switching to their L1 as a means of avoiding giving a more in-depth message in either language reduced from 3 to 0 post intervention, ceasing by 100%, while instances of the L1 being used as a means of supporting the delivery of messages in the L2 were noted for the first time, increasing by 100% from 0 to four post intervention. These changes are summarized on Figure 2 here:

Figure 2

Changes in the Manner of L1 Use Pre Versus Post Intervention



Examples of these changes as they emerged from the data are presented here, on Table 2:

Table 2

Examples of Changes in the Manner of L1 Use

Type of L1 use	Definition	Utterance	Session
L1 used to avoid depth.	L1 used to avoid speaking in depth in either the L1 or L2 when the delivery of a more in-depth message is needed as per the speaking activity.	Teacher-researcher: "And what does that mean, for a murder to be very brutal?" Participant 2: "It means that it's bruto."	Pre-intervention session 2

L1 used as a means of supporting L2 use.	L1 used to encourage and facilitate L2 use occurring during the delivery of the same message.	Participant 1: Post intervention, session 8 “Venganza, venganza, ja ja ja, that’s when you get mad because of somebody, and you want to do the same thing for them that made you mad.”
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4.2 Specific Objective 2: To explore why any changes in learners’ L1 and L2 use during in class English language speaking activities occurred as a result of the implementation of circumlocution lexical picture description games

The findings which correspond to Specific Objective 2 were gathered using video recording and transcription, participant lesson observation forms, stimulated recall, and a semi-structured interview. These findings have been categorized by theme and sub-theme, and are described in the sub-sections below.

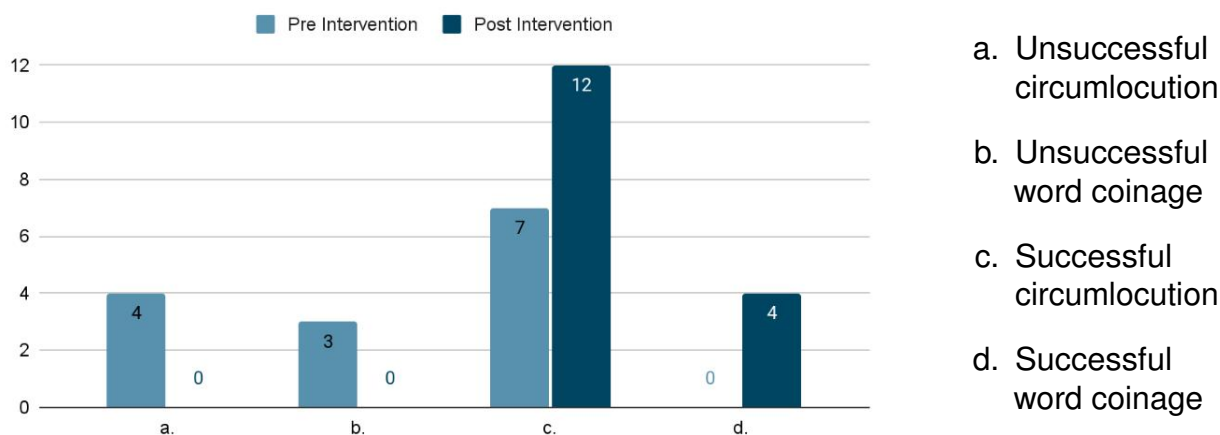
4.2.1 Changes in L2-Based Oral Strategy Use Pre Versus Post Intervention

Important changes in the participants’ use of L2-based achievement speaking strategies occurred pre versus post intervention. These changes fall into four categories: Unsuccessful use of circumlocution, unsuccessful use of word coinage, successful use of circumlocution, successful use of word coinage. For these purposes, successful strategy use is defined as the participant using a strategy to comprehensibly convey their intended meaning while speaking upon encountering a disparity between their knowledge of the language and what they wish to convey orally (Alibakhshi & Padiz, 2011). Unsuccessful use of the strategy is defined as the participant using the technique to either convey an incomprehensible oral message, or one understood differently than their intended meaning.

The findings show that notable unsuccessful attempts at circumlocution reduced from 4 to 0 pre vs. post intervention, constituting a reduction of 100%, while notable successful attempts at circumlocution were observed as rising from 7 to 12, constituting an increase of 71.4%. A second speaking strategy not specifically targeted by the intervention, word coinage, emerged as well. Here it can be seen that unsuccessful attempts at word coinage reduced from 3 to 0 pre versus post intervention, constituting a 100% decrease, while successful attempts at word coinage rose from 0 to 4, constituting an increase of 100%. These changes in achievement strategy use pre and post intervention are described on Figure 3 here:

Figure 3

L2-Based Achievement Strategy Use Pre Versus Post Intervention



Examples of the participants' unsuccessful versus successful L2-based oral achievement strategy use pre versus post intervention are Presented on Table 3 here:

Table 3

Unsuccessful Versus Successful L2-Based Oral Achievement Strategy Use Pre Versus Post Intervention

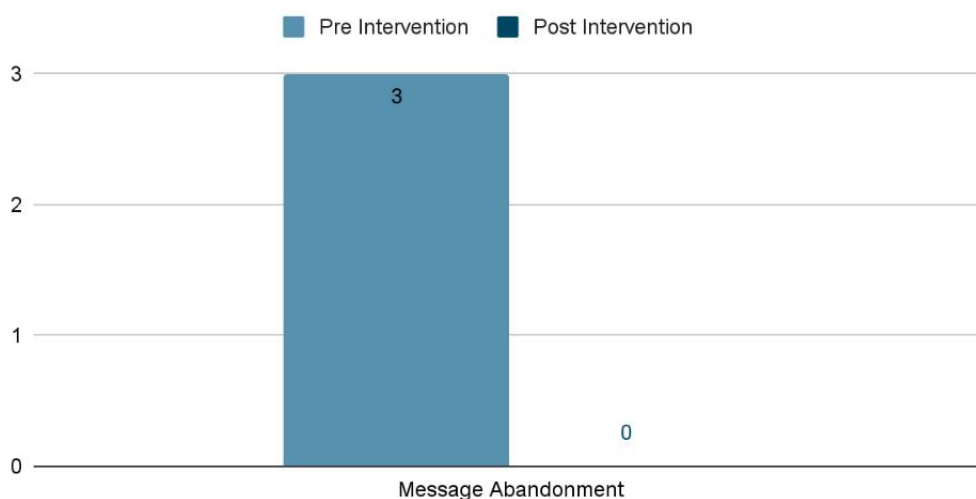
Type of Strategy Use	Utterance Made by Participant	Session
Unsuccessful use of circumlocution	Participant 2: "He has a place in the...oh I don't know how to say it...in the type of place like a ch..."	Pre-intervention, session 2
Successful use of circumlocution	Participant 1: "When you get under water and you can't breathe."	Post intervention, session 8
Unsuccessful use of word coinage	Participant 2: "If you're the Cr... <i>incomprehensible</i> ...I think you say."	Pre-intervention, session 2
Successful use of word coinage	Participant 1: "Oh it's really amazing! Because in the last century we have going like this! We have evolutionized very quickly!"	Post intervention, Session 8

4.2.2 Changes in Abandonment of Message in the L2 Pre Versus Post Intervention

Instances of the participants abandoning their message in the L2 upon facing

communication gaps reduced from 3 during the pre-intervention sessions to 0 post intervention, showing that the participants' use of this reduction strategy notably diminished after receiving circumlocution training via lexical picture description games. Message abandonment, as it is referred to here, indicates instances when the participants left their oral message entirely unfinished after already having begun delivering the message. This theme is described on Figure 4 here:

Figure 4
Abandonment of Message Pre and Post Intervention



4.2.3 Code-Switching Due to an Under-Developed Strategic Competence **Pre-Intervention**

Falling back on their L1 during the pre-intervention L2 speaking activities as a result of having an under-developed L2-based strategic competence appeared as an important theme with respect to SO2. This theme appeared in the participants' meta-cognitive narrations during both the stimulated recall and the semi-structured exit interview with a total frequency of 5. It has been subdivided into two sub-themes, those being that the participants had no choice but to use their L1 to overcome difficulties communicating during L2 speaking activities, and L1 use occurring due to failed attempts at using achievement speaking strategies grounded in the L2. The sub-theme of L1 use being the only option, which occurred with a frequency of 2, is exemplified by the following quotes from the data:

“Because in the others times we didn't know that technique, so it was like we don't have to choose, we have to talk to you in a Spanish. . .”-Participant 2, semi-structured interview

“Now that I see I think that I could have used *English strategy*, but during those times I didn't know it so I didn't do it.” -Participant 2, stimulated recall

The sub-theme of L1 use due to a failed L2-based achievement strategy attempt, which occurred with a frequency of 3, has been exemplified by the following quotes from the data:

“I do some circumlocution but in a Spanish way.” -Participant 2, stimulated-recall

“I would say the word in Spanish...I describe the word, but but really really badly, you know, like very badly because I didn't have enough practice.” -Participant 1, semi- structured interview

“I described like really badly, explicitly thinking circumlocution.” - Participant 1, Stimulated Recall

4.2.4 L2 Use Due to Increased Strategic Competence Post Intervention

Accelerated L2 use during the post intervention speaking activities by virtue of increased oral strategic competence gained during the intervention's strategy training emerged as an important theme across both the stimulated recall and semi-structured interview data collection sessions. This theme occurred with a total frequency of 9. The participants described increased L2 use stemming from the intervention strategy training during both the stimulated recall and semi-structured interview sessions, explaining that circumlocution acted as a substitute for L1 use when they faced challenges communicating orally in the L2. They also described circumlocution as serving as a means of expanding their L2 use during appropriate moments. The sub-theme of circumlocution serving as a substitute for code-switching, which occurred with a frequency of 5, is exemplified by the quotes from the data here:

“I was speaking and I didn't know the word and I used circumlocution.”-Participant 2, stimulated recall

“Because if I don't know a word I explain it.” -Participant 2, semi-structured interview

“I used circumlocution, I remember that in that time I thought there was a word for that...” *When it was unknown circumlocution was used.* -Participant 2, stimulated recall

“I say the word in Spanish and then I explain it because I thought, ‘Circumlocution!’” - Participant 2, stimulated recall

“Because in the others times we didn't know that that technique, so it was like we don't have to choose, we have to talk to you in a Spanish.” - Participant 2, stimulated recall

The sub-theme of circumlocution training facilitates increased L2 use, which occurred with a frequency of 4, is exemplified by the quotes from the data below:

“Well, of course it’s like very good, knowing the speaking strategy, because if you don’t know the word or something.” - Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“It’s like what Participant 1 said. We are not dictionaries so we don’t know by memory all the words, so *training* will be useful.” - Participant 2, semi-structured interview

“I say (to myself) ‘I can use circumlocution’ it was going deep in me...”
-Participant 2, stimulated recall

“I used circumlocution, I remember that in that time I thought there was a word for that...”*and when it was unknown circumlocution was used* – Participant 2, stimulated recall

4.2.5 Novel Perseverance when Speaking in the L2 Post Intervention

Novel perseverance when delivering oral messages in the L2, not noted during the pre intervention lesson observations, emerged as a notable theme from lesson observation forms 1 and 2, completed after the during and post intervention sessions. The theme of novel perseverance while speaking in the L2 was also markedly present during the stimulated recall and semi-structured interview. This theme occurred with a total frequency of 14. For these purposes, perseverance is defined as the participants persisting in the delivery of their message in the L2 despite evidencing signs of struggle and frustration in doing so.

As the participants reflected upon their delivery of oral messages in the L2 pre-intervention as opposed to post intervention, they described an inability to persevere in speaking in the L2 pre-intervention, which is contrasted with their ability to persist, using the intervention strategy, post intervention. These instances were observed by the teacher-researcher. Both participants also described an attitude of perseverance in terms of speaking in the L2 post intervention during the stimulated recall and the semi-structured interview. The sub-theme of a lack of persistence pre-intervention, which occurred with a frequency of 3, is exemplified by these quotes from the data here:

“...What Would you do before we learn to play the game?”
-Teacher-Researcher, semi-structured interview

“I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know! It was I would say the word in Spanish” - Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“It is the same” referring to Participant 1’s above comment, “I would ask my Dad or the internet. . . we can use the strategy, it’s like better.” - Participant 2, semi-structured interview

The sub-theme of an attitude of perseverance post intervention, with a frequency of 3, is exemplified by the following quotes from the data:

“It was hard that work, but now that I think I can totally use circumlocution.” - Participant 2, stimulated recall

“The easy way is to say the word in Spanish but sometimes it’s not the way.” - Participant 2, stimulated

“It was hard...I can see that I could use circumlocution ...”-Participant 2, stimulated recall

The sub-theme of observed instances of novel perseverance while speaking in the L2 post intervention, with a frequency of 8, is illustrated by these examples from the data:

“I wanna say something, I wanna say something. . . Oh, how do you say it how do you say it *banging the table!* Aaaaah! Vito didn’t want him to have the charge of things. . .” - Participant 1, participant lesson observation form 2

“The colors lights and shadows can make perspectives. For example if I put like a yellow and a how do you call it purple then those scenes...*frustrated pause... oh... sounds of frustration...*I just know how to say it in Spanish...well you’re attention is more put in those scenes because the mix of colors makes them more interesting. The same like with red or green. The colors are made to put more attention on the scene to make us feel the way they want because of the colors, lights and shadows.” -Participant 1, participant lesson observation form 2

Despite evidencing struggle the participants persevered in using circumlocution to paraphrase the terms “guilt/culpa” and “confianza/confidence”. - participant lesson observation form 1

Incident observed and recorded during a stimulated recall data collection session: I don't know how to describe that word like even if I know circumlocution because that word is like extra difficult” -Participant 1, stimulated recall

“You want to give it a try right now.” -Teacher-Researcher, stimulated recall

“It's like a thing that you put in your ears when you're in the computer.”

-Participant 1, stimulated recall

4.2.6 Emergence of a Diverse Range of Lexical Descriptions During and Outside of Intervention

The most frequent theme to emerge from the intervention participant lesson observation forms in relation to SO2, occurring 36 times, is the appearance of instances of increasingly diverse, complex, cooperative, and spontaneous paraphrases of lexical items, occurring both during, and outside of game-play, made by both participants. As the game progressed in difficulty, moving from basic to advanced lexical items, the participants' descriptions of these items became multiplex and varied as they reached for different ways to characterize such an assortment of words by way of paraphrase and circumlocution. They did so via exemplification, description, approximation/synonym use, comparison, and circumlocution involving negotiation between them. This occurred in an increasingly cooperative way. The sub-theme of exemplification, occurring with a frequency of 5, is exemplified by this excerpt from the data here:

“Do you remember ‘Outlander’? What is the series about?” -Participant 1, participant observation form 1

“Time travel!” -Participant 2, participant observation form 1

“Yes, but what is it about in time? Like the present, the future. . .” -Participant 1, participant observation form 1

“The past!” -Participant 2, participant observation form 1

The sub-theme of description, with a frequency of 8, is exemplified by this excerpt from the data here:

When spontaneously using circumlocution to express the idea of a shooting star: “...the stars that move, you know those stars...”-Participant 2, participant observation form 1

The sub-theme of approximation/synonym, with a frequency of 7, is exemplified by this excerpt from the data here:

“It’s like synonymous of trust or sure or something...it’s the opposite of not trusting yourself.” -Participant 1

The sub-theme of comparison, with a frequency of 8, is exemplified by this excerpt from the data here:

It’s a feeling the opposite of hate, when two people have romantic feelings for each other.” -Participant 2, participant observation form 2

The sub-theme of Circumlocution involving auxiliary negotiation between participants, with a frequency of 8, is exemplified by this excerpt from the data here:

Discussing the lexical item “culpa”: “Yeah, but it’s a synonym of that, do you know that feeling.” -Participant 1, participant observation form 1 “It’s the opposite?” -Participant 2, participant observation form 1 “No it’s the synonym of blame, when you feel blame.” -Participant 1, participant observation form 1 “Culpa!” -Participant 2, participant observation form 1

4.2.7 Emergence of Spontaneous Excess L2 Interactions During and Post Intervention

With respect to SO2, the teacher-researcher noted the emergence of excess spontaneous, natural, and non required L2 interactions between the participants, and between the participants and teacher-researcher during the post intervention conversation activities and post intervention stimulated recall and semi-structured interview data collection sessions. This had not occurred during the pre-intervention sessions. During the intervention sessions, the game facilitated the unnecessary and extra use of the L2 between the two participants as they negotiated and discussed how to play, the game’s materials, and their external/virtual settings, using their L2 as opposed to their L1. This pattern continued during the post intervention speaking activities, and most remarkably during the post intervention stimulated recall and semi-structured interview sessions, which the participants insisted on completing in English. They both did so successfully. It is important to emphasize that the participants were not obligated to attempt the L2 on these occasions, and their use of the language was therefore impromptu and voluntary. These findings emerged from the participant lesson observation forms, the stimulated-recall, and the semi-structured interview sessions with a frequency of 28. This theme is exemplified by these quotes and examples from the data:

“Shut your audio please, because if you don’t I won’t listen to anything.” - Participant 1 to Participant 2, participant observation form 2

The participants argued about participant 2’s birthday party in the L2 during a break from the speaking activity: “And then I opened presents.” - Participant 2, participant observation form 2

“What! Presents!” -Participant 1, participant observation form 2

“Yeah, but I don’t really care about presents.” - Participant 2, participant observation form 2

“Noooo. Eeeeeverybody likes presenents.” - Participant 1, participant observation form 2

Participant 1 and Participant 2 discuss the concept of love at first, one of the lexical items on the playing cards, outside of game play about love at first sight: “oh no, oh g-d, I’m barfing!!” -Participant 1, participant observation form 1

“You know you don’t always have to express your emotions so much!” -Participant 2, participant observation form 1

“I don’t believe because it’s like stupid! You just see and love. . . ?” -Participant 1, participant observation form 1

“I’m going to use circumlocution! It’s like the stars that move, you know those stars, it’s like that, it’s quick, love at first sight, it happens, but quick. It’s over quick.” -Participant 2, participant observation form 1

The participants discussing their preference for conducting the semi-structured interview in English: I think in English it will be alright.” -Participant 2, semi-structured interview

“Yeah, it’s the most natural thing in the word – Participant 1, semi-structured interview

Participant 2 conducts her stimulated recall in the L2, even discussing the recording mechanism with the teacher-researcher in that language:

“Are we record? Okay I start.” - Participant 2 to the teacher-researcher, stimulated recall

4.2.8 Observed Progress Regarding L2-based Oral Strategy Use During Intervention

The teacher-researcher observed that the participants were able to continue paraphrasing increasingly complex lexical items in multiple and diverse ways when prompted to do so. Thus progress in terms of their oral strategy use was unmistakable as the participants moved through the levels of the game. This theme, with a total frequency of 12, is exemplified by this excerpt from the data:

“If you couldn’t give an example from a movie, what would you say.” -Teacher-Researcher, participant observation form 1

“A person who works at the court, who defends someone, and there is another person and they fight, and there is a person called ‘honor’ who says you win, you lose to them.” -Participant 2, participant observation form 1

4.3 Specific Objective 3: To explore learners’ perceptions of circumlocution lexical picture description games on their use of the L2 during speaking activities.

The findings which correspond to Specific Objective 3 were gathered using stimulated recall, and a semi-structured interview. They have been categorized by theme and sub-theme, and are described in the sub-sections below. They have been summarized in their entirety on Figure 5 here:

Figure 5
Learners' Perceptions of Circumlocution Lexical Description Games

Learners' Perceptions	Theme	Frequency	Sub-themes
	Intervention is Useful	9	
Intervention Effective at Strategy Training	1	Games Effective	
	3	Scaffolding Effective	
Intervention Facilitates oral prpogress in the L2	14		
Internalization of Circumlocution	3	Assiduousness Towards Circumlocution	
	7	Automated Circumlocution Use	
Intervention Facilitates Exclusive L2 Use	7		

4.3.1 Intervention Described as Useful

A prominent theme emerging from both the stimulated recall and the semi-structured interview with regards to SO3 is the usefulness of the intervention. The findings across both instruments show the participants describing on 9 different occasions explicit training in circumlocution via lexical picture description games as being advantageous to them regarding their L2 speaking capabilities. This conclusion was reached by Participant 2 both during her metacognitive analysis of her performance pre, during and post intervention, and by both participants in terms of their stated beliefs, feelings, and experiences regarding the intervention during the semi-structured interview. Quotes from the participants are presented below to exemplify this point:

“I can see that I could use circumlocution to explain...when I said it in Spanish it broke the atmosphere.” -Participant 2, stimulated recall

“It helps a lot.” -Participant 2, stimulated recall

“I feel less frustrated...because I go around the word now, not into it...like a wall.” - Participant 2, semi-structured interview

“Well, of course it’s like very good, the speaking strategy, because if you don’t know the word or something.” -Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“It’s like what Participant 1 said. We are not dictionaries so we don’t know by memory all the words, so that will be useful.” -Participant 2, semi-structured interview

“I think strategy useful because you learn the language, yeah they are useful!”
- Participant 2, semi-structured interview

4.3.2 Intervention Design an Effective Means of Oral Strategy Training

With respect to SO3, the participants described the intervention, specifically learning and practicing circumlocution through lexical picture description games, as being an effective means of oral strategy training. This theme appeared 4 times, mentioned by both participants, during the semi-structured interview.

In expounding upon this idea the participants affirmed the helpfulness of a ludic approach to language learning, and they emphasized the power of the scaffolding built into the lexical picture description game by way of it’s basic, intermediate, and advanced levels, which were periodically mixed depending on the session. This was described as being useful in helping them confidently master a range of circumlocution techniques in the L2. Participant 1, using the idea of hair growth vs. body growth (that results from a sudden and painful growth spurt) as an analogy for the intervention facilitating her ability to comfortably

master circumlocution, underscored how the intervention always remained within her zone of proximal development across sessions. The sub-theme of the effectiveness of games is exemplified by this quote from Participant 2:

“Every game we did...they were all useful.” -Participant 2, semi-structured interview

The sub-theme of the effectiveness of scaffolding, with a frequency of 2, is exemplified by these quotes from both participants:

“Yes, circumlocution is just unconscious like my hair, like, growing, I don’t notice it, or that I am growing, it’s like unconscious. This time I didn’t notice that I was learning. I only notice when my knees hurt, when my knees hurt or my arms hurt...like when you grow very fast you you, that happens to everybody I suppose because it happens to me a lot, especially last night, I couldn’t sleep, it’s like when you grow very fast, I don’t know what happens but you just begin to feel it because you grow so fast. . .” - Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“So you’re comparing learning a new skill really fast to growing pains when your knees hurt?” -Teacher-Researcher, semi-structured interview

“Yeah, yeah yeah you grow so fast you can notice it. But if you don’t do it so fast you can’t notice anything.” -Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“Do you think you learned something?” -Teacher-Researcher, semi-structured interview

“Yeah, of course!” -Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“But it didn’t make your knees hurt?” -Teacher-Researcher, semi-structured interview

“No.” -Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“The game was in levels. If put to us a very hard word in the beginning, we will be like shocked...the process helped us become confident.” -Participant 2, semi-structured interview

4.3.3 Intervention Perceived and Observed as Leading to Progress in Terms of L2 Speaking and Oral Strategy Use

The most prominent theme with regard to SO3 to arise from the stimulated recall, the semi-structured interview, and participant lesson observation form 2, is that the intervention led to progress in terms of L2 speaking and oral strategy use. During the stimulated recall, upon observing and reflecting upon her own performance pre, during, and post intervention, Participant 2 repeatedly emphasized the positive changes regarding

her ability to confidently, accurately, and fluently deliver messages in the L2, even when challenged. When probed for more information on the subject during the semi-structured interview, both participants affirmed that the intervention's explicit strategy training and practice led to a positive evolution in terms of their ability to assuredly continue speaking in the L2, via strategies, during difficult moments. They explained that before they were not equipped to do so. This theme, with a frequency of 14, is exemplified by these quotes from the data:

"I speak more fluently, there's like a jump. I speak more fluently, sometimes I still struggle to think of the words, but it's not as long as in those times."
-Participant 2, stimulated recall

"I can see that I progress like...more fluent I speak! And yeah, it helps a lot."
-Participant 2, stimulated recall

"...the process helped us become confident." -Participant 2, semi-structured interview

"My speaking, obviously it surprised me at the beginning that I used to speak so bad, and when I finished I did it well, like progress!" -Stimulated Recall

4.3.4 Internalization of Circumlocution

Regarding SO3, across both the stimulated recall and the semi-structured interview, with a total frequency of 10, both participants emphasized their perceived internalization of circumlocution post intervention. The participants defined internalization of the strategy as meaning that they had retained it to such a degree that they can call upon it automatically and without anticipation when needed. Two sub-themes emerged from this theme: a deep awareness and assiduousness of and towards circumlocution, and an automated use of circumlocution during appropriate circumstances stemming from the strategy being deeply integrated into their L2 systems. The sub-theme of an assiduousness towards circumlocution with a frequency of 3 is exemplified by the quote from the data here:

"I don't know if it was right to say to my sister to use circumlocution but I just did it, I was conscious about it...like 'every word that you don't know circumlocution!'" - Participant 2, stimulated recall

The sub-theme of Automatic circumlocution use, with a frequency of 7, is exemplified by this quote from the data:

“I’m not thinking consciously so it’s like something like a chip that is in me.”
-Participant 2, semi-structured interview

“Oh it’s unconscious for you?” -Teacher-Researcher, semi-structured interview
“Yes, it’s just unconscious like my hair.” -Participant 1, semi-structured interview

4.3.5 Intervention Facilitates Exclusive L2 Use

Both participants indicated explicitly and implicitly their perceptions that their use of the L2 came to them more naturally and comfortably during in class speaking activities, as well as during speaking activities with the teacher-researcher post intervention, due in part to the intervention’s activities. This was conveyed during the stimulated recall and semi-structured interview sessions. The participants categorically explained the naturalness of speaking in the L2 in the wake of the intervention during the interview, as well as inferring it through their insistence on completing both the stimulated recall and semi-structured interview in English. This theme, which occurred with a frequency of 7, has been exemplified by the excerpt from the data here:

“It’s weird to speak to you in Spanish, so weird. I think in English it will be alright.” -Participant 2, semi-structured interview

“Yeah, it’s the most natural thing in the world because we’re always speaking English with you!” -Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“Has it gotten weirder to speak to me in Spanish since we started working together. . .” -Teacher-Researcher, semi-structured interview

“Yeah.” -Participant 1, semi-structured interview

“Yeah, I have something I want to say. In my case it became more like weird to speak to you in Spanish.” -Participant 2, semi-structured interview

Chapter V: Discussion

This study's data indicates that circumlocution training via lexical picture description games supports EFL learners' L2 use while speaking, and that these games reduce learners' code-switching and oral dependence on the L1. This is achieved by improving their L2-based oral achievement strategic competence, and curtailing their use of reduction strategies, leading to improvements in terms of L2 speaking. As observed by the participants and teacher-researcher, the intervention training reduces code-switching occurring due to an under-developed strategic competence, and increases and improves their L2 affinity and use. It also changes the nature of their L1 use to utterances that amplify the oral use of the L2, leading to excess and exclusive L2 use, while endowing the learners with the perseverance necessary to continue delivering message in the target language. This study's data also indicates that the intervention strategy training is an effective means of strategy training due to its incorporation of scaffolding, and its leading to the participants' internalization of the speaking strategy targeted by the game. Taken together, this constitutes enhanced L2 speaking abilities.

In this chapter these findings are explored and reflected upon, and the implications and limitations of this study are explained. This discussion has been organized by theme.

5.1 Intervention Supports Oral L2 Use and Reduces Code-Switching Through Improved L2-Based Oral Achievement Strategy Use

The first important theme to emerge from this study, as observed by the teacher-researcher and participants, is that circumlocution training through lexical picture description games supports oral L2 use while reducing code-switching occurring due to an under-developed strategic competence. This is achieved by the intervention improving the participants' L2-based oral achievement strategic competence, and curtailing their use of reduction strategies, leading to improvements in terms of L2 speaking.

That the intervention led to improved L2-based oral achievement strategic competence is borne out by the data in that the participants' use of the oral achievement strategies circumlocution and word-coinage, with the latter not having been taught to the participants, improved significantly post intervention, while their unsuccessful attempts at using these strategies ceased completely. Here it can be seen that the participants' post intervention instances of successful circumlocution use increased by 71.4% while their successful use of word-coinage increased by 100%, and their unsuccessful attempts at using these strategies decreased by 100%. Furthermore, this occurred in tandem with their use of the oral reduction strategy, abandonment of message, decreasing by 100% post intervention.

An even deeper indicator of the participants' improved strategic competence post intervention is the varied and nuanced ways in which they employed circumlocution during and post intervention. Here they employed the strategy by means of exemplification, description, approximation, comparison, and complementary negotiation between each other. These findings are in alignment with those of other researchers whose data highlights the positive impact of explicit achievement strategy training on learners' strategy use. They include Nakatani (2005), Sukirlan (2014), Teng (2012), who demonstrate the effectiveness of such strategy training in allowing students to persist in conversation as opposed to abandoning their message.

This increase in L2-based oral achievement strategy use, undeniably led to improved and increased L2 use by the participants, as is borne out by this study's data, as well as contributing to reductions in their code-switching during English language speaking activities. This is unsurprising given the elemental importance of oral strategic competence in achieving oral communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), especially for learners of an additional language, as highlighted by Burns (2019). Moreover, strategy training specifically including circumlocution has been shown to enhance the speaking abilities of EFL learners, especially younger, lower level learners (Kassem, 2019), (Worden, 2016).

Regarding improved L2 use post intervention, the participants described improvements in their abilities to deliver messages in the L2 thanks to receiving explicit instruction and training in circumlocution 23 times during the stimulated recall and semi-structured exit interview data collection sessions. Here the participants directly linked their perceived improvements in L2 speaking to the intervention's strategy training, stating that circumlocution led them to continue speaking in the L2 with increased confidence, fluency, and nuance, allowing them to bridge communication gaps while doing so. This is connected to the participants' progress in terms of their ability to use circumlocution with increasingly complex lexical items in diverse ways. That explicit oral strategy training generally, and training which includes circumlocution specifically, leads to improved L2 speaking abilities is supported by many studies. Among them are those of Kassem (2019), Kuen et al. (2017), Rabab'ah (2015), and Teng (2012). The latter two studies both include meta-cognitive components through which a preference for circumlocution use, as well as perceived improvements in L2 speaking thanks to oral strategy training are described. This bears overt parallels to the current action research study.

The data shows a decrease of 58% in the participants' use of the L1 during in-class English speaking activities post intervention, constituting a substantial decrease in code-switching. This can be attributed to the participants' improved competence in achievement strategy use thanks to their mastery of circumlocution via the intervention, as described by them during the stimulated recall and semi-structured exit interview data collection sessions. Here, the participants relayed depending on code-switching upon encountering difficulties delivering their message in the L2 because they either felt as though they had no other choice, or their attempts at L2 achievement speaking strategies would fail. On the other hand, the participants describe specific instances of L2 use post intervention occurring solely because of their use of circumlocution, learned and reinforced during the study's intervention, constituting an increase in their use of the additional language.

These explanations of their pre-intervention code-switching align with the findings of Ozdemir (2015), which state that an inability to access precise language in the L2 leads to L1 use during EFL speaking activities, a phenomenon that by its very nature circumlocution seeks to remedy. This also corresponds with the findings of Ogata (2005) and Sukirlan (2014), which demonstrate circumlocution's effectiveness in reducing code-switching during L2 speaking activities. At the same time, the participants' descriptions of L2 use post intervention are consistent with the findings of Kuen et al. (2017), whose study on the effects of oral strategy training involving circumlocution on EFL learners' speaking abilities demonstrate that such strategy training leads to increased and lengthier oral production in

the L2.

5.2 Intervention Modifies Oral L1 Use to Support and Provoke excess Oral L2 Use

Not only did the participants' L1 use reduce, as previously described, but the nature of their L1 use when it did occur during L2 speaking activities changed to facilitate and further L2 use. Here, the participants would make utterances in the L1 in order to expound upon ideas and lexical items using the L2, often cooperatively, in a manner mimicking the lexical description game played during intervention. This is opposed to using the L2 as a means of avoiding depth while speaking, which often occurred before the intervention, in conjunction with the code-switching.

These findings resonate with the findings of Yüzlü & Derin (2020) on the effectiveness of L1 use on the L2 oral production of Turkish EFL learners, where the researchers found that if used carefully, purposefully, and systematically, L1 use can enhance L2 oral production. This occurs as the L1, being the primary cognitive tool (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), helps scaffold the use of the L2 while also allowing for knowledge to be made both procedural and then declarative Yüzlü & Derin (2020). This precise and purposeful L1 use also gives rise to abilities of linguistic enquiry, leading to a more comprehensible utilization of the L2, while also facilitating interaction Yüzlü & Derin (2020). In the current study, it seems as though after receiving circumlocution training, the participants changed their L1 use to one mimicking the shrewd manner described by Yüzlü & Derin (2020). They relied on it in an expository manner, and as a means of examining language, so as to lead to increased and more cooperative L2 interactions.

Given the findings on the effects of oral strategy training which includes circumlocution (Sukirlan, 2014), and the findings regarding metacognitive instruction with a focus on oral communication (Sato & Lam, 2021), it stands to follow that the current action research study's intervention influenced the changes in the participants' L1 use to that of the phenomena described in the previous paragraph. The findings of Sato & Lam (2021) and Sukirlan (2014) demonstrate that such oral strategy training and metacognitive instruction lead to decreases in avoidance of message (Sukirlan, 2014), and to conscientious and cooperative communication during L2 speaking activities (Sato & Lam, 2021), which align with the descriptions of Yüzlü & Derin (2020). Rabab'ah (2015), and Teng (2012) also demonstrate how such training leads to more precise and better negotiated language use towards intended meaning the L2.

The participants' L1 use changing to support L2 use is therefore attributable to their increased oral strategic competence gained during-intervention. This helps account for another marker of the participants' improved oral communicative competence during and post intervention, namely their excess, often exclusive, use of the L2 both during and outside of game play, including during this study's meta-cognitive data collection sessions. This was displayed by the participants conversing unnecessarily between themselves in the L2 during and post intervention, as well as in the participants' insistence on completing the stimulated recall and semi-structured exit interview sessions exclusively in the L2 (which they did successfully). The participants had not demonstrated this behavior to such an extent pre-intervention, and it stands to follow that if the participants' L1 use both reduced and changed in nature to support extended L2 use, and if the participants

describe increased instances of L2 use due to their strategy training in circumlocution, that this would contribute to the excess use of the L2 described here.

In fact, when discussing this development during data collection sessions the participants expressed a strong affinity for, and natural sensibility towards, using the L2 in EFL contexts, whether required for speaking activities or not, explaining that they always possessed a desire to express themselves in the L2, but that before learning circumlocution this was difficult for them. This is in alignment with the findings of Al Hosni (2014), which demonstrate younger EFL learners' willingness to use the L2 while speaking, and their frustration at their ineptitude at doing so thanks to an inability to negotiate gaps in vocabulary. The participants also explained how speaking in the L2 in the classroom context had become innate, and this sensation increased post intervention. It is as though the intervention led to this increase in English language communicative abilities, including the ability to engage in meta-cognitive reflection in the L2, by training them in extensive, exclusive L2 use, an inherent component of circumlocution, as described by Berry-Bravo (1993). This was applied to a wide range of lexical items varying in complexity by way of the intervention's game, which made the use of the language automatic, and integrated it into the thought processes of the participants.

5.3 Intervention as a Useful Means of L2-Based Oral Achievement Strategy Training

The final major theme to emerge from this study's findings is the usefulness of the strategy's lexical picture description game as a means of oral achievement strategy training, particularly with regards to those strategies based in the L2, in this case circumlocution and word coinage. This can be attributed to the structure of the game, to the game leading to the internalization of circumlocution which allowed the participants to subsequently use the strategy accurately and automatically when it best serves them while speaking, and to the participants displaying increased perseverance while speaking in the L2 post intervention.

During data collection sessions, the participants described the structure of the lexical picture description game as being a very useful means of oral strategy training thanks to its motivating and helpful ludic approach, and thanks to the game's scaffolding. During the semi-structured interview the participants described the game's scaffolding as allowing them to comfortably and confidently master circumlocution by guiding them in more complex and varied applications of the strategy. This was achieved thanks to the basic, intermediate, and advanced levels of the game through which they progressed. The participants' descriptions align with other studies which have successfully integrated scaffolding into their oral strategy training, such as Gunning & Oxford (2014), as well as aligning with the findings of Zarandi & Rahbar (2016), and Naibaho (2019), who found scaffolding to be effective at bringing about achievements in EFL speaking.

The scaffolding built into the intervention's game could also be partially responsible for the diverse range of lexical descriptions the participants used when employing circumlocution, as well as for the surprising emergence of a second strategy, word-coinage, used by the participants post intervention. Given that the game's basic, intermediate, and advanced levels required the participants to reach for disparate, nuanced, and increasingly intricate manners of description, it could very well follow that this instilled in them a diverse array of circumlocution techniques, and possibly even achievement speaking strategies,

although this would need to be investigated further.

In addition, Kuen et al. (2017) describe the importance of practicing oral communication strategies in cooperative ways, as was done during the current action research study's intervention. The cooperative structure of the intervention's game, necessitating the oral use and comprehension of the L2 in a collaborative manner, could also explain the speaking achievements and excess use of the L2 between the participants post intervention.

During the stimulated recall and semi-structured interview data collection sessions both participants described circumlocution as having been so ingrained in their L2 systems that they turned to and accurately used circumlocution automatically to bridge communication gaps when speaking in the L2 post intervention. Here, it seems as though the structure of the lexical picture description game, played over multiple intervention sessions, using a diverse range of lexical items, led to the internalization of the strategy, which in turn led to increased and improved use of circumlocution post intervention. This resulted in improved capabilities in terms of L2 speaking.

An important underlying factor contributing to the participants' post intervention achievements in L2 speaking and L2-based achievement strategy use is a novel perseverance displayed by them while speaking in the target language. This occurred distinctly in the wake of the game-based strategy training, and is another strong indicator of the intervention's usefulness in terms of improving EFL students' oral capabilities in the L2. This newfound perseverance while speaking in the L2 is fundamental in allowing the participants to continue communicating in the improved manners described in section 5.1 of this chapter, and it is attributable to their improved use of achievement strategies. This is evidenced by the participants displaying their improved strategic competence in ways mimicking the intervention strategy training. The literature supports that strategy training which incorporates circumlocution is effective in leading learners to persevere while speaking in the L2. Scholars whose research led them to this conclusion include Gunning & Oxford (2014), whose sixth-grade participants used strategies including circumlocution to persevere while speaking in the L2 after receiving oral strategy instruction, and Teng (2012), who similarly found that strategy training leads to perseverance when encountering difficulties speaking in the L2.

5.4 Implications

Based on the findings of this action research study it could be argued that explicitly training EFL learners in circumlocution through lexical picture description games positively impacts, supports, and increases their L2 use and their use of oral L2 based achievement strategies, with these being integrally linked. In addition, it reduces learners' reliance on their L1 upon encountering difficulties when speaking, fostering in them the ability to converse exclusively in the L2, while lessening their dependence on oral reduction strategies. Lexical description games are also described as an effective means of strategy training.

This action-research intervention also demonstrates the key role played by the teacher in planning and facilitating strategy instruction and practice in the EFL classroom to the benefit of the learners. This teacher-researcher, therefore, plans on continuing to do so

more broadly in her own educational practice. More specifically she will continue to instruct and train these participants in circumlocution, and will consider doing so with other learners, as this speaking strategy has shown in the current study to be particularly beneficial to the participants with respect to supporting and improving their speaking capabilities in the L2.

The current results also support oral strategy instruction and training generally. The pre-intervention data indicates that the participants were grasping for multiple speaking strategies grounded in the L2 all along, however they needed oral strategy training to implement them. It is especially interesting to note that this study's findings allude to specific training in one strategy, in this case circumlocution, having the ability to positively affect the use of another, word coinage.

Another implication of this study is related to the use of metacognitive data collection techniques with younger learners. The importance of using these instruments for research within the field of education has been established, for example, Kuen et al. (2017) point out that often the only way to truly discover students' learning strategies and progress is to question them directly, leading them in reflection. While some researchers may be hesitant to employ these techniques with younger learners, this study's findings show that they are able to reflect and comment upon their own learning and linguistic processes, even developing the ability to do so in a language additional to their L1.

5.5 Limitations

This study's design and data collection techniques do present limitations. The small sample used in this investigation, as well as the unique profiles of the participants as highly effective learners, make it difficult to generalize its findings to larger populations.

Additionally, the private capacity in which this study was conducted provided a large amount of flexibility that would not be possible in more conventional educational settings. Furthermore, the participants and teacher-researcher enjoy a well established working relationship which fostered maximum cooperation and communication between them. It would therefore be interesting to repeat this study with a larger sample in a traditional school environment.

This study's intervention concentrated solely on training students in circumlocution, limiting the extent to which the effects of oral strategy training can be understood. Hence, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study focusing on either a different speaking strategy, or a wider range of strategies to better gauge the effects of oral strategy training in general, as well as to understand and compare the effects of training in different speaking strategies.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

6.1 Summary of Main Findings and Related Recommendations

This study, which aimed to describe the contribution of circumlocution lexical picture description games on young EFL learners' oral use of the L1 and L2, found that explicit training in circumlocution using lexical picture description games supports and amplifies learners' use of the L2 while reducing their reliance on the L1. It also found that circumlocution training via lexical picture description games is an effective means of strategy training due its scaffolding of the speaking strategy, its leading to the internalization of the strategy, and its ludic and cooperative design. This study's findings show that the participants' reliance on code-switching to the L1 markedly decreased post intervention, the nature of their L1 use changed to amplify the use of the L2, and their use of L2-based achievement strategies notably improved after receiving training in circumlocution. Moreover, after the intervention their use of the reduction strategy message abandonment ceased completely.

The findings indicate that the improvements in the participants' L2-based oral achievement strategic competence, along with the curtailing of their use of reduction strategies, were achieved through circumlocution training, and led to reductions in L1 use occurring due to an under-developed strategic competence, as well as amplifying their use of the L2. The circumlocution training also increased the participants' affinity for the L2, leading to excess and exclusive L2 use, while endowing the learners with the perseverance necessary to continue delivering their message in the target language, which also contributed to changes in their language use.

Circumlocution instruction should therefore be considered valuable in the EFL classroom, and oral strategy training should be included in EFL speaking curricula. EFL teachers whose students struggle to maintain oral interactions in the L2 should consider instructing and training their students in circumlocution or other L2-based achievement strategies in a ludic and cooperative way, as this has been beneficial in remedying this problem as it manifested itself in the current teacher-researcher's students.

6.2 Personal Reflections and Further Recommendations

On an introspective and personal note, the process of implementing this action research has been rewarding from its inception to its end. In terms of improving my critical thinking skills, undertaking the thematic analysis necessary to analyze certain data generated during this study has been very beneficial. Undergoing the process of methodically analyzing and categorizing my participants' utterances and behaviors across instruments instilled in me an instinct and ability to parse out the essence and essential details and themes of the utterances and texts which surround me, so as to better understand their true meaning and significance, making connections and consolidations between them when necessary. This has played out across many aspects of my life. In my teaching practice, for example, I now find that I am able to make shrewder sense of the goings on in my classroom, and am better able to determine the underlying meanings and larger implications of what is being said to me and around me. These skills have extended to how I read written texts as well. These improved listening, reading, and observation skills have also effected the way that I consume media, make sense of my personal as

well as professional written and oral correspondence, allowing me to better understand the world around me.

During the pre and post intervention data collection sessions it was extremely gratifying to witness the participants' enthusiasm and growth with regard to expressing themselves orally in the L2 while participating in the structured conversations used for measuring their language use. The principal contributing factor to this, I believe, was their enthusiasm for the topic of conversation ("The Godfather" trilogy/organized crime), which was chosen based on their input, as directly solicited by me. It was therefore relevant to their interests and goals in terms of L2 oral expression and comprehension. Consequently, the participants strove to continue speaking in the L2, reaching for achievement strategies with which to do so. I believe this led them to have more open and eager attitudes towards oral strategy training in general, and the intervention's circumlocution training specifically, which was a key factor to its success.

I therefore recommend that world language teachers seriously evaluate and consider their learners' interests, environments, and contexts for language use when selecting and adapting pedagogical materials. I would emphasize that the best means of obtaining this information is via the learners themselves, who, in my experience, are not shy in expressing themselves when approached with an open heart and mind.

In fact, I have already been implementing this more widely in my own teaching practice across contexts since completing this action research to positive effect. For example, a seventh grade class of mine was struggling to engage with a certain text which formed the base for a series of activities. I therefore asked the learners their opinions of the material and true preferences, and subsequently changed the texts to reflect their answers. Their work and participation immediately improved, and we were able to finish the unit far more successfully than would have been possible without their input regarding the course materials. It is worth mentioning that these learners' preferred subject (ghost stories) lay a bit outside of my realm of enjoyment given our context (as was the case with the conversation topic indicated to me by this action research's participants), however my recent experiences as a teacher-researcher led me to believe that the academic benefits outweighed my discomfort, therefore I strove to incorporate it into our lessons in an educational and fitting manner, and I was not disappointed. The importance of listening to and collaborating with the participants was consistent throughout this action research, including during its design.

One challenge I faced while constructing this study was deciding which data collection instruments to use given that I was working with lower secondary learners. The main concern was whether participants belonging to this age group could successfully and confidently complete stimulated recall, given the complexities involved in completing such meta-cognitive reflections and narrations. However I engaged them in a frank discussion regarding the structure and function of stimulated recall protocols, and they assured me that they felt able and were enthusiastic to complete stimulated recall.

I would therefore advise other teacher-researchers to openly communicate with their participants during all stages of an action research project, and would tell them to not let the age of their participants dissuade them from having these conversations. In my experience, younger learners are capable of considering and disclosing their cognitive abilities and comfort levels, generally speaking. In the case of this study, for example, the

participants completed the meta-cognitive protocols quite well, as per their assurances, and this study would have been far poorer without the data elicited from those instruments.

Overall, the participants enjoyed cooperating on this action research study, and for me it was very gratifying to see their pride in contributing to a piece of research meant to be disseminated to a wider audience. This brings me to another personal reflection on the benefits of action research in the field of education, especially regarding younger learners: that if conducted in an open manner it introduces and trains learners in analytic inquiry and investigation, instilling in them an interest and ability to consider their environment, learning, and themselves scientifically, as well as an interest in investigation generally. These skills are transversally useful in one's educational and professional life, and introducing learners to research methods, and allowing them to see and explore their classroom through the paradigm of laboratory help remedy the oft lamented lack of interest in investigation and the sciences on the part of the young. I therefore suggest that teacher-researchers engage in a continued dialogue with their participants with respect to all stages of the action research. I, for example, presented my academic posters and slides respecting this study to my participants (in an age appropriate manner), as well as to the wider audience for which they were originally intended.

In conclusion I would like to add that as a professional it has also been beneficial and satisfying for me to begin to treat my classroom as a laboratory. In so doing I now observe my teaching contexts with a more critical, inquisitive eye, and I feel better equipped to not only identify, but methodically examine issues of concern and interest as they arise in my teaching environment. In so doing I will hopefully make a positive contribution to my students and colleague's experiences in school.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Lexical Virtual Playing Cards

Game: What's on my card?

How to Play

- You and your classmate work as a team against Rachel.
- You take turns describing images with their Spanish/English definition to your partner.
- The image/word will be sent to you on a digital "card" through our Google Drive.
- Your partner must guess what is on your card from your circumlocution.
- The only information the teacher will give your teammate about your word is the category it belongs to.
- The words are related to things we have been discussing in class.
- If your partner guesses what's on your card in four minutes or under your team earns the points on the card.
- If your partner is unable to guess the term on the card Rachel wins the points on the card.
- If you accidentally say the word on your card in any language your team automatically loses that round.
- There are three categories of cards: basic, worth 1 point, intermediate, worth 2 points, and advanced worth 3 points. *We will begin with easier words and work towards advanced words.*
- If your team wins Rachel will share a funny photo of herself in high school or college with you!

Love at first sight Amor a primera vista
2 Points



Trial Juicio
3 Points



The city La ciudad
1 Point



Appendix B: Participant Lesson Observation Forms 1 and 2

Participant Observation Form One

Procedure

Participant Observation Form One is to be completed four times after reviewing the complete recordings of intervention sessions 4-7, and focuses on incidents related to the intervention as it takes place.

Materials

Zoom software for recording.

Participant observation form one

Action (In Sequential Order)	Description
Verify the virtual setting and mechanisms	Before beginning the session verify that the researcher and the participants have a secure and reliable digital connection, that Zoom's recording mechanism functions, and that there are minimum disturbances in the researcher's and participants' ambiance.
Conduct and record the virtual sessions	Remind the participants that this session will be observed and those observations will be committed to writing. Conduct and record the virtual sessions according to the investigation's action plan.
Watch the recorded sessions and complete Participant Observation Form One after each of sessions 3-6.	Watch the recorded sessions and complete Participant Observation Form One after each of sessions 3-6.
Analyze the Data	To be determined

Participant Observation Form One

Name

Date

Elicitation	Description	Analytic Notes	Subjective Reflections
Understanding of the intervention and strategy:			
Are there incidents of confusion?			
Are there incidents of understanding?			
Focus: Student-game			
Understanding of the intervention and strategy:			
Are there incidents of confusion?			
Are there incidents of understanding?			
Focus: Student-student			
Understanding of the intervention and strategy:			
Are there incidents of confusion?			
Are there incidents of understanding?			
Focus: Student-teacher			
Attitudes of participants during the intervention and explicit teaching and practice of the strategy			
Focus: student			

Progress displayed during the intervention and the explicit teaching and practice of the strategy:

Incidents of progression, stagnation, and/or regression with regards to the use of the intervention?

Incidents of progression, stagnation, or regression with regards to the use of paraphrase and their ability to maintain oral interactions in the L2 during random interactions throughout the session?

Focus: Student-game

Progress displayed during the intervention and the explicit teaching and practice of the strategy:

Incidents of progression, stagnation, and/or regression with regards to the use of the intervention?

Incidents of progression, stagnation, or regression with regards to the use of paraphrase and their ability to maintain oral interactions in the L2 during random interactions throughout the session?

Focus: Student-student

Progress displayed during the intervention and the explicit teaching and practice of the strategy:

Incidents of progression, stagnation, and/or regression with regards to the use of the intervention?

Incidents of progression, stagnation, or regression with regards to the use of paraphrase and their ability to maintain oral interactions in the L2 during random interactions throughout the session?

Focus: Student-teacher

Miscellaneous relevant information

Miscellaneous relevant information

Participant Observation Form Two

Procedure

Participant Observation Form Two is to be completed 6 times after reviewing the complete recordings of sessions 1-3 and 8-11. It focuses on the participants' use of the L1 and use of speaking strategies while taking part in the same speaking activity that took place pre-intervention.

Action (In Sequential Order)	Description
Verify the virtual setting and mechanisms	Before beginning the session verify that the researcher and the participants have a secure and reliable digital connection, that Zoom's recording mechanism functions, and that there are minimum disturbances in the researcher's and participants' ambiance.

Conduct and record the virtual sessions	Remind the participants that this session will be observed and those observations will be committed to writing. Conduct and record the virtual sessions according to the investigation's action plan.
Watch the recorded sessions and complete Participant Observation Form One after each of sessions 3-6.	Watch the recorded sessions and complete Participant Observation Form One after each of sessions 7 and 8.

Analyze the Data

Participant Observation Form two

Name

Date

Elicitation	Description	Analytic Notes	Subjective Reflections
	Incidents regarding the use of circumlocution, other speaking strategies, and code-switching while completing the speaking activity: Focus: teacher-student		
	Incidents regarding the use of circumlocution, other speaking strategies, and code-switching while completing the speaking activity: Focus: student-student		
	Attitudes of the participants while taking part in the speaking activity in the L2: Focus: Student		
Miscellaneous information	relevant		

Appendix C: Stimulated Recall for Pre, During, and Post Intervention Footage

Stimulated Recall: Pre-Intervention Footage

Materials Used

Two sets of footage of each participant performing the pre-intervention speaking activity, one for the explicit practice of the think-aloud protocol and one for completing the protocol itself.

A set of footage of the researcher performing a speaking task to be used as a means of modeling the think-aloud protocol for the participants.

A secure internet connection available to both the researcher and the participants.

Zoom software, downloaded by the researcher and the participants.

Materials for transcription and data analysis.

Pre-intervention Retrospective Think-Aloud Protocol Procedure

Action (In Sequential Order)	Description
Verify the virtual setting and mechanisms	Ensure that a secure digital connection exists for all participants so as to successfully complete the procedure, that the video recording and chat function work properly, that the videos to be used in the think aloud protocol work and can be easily paused, played, and, replayed, and that there are minimum disturbances in the participants' and researcher's ambiance.

Pre-task orientation, to be repeated during the think-aloud protocol warm-up/training, and prior to each actual think-aloud protocol.

Introduce and explain the task and its purpose to the participants:

Ask them to explain what a “think-aloud” protocol may entail.

Address their ideas.

Explain that they are to watch selective footage of themselves performing a speaking activity pre-intervention.

Explain that they are to watch the video, pausing it regularly to express their thoughts regarding what they observe with regards to their speaking performance, their use of the L2 vs. the L1, and their strategy use pre-intervention: Tell them to “say out loud” in whatever language they prefer, whatever they think, observe, and/or what catches their attention as they watch themselves do the speaking activity. Tell them that there are no right or wrong thoughts, and they should pay attention to what they think of their speaking in general, what they think of how they use English and Spanish, and “how” they see themselves speaking, are they using any “tools”?

Emphasize the importance of using whatever language they wish to verbalize their thoughts, using their L1 is not only fine but encouraged (Lavadenz, 2003).

Warm up, to be completed as a practice/training session on its own, and in a modified form before each actual think-aloud protocol.

Allow the participants to practice the protocol using a three part warm up method comprised of explaining (see previous step), modeling, and supervised practice (Church & Bereiter, 1983):

The researcher models the task for the participants using footage of themselves.

Have the participants explicitly practice the protocol with footage of themselves performing the pre-intervention speaking activity. At this point the researcher can gently interrupt and guide the participants if they struggle (Rankin, 1988).

Conduct and record the think-aloud protocol

Allow the participants to watch their videos individually, pausing their videos to verbalize their thoughts in a natural, spontaneous manner with regards to their speaking performance in the L2, their use of the L2 vs. L1, and their strategy use pre-intervention. Allow the participants to re-watch all or part of the footage as they prefer. The researcher is to remain silent as the actual think-aloud protocol takes place, only speaking to prompt the students to keep talking by way of Zoom's chat mechanism if the dialogue stagnates, pausing the footage themselves only if the participant shows signs of extreme struggle, or to address any issues of immediate concern regarding the virtual environment unrelated to the verbalization of the participants' thoughts.

Transcribe the think-aloud protocol

Transcribe each participant's utterances during their respective think-aloud protocol verbatim.

Analyze data

Code the transcriptions deductively, and categorize thematically as per the research aims for analysis.

Learner Retrospective Think-Aloud Protocol: During Intervention Footage

Materials Used

Two sets of footage of each participant performing the during intervention picture description game, one for the explicit practice of the think-aloud protocol and one for completing the protocol itself.

A set of footage of the researcher performing a speaking task to be used as a means of modeling the think-aloud protocol for the participants.

A secure internet connection available to both the researcher and the participants.

Zoom software, downloaded by the researcher and the participants.

Materials for transcription and data analysis.

During Intervention Learner Retrospective Think-Protocol Procedure

Action (In Sequential Order)	Description
Verify the virtual setting and mechanisms	Ensure that a secure digital connection exists for all participants so as to successfully complete the procedure, that the video recording and chat function work properly, that the videos to be used in the think aloud protocol work and can be easily paused, played, and, replayed, and that there are minimum disturbances in the participants' and researcher's ambiance.

Pre-task orientation, to be repeated during the think-aloud protocol warm-up/training, and prior to each actual think-aloud protocol.

Introduce and explain the task to the participants:

Explain to the students that we will continue with the same think aloud protocol using different video footage of them working with the picture description game, completing the intervention.

Address their questions and concerns.

Explain that they are to watch the video, pausing it regularly to express their thoughts regarding what they observe with regards practicing circumlocution by way of the picture description game (the intervention): Tell them to “say out loud” in whatever language they prefer, what-ever they think, observe, and/or what catches their attention as they watch themselves. Tell them that there are no right or wrong thoughts, and they should pay attention to the game, and how they see themselves completing it.

Emphasize the importance of using whatever language they wish to verbalize their thoughts, using their L1 is not only fine but encouraged (Lavadenz, 2003).

Warm up, to be completed as a practice/training session on its own, and in a modified form before each actual think-aloud protocol.	Repeat the pre-task orientation as necessary. Allow the participants to practice the protocol using a three part warm up method comprised of explaining (see previous step), modeling, and supervised practice (Church & Bereiter, 1983): The researcher models the task for the participants using footage of themselves. Have the participants explicitly practice the protocol with footage of themselves performing the pre-intervention speaking activity. At this point the researcher can gently interrupt and guide the participants if they struggle (Rankin, 1988).
Conduct and record the think-aloud protocol	Allow the participants to watch their videos individually, pausing their videos to verbalize their thoughts in a natural, spontaneous manner. Allow the participants to re-watch all or part of the footage as they prefer. The researcher is to remain silent as the actual think-aloud protocol takes place, only speaking to prompt the students to keep talking by way of Zoom's chat mechanism if the dialogue stagnates, pausing the footage themselves only if the participant shows signs of extreme struggle, or to address any issues of immediate concern regarding the virtual environment unrelated to the verbalization of the participants' thoughts.
Transcribe the think-aloud protocol	Transcribe each participant's utterances during their respective think-aloud protocol verbatim.
Analyze data	Code the transcriptions deductively, and categorize thematically as per the research aims for analysis.

Learner Retrospective Think-Aloud Protocol: Post Intervention Footage

Materials Used

Two sets of footage of each participant performing the post-intervention speaking activity, one for the explicit practice of the think-aloud protocol and one for completing the protocol itself.

A set of footage of the researcher performing a speaking task to be used as a means of modeling the think-aloud protocol for the participants.

A secure internet connection available to both the researcher and the participants.

Zoom software, downloaded by the researcher and the participants.

Materials for transcription and data analysis.

Post Intervention Learner Retrospective Think-Aloud Protocol Procedure

Action (In Sequential Order)	Description
Verify the virtual setting and mechanisms	Ensure that a secure digital connection exists for all participants so as to successfully complete the procedure, that the video recording and chat function work properly, that the videos to be used in the think aloud protocol work and can be easily paused, played, and, replayed, and that there are minimum disturbances in the participants' and researcher's ambiance.

Pre-task orientation, to be repeated during the think-aloud protocol warm-up/training, and prior to each actual think-aloud protocol.

Introduce and explain the task to the participants:

Explain to the students that we will finish with the same think aloud protocol using video footage of them completing the same speaking activity from video one post-intervention.

Address their questions and concerns.

Explain that they are to watch the video, pausing it regularly to express their thoughts regarding what they observe with regards to their speaking performance, their use of the L2 vs. the L1, and their strategy use pre-intervention: Tell them to “say out loud” in whatever language they prefer, what-ever they think, observe, and/or what catches their attention as they watch themselves do the speaking activity. Tell them that there are no right or wrong thoughts, and they they should pay attention to what they think of their speaking in general, what they think of how they use English and Spanish, and “how” they see themselves speaking, are they using any “tools”?

Emphasize the importance of using whatever language they wish to verbalize their thoughts, using their L1 is not only fine but encouraged (Lavadenz, 2003).

Warm up, to be completed as a practice/training session on its own, and in a modified form before each actual think-aloud protocol.

Repeat the pre-task orientation as necessary.

Allow the participants to practice the protocol using a three part warm up method comprised of explaining (see previous step), modeling, and supervised practice (Church & Bereiter, 1983):

The researcher models the task for the participants using footage of themselves.

Have the participants explicitly practice the protocol with footage of themselves performing the pre-intervention speaking activity. At this point the researcher can gently interrupt and guide the participants if they struggle (Rankin, 1988).

Conduct and record the think-aloud protocol Repeat the pre-task orientation and warm-up as necessary.

Allow the participants to watch their videos individually, pausing their videos to verbalize their thoughts in a natural, spontaneous manner. Allow the participants to re-watch all or part of the footage as they prefer. The researcher is to remain silent as the actual think-aloud protocol takes place, only speaking to prompt the students to keep talking by way of Zoom's chat mechanism if the dialogue stagnates, pausing the footage themselves only if the participant shows signs of extreme struggle, or to address any issues of immediate concern regarding the virtual environment unrelated to the verbalization of the participants' thoughts.

Transcribe the think-aloud protocol

Transcribe each participant's utterances during their respective think-aloud protocol verbatim.

Analyze data

Code the transcriptions deductively, and categorize thematically as per the research aims for analysis.

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Procedure, Dimensions, and Final Script

Important to note:

The final script is in English as the Participants insisted on completing the interview in that language.

As the interview was semi-structured the conversation at time flowed in a spontaneous natural manner, therefore questions, comments, and sub-themes emerged which, while present in chapter IV of this report, are not present here.

The questions used to clarify utterances made by the participants during the stimulated recall sessions could not be anticipated.

Semi-structured exit interview, post retrospective think-aloud protocol

Materials Used

A secure internet connection available to both the researcher and the participants.

Zoom software, downloaded by the researcher and the participants.

Materials for transcription and data analysis.

Semi-structured exit interview procedure (To be completed twice, once with each participant)

Action (In Sequential Order)	Description
Verify the virtual setting and mechanisms	Ensure that a secure digital connection exists for all participants so as to successfully complete the interview, that the video recording and chat function work properly, and that there are minimum disturbances in the participants' and researcher's ambiance.

Pre-interview briefing to be conducted in the participants' first language.

Introduce and explain the purpose and structure of the interview to the participants and address any of their questions regarding these subjects:

Disclose to the participants that the purpose of the interview is to clarify and validate the content generated by them during the think-aloud protocols and your interpretations of that content, as well as to obtain necessary additional information regarding their use of the L1 vs. the L2 pre, during, and post intervention, as well as their strategy use while speaking.

Explain to the participants that the interview will therefore consist of two parts respectively.

Disclose to the participants that the purpose of the interview is to further explore their perceptions of the intervention with regards to their L2 use while communicating orally.

Welcome, and address and questions, comments or concerns of the participants regarding the interview.

Conduct and record part I of the interview in the participants' first language: Clarifying and validating the content and interpretation of the think-aloud protocols

The participant will be asked a series of interpreting, specifying, probing, and follow up questions regarding their utterances made during the think-aloud protocols.

The thematic dimension of part I of the interview is focused on the participants' metacognitive utterances made during the think-aloud protocols regarding their speaking in the L1 vs. the L2, and their strategy use while doing so.

The interview will be conducted in a dynamic, open-ended manner, while maintaining a thematic structure, characterizing it as semi-structured.

The specifics of the script will be solidified once after having completed and analyzed the think-aloud protocols.

See section below titled “Script I” for more information and specifics.

Post Interview Part I debriefing

Once part I of the interview has been completed the researcher summarizes the main points and themes of the interview as understood.

Ask the participants if there is anything else they would like to add and/or clarify.

Address any questions and concerns of the participants.

Inquire after the participants’ emotional state post-interview, and about their subjective experiences during the interview.

Pre-interview part II briefing

Explain to the participants that the interview is transitioning to part II.

Remind the participants of the purpose and theme of part II of the interview and address their questions, comments, and concerns.

Conduct and record part II of the interview in the participants' first language: Exploring the participants' perceptions of the treatment with regards to their L2 use while speaking.

The participants will be asked a series of indirect, interpreting, structuring, introductory, follow-up, probing, and specifying questions relating to the thematic dimensions of:

Their perceptions of and experiences during the intervention.

Their L1 vs. L2 use pre, during, and post intervention.

Their oral strategy use pre, during, and post intervention.

The interview will be conducted in a dynamic, open-ended manner, while maintaining a thematic structure, characterizing it as semi-structured.

See section below titled "Script II" for more information and specifics.

Post-interview debriefing to be conducted in the participants' first language.

Once the interview has been completed the researcher summarizes the main points and themes of the interview as understood.

Ask the participants if there is anything else they would like to add and/or clarify.

Address any questions and concerns of the participants.

Inquire after the participants' emotional state post-interview, and about their subjective experiences during the interview.

Analyze data

Transcribe the interview.

Analyze the data with a focus on meaning applying meaning condensation techniques.

- a. **Miscellaneous**
- b. **General use of L2 during speaking activities.**
- c. **Clarification of think-aloud data**
- d. **Validation of interpretations of think-aloud data**
- e. **Perception of the intervention**
- f: **The effect of the intervention on speaking and strategy use while speaking**

	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.
You say that you now feel comfortable only speaking in English with me. Even when you are given a chance to speak in Spanish. How and when did that happen? Why? Are you very comfortable speaking in English now? Could it be related to the game? SO3		X				X
Tell me about your general experiences with the speaking activities and with the game and learning about circumlocution. What do you think of circumlocution (can you still describe what it is?) What do you think of speaking strategies in general? S02					X	
Do you remember before the game? How would you feel when speaking in English? What would you do when you didn't know how to continue? S02 S03		X				X
Do you think that's always the best thing to do? Why or why not? S02 S03		X				X

	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.
What do you do now when you encounter the same problem? Have you noticed a change in your strategy use?		X				X
How do you think the game and the teaching of the strategy effected your speaking? Why do you think it did so? Did it make your speaking easier? SO 3						
Did you enjoy learning circumlocution through a game? Do you think that made it easier? S02 S03					X	X
I was very impressed with your abilities to progress through the game to harder and harder words. Participant 1, you already touched up on this a few classes ago, but did your progression feel natural or hard (like when you said your hair is growing)? Why or why not? SO2 SO3	X				X	X
Do you feel more confident speaking English now that you have acquired a new speaking strategy? Did learning and playing the game make you feel more confident? SO2 SO3					X	X

	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.
Do you think circumlocution will be useful to you in the future when speaking? How? Do you feel like you can continue with your message more efficiently now that you have learned this strategy? S02 S03						X
Participant 2: Participant 2, you mention the strategy being “deep in you”. I think I understand what you mean by that but can you just clarify? You can clarify in Spanish if you would prefer.			X			
Participant 2: During the think aloud you mention your progress many times. Can you be more specific by what you mean by progress? Progress in terms of what? What do you attribute your progress to? To the game?			X			

Participant 2: While completing your think aloud protocol you seemed genuinely surprised at the difference between your speaking before and after learning and practicing circumlocution.

X

X

Can you be more specific about what surprised you? Why do you think you spoke worse, and how do you think you improved?

Do you think the way we learned helped you? Why or why not?

Notes to self: Don't forget to explore what Participant 1 said when you were wearing the pink jacket. Be sure to explore why and how the intervention may have helped specifically