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## The Impact of Task Type on Iraqi EFL Learners' Use of Communication Strategies

**ABSTRACT**

This study is aimed at investigating the impact of task type on Iraqi EFL learners' use of communication strategies (henceforth CSs) when they communicate orally in English. To answer the research question and accomplish its aim, three oral tasks were employed: a one-way task (picture description task), and two two-way tasks (information-gap task and opinion-gap task). The tasks were carried out in the in-person, and under the researcher's monitoring. The sample of the study were (56) sophomores in the Department of English-College of Education University of Mosul, of the academic year 2020-2021. The results revealed that task type had an impact on the number of CSs used. It was found that opinion-gap task elicited the highest number of interactional, reduction, and time-gaining strategies, whereas picture description task elicited the highest number of self-solving strategies.

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### تأثير نوعية المهمة على استخدام الطلبة العراقيين الدارسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية لاستراتيجيات التواصل

سعود طه محمود النجم/ جامعة الموصل/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية  
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**الخلاصة:**

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق من تأثير نوع المهمة على استخدام الطلبة العراقيين الدارسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية لاستراتيجيات التواصل عندما يتواصلون بها شفهيًا. للإجابة على سؤال البحث وتحقيق هدفه ، تم استخدام ثلاث مهام شفوية: مهمة أحادية الاتجاه: مهمة وصف الصورة ، ومهمتين ثنائيتين: مهمة فجوة المعلومات (ايجاد الفروقات) ومهمة فجوة الرأي (مقابلة تبادل الآراء). تم تنفيذ المهام بشكل حضوري وتحت إشراف الباحث. بلغت عينة الدراسة (٥٦) طالباً وطالبة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية-

كلية التربية جامعة الموصل للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٠-٢٠٢١. كشفت النتائج أن نوع المهمة كان له تأثير على عدد المستخدمة. لقد وجد أن مهمة فجوة الرأي قد أثارت العدد الاكبر من استراتيجيات التفاعل ، والحد (التقليل) ، وكسب الوقت ، في حين أن مهمة وصف الصورة هي التي أثارت العدد الاكبر من استراتيجيات المعالجة الذاتية.

## 1. Introduction:

It is normally believed that the aim of a foreign language learning / acquisition, on the part of a foreign language learners, is to get competent, and be able to communicate effectively by that language. Communication is defined as a process in which a speaker/writer codes a message and an addressee/ reader decodes it to fulfill a communicative need. This requires both linguistic and communicative competence in the target language in question. It is completely usual, and likely to happen, that foreign language learners find it difficult to use it as well as its native speakers do, and as the context demands. To solve such problems, those learners make use of their strategic competence, which is a sub-component of communicative competence (Richards & Schmidt, 1983, p. 4; Oxford, 1990). Communicating in a second language is challenging, specifically for those learners who require more time to comprehend and articulate information than native speakers. These issues get worse by the learners' lack of linguistic resources, the nature of the message to express, and the situational or learning setting, among other reasons. L2 oral production is a difficult process that necessitates the acquisition of a variety of abilities in order to deal with the variety of problematic situations encountered. Strategic competence has been determined to be necessary and effective in addressing the grammatical and sociolinguistic issues that develop during communication (Yule & Tarone, 1990).

On the part of second language acquisition researchers and language teachers, it has been long proved that both researchers and teachers wish to elicit samples of learners' language use. The researchers require these samples in order to ascertain how second language learning and use processes occur. In the case of teachers, these examples are critical since they serve as a means of assisting learners and as evidence of effective learning. Researchers and teachers are aware that the samples they elicit differ according to how much emphasis learners place on using language correctly or communicating a message. For instance, blank-filling tasks are more likely to represent the learner's concern for accuracy, whereas some types of communicative activities are more likely to reflect how learners communicate in the foreign language (Ellis, 2003). Task concepts evolved as a result of communicative instruction

and material growth. Johnson (1979) described task-oriented instruction as instruction that gives "real meaning" through the use of language-mediated tasks, with success determined by whether the tasks are completed or not (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979)

This study is concerned with investigating the impact of variation in task type on the CSs used by Iraqi EFL learners in oral tasks. Based on this objectives, the study is intended to answer the following research question:

- Is there any impact of task type on Iraqi EFL learners' use of CSs?

The significance of this study lies in that it may be of pedagogical interest in teaching CSs or adopt the task-based approach and involve CSs with it. This study will reveal how Iraqi EFL learners behave when they communicate in English orally, and how they manage communication difficulties. It is an attempt to show the relation between Iraqi EFL learners' use of CSs and the task type they perform. Hence, its findings would be useful in determining what type of tasks to include in a syllabus design, and what CSs that contribute to language learning.

## **2. Theoretical background:**

### **2.1. Definitions of communication strategies:**

Although there is no total agreement on defining CSs, which is due to the variation in of perspectives and research objectives from which CSs are, but numerous scholars accept Tarone's (1976) and Corder's (1981) definitions: CSs have been defined as a “systematic tool that a speaker uses to convey and explain her/his message when confronted with a communication challenge”. In this sense, the challenge refers solely to the speaker's poor grasp and command of the language required and utilized in interaction. In other words, it is a learner's attempt to encode meaning in L2 in contexts where her/his L2 knowledge or rules have not been fully formed and developed (Tarone, 1976, p. 78; Corder, 1981, p. 103; Dornyei, 1995, p. 56).

Tarone (1977, p. 195- cited in Haddad, 2015, p. 6), Boxer & Cohen (2004, p. 175) and Ellis (1999, p.530) defined CSs as “techniques employed by a speaker to deal with communication crises in situations where s/he does not have adequate linguistic repertoire”. They are used by speakers who insist on expressing their message even though their language structures are limited.

Tarone (1981, p. 288) stated that CSs are “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared”. That is to say, to cooperate achieving the

communicative goal is the responsibility of both speaker and addressee involved in a communication event.

Faerch and Kasper (1984, p. 47-48) considered CSs as “sub plans in the planning phase and labeled them within the underlying cognitive structures. Hence, CSs are defined as plans that a speaker consciously employs to solve what seems to her/him as a dilemma in achieving certain communicative aim”. This definition distinguishes CSs in terms of problem-orientedness and potential consciousness. Furthermore, it is in accordance with Poulisse's (1984) definition; Poulisse stated that CSs are used in planning phase when speakers have problems in getting their intended meaning properly shared due to L2 short-comings.

## **2.2. Classifications of communication strategies:**

Numerous scholars have classified and categorized CSs in a variety of ways, but till now researchers have not reached an agreement on how to classify CSs because of the different standpoints from which they approached CSs. CSs are primarily divided into two broad categories, each with its own set of advocates and adherents. The first is promoted by Faerch and Kasper (1983) and Tarone (1977), who adopt the product-oriented approach. This approach emphasizes the interactive and external aspects of CSs, whereas the second approach (the process-oriented approach) is favoured by Bialystok (1990) and the Nijmegen group who are primarily concerned with the internal psychological aspects of CSs.

Tarone confirmed her interactional perspective of CSs when she divided the CSs in her taxonomy. She distinguished five major types, namely, asking for help, L1 and L2 transfer, paraphrase, mime, and avoidance. She proposed these strategies following an empirical experiment with a large number of L2 learners. Tarone's classification of CSs is significant because it has been adopted in a number of subsequent studies (Dornyei and Scott, 1997).

Bialystok (1990), a proponent of process-oriented CSs, distinguished two broad categories of CSs: control-based strategies and analysis-based strategies. Such classification is established on the basis of language processing framework. The former refer to the selection of a representational system capable of conveying and making explicit information pertinent to the intended concept's identity. The latter imply an attempt to communicate the intended concept's structure by making explicit the relational defining features (Bialystok, 1990).

According to Faerch and Kasper (1983a), “speech production consists of two phases: the planning phase and the execution phase. In their classification, Faerch and Kasper identified two broad categories of strategies for resolving communication difficulties: avoidance strategies and achievement strategies. Avoidance strategies entail abandoning or avoiding a particular word or phrase

(formal reduction) with which the learner is having difficulty at a level of language phonology, morphology, or syntax. It can also be functional reduction in which the speaker avoids certain conversation topics. On the other side, there are strategies for achievement, which include cooperative and non-cooperative strategies. The former strategy is used when the learner requires assistance from the other party in order to overcome communication difficulties, whereas the latter strategy is used when the learner himself manages the dilemma to overcome communication difficulties without seeking assistance from others” (Cook, 1993, p. 123; Faerch & Kasper, 1984, p. 48).

It has long been common practice to classify communication strategies by using largely product-oriented taxonomies. Different types of achievement strategies (also called compensatory strategies) are classified in such taxonomies according to the resource language, target language, used to encode the strategy, as well as the linguistic structure in which the strategy is expressed and understood (Poullisse, 1987, p. 141). As proponents of the process-oriented approach, the Nijmegen group criticized the previous classifications and taxonomies for focusing on only the linguistic form that emerges as a result of a strategy rather than on the process that preceded and caused it (Dornyei, 1995, p.57). They presented a taxonomy of CSs based on a comprehensive and empirical study. Compensation strategies are classified by the Nijmegen group into two broad categories: linguistic and conceptual strategies (Poullisse, 1987; Cook, 1993). Here, it is enough to refer to Nijmegen group taxonomy but not to follow their classification due to their disregarding of interactive CSs. Hence, this study is not in accordance with such taxonomy since this study targets EFL learners and it is usual for those learners to use interactional CSs as much as they face communication difficulties in a conversation. It is not only a psychological process that a speaker manages an interaction process, but interactional one as well. The term "conceptual architecture" refers to two distinct types of strategy: analytic strategies, which entail 'a conceptual analysis of the originally intended concept, such as "a talk uh bird" for "parrot" or "he lives in the mountain" for "hermit"; and holistic strategies, which entail 'the selection of a different concept that is sufficiently similar to the original to convey the speaker's intended message (Cook, 1993, p. 126; Dornyei, 1995).

In 1995, Dornyei proposed his taxonomy, which he based on those of Varadi (1973), Tarone (1977), Faerch and Kasper (1983), and Bialystok (1990). He divided CSs into three broad groups: avoidance strategies, “compensatory” (“achievement”) strategies, and “time-gaining” strategies. What is different here is that the last category was not included in the previous taxonomies. It consists of strategies, or devices, that are used to help speakers to get some more time to structure their turn and keep the communication channel open. The first and second categories were referred to and explained in earlier classifications. Since the current study is basically descriptive, decision has been made to target any CSs that may be detected in the participants' oral

production. Thus, time-gaining strategies are also investigated among other types and categories of CSs since they are also considered as tools to manage a communication breakdown (Dornyei,1995, p.58).

### 2.3. Previous studies on communication strategies:

There have been many previous studies that tackled the use of CSs by EFL learners in many countries. Here are some of these studies:

Abunawas (2012) conducted a study to identify the CSs that Jordanian EFL learners use to cope with communication difficulties. His study was quantitative in nature; data collection tools were picture description and an interview. The study targeted sixty-six students at Zarkaa university. The findings showed that Jordanian students employed different CSs; they made use of achievement and interactional strategies. Reduction strategies were also detected.

Haddad (2015) carried out a study in Algerian context to find out what Algerian EFL learners usually do to manage their lack of English knowledge, vocabulary gap in particular. The study was mixed in nature, and a questionnaire and an observation were the data collection tools. The findings indicated that participants have problems while attempting to communicate in English. They employed a range of various communication styles. Additionally, the results indicated that the most frequently used CS was *circumlocution*, and the least frequently used strategy was *word coinage* by Bejaia master II University students.

In 2016, Al-Alawi conducted a study in Oman. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the CSs utilized by Omani English learners when they can hardly communicate in English. The study employed a qualitative approach. It elicited data through the use of photo description and semi-interview tasks. It was carried out with sixty Technology College students. The results revealed that Omani EFL employed a considerable range of CSs due to the difficulties they faced in using English to share their message and fulfill their communicative goals.

Hardianti (2016) also conducted a study in Indonesian context to point out types of CSs that Indonesian university students employ in oral interaction. The study targeted a five-student group being involved in a discussion session. The study was qualitative in nature, and employed observation and an interview to elicit the use of CSs. The findings reflected that the participants employed achievement strategies more than avoidance strategies.

Ahmed & Pawar (2018) carried out a study in India to find out what types of CSs Radfan College students use when communicating in English, and how significant such use is in the process of their learning of English. The study was qualitative; it made use of observation of classroom interaction to collect data and elicit CSs use. the participants were the sophomores and juniors of this college. The results revealed that most of the participants preferred to abandon

the message or code switch to their first language. There were only very few participants who tended to use achievement strategies.

This study is different from these studies in that no previous study was conducted in Iraq. Moreover, the population and sampling of this study are different. It targets Mosul university students and expose them to three oral tasks to examine their employment of CSs as these tasks demand.

#### **2.4. Task-based language teaching (TBLT):**

TBLT is considered one of the major language teaching approaches. This approach considers tasks, particularly interactive ones, as the essential units of learning / teaching process (Alahmed, 2017). Foreign/ second language learners are primarily after achieving their ultimate goal which is language learning. Tasks make this possible by setting learners into problem-solving situations in which they negotiate tasks in hand between their previous knowledge and the novel one. Hence, TBLT is seen as a “strong version” of communicative language teaching since in both approaches, learners grasp the target language aspects through use. They learn what they need of language structures and aspects as they actually need it to carry out the tasks required. This supports the assumption that language is better learned through “actual use” and exposure of meaning that occur through performing tasks, much more than merely formal instruction. “The tasks are relevant, and completing them requires students to communicate. Each task has a defined consequence, indicating to both the teacher and pupils whether or not the communication was successful” (Larsen-Freeman, & Anderson, 2011). The inspiration for using tasks in TBLT is that they can challenge students cognitively and maintain their engagement and motivation in authentic language use. There are two basic types of tasks here: pedagogical tasks, which refer to those included in the syllabus and performed in the classroom, and target tasks (real-world tasks), that are basically done to express meaning for real-life situations and they are done out of the classroom (Brown, 2001, p. 242-243; Alahmed, 2017).

##### **2.4.1. Types of tasks:**

Tasks that could be employed in TBLT are categorized by Ellis (2009) into unfocused vs. focused tasks, and input-providing vs. output-prompting tasks. Below is a brief accounting for these tasks:

1. *Unfocused tasks*: these tasks are those that are “intended to give learners more opportunities for general communication. What is all needed from the participants is to depend on their accessible linguistic repertoire to accomplish the task”.
2. *Focused tasks*: this type contains tasks that are designed to facilitate communication through the use of a specific linguistic item, typically a

syntactic structure. Of fact, it could be said that there would be no guarantee that the challenge will elicit the language structure anticipated by the task designers. Focused tasks, like other tasks, should be purposeful. As a result, the focused task's target linguistic feature is 'hidden', i.e., implicitly shared.

3. *Input-providing tasks*: these tasks require learners to “provide input and engage them in the receptive skills of listening and reading. Input-providing tasks not only help students improve their receptive abilities, but also allow teachers to introduce new language”. An example of this type is "listen and do" task.
4. *Output-prompting tasks*: Students are motivated to write or speak meaningfully when they are given output-prompting activities (Larsen-Freeman, & Anderson, 2011).

Prabhu(1987) (cited in Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011) stated the tasks used within TBLT approach are of three types:

- a) *Information-gap task*: An information-gap activity requires learners to communicate information in order to finish a task. For instance, one student may be given a picture and instructed to explain it for another student to draw, or students may be instructed to draw each other's family trees.
- b) *Opinion-gap task*: To complete an opinion-gap task, students must communicate their personal opinions, preferences, viewpoints, feelings, or attitudes. For example, students may be assigned a social problem, such as high unemployment, and asked to propose a series of feasible remedies; or they may be assigned to write a letter of advice to a friend who has requested their help on a particular issue.
- c) *Reasoning-gap tasks*: A reasoning-gap task encourages students to derive new information by inferring it from previously provided information. For instance, students may be given a railroad schedule and asked to choose the best route between two cities, or they may be asked to solve a riddle. In the session we saw, students were tasked with determining the three most popular and least popular subjects based on the findings of their surveys or interviews. It is believed that “reasoning-gap tasks are the most effective since information-gap tasks frequently demand a single step of knowledge transfer rather than ongoing negotiation and opinion-gap tasks are frequently open-ended”. On the other hand, reasoning-gap activities promote a more persistent engagement with meaning, while they are nonetheless ineffective characterized by a rather consistent use of words.

#### 2.4.1. Previous studies on the impact of task type and

### **EFL learners' use of communication strategies:**

As any other research area, the relation between task type and the use of CSs was under many studies in various contexts. Here is a discussion of these studies, followed by explaining how the current study is different from them.

Dobao (2001) carried out a study to investigate whether Galician learners' use of CSs was affected by the task type they performed. The study targeted fifteen learners. It was quantitative in nature, and employed story narration and conversation tasks to elicit CSs use. The findings revealed that task type affected both quantity and types of CSs. The conversation task elicited higher number of achievement strategies than story narration.

Ghout-Khenoune (2012) studied the impact of task type on Algerian EFL learners' strategic behaviour. The study was qualitative and data were gathered by means of two task: free discussion and picture description. The sample of the study were a group of university students. The findings reflected that task type had an influence on only the number of CSs, but not on their types.

Rosas (2018) conducted a study to uncover the effect of task type on Spanish EFL learners' use of CSs in interaction. Data were collected via audio, video, and stimulated instruments. The study targeted (24) university students. It resulted in revealing that difference in task types elicit different CSs as participants employed them to meet the needs of each task. The participants tended to use approximation strategy in close task, but self-reconstructing in open tasks since the constraints were normally less in open tasks than those in close tasks.

Pawlak (2018) examined the influence of task type on Polish EFL learners' use of CSs. The study was quantitative in which a questionnaire was used to elicit the use of CSs. It targeted (20) postgraduate first semester students. The results showed that task type affected CSs use as to meet the demands of each task.

Zerrouki and Al-Khanji (2020) carried out a study to account for the influence of task type on Algerian EFL learners' use of CSs. The study was qualitative in which interview task was the elicitation tool. It targeted (30) university students. It was found out that task type had an influence on the use of CSs as long as interviews were difficult, this demands more linguistic items the thing that made participants use more CSs.

This study differs from the above-mentioned studies in its context and population, i.e., no previous studies on the relation between task type and the use of CSs were carried in the Iraqi context. Additionally, this study employs a

one-way task (picture description) and two two-way tasks (information-gap task and opinion-gap task).

### **3. Methodology:**

#### **3.1. Population and sampling:**

This study targeted, as its sample, (56) sophomores in the Department of English-College of Education-University of Mosul, of the academic year 2020-2021. The participants were randomly selected, and told to behave completely normal in doing the tasks in order to gain as much authentic, natural data as possible. They were also informed that taking part in the research tasks is optional, so the tasks were willingly done.

#### **3.2. Data collection procedures and instruments:**

To elicit the range of the CSs used by the participants under study and to achieve the aim of the research and answer its question, the researcher employed three oral tasks to collect the required data. These tasks were picture description task, information-gap (spot the differences) task, and opinion-gap (interview) task. participants were asked to do the task, and as they were doing them, their performance was audio-recorded. It was first intended to video-record the data, but due to some cultural considerations (there were female participants who had some reservations on being involved in a video recording), decision made to audio-record the data. After finishing the process of collecting data, the recorded data were transcribed, CSs were coded and counted in each task, and then CSs numbers were statistically analyzed and computed to arrive at the frequencies and percentages of each CS per task. To make sure that the data analysis was properly carried out, the researcher asked two colleagues, specialized in applied linguistics, to double check the coding process. One of them did the blind coding where he was given 20% of the raw data along with the coding scheme that the researcher already prepared for this purpose. The other was asked to do the normal coding; he was given 20% of the coded data also with the coding scheme. The results showed high degree of agreement with the first coder, and full agreement with the latter. The tasks employed in this study are discussed below:

##### **3.2.1. Picture-description task:**

It is well-proved that picture description task is a highly useful method of examining a learner's oral production and eliciting a range of CSs used. Picture description task varies according to the objectives for which it is conducted: it may be some pictures with single object in each (this type is mainly used to examine phoneme contrasts), or it may be a series of pictures of a scene or incident or any set of related pictures (this type is normally used to test the

overall oral skills and strategies) (Heaton, 1988, p. 92). For the purpose of the current study, the latter type was adopted since the study attempt to account for the oral production, among which are CSs, as a whole. In this task, the researcher provided the participants with some pictures and explained what to do. The researcher clarified out the instructions of how to do the task properly. A description of the first three pictures was presented to familiarize the task and help participants get started. Then, the participants were asked to provide as much description of the other pictures as they could.

### **3.2.2. Information-gap task:**

Information-gap task is an interactional task proposed to involve learners in a meaning negotiation process, completion task and / or solving a problem. When applied, this task subjects learners to near-authentic use of the target language. It is one of various useful techniques, besides opinion-gap task, that help learners develop their speaking skills and enhance their language learning procedures since it expose them to communicative situations in which they are required to use the target language orally to negotiate meaning and express themselves obviously. It is a technique in which learners miss some needed information to complete a task so they have to communicate with their partners to manage: they share what they have with their partner and ,in turn, the latter do the same (Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Namaziandost et al., 2019).

One of the examples of the information-gap task is spot the differences task. Each pair of the participants were given two pictures, labeled as A and B. The pictures were of two halls and they were almost the same but with ten differences between them. The researcher clarified out the instruction on how to manage doing the task: each pair of participants were asked to find the differences but by only looking at one's picture, without looking at each other's picture. To help the participant get started and to familiarize the task, the researcher provided one of the differences between the pictures.

### **3.2.3. Opinion-gap task:**

Opinion-gap task, which is also of reciprocal type of tasks, is intended to engage participants in a social interaction in which they are asked to share their ideas, attitudes, preferences, ...etc. to complete a task. This task is in contrast to the previous one in that no missing information is there, instead, all the information is shared and uncovered from the beginning of the task. What to do here is only reflecting one's own opinion and attitude concerning the topic in question ( Fallahi et al., 2015, p. 173).

An oral opinion-gap activity was carried out as the researcher was meeting the participants to ask them certain questions on a certain topic. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher asked the participants to feel free and behave normally as if it was a friend-to-friend talk. This would increase the possibility of having the participants in real-like interactional life situation, and end with valid oral production and CSs use. The topic was about *tourism*, which is related to the participants' lives in a way or another, but rather difficult for them as it needs some specific vocabulary. The more difficult a topic is, the more proficient linguistic competence it requires and the more CSs will be elicited from those participants with poor linguistic repertoire. Three questions were addressed to all the participants, they were the same questions. The plan was made like this in order to encourage the participants to talk about the topic in question as much as possible.

#### 4. Findings and discussion:

The results showed that task type affected number of CSs. The variation in number of CSs use in regard to task type is significant in only two CSs types; self-solving, with the value of (0.000) and time-gaining strategies, with the value of (0.040). As for reduction strategies (0.400) and interactional strategies (0.482), the difference is somehow slight. This is shown in the table (1) below.

Factors	Target strategies	Task 1		Task 2		Task 3		X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
		No	%	No	%	No	%		
Reduction CSs	Message abandonment	12	24 %	21	41 %	18	35 %	4.048	0.400
	Topic avoidance	23	25 %	32	34 %	38	41 %		
	Code switching	18	27 %	16	24 %	32	48 %		
	Foreignizing	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%		
Self-solving CSs	Circumlocution	45	47 %	21	22 %	29	31 %	76.726	0.000 *
	Approximation	186	74 %	52	21 %	13	5%		
	Use of all-purpose words	13	33 %	10	25 %	17	43 %		
	Word coinage	3	27 %	5	45 %	3	27 %		
	Self-	49	45 %	32	29 %	29	26 %		

	correction		%		%		%		
<b>Interactional CSs</b>	Appeal for help	0	0%	25	44%	32	56%	3.476	0.482
	Comprehension check	0	0%	14	52%	13	48%		
	Asking for repetition	0	0%	29	44%	37	56%		
	Clarification request	0	0%	9	29%	22	71%		
	Asking for confirmation	0	0%	16	46%	19	54%		
<b>Time-gaining CSs</b>	Use of lexical fillers	42	27%	53	34%	62	39%	10.053	0.040*
	Use of non-lexical fillers	56	41%	31	23%	48	36%		
	Self-repetition	37	41%	20	22%	34	37%		

Table (1) CSs in terms of task type.

Factors	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Reduction (negative) CSs	53	69	88	249.981	0.000*
Self-solving CSs	296	120	91		
Interactional CSs	0	93	123		
Time-gaining CSs	135	104	144		

Table (2) categories of CSs in terms of task type.

The results showed task type has an impact on the quantity of CSs used. Opinion-gap task was found to elicit more reduction, interactional, and time-gaining strategies than information-gap task, and much more than picture description task. In opinion-gap task, reduction strategies were detected in (88) instances which is higher than that in information-gap (69), and that in picture description (53). Interactional strategies were identified in (123) instances, and (93) in information-gap task, but never used in picture description task due to its one-way nature. Time-gaining strategies were found in (144) cases, and (104) cases in information-gap, and (135) in picture description task. As for self-solving strategies, the situation is rather different: picture description task elicited the highest number of instances (296), whereas information-gap task elicited (120), and opinion-gap task (91). This was due to the fact that in one-way task, the learner was the unique participant in the task; s/he was the master

of situation and had many possible options to manage her/his performance. s/he had no partner to ask her/him to cooperate to have successful communication process.

The table (3) below shows the percentages of each CS in reference to CSs within the same category and also in reference to task type. It also reveals the percentage of using each strategy as a whole in the three tasks. In task 1, the most frequent reduction strategy was TA (43%), and the least was MA (23%). The most frequent self-solving strategy was App (63%) and the least was WC (1%). The most frequent time-gaining strategy was UNLF(56%) and the least was SR(37%). In task 2, the most frequent reduction strategy was TA (43%) and the least was CS (23%). The most frequent self-solving strategy was App (43%) and the least was WC (4%). The most frequent interactional strategy was AR (31%) and the least was CR (10%). The most frequent time-gaining strategy was ULF (51%) and the least was SR (19%). In task 3, the most frequent reduction strategy was TA (44%) and the least was MA (24%). The most frequent self-solving strategy was Cir and SC (32%), and the least was WC (3%). The most frequent interactional strategy was AR (30%) and the least was CC (11%). The most frequent time-gaining strategy was ULF (43%) and the least was SR (24%).

Factors	Target strategies	Task 1		Task 2		Task 3		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Reduction CSs	Message abandonment	12	23%	21	30%	18	20%	51	24%
	Topic avoidance	23	43%	32	47%	38	43%	93	44%
	Code switching	18	34%	16	23%	32	37%	66	32%
	Foreignizing	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
		53	100%	69	100%	88	100%	210	100%
Self-solving CSs	Circumlocution	45	15%	21	18%	29	32%	95	19%
	Approximation	186	63%	52	43%	131	14%	251	49%
	Use of all-purpose words	13	4%	10	8%	17	19%	40	8%
	Word coinage	3	1%	5	4%	3	3%	11	2%

	Self-correction	49	17%	32	27%	29	32%	11	22%
		29	100	12	100		100	50	100
		6	%	0	%	91	%	7	%
<b>Interactional CSs</b>	Appeal for help	0	0%	25	27%	32	26%	57	26%
	Comprehension check	0	0%	14	15%	13	11%	27	13%
	Asking for repetition	0	0%	29	31%	37	30%	66	31%
	Clarification request	0	0%	9	10%	22	18%	31	14%
	Asking for confirmation	0	0%	16	17%	19	15%	35	16%
		0	0	93	100	12	100	21	100
					%	3	%	6	%
<b>Time-gaining CSs</b>	Use of lexical fillers	42	31%	53	51%	62	43%	15	41%
	Use of non-lexical fillers	56	42%	31	30%	48	33%	13	35%
	Self-repetition	37	27%	20	19%	34	24%	91	24%
		13	100	10	100	14	100	38	100
		5	%	4	%	4	%	3	%

Table (3) categories, numbers, and percentages of CSs in terms of task type

The findings of this study are in accordance with those of Dobao's (2001), Ghout-Khenoune's (2012), Rosas's (2018), Pawlak's (2018), and Zerrouki's (2020) which indicated that difference in task type affects number of CSs used.

## 5. Conclusion:

This study was basically conducted to find out if there is any relation between Iraqi EFL learners' use of CSs and the task type they perform. It has been found out that task type has a significant impact on the quantity of CSs used. Opinion-gap task was found the most eliciting task as it elicited the highest number of CSs among the three tasks. In this task, learners used interactional, time-gaining, and reduction strategies more than the other two tasks. On other side, picture description task elicited the highest number of self-solving strategies. These findings could be attributed to the nature and demands of each task. Opinion-gap task elicited the highest number of CSs because of its rather difficult nature; the participants could hardly get along with the interviewer in an accurate and fluent way. Another reason is that the

participants were rarely exposed to oral interaction in English, that is why they struggle a lot when being involved in such a task. As for picture description task, and how it elicited the highest number of self-solving strategies, it could be attributed to the nature of this task; it is a one-way task in that the participants was the only party in the situation and s/he had to manage the process.

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