Investigating Oral Communication Strategies Used by Registrar's Office Employees in an International University Context: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The global spread of English has led to both the use of English as a lingua franca and as well as the emergence of new diversities of spoken English acknowledged as 'World Englishes'. This enlarging use of English in all domains of life including the higher education contexts necessitates mutual intelligibility among second language (L2) users for effective communication. In the pursuance of this aim, L2 users need to employ some oral communication strategies (OCSs).

Given the fact that Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) is an English-medium university which accommodates international students from 106 different countries, English is used as a lingua franca within the campus including the Registrar's Office (RO). However, there is no study conducted to investigate the strategies used by the employees to communicate with the non-Turkish speaking international students successfully. This study, then, aims to explore the oral communication strategies used by the RO employees to overcome oral communication breakdowns with the international non-Turkish speaking students at EMU.

To achieve this goal, a mixed methods approach was followed to elicit data from 40 RO employee participants through Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI). In addition, 12 participants were interviewed to triangulate the findings obtained via the survey. After analyzing the collected data, the major findings of this study showed that RO employees mostly negotiated for meaning while speaking and listening. Findings of the study are justifiable as the RO employees have no other

choice but maintaining successful communication with international non-Turkish speaking students in order to fulfill their needs.

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature about oral communication breakdown in the English language taking place between the RO employees and the students in an international university context. The findings of this study can inform both the university administrators and syllabus designers to work in collaboration for designing an ESP course for the employees to improve their oral communication skills and strategies in English.

Keywords: Oral communication strategies (OCSs), English as a lingua franca (EFL), oral communication breakdowns (OCBs), Registrar's Office (RO), English at workplace

ÖZ

İngilizcenin küresel yayılımı, hem İngilizcenin ortak bir dil olarak kullanılmasına, hem de "Dünya İngilizleri" olarak bilinen yeni İngilizce türlerinin ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Yüksek öğretim bağlamları da dahil olmak üzere yaşamın her alanında İngilizcenin bu yaygın kullanımı, ikinci dil (L2) kullanıcıları arasında etkili iletişim sağlayabilmek için karşılıklı anlaşılabilir olmayı gerekli kılmaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, İngilizceyi ikinci dil olarak kullananlar, bazı sözlü iletişim stratejileri (SİS'ler) kullanmak durumundadırlar.

Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi (DAÜ), 106 farklı ülkeden uluslararası öğrenciye ev sahipliği yapan ve İngilizce dilinde eğitim veren bir yüksek öğretim kurumdur. Bu nedenle, DAÜ Öğrenci İşleri Ofisi çalışanları, Türkçe konuşamayan ve iletişim için İngilizce kullanan pek çok öğrencinin farklı İngilizce türleriyle yüz yüze kalmakta, söz konusu çalışanların bu öğrencilerle olan etkileşimlerini belirli bir verimlilik düzeyinde sürdürmeleri beklenmektedir. Ancak, bu verimliliğin nasıl elde edildiğini anlamak için yapılan hiçbir çalışma yoktur. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, DAÜ Öğrenci İşleri Ofisi çalışanlarının, uluslararası öğrencilerle İngilizce dilinde sözlü iletişim kopukluklarının üstesinden gelmek için ne gibi stratejiler kullandıklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu amaca ulaşmak için, karma araştırma yaklaşımı kullanılarak, 40 Öğrenci İşleri Ofisi çalışanı katılımcıdan Sözlü İletişim Stratejisi Envanteri (OCSI) aracılığıyla veri toplanmıştır. Ayrıca çalışmanın güvenirliğini ve geçerliğini artırmak için 12 katılımcı ile mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Toplanan verilerin analizi sonucunda elde edilen

bulgular, Öğrenci İşleri Ofisi çalışanlarının dinleme ve konuşma sırasında çoğunlukla anlamı doğrulamak için stratejiler kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Bu sonuç, söz konusu çalışanların Türkçe konuşamayan uluslararası öğrencilerle etkili iletişim kurmak için İngilizce dilinde anlaşmaktan başka seçeneğe sahip olmamalarından dolayı, gerçekçi ve savunulabilir bir sonuçtur.

Bu çalışma, uluslararası bir üniversite ortamında üniversite personeli ile öğrenciler arasında gerçekleşen İngilizce sözlü iletişim kopukluklarını araştıran çalışmalara katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, hem üniversite yöneticilerine hem de müfredat tasarımcılarına, çalışanların İngilizce sözlü iletişim becerilerini ve stratejilerini geliştirebilmeleri için bir Özel Amaçlı (ÖAİ) kursunun hazırlanmasına ışık tutabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sözlü iletişim stratejileri (SİS), ortak dil olarak İngilizce, sözlü iletişim kopuklukları, Öğrenci İşleri Ofisi, işyerinde İngilizce kullanımı

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Finally, to those who took what I can never retrieve when they departed, to my father and my brother Dr. Raed Al-Tahtamoni, I will keep on chasing our dreams.

To my heavenly mother and my lovely wife I say: this has become true because of your prayers and care.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
CSs	Communication Strategies
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
EMU	Eastern Mediterranean University
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
I	Interviewee
IL	Interlanguage
L1	First Language (Mother Tongue)
L2	Second Language
MA	Master of Arts
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MSc	Master of Science
OCBs	Oral Communication Breakdowns
OCSI	Oral Communication Strategy Inventory
R	Respondent
RO	Registrar's Office
RS	Repair Strategies
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TL	Target Language

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter first outlines the background to the study and presents the problem statement as well as the aim of the study and the research questions. Lastly, it discusses the significance of the study to the field.

1.1 Background of the Study

Foreign language learners are expected to convey their messages and endure in a conversation till they reach their communication goal. They may encounter several communication worries when they try to maintain their communication engagement running successfully. Nonetheless, because their language, or 'interlanguage' (IL) as referred to by Selinker (1972), is insufficient or limited, second language (L2) learners have to engage communication strategies (CSs) during their oral interactions. According to Faerch and Kasper (1983), communication strategies are those maneuvers which L2 learners deploy so that they would be able to overcome the barriers to the achievement of specific communication goals.

Investigating these communication strategies may help linguists to understand the complicated processes of language acquisition better. Moreover, similar analysis may lead to have new thoughts about developing new strategies to enhance L2 users regarding their IL skills. For example, Mei and Nathalang (2010) found out that Chinese EFL learners employ CSs to overcome difficulties as regards their IL while using English to talk to others in different talk events.

An important component of communicative competence is known as ‘strategic competence’, which enables the learners to deal with difficulties related to communication (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995). By applying strategic competence, L2 users can recompense for their linguistic limitations in the target language (Bialystok, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995).

As it is considered to be one of the elements which affect the development of IL, communication strategies attracted the attention of many researchers. Despite the fact that there is not yet an agreement on how CSs are defined, several definitions have been proposed as regards the CSs of second language learners. According to Dörnyei and Scott (1997), there are two views to conceptualize CSs; traditional and psychological. The traditional view as seen by researchers such as Faerch and Kasper (1983) and Tarone (1977) is that CSs are verbal and nonverbal emergency treatment procedures employed by L2 speakers to overcome insufficient language proficiency. Similarly, Canale (1983) defined CSs as efforts by L2 speakers to improve the efficiency of communication, while scholars such as Poulisse, Bongaerts, and Kellerman (1987) presented the psychological view of CSs as innately intellectual processes.

According to Bialystock (1990), the definitions have three main common features: problematicity, consciousness, and intentionality. ‘Problematicity’ means that strategies are not typically employed while daily language operations, but when difficulties that may disturb communication in either learning or production are perceived, then these strategies are adopted. The second feature ‘consciousness’ denotes the mindfulness of a learner that a strategy is being active for a specific

purpose, or the awareness of how that strategy can end up with achieving an envisioned result. The third feature of CSs is 'intentionality', which refers to the learner's ability to regulate those strategies to select particular strategies from a variety of choices and intentionally apply them to realize some positive effects.

Kasper and Kellerman (1997) report that identifying CSs is governed by the individual perception of what CSs are meant to be, and accordingly, "it matters very much whether one conceives CSs as intra-individual or inter-individual events" (p. 3). The intra-individual perspective refers to comprehending the cognitive-psychological facet which concentrates on the cognitive operations of referential tactics. These tactics aim at providing process-orientated or psychologically conceivable descriptions of CSs to appraise the process of choosing the properties of the referent, which are encoded by the talker in order to overcome a lexical difficulty and sustain her/his communicative intent. On the other hand, the inter-individual perception, according to Yule and Tarone (1997), identifies tools used in joint negotiation of meaning and weighs evident behaviour in developing classifications or frameworks "with implied insinuations being made about the alterations in psychological processing that shaped and created them" (p. 19).

In the effort to transport a message or communicate successfully with others, the L2 utterers feel that the linguistic item required is not vacant; therefore they employ a variety of CSs so that the meaning can be delivered without interrupting the flow of the communication. Canale and Swain (1980) developed a widely cited framework of communicative competence, which takes into consideration grammatical, sociolinguistic and communicative competence. Later, this restricted spectrum of

competencies was considered to be insufficient for communication approach to language teaching and learning purposes. Canale (1983) included four domains of competence after the revision of the framework, namely grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

Grammatical competence, according to Canale and Swain (1980), is the aspect that covers the knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology and syntax. The second competence area is sociolinguistic competence. As suggested by Savignon (1997), it is the mastery of the socio-cultural code or variety of language use as a proper usage of lexis, register, politeness and style in an assumed condition. This competence necessitates an appreciation of the social setting in which language is practiced, such as the role of the participants, information they use, and the function of the interaction. The third competence area is the discourse competence, which refers to the ability of attaching sentences in bounces of discourse forming a succession of meaningful written and verbal expressions (Faerch & Kasper, 1984).

Finally, strategic competence is related to how good an individual may master the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies and deploy them to attain two goals: (a) to recompense for breakdowns in communication because of preventive circumstances in real communication (e.g., inability to recall something) or inadequate competence in one or more communicative competence domains; and (b) to improve the efficiency of communication (e.g., intentionally slow down for a rhetorical effect). According to Canale and Swain (1980), L2 users prove this sort of competence while deploying these communication strategies. Selected samples from this competence sort may be using paraphrasing, avoiding difficulties, and repetition

requests, simplification, clarification or slower speech. In this way, the contribution of Canale and Swain (1980) was considered to be significant for the related literature on communicative competence theory is the integration of communication strategies into their model.

1.2 Problem Statement

As stated above, second language (L2) users ultimately aim to be able to communicate with people speaking that language effectively (Popescu & Cohen-Vida, 2014). L2 oral production involves a complex process which requires the mastery of different competencies to deal with the various types of problematic situations encountered. In this respect strategic competence has been found necessary and effective in order to tackle the grammatical and sociolinguistic problems which arise in communication (Yule & Tarone, 1990).

Given the fact that Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) hosts international students of around 106 different nationalities, and the fact that English is used as a medium of instruction (EMI), the Registrar's Office employees have to deal with a huge number of multilingual university students (around 19,000) from these students' first days at the university till their graduation; a reality which brings to the surface the need for a great deal of English language use of the Registrar's Office employees with a certain level of efficiency. De Bartolo (2014) reported that as a result of the wide spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) with various language users, new forms of 'Englishes' are used to achieve mutual intelligibility. Additionally, according to my workplace experience at the Registrar's Office as a research assistant, I observed some communication breakdowns between the students and the Registrar's Office (RO) employees. At the front desk where students usually

visit to get important information or to demand a service such as a student ID card, scholarship procedures, getting transcripts and many more, I also observed that Registrar Office employees have developed some strategies to overcome these communication breakdowns during their oral communication with the non-Turkish speaking students in the English language which deserves to be investigated.

1.3 Aim of the Study

This study aims to explore the communication strategies used by the RO employees to overcome communication breakdowns with the international (non-Turkish speaking) students at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). More specifically, this study aims at addressing the following research questions:

1. What are the strategies used by the Registrar's Office employees to overcome the oral communication breakdowns with the international (non-Turkish speaking) students while speaking?
2. What are the strategies used by the Registrar's Office employees to overcome the oral communication breakdowns with the international (non-Turkish speaking) students while listening?

As it can be understood, the focus of the study is only on the oral communication in English. The written communication is beyond the scope of this study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in three ways. Firstly, despite the abundance of studies focusing on using English in workplaces (e.g., Alnasser, 2018; Evans & Suklun, 2017; Hiranburana, 2017; Saleh & Murtaza, 2018; Xie, 2016), there is a scarcity of research especially on oral communication breakdowns taking place between the

university staff and the students in an international university like EMU. Therefore, this study is expected to be unique and contribute to the related literature.

Secondly, and related to the previous issue, the results may also provide useful data for the Personnel Office Directorate of the University to plan in-service training for the professional development of the Registrar's Office employees as regards their use of English. This will definitely improve the quality of services provided to the international students, which will add up to the university's reputation.

Thirdly, the findings of the study can inform the content of a syllabus to be developed to meet the learning needs of the administrative personnel (including the Registrar's Office), working at different units of an international university like EMU, where the focus will be on oral communication strategies in using English. In other words, the results of the study may be considered as a first step to designing an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course for the current and prospective employees of the Registrar's Office and the other administrative units in EMU where the student-personnel communication is part of the campus life.

1.5 Summary

This chapter provided background information about the communication competences that foreign language speakers need to possess in order to maintain sufficient comprehensible oral communicative engagements. It also outlined the statement of the problem, aim of the study and the research questions, as well as the significance of the study. In the following chapter, the literature related to the study is reviewed.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature related to the current study in terms of the use of English in EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) contexts, communication strategies (CSs) in EMI contexts, oral communication breakdowns and repair strategies. Then, studies related to oral communication breakdowns and the use of English at workplace will be reviewed briefly.

2.1 Use of English in ELF Contexts

English language has become one of the key languages of academic communication across universities and teaching institutions all over the world (Bjorkman, 2011; Knapp, 2011). This was because of the changes that resulted from the growing use of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) due to globalization which has brought a number of substantial changes not only in political and economical domains, but also in higher education domain (Bjorkman, 2013). English, being the language of publications, science and technology, and activity, has become the dominant language of teaching as it has been preferred by more and more countries all over the world as a medium of instruction.

To attract students from other language backgrounds, many countries have developed and offered higher education programs in English. This expansion in the use of English certainly has its advantages such as more chances for student and staff exchange programs, easier collaboration probabilities between universities and

availability of job opportunities for those who speak English as a second/foreign language in other countries than their home countries. However, some challenges like English language proficiency levels and communicative competences may come to the surface as problems. The multilingual student body in countries where higher education programs are offered in English necessitates prerequisites such as standardized English language proficiency certificates or enrolling in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses offered by higher education institutions (Ferguson, 2007). Bjorkman (2011) identifies three groups of EAP learners. The first one refers to external students learning in English-speaking countries, e.g., Turkish students studying in Canada. The goal of EAP for this group is to equip these students with sufficient language using abilities in contexts where English language is used as a medium of instruction, which means that these students need to master using English of receptive and productive skills as they will be using English in written and spoken encounter settings. The second group refers to those who receive EAP courses outside English-speaking countries, e.g., Jordanian learners in Jordan. In this group of EAP, the focus is on assisting the learners to use the resources (mainly readings) related to their field of study in English efficiently. This is predictable as they will need to use English typically in writing and reading so that they can handle their coursework in English. The emergence of ELF has greatly affected the nature of the ordinary EAP students (Bjorkman, 2008). This kind of linguistic development created a third EAP group, which included those who come from diverse L1 backgrounds and speak English as a lingua franca with greater use of speaking skill (Bjorkman, 2009).

The available and offered materials of EAP courses did meet the needs of the first two groups but not as much as they did to the third group. Those EAP materials focused more on writing rather than speaking.

Bjorkman (2011) argues that researchers have to investigate data from authentic ELF scenarios if the goal is comprehension and the use of oral English in academia, especially when the research is based in English-speaking nation states. To sum up, EAP courses are supposed to be geared more on speaking skill especially in EMI contexts which accommodate the third group mentioned above where oral communication in multilingual contexts is the authentic requirement for those students. Therefore, the next part will discuss the communication strategies in ELF situations.

2.2 Communication Strategies in ELF Contexts

It is of great importance to revise the definitions of ELF throughout the literature to get a better understanding of the communication strategies (CSs) used by learners in EMI contexts. By the beginning of this century, many scholars (e.g., Baker, 2009; Jenkins, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2005; Pickering, 2006) paid great attention for ELF. As a matter of fact, ELF has been hypothesized in too many variant methods. For example, one of the earliest definitions was proposed by Firth (1996) and House (1999). Firth (1996) identified the concept ELF to refer to a linguistic communication among people who do not share the same mother tongue or the same cultural background, and for whom English is the foreign language they choose to communicate with. Similarly, House (1999) defined ELF as verbal exchanges between two or more different linguacultures (Agar, 1995) and English is not the mother tongue of any of them. It is obvious that these two definitions did not

include native English speakers in the analysis while other scholars like Mauranen (2012), Seidlhofer (2004, 2005), and Jenkins (2013) presented descriptions that suggested and highlighted the role of English native speakers in shaping the new World Englishes through analyzing the pre-existing common language formulas. Matsumoto (2015) also argued that English natives do participate in lingua franca interactions. This explanation is supported by Kachru's (1985, 1992) three circles model of World Englishes users. These circles (inner, outer and expanding) entail native speakers, as well as second language users and foreign language users of English. The description of ELF suggested by Mauranen (2012) corresponds with that suggested by Seidlhofer (2011) as both said that it is any given use of English between speakers from variant first mother tongues and for whom English is frequently the only choice for communication. Even Mauranen (2012) added that the use of a lingua franca shows that the user is not necessarily a language learner; however, ELF speakers are users of English as an intermediary of real life communication.

According to Canagarajah (2015), there has been a 'translingual practice' of ELF as it has eventually stirred nearer to the practice-based approach which focuses more on effective and successful communication settings via negotiation strategies rather than focusing on the lingua franca core. Moreover, Mortensen (2013) provided a substitute approach to define ELF by simply considering it as "the use of English in a lingua franca scenario" (p. 36). In this context, language scenario means the available linguistic resources in any communication setting among two or more speakers by the advantage of their personal language ranges. This substitute description suggests a wider and more general function-based (or practice-based) understanding of ELF,

which shed light on communication strategies. A number of pragmatic investigations on ELF (e.g., Cogo, 2015; Kaur, 2011; Meierkord, 2004) found that the communication breakdowns among non-native speakers do take place due to the differences in language usage, proficiency levels and culture. These miscommunication encounters among non-native speakers take place showing high levels of collaboration, interactional forcefulness and agreement-seeking behaviour.

Gass and Varonis (1991) on the other hand, found that the possibility for profound misunderstanding is very high if the speakers do not have the same mother tongue or share the same rules of sociocultural discourse. In other words, ELF communications seem to be mainly distinguished by strategies of negotiation that end up with mutual intelligibility through which speakers tend to show cooperative and lenient attitude towards the linguistic variations conversers may convey with them. According to Meierkord (1998, 2000), these successful ELF communications among speakers are due to their concerted and supportive attitudes. Many studies (e.g., Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Kaur, 2009, 2010; Meierkord, 2000; Pitzl, 2005) argued that ELF speakers usually share the responsibility of repair if there is a communication breakdown. They also display high levels of interactional competency by signaling the misunderstanding so that they keep the communication flow going on.

The results of a number of ELF pragmatic research investigations (e.g., Cogo, 2009; Matsumoto, 2011; Mauranen, 2007; Watterson, 2008) indicated that the variety of non-native speakers adapted CSs during ELF contexts to attain mutual understanding. Repetition was one of the most common identified strategies that non-natives deploy to maintain successful communication in spite of their variant

cultures and lingual backgrounds. In similar situations, repetition serves the purpose of confirming accurate understanding among speakers. Based on the function it serves, repetition can be defined as 'recycling of speakers' utterances' (Hulmbauer, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, the theoretical framework of CSs was first proposed by Selinker (1972) when he introduced the 'interlanguage' study. He reasoned that the unsatisfactory knowledge of a second language, together with the enthusiasm to maintain a successful oral communication, leads the learner to employ some CSs. Selinker's article became a cornerstone for more investigations on CSs, and many scholars (e.g., Dörnyei & Thurrel, 1991; Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Tarone, Cohen, & Dumas, 1976) have circulated investigations concerned with the meaning and the taxonomy of CSs. While Canale and Swain (1980) suggested the notion of communication strategies as part of the strategic competence, Faerch and Kasper (1983) paid more attention to the identification and classification of CSs and on their teachability. In 1990s, two books were published on communication strategies: one by Bialystok entitled *Communication strategies: A psycholinguistic analysis of second language use*, and the other one by Kasper and Kellerman, entitled *Advances in communication strategy research*. These two publications tried to find means to explain how communication strategies work during the oral interactions of L2 users.

Today, communication strategy taxonomy as a wide-ranging perception has been developed so that it can accommodate the existing communication needs of this century. According to Masithoh, Fauziati, and Supriyadi (2018), taxonomies that included CSs were offered by Tarone (1981), Dörnyei (1995) and Celce-Murcia

(1995), all of which have many overlaps. Tarone (1981), for example, itemized the following strategies: topic avoidance, message abandonment, paraphrase, coinage, native language, switching, miming and appeal for assistance. Dörnyei (1995) listed only two strategies in his taxonomy: avoidance and compensatory. Celce-Murcia (1995) enumerated avoidance, achievement, stalling for time-gaining, self-monitoring and interactional strategies.

Topic avoidance is a strategy that befalls when L2 users try to circumvent talking about topics which they find it difficult to express, while message abandonment strategy is the strategy used when a learner is incapable to carry on speaking about a concept because of the shortage of meaning construction, and therefore, s/he stops in the mid of conversation and gives up speaking (Aziz, Fata, & Balqis, 2018). Paraphrase or circumlocution strategy refers to describing the meaning or the function of a concept (e.g., *a kind of vegetables …. it has lots of leaves …looks like a ball ….,* when talking about cabbages). In coinage or word coinage strategy an L2 concept is produced assuming that it would transfer the meaning (e.g., 'fish zoo' for 'aquarium') (Rabab'ah, 2003).

Native language strategy, according to Aziz, Fata, and Balqis (2018), is one of two elements that are entailed within conscious transfer, namely native language and switching. The first one refers to the situation in which learners translate word-to-word from L1 to L2. On the other hand, switching refers to learners' use of L1 concept without any effort to translate it into the L2. Another strategy, miming, appears when learners tend to use non-verbal or non-linguistic resources such as gestures, facial expressions and sound imitation so that they replace a certain targeted

meaning through communication. Appeal for assistance strategy is the one through which learners directly or indirectly ask or express requests of help from their interlocutors due to insufficient knowledge of a linguistic concept in L2 (Aziz, Fata, & Balqis, 2018).

Compensatory strategies, according to Ya-Ni (2007), comprise recompensing for absent acquaintance. Stalling for time-gaining strategy appears when L2 learners use fillers or hesitancy maneuvers (such as *well, uh, as a matter of fact*) to fill gaps and win time to think and find the wanted concept. Self-monitoring strategy, as Celce-Murcia (1995) explains, refers to the use of phrases that give chances for self-fixing such as *I mean, that's to say*, while interactional strategies are the ones that include requests for clarifications and meaning negotiations or confirmation and comprehensions checks.

2.3 Oral Communication, Breakdowns and Repair Strategies

Before discussing the identification of oral communication breakdown (henceforth OCB), it is necessary to see how Matsumoto (2011) defined successful communication with its relation to two aspects: repair practice and the employment of CSs. Matsumoto (2011) argued that the speakers may proceed in successful communications by employing the repair practices and communication strategies (e.g., the communicative resources they possess and any communication strategy such as accommodation or repetition strategies) despite the fact that there could be miscommunication or non-understanding. In her study, Matsumoto used miscommunication to refer to the disappointment of the utterer to deliver an intended message, while non-understanding may occur because of the inability to understand the spoken English by the listener. Matsumoto (2015) defined the successful

communication as sequences of ongoing transfer of the speaker's intended meaning to the listener's mind. This definition was built on the fact that language plays an important role in connecting utterers' minds to achieve mutual intelligibility and understanding. During this process, it is believed that establishing apprehension is one of the predictable outcomes for communication. Therefore, Bailey (2004) argued that understanding is not only the case when two minds share a similar content, but it is also an aspect of harmonized social contact. In general, understanding or successful communication can be considered as a normal state of communication while misunderstanding or OCB is a failure.

2.3.1 Oral Communication Breakdowns (OCBs)

It is believed, as mentioned in the previous section and highlighted by some scholars (e.g., Bailey, 2004; Matsumoto, 2015; Schegloff, 2000) that misunderstanding can be simply defined by its opposite (that is successful communication) as a failure. In the oral production of language, the speaker sends messages and the listener receives them. Therefore, and as explained by Matsumoto (2015), failure can be attributed either to the sender and referred to as miscommunication or to the listener and referred to as non-understanding. Accordingly, in both cases OCB can be defined as a failure to convey or comprehend the intended verbal message. Bremer et al. (1996) argue that non-understanding befalls when the listener is not able to understand or interpret a part of or a whole expression, while misunderstanding or miscommunicating states the case when the listener reaches to an interpretation that sounds meaningful to her/him but it was not what the speaker intended. Accordingly, Kaur (2011) argues that in the instance of non-understanding, it is the listener's decision to signal the failure to the speaker or to "let-it-pass" as s/he is aware and conscious of her/his incompetence. This argument also goes hand in hand with what

was provided by Mauranen (2006); that is to say that it is the listener's option to signal for her/his incomprehension or to directly raise a request for clarification. On the other hand, in the situation of misunderstanding or miscommunication or say OCB, the listening person is not aware that s/he has misconstrued the utterer's intended meaning. Consequently, OCB will be revealed in the listener's next turn through an unclear answer to the miscomprehended question. The same explanation was also suggested by Bremer et al. (1996) that some OCBs cannot merely be accredited to only one part of the two parties, but there are other factors that may affect or cause the OCBs such as deciding on the listener's level of awareness, the shortage of communal knowledge and the various social experiences or backgrounds the participants come from. Nevertheless, House (1999) investigated the causes of the miscommunications among EFL participants and found no supporting evidence based on the first language cultural knowledge; instead, findings she reached attributed the problems of understanding to the participants' lack of pragmatic and linguistic fluency.

2.3.2 Repair Strategies

Throughout the review of an array of studies conducted on repair strategies (henceforth RSs) (e.g., Dingemanse et al., 2015; Kennedy, 2017; Rabab'ah, 2013; Somasi & Intaraprasert, 2011), it could be noted that there was a difficulty in defining CSs as every researcher took it from her/his perspective but generally they all shared what was embodied in Canale's (1983) definitions. According to Canale (1983), CSs are the "verbal and non-verbal strategies that could be employed to recompense breakdowns in communication because of preventive circumstances in real communications or inadequate interactional or psycholinguistic competencies, in order to boost the effective communicative competence" (p. 10). Thus, according to

Somasi and Intaraprasert (2011), within the related literature, the terms ‘communication strategies’, ‘strategies to deal with face-to-face oral communication problems’ and ‘strategies for coping with communication breakdowns’ overlap each other. Another definition proposed by Schegloff et al., (1977) suggests that repair strategies (RSs) are practices or mechanisms deployed by participants to prevent or to overcome possible problems in speaking, hearing and understanding.

Research studies on RSs such as the ones conducted by Drew (1997), Nagano (1997), Schegloff (2000), and Schegloff et al. (1977) recognized a diversity of repair strategies: self-initiated self-repair, other-initiation self-repair, other initiated other-repair, repetition, paraphrase, confirmation checks, clarification requests and comprehension checks. According to Schegloff et al. (2000, 2007), Watterson, (2008), and Rabab’ah (2013), repair, as a language marvel, is essential to keep communication even and correct, and ELF users are intelligent enough to deploy many restoration tactics through language interactions.

2.4 Related Studies on Oral Communication Strategies (OCSs)

It is proved that oral communication strategies (OCSs) are commonly used by both native and non-native users of English. A time line review of the use of CSs would also give a clearer look at the developments took place in this field in terms of both theoretical understanding and the experiential investigations that studied CSs in a second language, especially in oral communication.

According to Kennedy and Trofimovich (2016), the concept of CSs denotes the strategic employment of linguistic and non-linguistic resources to achieve communicative objectives. They also claim that investigating the use of CSs in a

second language is worthy because interlocutors' linguistic resources and the related cognitive processes in their second language are typically less developed than those in their mother language. Therefore, it is highly necessary for second language users to effectively employ the available resources they possess if they are to achieve their L2 communicative goals successfully. However, Kennedy and Trofimovich (2016) have proposed a time line research which included three noticeable themes in publications that investigated CSs. Those themes are 'theoretical', 'methodological' and 'pedagogical'. Studies which were themed as 'theoretical' focused on conceptualizations and discussions that can explain and identify CSs. In 'methodological' studies, researchers focused on analyzing language samples of two types: real recordings for authentic language interactions or research-based samples referring to settings and interventions prepared and provided by scholars. The third theme is 'pedagogically-oriented' studies through which L2 speakers were trained on employing certain CSs and were tested before and after training.

For the purposes of this current study, I will focus more on researches that dealt with the oral communication strategies throughout the time line research proposed by Kennedy and Trofimovich (2016). Initial studies on CSs have started with Richards (1971) when he presented a theoretical definition of CSs as occurrences of error created by the insufficient knowledge of the target language (TL). One year later, Selinker (1972) outlined the sorts of records and mental processes that might be employed to illustrate learners' awareness about TL and their production of interlanguage. Selinker (1972) theorized that second language users depend on those mental processes to interact with others. Another scholar, Rubin (1975) described tactics deployed by 'good language learners' as employing whatever knowledge they

owned such as circumlocution and word coinage to make their meaning delivered to others. Meanwhile, and under the title ‘systematic attempt[s], Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) outlined a frame and categorization for CSs. In addition to overgeneralization, their taxonomy included some tactical occurrences like topic avoidance. Depending on the preceding framework, Tarone (1977) proposed the first investigation that documented and examined prompted usage of communication strategies. English language learners were asked to tell cartoon stories in their mother tongue and then in English. After that, their performances in English were reviewed and five basic categories of CSs were found: avoidance, paraphrase, conscious transfer, appeal for assistance, and mime.

In 1980, an important study by Canale and Swain offered a new vision to second language acquisition. They elaborated an outline that intensely described the language students’ communicative competence. This framework was considered as a major tool in developing and organizing second language teaching and testing specially apprentices’ aptitude to interconnect in a second language. Among the competences described in this frame is strategic competence or the CSs which are set out to overcome miscommunications originated from insufficient linguistic or sociolinguistic knowledge.

A milestone investigation conducted by Faerch and Kasper (1980) suggested a hypothetical outline which directly referred to the mental processes language learners use to explain what CSs are. They labeled CSs as possibly sensible plan/s to crack what appears as a problem to the speaker to reach a given communicative objective. In such circumstance, CSs involve two mechanisms: ‘problem-orientedness’ and

'sensible awareness'. Accordingly, using CSs is projected in two settings: planning and awareness of language use. In both cases, strategies are categorized into reduction strategies such as avoiding, limiting, or changing the message and achievement strategies like using other tactics to communicating the message. Tarone (1980) proposed a frame in which she defined CSs as joint tries by two speakers to reach to an agreement on meanings they did comprehend. This definition entails two interacting people and attempts to develop a common understanding to achieve fruitful communication. This definition was later labeled as interactional approach. In her study, Tarone (1980) also contrasted functionally focused standpoints on CSs with more strictly constructed frames for repair that paid more attention to meaning on both linguistic and discourse structures.

In 1983, Bialystok investigated reasons such as speakers' proficiency levels or task type that might have influences on the way/s L2 users choose to employ certain CSs in particular events. The taxonomy was outlined rendering on the origin of the chosen CS/s, like interlocutors' L1 or non-linguistic circumstantial information. In her investigation, Bialystok (1983) reported that the three participating groups employed similar number of CSs, but the high level group deployed more CSs derived from L2. This study stood as an experimentally measured psycholinguistic research of prompted CSs. Faerch and Kasper (1983) abridged a collection of hypothetical and experimental viewpoints on conceptualizing and analyzing CSs by researchers and the way L2 users employed them. This work was the first to discuss case studies conducted by multiple researchers basically from North America and Europe, and the first to describe both approaches, i.e., interactional and psycholinguistic.

A number of studies (e.g., Corrales & Call, 1989; Paribakht, 1985) explored links between L2 speakers' language proficiency and the use of CSs. Paribakht (1985), for example, found out that intermediate L2 speakers used less L2-based CSs compared to their counterparts from the advanced proficiency L2 users who employed more intangible knowledge. Upon these results, Paribakht claimed that speakers' L2 proficiency level could be linked to the way those L2 speakers employ CSs. Similarly, Corrales and Call (1989) pointed out that speakers' use of CSs decreased as proficiency level increased.

One of the key studies for CSs that focused on learners' perspectives and conceptualizations in terms of their cognitive processes was the one conducted by Bongaerts and Poulisse (1989). They proposed a classification that comprised two core communication strategies: conceptual and linguistic. The conceptual CSs tangled analysis handling the concept that is being interconnected, while the linguistic ones elaborated misusing knowledge of one or more language structures. The scholars applied this classification to groups of L1 Dutch learners. Learners described abstract shapes in their L1, after that in English. The researchers found no clear differences in CSs used by learners in both languages Dutch and English, and most of them employed conceptual strategies that denoted the whole shape and its resemblance to a real object.

Firth (1990) argued that communication and meaning are jointly constructed and achieved during an interaction. Drawing on an interactional approach framework, she analyzed phone talks of L2 English businessmen users discussing contracts. These phone chats showed that unclear statements or expressions were overlooked or sidestepped when ambiguity is irrelevant to speakers' enduring dialogue.

In another study, Yule and Tarone (1991) suggested that researchers have to focus not only on the way by which mutual intelligibility is achieved by L2 speakers, but also on the contributions including the use of CSs that are provided by all the participants during oral interactions. Yule and Tarone (1991) also invited other scholars to study how learners can improve their CSs in collaborative communication.

One of the first investigations that aimed at training L2 learners on CSs belongs to Dörnyei (1995). He reported that Hungarian high school students who received strategy training displayed significant increases in most of the targeted strategies in terms of quality and quantity compared to their untrained counterparts. Dörnyei also reported that no link was found between speakers' L2 proficiency levels and the use of CSs.

In 1997, Dörnyei and Scott published a study that afforded a wide-ranging revision of the central theoretical methods to CSs. They adopted a psychological method through reviewing CSs' classifications and methodologies that categorized learners' cognitive processes. The framework they suggested focused on understanding the foundation of difficulties that CSs were used to overcome. These CSs were divided into three categories: 'own-performance', 'other-performance' and 'processing time pressure'. Accordingly, the scholars charted three types of CSs: direct, indirect and interactional. The first type, 'direct' CSs, included giving an alternative, controllable and self-contained approach of articulating meaning, for example, circumlocution. The second type, 'indirect' CSs, endorsed circumstances during which speakers share employing similar strategies such as the use of fillers, and the third type,

‘interactional’ CSs that require collaboration between speakers to overcome communication problems such as negotiating meaning.

Poulisse (1997) responded to the position paper proposed by Firth and Wagner (1997). She argued that oral production and skill learning are psycholinguistic tactics; therefore, it is not surprising that psycholinguistic methodology is fundamental to L2 learning. Although Poulisse (1997) agreed that meaning is featured as social and it can be negotiated between speakers, she also highlighted that in planning oral production, a speaker her/himself may add a certain concept with any particular meaning.

Meierkord (2000) foreshadowed an improvement of studies directed to CSs in ELF settings. She investigated authentic verbal interactions between users of ELF, assuming that communication standards are not related to the speakers’ cultural background, but they are affected by the speakers’ interlanguage and can also be indirectly overcome through interactions. Meierkord (2000) outlined two main principles that formed the oral interactions of ELF users: the willingness to save face for all participants involved in interaction and the desire to seem non-threatening. For example, ELF users will simplify their talks by choosing familiar language and by employing several helpful back-channels.

Smith (2003) put forward one of the first studies that investigated using CSs in computer-mediated communication (CMC) environments. He studied the CSs used by L2 users during problem-free discourse and repair strategies during task-based CMC. Smith reported the use of a varied collection of CSs by learners throughout task-based CMC. Users also deployed various repair tactics while piloting the tasks

in their chatting sessions. In the same way, in real life face-to-face interactions, a variety of CSs were employed by L2 CMC users, but only one CS was reported to be used at a time. And this solo use of strategy was reported to be more effective than mixed-strategy use to instant verbal comprehension.

One of the exceptional studies that explored longitudinal effects of teaching CSs was conducted by Nakatani (2005). He investigated norms of training that helped in raising L2 speakers' consciousness and reflections on using CSs in verbal communications. The study targeted two groups: one received training on classroom and out-classroom tasks, and the control group members were involved in small-group interactional tasks. The trained group displayed significantly higher talking scores and more frequent usage of some types of CSs comparing to their counterparts of the untrained group. In 2010, Nakatani conducted another study on the possible effects of instructed CSs' use and spoken communications by Japanese university students. He implemented a twelve-week English lessons that included CS training on the treatment group. Instructions entailed role-plays, and written and spoken pretest and posttest. Then, learners' performances of oral post-training test results were investigated and after that compared to those of the comparison group. Results showed that verbal post-training marks feebly correlated with the self-reported use of various CS types. Also, higher proficiency L2 students displayed higher rates of awareness of employing a range of CSs than their counterparts of the comparison group.

Mauranen (2006) proposed one of the first studies that embodied improvements of research on authentic ELF communication and the use of CSs in academic backgrounds. She investigated the occurrences of CBs in the first university degree

programs in ELF setting. She reported similar findings to those stated by Firth (1990) and Meierkord (2000) in that miscommunications were few but did exist. However, some CSs, for example self-repair, were employed by L2 speakers to avoid misinterpretations.

Drawing on Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) framework, McNeil (2014) explored the effects of CMC training of the use of CSs on L2 university students. The treatment group watched video classes and completed speaking and reflective activities for ten weeks. On the other hand, the comparison group finished the same chitchatting activities with reading tasks instead of tutorial tasks. McNeil (2014) reported that the treatment group generally employed more CSs than the comparison one.

Expansion of CSs research on technology-mediated communications goes on and increases even more to cover 3D virtual setting systems. Shih (2014) investigated the way L2 speakers could use CSs throughout a whole academic year. It was possible for the participants to watch themselves and others as well as they could hear or read the chats and interactions with either other learners and/or instructors. Shih (2014) reported that the most frequent implemented CSs were gestures, laughter or facial expressions for the non-verbal type, and gambits and fillers, appeals for assistance and paraphrases for the verbal communication strategies. Shih (2014) also found that most varieties of CSs were employed in roleplaying that in deliberations.

2.5 Related Studies on the Use of English at Workplace

Many papers and studies (e.g., Angouri, 2013; Firth, 2009; Kassim, and Ali, 2010; Moslehifar, & Ibrahim, 2012; Muthiah, 2003) have handled English language at workplace. It is reported in these studies that, due to many reasons such as the

snowballing intensities of mobility around the world and the multinational nature of business events and activities, language and communication needs have pushed those who work, study or travel for other purposes in different settings, to adapt according to the needs of the new settings and contexts they have found themselves in.

Angouri (2013), for example, investigated the reality of multilingualism within multinational corporation (MNC) settings in terms of the language policy and language use deployed by both managers and employees in three international companies. The participants were general managers, line managers and post holders. Drawing on data collected through a questionnaire from 154 line managers and post holders and via 20 interviews, Angouri (2013) found out that the participating employees constructed multilingualism as a 'given reality' and as 'the safest option' for language practicing in both work and social interactions. The workplace ecology in MNCs may be different according to the perceptions of the employees. According to Angouri (2013), what a language policy may mean to the employees looks to be very dynamic and an ethnographic research methodology may open new horizons and better explain the multifaceted phenomenon that has significant impacts on the improvement of both singular employees and MNCs entirely.

Another study on English at the workplace in which scholars shed light on feedback given from a Malaysian industrial setting was conducted by Kassim and Ali (2010). In this study, the researchers administered self-developed questionnaires to engineers in ten multilingual chemical corporations in order to collect data about the dynamic communication skills and conversational contexts that engineers may regularly encounter prior to the development of an English language course syllabus for engineering students. Kassim and Ali (2010) found out that it is advantageous for

engineers to possess a decent English command since this would make it easy for them to successfully communicate with all parties and stakeholders. The results also pointed out the need for more focus to be paid on spoken rather than written communication abilities.

Yet another study was conducted by Ly (2016), who investigated the internal e-mail communication in workplace setting trying to apprehend the way by which westerners 'European' and eastern 'Asian' employees can understand each other and collaborate. The researcher analyzed the way through which Westerners write requests, criticisms and disagreements when they write internal work e-mails to their Asian peers. Ly (2016) also inspected the way Easterners perceived those e-mails in terms of whether being polite, friendly and clear. Ly (2016) concluded that European employees employed a variant collection of strategies to express request, criticism, and disagreement. Speech acts were more indirectly expressed when they were more aggressive. The Asian employees, on the other hand, preferred direct expressions for requests; however, indirect expressions were more preferred for criticism and disagreement acts of speech.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, literature related to the use of English as well as the use of communication strategies in EMI settings, the use of communications strategies and communication breakdowns and repair strategies were reviewed. Also, an array of related studies that targeted the CSs and RSs were summarized. Finally, a light was shed at a number of studies on the use of English at workplace. In the next chapter, a detailed description of the methodology used in this study will be reported.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the methodology employed in the study. Firstly, the research design is introduced. Then, the context of the study and the participants are described. Following this, data collection instruments (both quantitative and qualitative) are explained along with the data collection process. The chapter ends with the steps and procedures followed in data analysis and the taxonomy adopted for this study.

3.1 Research Design

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the nature of oral communication strategies, especially in English as a lingua franca (ELF) contexts, is complex and needs to be addressed using different data sources as well as a flexible framework so that the various orientations can be incorporated. A mixed methods approach, therefore, would be essential to deal with the spoken interactions between the Registrar's Office (RO) employees in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) and the international students. In this light, research design for this study is a mixed methods approach, which utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data.

The mixed methods approach, according to Johnson et al. (2007), is being progressively used more and devoted to research practices. As it can be positioned between the two types of qualitative and quantitative methods, it attempts to make the full use of the strengths of both approaches. In other words, mixed methods

research approach considers the multiple perspectives and standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research that produces knowledge throughout theory and practice (Johnson et al. 2007). Accordingly, this method can be simply defined as a blend that embraces thoughts from qualitative and quantitative data. Leech and Onwuegbuzi (2007) argue that mixed methods research stands for a research which encompasses gathering, examining, and inferring quantitative and qualitative data in one study.

Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) defined the mixed methods research design as an investigation in which the researcher gathers and examines data, mixes the results and pulls implications using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in one investigation. Similarly, Turner, Cardinal, and Burton (2017) stated that all methods individually are flawed but mixing methods can offer better answers to research questions. Likewise, McKim (2017) found that mixed methods provided deeper meaning to university graduate students and perceived to be more valuable than the quantitative or qualitative methods. As the research questions of this study could not be answered by only one paradigm (i.e. either qualitative or quantitative), the researcher utilized the mixed methods in both data collecting and discussing the results.

The current study used mixed-methods research design as a methodology for this case study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) describe a mixed-methods approach to research emphasizing that it involves philosophical assumptions which direct the way of collecting and analyzing data and the mixing the qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single

study or series of studies. Its central principle is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. Therefore, the current study investigated the OCBSs and RSs which were deployed by RO employees in the EMU context by following a descriptive mixed methods research design.

Yin (2002) describes a case study as a detected inquiry that explores an existing phenomenon within its authentic context. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), a case can be just one individual, classroom, school or program; and in some cases, the researcher may study a particular case in order to understand a larger phenomenon and to draw conclusions which would be applicable beyond that particular case. These types of studies are called instrumental case studies. Based on this description, it is possible to say that this current study is an instrumental case study to investigate the OCBSs as well as the repair strategies deployed by the non-native English speaking employees in a context where English is used as a lingua franca to overcome communication breakdowns with international students who have different linguistic backgrounds.

3.1.1 Researcher Positionality

As mentioned previously, the researcher worked at the RO as a research assistant for 18 months. During this period several opportunities were available to observe various communication breakdowns that took place between the non-Turkish speaking international students and the RO employees. Due to the researcher's interest in this linguistic issue, written notes were kept which later helped the researcher in understanding the nature of the communication breakdowns as well as

the strategies used by the RO employees. This workplace experience as an insider is believed to contribute to the authenticity and reliability of this study.

3.2 The Context

This study was conducted in the Registrar's Office Directorate at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in Famagusta, North Cyprus. English is used as a medium of instruction at EMU to the great numbers of international students (from 106 different countries) who communicate in English with RO employees and other academic staff.

The Registrar's Office Directorate supplies many services concerning student registration and admission, grade reporting, student identification documents, transcripts, graduation and alumni issues. The office also prepares and keeps the relevant documents for the effective delivery of the aforementioned services, prepares and evaluates various statistics regarding student-related issues and submits them in the form of annual reports to the concerned entities.

This study investigated the oral communication breakdowns between international students and the employees of the Registrar's Office. Due to the nature of the services offered by this unit, newly enrolled students start their four-year journey at the RO; other senior students also do stopover to request documents such as grade records and transcripts or finalize some other governmental procedures such as student and residency permits. As a result, it can be imagined how busy such a unit is and ultimately how much English language is used in this context.

3.3 The Participants

The total number of employees working at the RO was 50 (25 permanent staff and 25 temporary research assistants) during the data collection stage. Overall, 40 people participated in this study, only four permanent and six temporary employees did not take part. All the permanent employees were local Turkish Cypriots, Turkish being their mother tongue, while the temporary ones (i.e., the research assistants) came from different lingo-cultural backgrounds.

In order to overcome any expected linguistic difficulties, the administration of the RO took some preventive measurements and hired assistants from different cultural backgrounds. Sixteen participants out of 40 were MA/MSc graduates. Overall, 47.5% of the participants were between 20-30 years old and 77.5% of them were females. Work experience variable showed that 75% of the participants had less than five years of experience. Nevertheless, 20 percent of the RO employees had more than 10 years of experience and most of them were team leaders in the administration of the RO unit. Twenty-four participants reported that they used English language for more than three working hours every day. Fifty-seven point five percent of the participants used the English language out of the working environment which indicates the extent to which English language is being used within this context. Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, give more details about the demographic data of the participants of this study.

Table 3.1: Age ranges of the participants

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
20-30	19	47.5%
31-40	13	32.5%
40- above	8	20%
Total	40	100%

As seen in Table 3.1, 19 (47.5%) of the participants' age ranged from 20 to 30. Thirteen participants (32.5%) ranged from 31-40, while only eight participants were above 40 years old with a percentage of 20%.

Table 3.2: Gender of RO employees

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	9	22.5%
Female	31	77.5%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.2 displays gender of RO employees. The number of female RO employees surpassed the male ones more than three folds. Wherein only nine (22.5%) of the participants were males.

Table 3.3: Education levels of the participants

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
High school graduate	9	22.5%
University graduate	15	37.5%
MA/MSc graduate	16	40.0%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.3 demonstrations the education levels of the participants. Forty percent (n=16) of the RO employees held MA/MSc degree, trailed by 37.5% (n=15) graduated with a university degree. Only 9 of the participants held high school certificates.

Table 3.4: Working experience of the participants

Working duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less 1 year	15	37.5%
2-5 years	15	37.5%
6-10 years	2	05.0%
Over 10 years	8	20.0%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.4 shows the working experience of the participants. Participants who had less than one year and from two to five years shared the same percentage (37.5%) and the number was 15 for age working duration group. Only two participants' work experience ranged from two to five years with a percentage of five percent. The number of the most experienced participants (above ten years) was 8 and they were all interviewed.

Table 3.5: Use of English outside working environment

	Frequency	Percentage
No	17	42.5%
Yes	23	57.5%
Total	40	100%

Table 3.5 shows the use of English outside working environment. Seventeen participants (42.5%) reported that they don't use frequently use English language outside working place. On the other hand, 23 participants (57.5%) informed that they

do use English language outside working place which indicates the extent to English language is being used within this context.

All of the 40 participants responded to the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory. Later, 12 of the permanent employees were interviewed. All of the participants in this study reported that they had good command of English language. More than half of the participants (57.5%) rated their general command of English language as 'good' and 62.5% of them valued their spoken English as 'good' according to the results of an English language proficiency test administered by the Personnel Office Directorate a few months ago. As a rule, to keep on the high standards, EMU encourages all Turkish employees to sit for English language proficiency test every other year. Twenty-four participants reported that they use English language for more than three hours in their working time which - for more than half of them - lasts for eight hours a day.

As mentioned above, temporary international research assistants came from different countries with different mother tongues such as Arabic, Persian, Russian, and Urdu. The female employees at the RO surpassed the male ones more than three folds; only 22.5% of the participants were males. As for the work experience, 37.5% of the participants (N= 15) had less than one year and the same percentage represented those who had between 2-5 years of experience. Working experience variable was important for this study as the researcher targeted those who were the most experienced employees (most of whom were permanent) to conduct the interviews with. Their long experience revealed more insightful thoughts to the researcher during the semi-structured interviews

3.4 Sample Size and Scope of the Study

Guetterman (2015) argued that the range of sample size in mixed methods approach investigations is between 30 to 50 participants and this count shall not represent less than 10 per cent of the total population. Other scholars (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Morse, 1994) have provided researchers with concrete numbers. On the other hand, Onwuegbuzi and Collins (2007) argued that investigations that apply a mixed methods approach may encounter some challenges on sampling decisions. They also contended that sampling size considerations tend to be dichotomized or divided by connecting small samples with qualitative investigation and large samples with quantitative research.

Despite the fact that this division represents the most shared way of connecting sample size to research paradigm, it seems too simplistic and thereby misleading. According to Onwuegbuzi and Collins (2007), sometimes it is appropriate to target small samples in quantitative studies, while there are times when it is defensible to investigate large samples in qualitative research. For example, if the total number of the targeted population is relatively small and the sample of the study represents a high percentage of the whole employees in any institute, then it is justified to quantitatively collect and analyze data. Accordingly, the number of participants in this study represents 80% of the whole targeted population for the quantitative part of the data (N = 40/50). On the other hand, the qualitative data in this study was collected from 24% of the whole population (N =12/50). That is to say, the sample size for both qualitative and quantitative data according to whole population is highly represented in this study and it is statistically significant.

The scope of this study is authentic by its nature and intakes both students and RO employees. Yet, the focus is more on the RO employees for mostly time-related reasons as well as technical and ethical issues such as the impracticality of the permission to be obtained from each and every student to be videotaped or audiotaped. This might have affected the linguistic performance of interlocutors negatively, which in turn would disturb the reliability of the data collection procedures. Therefore, only the RO employees were included in the study.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

In this mixed methods approach, the quantitative data were gathered by means of Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI), and the qualitative data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews conducted with 12 participants.

3.5.1 Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI)

The Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI), developed by Nakatani (2006), was used by many scholars (e.g., Diaz Larenas, 2011; Metcalfe, & Noom-Ura, 2013; Ozdemir, & Orsdemir, 2017; Yaman, & Kavasoglu, 2013), and therefore its reliability and validity have been evidenced. OCSI consists of three parts. The first part is the demographic part, which consists of nine items about the participants' demographic profile such as their age, gender, and working experience. The second part is composed of 32 statements that deal with strategies for coping with speaking problems during communicative tasks. The thirty-two items which deal with speaking challenges throughout oral communication tasks, are categorized into eight strategy groups or as pointed out by Nakatani 'factors'. These factors are ordered alphabetically in the OCSI; A-H for the second part, and I-O for the third one. These factors are:

- Factor A: Social affective strategies,

- Factor B: Fluency-oriented strategies,
- Factor C: Negotiation for meaning while speaking,
- Factor D: Accuracy-oriented strategies,
- Factor E: Message reduction and alteration strategies,
- Factor F: Nonverbal while speaking strategies,
- Factor G: Message abandonment strategies, and
- Factor H: Attempt to think in English strategies.

Participants were requested to tick the most appropriate options for them on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, 1 being 'never or almost never true of me', and 5 'always or almost always true for me'.

The last part of the OCSI investigated strategies for coping with listening problems during communicative tasks. It consisted of twenty-six items. Those strategy groups were categorized into seven factors namely:

- Factor I: Negotiation for meaning while listening strategies,
- Factor J: Fluency-maintaining strategies,
- Factor K: Scanning strategies,
- Factor L: Getting the gist strategies,
- Factor M: Nonverbal while listening strategies,
- Factor N: Less active listener strategies, and
- Factor O: Word-oriented strategies.

The participants were requested to tick the most appropriate option for them on the same 1-5 scale (Appendix A). The responses were then analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews

According to Dörnyei (2007), one of the most common forms of face-to-face data collecting tools is the semi-structured interview. In the field of applied linguistics, semi-structured interviews come in the middle of two excesses: structured and unstructured types. The structured one is too limited in gathering data, and the unstructured one is too loose.

Semi-structured interview is appropriate for this study due to the complex nature of CSs and the interpretations that may exist within the linguistic discourse. Accordingly, the researcher prepared an interview which consisted of two parts: seven open-ended questions and five suggested scenarios for interaction cases. The scenarios were very likely to happen as they were shaped according to the workplace experience of the researcher himself at the RO as a temporary employee for 18 months (Appendix B).

The open-ended interview questions were well-thought-out with simple language in English and were direct to the point and allowed many pop-up questions and inquiries rose by the researcher who was inspired by his ethnographic experience. However, the pop-up questions along with the researcher's workplace experience did not affect the neutrality of the interviews. Dörnyei (2007) argued about the neutrality during interviews and assured that interviewer needs to keep in mind not to impose any individual bias toward any argument, nor to bind the interviewees with any

response. During the interviews of this study, the researcher led the interactions and maintained a smooth flow of the conversation following the guideline and allowing the interviewees to respond and reflect freely. Almost all the participants showed positive attitudes towards the suggested scenarios and they described them expressing how real and relevant they were. One of the interviewees said: “I had the same situation with some students many times” through the interview. The interviews with the RO employees lasted between 15-20 minutes.

The interviews were conducted in two ways. The first way is through regular face-to-face eight interviews, and the second is via written answers to the semi-structured questions submitted by four participants who preferred to reflect and write more than to talk. Following this method of data collecting gave the participants the choice to express themselves the way they prefer and this would positively be reflected in better understanding to the CSs used by the RO employees. In addition, workplace observation notes kept by the researcher since the beginning of the study were used in commenting on the analysis of the interviews.

Prior to the administration of the OCSI as well as the conduction of the semi-structured interviews, the researcher obtained the approval of the Ethical Committee of EMU. After getting the consent of the volunteering participants, the researcher held a brief session with them to inform them about the aim of the study and clarified some terms in the inventory (OCSI) that might be problematic to be understood. Data collection process took 10 days in the spring semester of 2018-2019 academic year.

3.6 Data Analysis

For this study, three major procedures were conducted to come to an answer for the research questions. The first procedure was to collect responses to the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) from the RO employees. Secondly, responses to the open-ended semi structured interview questions were analyzed through transcribing and coding the data. Finally, cross-sectional readings of the data results were done to help in reaching to a better understanding for the nature of communication strategies used by the RO employees.

Using the 22nd version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation for each item were calculated. Regarding the analysis of the qualitative data (both the seven open-ended semi-structured questions and the five suggested scenarios), the interviews were transcribed and re-sent to the interviewees to confirm what they had intended was transcribed correctly. Then each and every interview was deeply read and focused on. After that, a framework was created to categorize the data. Patterns of strategies that were employed by the interviewees were identified. Connections between similar patterns were made.

In order to achieve higher reliability rates for the analysis of the qualitative data, an inter-coder agreement was conducted by another researcher. A colleague researcher was requested to participate in coding the data of the interviews. According to Lombard et al. (2002), the inter-coder agreement is the extent to which at least two independent researchers make similar decisions in terms of coding during assessing or/and analyzing contents as a means to achieve more reliable results. Finally,

comparisons between the researcher's coding and the one conducted by the colleague researcher were made and found very similar. Accordingly, the researcher interpreted data and explained the findings.

3.7 Summary

This chapter first presented the research design, followed by the context within which the study was conducted. Then, participants of the study were presented as well as the sample size and the scope of the study. Data collecting instruments, namely OCSI and semi-structured interviews, were then presented. Finally, the procedures that were followed to analyze the data of this study were highlighted. The results of data analysis are reported in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

This chapter reveals the findings obtained after having both quantitative and qualitative data analyzed in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the strategies used by the Registrar's Office employees to overcome the oral communication breakdowns with the international (non-Turkish speaking) students while speaking?
2. What are the strategies used by the Registrar's Office employees to overcome the oral communication breakdowns with the international (non-Turkish speaking) students while listening?

The quantitative data will be verbally described and the qualitative data will be interpreted. The inter-coder agreement obtained from the data of the interviews ensured the neutrality of the analysis. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the workplace observation of the researcher himself added more to the legitimacy of the answer of the research questions.

The findings related to the first question about strategies for coping with communication breakdowns during speaking will be explained first. Then, the same will be done for the strategies for coping with communication breakdown during listening.

4.1 Research Question #1: What are the Strategies Used by the Registrar's Office Employees to Overcome the Oral Communication Breakdowns with the International (non-Turkish Speaking) Students while Speaking?

The results showed that most of the RO employees had to deal with achievement or compensatory strategies while talking to international students. Due to the important service offered by the RO employees, avoidance strategies were not a standing choice. In one way or another, RO employees had to keep the flow of the oral interaction going on in order to finalize or fully offer the academic or administrative service and meet their work responsibilities.

4.1.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data for Speaking Strategies

As explained before, the second part of the OCSI had 8 factors, namely social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, message reduction and alteration strategies, nonverbal while speaking strategies, message abandonment strategies, and attempt to think in English strategies. These factors are related to the strategies for coping with speaking problems during communicative tasks. Each of these factors is analyzed one by one in the following section.

The first factor was about the social affective strategies which were represented by items 1-6. The analysis of the quantitative data revealed that it was always or almost always true for the RO participating employees to try to give a good impression to the listener. This item scored the highest mean score as it was 3.92. The least mean score in this factor was represented by 3.35 as 15 participants expressed that it was

somewhat true for them to try to relax when they felt anxious. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Factor A: Social affective strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
1	I try to relax when I feel anxious.	3	4	15	12	6	3,35	1,09
2	I try to enjoy the conversation.	1	3	10	18	8	3,72	0,96
3	I try to give a good impression to the listener.	1	4	7	13	15	3,92	1,09
4	I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.	3	3	8	15	11	3,7	1,18
5	I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes.	1	3	14	17	5	3,55	0,9
6	I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say.	1	6	7	23	3	3,52	0,93

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The second factor was about the fluency-oriented strategies which were represented by items 7-12. Data analysis revealed that the highest mean score (3.67) was expressed through the item number 9 as 34 participants tended to pay attention to the conversation flow. While the lease mean score (3.25) was for the item number 7 as 25% of the participants expressed that this item was generally not true for them and 32.5% expressed that this item was somewhat true for them. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Factor B: Fluency-oriented strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
7	I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation.	0	10	13	14	3	3,25	0,92
8	I pay attention to my pronunciation.	2	5	9	15	9	3,6	1,12
9	I pay attention to the conversation flow.	1	5	12	10	12	3,67	1,11
10	I change my way of saying things according to the context in order to continue conversations.	3	7	12	9	9	3,35	1,23
11	I take my time to express what I want to say.	2	5	12	15	6	3,45	1,06
12	I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.	3	2	9	16	10	3,7	1,13

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The third factor was about the negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies. This factor was represented by items 13-16. The item numbers 16 and 14 was almost the most preferred by the participants as 29 and 30 RO employees respectively expressed that it was generally and always or almost always true for them to give examples when the listener didn't understand or repeat what they wanted to say until the listener understood. The highest mean scores for this factor were 4.02 and 3.9 for the items 16 and 14 respectively. Most of the item results for this factor were close to each other as the mean for these strategies ranged from 3.47 to 4.02, which reflects a positive tendency toward negotiation for meaning. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Factor C: Negotiation for meaning while speaking

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
13	I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say.	1	7	10	16	6	3,47	1,03
14	I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands.	3	3	4	15	15	3,9	1,21
15	While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech.	1	4	8	13	14	3,87	1,09
16	I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I am saying.	0	4	7	13	16	4,02	0,99

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The fourth factor was about accuracy-oriented strategies which were represented by items 17-21. Item number 19 was the most preferred strategy for 26 participants. The mean score for this item was 3.72. RO employees reported that they corrected themselves when they noticed have made mistakes. The least preferred strategy in this factor was item number 21. Only 5 participants expressed that they always or almost always tried to talk like native speakers and the mean score for this item was only 2.92. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Factor D: Accuracy-oriented strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
17	I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation.	1	6	16	12	5	3,35	0,97
18	I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.	1	7	9	18	5	3,47	1,01
19	I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.	3	1	10	16	10	3,72	1,1
20	I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.	1	10	10	14	5	3,3	1,06
21	I try to talk like a native speaker.	8	8	8	11	5	2,92	1,34

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The fifth factor was about message reduction and alteration strategies which were represented by items 22-24. Results for these three strategies were relatively positive and close to each other as the mean score ranged from 3.3 to 3.87. Although, the highest mean score was for item number 23 as 36 participants expressed that they used words which familiar to them. Eight participants found this item somewhat true, 17 generally true and 11 always or almost always true for them. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Factor E: Message reduction and alteration strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
22	I reduce the message and use simple expressions.	1	3	12	17	7	3,65	0,94
23	I use words which are familiar to me.	0	4	8	17	11	3,87	0,93
24	I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent.	1	6	15	16	2	3,3	0,88

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The sixth factor was about the nonverbal while speaking strategies which were represented by items 25-26. Thirty-four participants reported generally positive tendency towards trials to make eye contact while speaking, and 34 of them were also positive about using gestures and facial expressions when they couldn't communicate what they wanted to say. The mean score for items 25 and 26 were 3.75 and 3.57 respectively. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Factor F: Nonverbal while speaking strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
25	I try to make eye contact when I am talking.	3	3	7	15	12	3,75	1,19
26	I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't communicate what I want to say.	2	4	12	13	9	3,57	1,1

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The seventh factor was about the message abandonment strategies which were represented by items 27-30. In general, the mean scores for these strategies were relatively low (all less than three). This trend by the participants reflected the nature of the client-agent relationship within this context. Mean scores ranged from 2.12 to 2.92, as 26 participants reported using the strategy in item 28 which was related to asking other people (mostly research assistants of similar L1 to the interlocutor) to help them when they couldn't communicate well. The least preferred strategy as reported by the participants was that in item 29. Nineteen participants reported that they never or almost never gave up when they couldn't make themselves understood. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Factor G: Message abandonment strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
27	I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.	6	13	10	10	1	2,67	1,09
28	I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well.	11	3	8	14	4	2,92	1,4
29	I give up when I can't make myself understood.	19	6	7	7	1	2,12	1,26
30	I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I don't know how to express myself.	9	7	15	6	3	2,67	1,2

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The eighth factor was about attempt to think in English strategies which were represented by items 31-32. Most of the responses by the participants to this factor were higher represented by somewhat true and generally true for them. The mean

scores were 3.05 and 3.32 for the items 31 and 32 respectively. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Factor H: Attempt to think in English strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
31	I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation.	5	9	11	9	6	3,05	1,25
32	I try to think of what I want to say not in my native language but English.	3	5	14	12	6	3,32	1,11

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me.3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

4.1.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data for Speaking Strategies

Similar to the quantitative results, qualitatively obtained results confirmed that RO employees utilized achievement strategies to overcome oral communication breakdowns during speaking with international students. In order to confirm these finding, quotes for some the interviewees will be presented. For ethical reasons, the interviewees were given codes with numbers such as (I1) stands for interviewee number one …and so on. Noting that the quotes will be presented exactly as uttered by the interviewees, they were asked what they would say or do when non-Turkish speaking international students do not understand what they have said in English. I6 said:

> Most of the time I repeat myself when the students don't understand what I am saying. If I see that they still don't understand what I'm saying I try to explain them very simply what I want to say. (I6).

In the same way, I8 stated in her answer directly that she repeats and gives examples if the non-Turkish speaking international students do not understand her:

> (Silence)… I repeat it... hmmm…. And I... give the example... I am trying to make it easy... first I am trying to understand if the problem for my speaking …my English or his understanding …I mean his speaking …(I8).

More detailed information about the interviewees' responses to question number 6, can be seen in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Semi-structured interview question #6: What do you do when some students do not understand what you say in English?

Main answers	**# of respondents**
1) Repetition with different words.	(I1), (I3), (I4), (I5), (I6), (I7), (I8), (I9), (I12)
2) Use non-verbal expression like body language and/or facial expressions	(I11), (I10)
3) Create a more friendly context	(I2)

Note: Each number in brackets represents a particular interviewee.

According to the findings, the RO employees attributed the oral communication breakdowns to the different accents of the non-Turkish speaking international students. In their opinion, most of those communication breakdowns were accredited to different accents and various cultural backgrounds of the English speaking students as L2 users. These results also go hand in hand with those reported by Nakatani (2006) in the Japanese context. Moreover, within an EMI context non-native English speakers, as reported by Wang et al. (2017) have low confidence in their English speaking skill as they fear of negative evaluations or being misjudged by others due to the expected undeveloped sociolinguistic competence.

4.1.3 Analysis of Scenario Responses for Speaking Strategies

When the results of the responses obtained by the suggested scenarios were analyzed, it was clear that the responses RO employees contributed were very similar to those they gave while answering the OCSI. The third and the fourth scenarios focused on eliciting the strategies RO employees would prefer to use while dealing with speaking problems. The results as reported by the interviewees revealed that half of them have negotiated with their interlocutors to keep the conversation on during the third scenario. Furthermore, two interviewees preferred employing the guessing the meaning strategy. The rest of the four interviewees chose a different strategy for each; one of them chose coinage, the other chose to ask the international student to show an example of the document s/he intends to ask for, and the third one preferred translating the uttered word to her mother tongue (which is Turkish), while the last interviewee did not give an answer for this scenario.

Regarding the fourth scenario, interviewees reported employing the same strategy they used in the third scenario. Ten out of the twelve interviewees preferred negotiating with their interlocutors while speaking in order to make sure that they were clearly understood. One of the two remained interviewees responded appropriately to the scenario as he knew the meaning of ‘ASAP’, while the other preferred employing the eye contact and observing body language to understand the intentions of the non-Turkish speaking international student (Tables 4.10 and 4.11).

Table 4.10: Scenario #3 A student said: "Me have learner card". You don't understand him/her. What would you do?

Main answers	# of respondents
1) A direct request for clarification.	(I1), (I2), (I4), (I5), (I6), (I8), (I11)
2) Focus and try to guess meanings of the keywords.	(I7), (I12)
3) Use real objects.	(I3)
4) Use a translator.	(I9)
5) Haven't experienced similar situation.	(I10)

Note: Each number in brackets represents a particular respondent

Table 4.11: Scenario #4 A student said: "I want to take my original certificates" so, you started with the termination process, and then s/he said: "No, no I don't want to go to another university." What would you say?

Main answers	# of respondents
1) A direct request for clarification.	(I1), (I3), (I4), (I5), (I6), (I7), (I9), (I10), (R4), (I8)
2) Keep eye contact to better understanding.	(I8)
3) The situation is understood completely.	(I2)

Note: Each number in brackets represents a particular respondent

4.2 Research Question #2: What are the Strategies Used by the Registrar's Office Employees to Overcome the Oral Communication Breakdowns with the International (non-Turkish Speaking) Students while Listening?

4.2.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data for Listening Strategies

The analysis of data from the third part of the OCSI, revealed the strategies for coping with oral communication breakdowns while listening. This part of the OCSI consisted of 7 factors namely negotiation for meaning while listening strategies, fluency-maintaining strategies, scanning strategies, getting the gist strategies,

nonverbal while listening strategies, less active listener strategies and word-oriented strategies. These factors are related to the strategies for coping with listening problems during communicative tasks. Each of these factors will be analyzed one by one in the following section.

The first factor was about negotiation for meaning while listening strategies which were represented by items 1-5. The participants reported in this factor that they either asked for repetition when they couldn't understand the speakers or they made it clear to the speakers about what they haven't been able to understand. These results were represented in items 1 and 5 as the mean scores were 3.82 and 3.8, respectively. Item number 3 was the least preferred strategy for the participants although the mean score was 3.25. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Factor I: Negotiation for meaning while listening strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
1	I ask for repetition when I can't understand what the speaker has said.	1	1	11	18	9	3,82	0,9
2	I make a clarification request when I am not sure what the speaker has said.	0	6	6	21	7	3,72	0,93
3	I ask the speaker to use easy words when I have difficulties in comprehension.	6	6	9	10	9	3,25	1,37
4	I ask the speaker to slow down when I can't understand what the speaker has said.	5	5	8	12	10	3,42	1,33
5	I make clear to the speaker what I haven't been able to understand.	0	5	9	15	11	3,8	0,99

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The second factor was about fluency-maintaining strategies which were represented by items 6-10. Item number 7 scored the highest mean with 3.72. Twenty-one participants reported that sending continuation signals to show their understanding in order to avoid conversation gaps was generally true for them. The mean of least preferred strategy represented in item 8 scored 3.3. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Factor J: Fluency-maintaining strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
6	I pay attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation.	3	4	10	11	12	3,62	1,23
7	I send continuation signals to show my understanding in order to avoid conversation gaps.	0	2	12	21	5	3,72	0,75
8	I use circumlocution to react to the speaker's utterance when I don't understand his/her intention well.	2	7	11	17	3	3,3	1,01
9	I ask the speaker to give an example when I am not sure what he/she has said.	3	3	10	17	7	3,55	1,1
10	I pay attention to the speaker's pronunciation.	4	5	9	11	11	3,5	1,3

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The third factor was about the scanning strategies whish were represented by items 11-14. Results of this factor showed that the participants mainly preferred to try to catch the speakers' main point (item 14). The mean for this item was the highest as it scored 4.07. Although the mean of item number 11 scored the least (3.25), 9 participants expressed that it was somewhat true for them to report that they paid attention to the subject and verb of the sentences when they listened, 7 reported it

was generally true and 11 expressed that it was always or almost always true for them. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Factor K: Scanning strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
11	I pay attention to the subject and verb of the sentence when I listen.	6	7	9	7	11	3,25	1,42
12	I especially pay attention to the interrogative when I listen to WH- questions.	2	6	12	15	5	3,37	1,05
13	I pay attention to the first part of the sentence and guess the speaker's intention.	1	6	12	14	7	3,5	1,03
14	I try to catch the speaker's main point.	0	1	8	18	13	4,07	0,79

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The fourth factor was getting the gist strategies which were represented by items 15-18. Item number 16 scored the highest mean with 3.47. The total of 33 participants responded positively and reported that they anticipated what the speakers were going to say based on the context. Respondents' counts for this item were 13, 14 and 6 participants who expressed that this item was somewhat true, generally true and always or almost always true for them. Only 7 participants out of the forty expressed that this item was generally not true for them. The lease preferred item in this factor was umber 15 with a mean score of 3.1. Participants did not mind if they couldn't understand every single detail during conversations with international students. More details about this item in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Factor L: Getting the gist strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
15	I don't mind if I can't understand every single detail.	4	7	14	11	4	3,1	1,12
16	I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context.	0	7	13	14	6	3,47	0,96
17	I guess the speaker's intention based on what he/she has said so far.	2	6	14	11	7	3,37	1,1
18	I try to respond to the speaker even when I don't understand him/her perfectly.	2	7	9	19	3	3,35	1,02

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The fifth factor was about nonverbal while listening strategies which were represented by items 19-20. Item number 19 was the most preferred strategy reported by the participants as it scored 3.9 while the mean of the strategy of item number 18 scored 3.5. According to the results of item number 19, participants reported that they paid attention to the speakers' eye-contact, facial expressions and gestures while they were listening to their interlocutors. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Factor M: Nonverbal while listening strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
19	I use gestures when I have difficulties in understanding.	2	4	13	14	7	3,5	1,06
20	I pay attention to the speaker's eye-contact, facial expression and gestures.	0	2	9	17	11	3,9	0,9

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The sixth factor was about the less active listener strategies which were represented by items 21-22. Results showed that the participants deployed both strategies in items 21 and 22 with mean scores of 3.02 and 3.17 respectively. Respondents to item 22 reported that they only focused on familiar expressions while those who responded to item 21 reported that they tried to translate into their native language in this case Turkish, to understand their interlocutors. More details about this factor in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Factor N: Less active listener strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
21	I try to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said.	6	7	12	10	5	3,02	1,25
22	I only focus on familiar expressions.	3	4	19	11	3	3,17	0,98

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me.5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

The seventh factor was the word-oriented strategies which were represented by items 23-26. Results showed that responses to these strategies were very close to each other in terms of the mean scores. Items 24 and 25 scored the highest mean with 3.5 for each, while the next most preferred strategy (mean score 3.4) was item 23 as participants reported that they paid attention to the words which the speakers slowed down or emphasized. The least preferred item as reported was number 26 with the mean score of 3.02. Eight participants reported that this strategy was never or almost never true for them and three expressed that this strategy was generally not true for them. Numbers of those who reported that this item was somewhat true, generally

true and always or almost always true for them were 13, 12 and 4 respectively. More details about this factor can be seen in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Factor O: Word-oriented strategies

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
23	I pay attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes.	1	5	15	15	4	3,4	0,92
24	I guess the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words.	1	4	15	14	6	3,5	0,96
25	I try to catch every word that the speaker uses.	3	3	13	13	8	3,5	1,13
26	I pay attention to the first word to judge whether it is an interrogative sentence or not.	8	3	13	12	4	3,02	1,27

Note: 1= Never or almost never true of me. 2= Generally not true of me. 3= Somewhat true of me. 4= Generally true of me. 5=Always or almost always true of me. S.D= Standard Deviation

4.2.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data for Listening Strategies

When the qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed, it became clear that RO employees try to maintain a smooth flow of the conversations with non-Turkish speaking international students depending more on negotiation for meaning strategies. Only two interviewees reported that they depended more on some key words to understand the speakers' intentions and ultimately help them and offer the requested service. For example, answers given to the question number 3 in the semi-structured interview by RO employees revealed that negotiation for meaning was the most preferred strategy for them. The responses to the question that investigated nationalities of the most difficult student accent that RO employees encountered, revealed that 7 interviewees reported that it was very difficult for them to cope with international students who came from Africa such as Nigerians, accrediting the

miscommunication to the different accents or pronunciation styles. For example, one of the most experienced interviewees mentioned that some international students say /aks/ instead of saying /ask/. As time passed by, in his opinion, he got familiar to those accents and started to understand some other speaking styles more easily.

An extended contemplation at the transcriptions of the interviews revealed some inspiring thoughts to this research by the RO employees. In general, three quarters of the twelve interviewees reported that most of the OCBs they encountered were overcome by deploying direct repetition and requests for examples strategies. Using such strategies indicates that RO employees generally negotiated for meaning during their conversations as listeners with the non-Turkish speaking international students. For example, when he was asked about the challenges to understand variant Englishes, interviewee 1 (I6) said:

> To be honest I sometimes find some Nigerian speakers speech difficult to understand. Because tend not to speak loudly and it becomes difficult for me to understand what they are saying and every time I have to ask them to repeat themselves or even to speak more clearly. (I6).

Another response of one the interviewees who preferred the written form interview may confirm the results obtained from the qualitative data regarding challenges to understand some of the international student while listening to them. Interviewee 11 (I11) stated:

> Generally Arabic, Russian or Pakistanian students English I understand more better compare with Nigerians. (I11).

This can be attributed to the nature of the client-agent relationship between both parties. Service needs to be fulfilled no matter how as students and RO employees have no other choice but understanding each other.

Interestingly, one of the most experienced personnel in the Registrar's Office reported that he created more relaxed contexts with a friendly manner and used positive facial expressions such as smiles to overcome the causes of the miscommunications with the non-Turkish speaking international students. He believed that when students feel relaxed and the anxiety levels are lower, students can express themselves easier and communication can go on smoothly.

4.2.3 Analysis of Scenario Responses for Listening Strategies

When the results of the responses obtained by the suggested scenarios were analyzed, it was clear that the responses given by RO employees were very similar to their responses in the OCSI. The two scenarios investigated the strategies employed to deal with communication breakdowns while listening. Fabricated scenarios asked the RO employees what they would say if they did not understand what the international student said. Nine of the twelve interviewees chose to directly request for clarification either by repetition or giving examples. Two of the interviewees employed the strategy that helps them to pick the most significant words and skip the others to try to understand what their interlocutors have said. Only one RO employee reported that she sought help from other colleagues of those who speak the same mother tongue of the interlocutor. To be more specific for the second scenario, two of the interviewees reported that they would check 'Google' for the meaning of the words they did not understand (Tables 4.19 and 4.20).

Table 4.19: Scenario #1 A student said: "I want to take a student certificate because my residency will expire, and I do need to renew it ASAP." You don't understand the word ASAP. What would you do in this case?

Main answers	**# of respondents**
1) A direct request for repetition with different words.	(I2), (I1), (I3), (I4), (I6), (I7), (I9), (I10)
2) Focus on the keywords only.	(I8), (I5)
3) Request help from a native speaker assistant.	(I12), (I11)

Note: Each number in brackets represents a particular respondent.

Table 4.20: Scenario #2 A student said: "I want a 'student declaration' please." You don't understand him/her. What would you do?

Main answers	**# of respondents**
1) A direct request for repetition with different words.	(I1), (I3), (I4), (I6), (I7), (I8), (I9), (I10), (I11), (I12)
2) Try to guess the meaning or check Google for the meaning	(I2), (I5)

Note: Each number in brackets represents a particular respondent.

The last suggested scenario targeted the interpersonal communication skills of the RO employees. This suggested setting elicited how the RO employees would carry on a conversation with their international interlocutors if they were interrupted by a phone call for example. The twelve interviewees' responses offered apology and regularly used phrases such as 'sorry, you were saying …, sorry, can you say that again, I had to take that phone call' (Table 4.21).

Table 4.21: Scenario #5 A student came to you and started asking for a service. In the middle of his/her talk, your phone rang and you answered it fast. What would you say when you get back to the student?

Main answers	**# of respondents**
1) Apologizes and carry on.	(I1), (I2), (I3), (I4), (I5), (I6), (I7), (I8), (I9), (I10), (I11), (I12)

Note: Each number in brackets represents a particular respondent.

4.3 Summary

In this chapter an answer to the research questions of this study was presented. Drawing on the analysis, the results that were obtained throughout the collected data offered an accidental result as well. First results obtained from data that dealt with problems while speaking were offered. Then, the results attained out of the data that subjected problem while listening. Finally, the findings that were drawn on the semi-structured interview along with the suggested scenarios were presented. Discussion of the results will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated the oral communication strategies used by the RO employees to overcome communication breakdowns with non-Turkish speaking international students. The preceding chapter has reported the findings of the study. This final chapter presents discussion of the findings, conclusion, implications and limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for further research.

5.1 Discussion of the Results

As stated above, communication strategies that RO employees used to keep a successful communication with international students were investigated in this study. The results of each factor in the second and the third parts of the quantitative data were grouped in one table for speaking strategies and another for listening strategies. The arithmetic average of the obtained results for each factor was calculated in order to help the researcher in tracing the general trend of the RO employees in deploying the OCBSs.

The analysis of the quantitative data revealed that the most preferred strategy factor by RO employees was negotiation for meaning while speaking (Factor C) because 13.95% of the participants in this study tended to make sure that they understood the message or their message was understood by the listener. 13.37% of the participants preferred deploying nonverbal-while-speaking strategies (Factor F) as they believed that keeping eye contact and using gestures and facial expressions would help them

to overcome the OCB. Next, Factor A, that is social affective strategies, gained the preference of 13.26% of the participants. The message reduction and alteration strategies grouped in (Factor E) were preferred by 13.18% of the participants. It is worthy to mention that although it came in the third rank, the social affective strategies factor was almost as important as the preceding two strategy factors; negotiation for meaning while speaking and nonverbal strategies. The less preferred factors by the RO employees were the fluency-oriented strategies (Factor B), the accuracy-oriented strategies (Factor D), and the attempt to think in English strategies (Factor H) came next with 12.78%, 12.27% and 11.65% respectively.

On the other hand, the least preferred factor by the RO employees was message abandonment strategies. Only 9.49% of the employees chose to leave unfinished messages due to some language difficulties.

The results showed that the most preferred strategy factor by the RO employees was ‘negotiation for meaning’. 13.95% of the participants reported that they made some comprehension checks by using some phrases like (is it clear, do you know what I said), to make sure that students understood them clearly enough. Repetition and giving examples were also among of the strategies deployed for the same purpose. For example, nine out of the twelve interviewees reported that they either repeated and gave examples, or repeated the same notion in other easier words to keep themselves engaged in a successful communication with the international students. Meanwhile, in their efforts to understand their interlocutors, RO employees directly requested repetitions from international students. For example, responses to the

suggested scenarios revealed that a direct request for clarification was the most noticeable strategy by all the interviewees.

The reason for which RO employees requested repetition was to confirm that they understood and were understood by their interlocutors. This is an expected finding and it is consistent with those reported by Nakatani (2006), who pointed out that using such compensatory strategies reflects behaviour of a good learner or an L2 user, and by Somasi and Intaraprasert (2011), who found out that due to their imperfect linguistic acquaintance, Thai English for international communication students employed various achievement strategies to handle oral face-to-face miscommunications.

Results of this study showed that the least preferred strategy by RO employees was message abandonment strategies. According to the quantitative data, some language difficulties were reported to be the reason for which RO employees chose to leave messages unfinished. Then again, a close look at the qualitative data revealed that only two of the interviewees sought help from other people -in this case research assistants- to maintain communicating with their interlocutors. Such behavior can be attributed to the nature of the context within which interactions take place. Student-RO employee interaction settings are practical by nature and content is always framed by some administrative regulations and guidelines such as course registering or document issuing. Accordingly, RO employees have no choice but keeping successful communication with international students. This could possibly be the reason for this strategy factor to be the least preferred one.

RO employees' responses indicated that they deployed nonverbal strategies while listening (Factor M), as 15.27% of them either used gestures or paid attention to the speakers' eye-contact, facial expressions and gestures when they had difficulties to understand them.

The second most preferred strategy by RO employees was negotiation for meaning while listening (Factor I). Data analysis revealed that 15.06% of the participants directly asked their interlocutors for repetition, requested clarifications, or to slow down when they couldn't understand what the speaker has said. Scanning strategies (Factor K) came next as 14.65% of the RO employees paid attention to the subject and the verb of the sentences while listening to the speakers. Meanwhile, Factor J that is fluency-maintaining strategies was employed by 14.60% of the participants. They reported that they asked the speaker to give examples to make sure that they understood the non-Turkish speaking international students properly. Factor O, that is the word-oriented was used by 13.86% of the participants. RO employees reported that they try to guess the meaning by focusing on the key words to fully understand the speakers' intentions. Getting the gist strategies (Factor L) came next as 13.74% of the participants did not mind when they could not understand every detail. On the other hand, Factor N that is the less active listener strategies was the least preferred. Only 12.79% of the participants tried to translate (in their minds while listening) into L1 (in this case Turkish) to understand the speakers and very few RO employees focused on the familiar expressions said by the speakers.

It was also found that 15.06% of the participants have openly asked for repetitions, requested clarifications or asked the speakers to slow down when they couldn't keep

a successful communication. Such an expected result, of deploying negotiation for meaning while listening, is simply justified as a natural behaviour by foreign language users in the working place contexts. This result is parallel with results found in different contexts by other scholars such as Nakatani (2006) in the Japanese context and Rabab'ah (2013) in the Jordanian and the German contexts. The latter study reported that both Jordanian and German non-native English speakers deployed repetition more frequently than self-initiated repair strategy.

Most interviewees in this study attributed the communication breakdowns to the different accents and various sociolinguistic backgrounds of their interlocutors. Again, and as found by Nakatani (2006) in the Japanese context, the cultural landscape shed its lights on the results of this study.

One interesting and unexpected finding in this study was a notion reported by one of the most experienced interviewees. The interviewee stated that creating a very relaxed context through friendly manners and using positive facial expressions such as smiles usually attributed in eliminating miscommunication causes. This belief in 'lowering anxiety levels contribute to more successful communication' is proved to be the consent of many psychological scholars in the SLA field for example, Wang et al. (2017).

It is also worth mentioning that using technology was reported to be useful to maintain a successful communication with international students, as checking on the 'Google' is fast and helpful, especially when one uses smart applications such as instant translation applications.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study showed that most of the RO employees preferred to employ negotiation for meaning strategies for problems in speaking as well as in listening. They needed to make sure that they reached to the point of mutual intelligibility during their oral communication with the international non-Turkish speaking students. Otherwise, the services RO employees are expected to be responsible about what could not be achieved.

Another major finding concluded by this study was that RO employees did not prefer using the message abandonment strategy. This finding indicated that RO employees had no choice but to keep the communication successful. This result was not obvious in other settings as much as it was in the current study.

It is obvious that the measurements taken by the administration of EMU regarding employing international assistants on the temporary biases have helped the RO employees to overcome some oral interactional settings. Similar measurements are taken in other EMU departments such as the Accounting and the International Offices. Accordingly, similar multinational settings that host too many different languages and cultures such as universities may consider these measurements an example to be followed.

5.3 Implications of the Study

This study was conducted in an EMI context in the Registrar's Office at EMU. Policy and decision makers in similar contexts may get inspired by the reported results of this research. For example, in order to improve the employees' English use within workplace, the administration may design some professional development

programs such as maintaining successful oral communication with L2 users, and better administrative professional development programs for the employees. All the obtained results can be considered as an initial step for any language course designer to design a related course, i.e. ESP course, especially within the changing status of English, such as the World Englishes and the different accents of the nowadays spoken English.

The qualitative analysis revealed that most of the RO employees are welling to attend a suggested professional development course, emphasizing that a speaking course or successful oral communication course would be the most preferred. The increasing numbers of non-native users of English is a fact that cannot be ignored. Upon this, and due to the special workplace context of the RO, it is highly vital to enable the RO employees with the strategies they may need to successfully overcome any communication breakdown with the multilingual non-native English users. Any course designer would probably benefit from the results stated here as the teachability of communication strategies, according to Dörnyei (1995), is possible.

The researcher also observed that the RO employees showed interest and inquired about the communication strategies and the methods they may follow to achieve better communication with international English users. This interest may entail an increase of their awareness about CSs if they are trained about how to use CSs more effectively.

English language at workplace has been widely investigated but very little if none at all has targeted the oral communication strategies in a Registrar's Office context.

Therefore, this study can be considered to be one of the first studies to investigate oral communication strategies in RO context.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study has a number of limitations. Firstly, data were collected only from one of the interlocutors, i.e., RO employees. The international students were not included in the study. Due to ethical issues, it would be very difficult to investigate the communication events form both perspectives. Since the Registrar's Office is visited by several different students with urgent demands, it would be impractical to ask for their participation, as well.

Secondly, data collection tools were limited to a survey and interviews. Observations and even video or audio-recording could have been used to collect more authentic and realistic data. However, that would require high level technical equipment and also more complicated ethical procedures, which were beyond the capacity of the researcher.

Finally, although it was used by many scholars, the majority of the participants found the survey (OCSI) somehow difficult to understand. In fact, the researcher explained the items by giving examples and also their Turkish equivalents before the administration of the OCSI. However, many participants directly asked the researcher about the meaning of some idioms such as 'oral communication strategies', 'circumlocution' and 'interrogative', which were all explained again. Yet, this might still have a negative effect on the reliability of their answers.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

For further research purposes, the study may have some suggestions to be taken into consideration. Firstly, oral communication strategies are crucial elements in maintaining intelligible oral communication not only in EFL contexts, but also in L1 contexts as well. Therefore, further studies can look into this linguistic issue by considering both parts of conversations; speaker and listener in similar EMI contexts. In other words, oral communication strategies can be better investigated when interlocutors' conversations from both sides are targeted.

Secondly, Registrar's Offices at universities that host international students have a huge archive of both oral and written types of communication settings. For example, many written forms such as e-mails and online chatting platforms, store huge amounts of communication settings between employees and international students. Investigating communication strategies through the written forms of communication may be added to the findings obtained in this research especially because targeting larger numbers of participants will allow making broad view about the results.

Thirdly, other data collections methods such as observations, audio or video-recordings can be utilized in future studies to analyze the oral communication strategies better. This would enable the researchers to establish a small corpus to be analyzed from different perspectives.

Finally, as it was stated in the implications of this study, RO employees may need to be enrolled in in-service training professional development programs about the use of English. The findings of this study may stand as an initial step for any ESP course

designer to plan a related course and choose some authentic materials that reflect the implementation of oral communication strategies related to different accents and various cultural backgrounds.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI)

THE ORAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY INVENTORY

(Nakatani, 2006)

Part 1: Demographic Questions

Please tick (√) the most appropriate option for you.

1. Your age:	☐ 20-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41+
2. Gender:	☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Your education level:	☐ High school graduate ☐ University graduate ☐ MA/MSc graduate
4. How long have you been working at the Registrar's Office?	☐ Less than 1 year (or almost 1 year) ☐ 2-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ 10+ years
5. When and where did you learn English? Please write.	.....
6. How do you rate your English level in general?	☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐ Not very good
7. How do you rate your spoken English level?	☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐ Not very good
8. How often do you use English language at work (during working hours)?	☐ More than 3 hours ☐ 1-2 hours ☐ Less than 1 hour
9. Do you use English language out of school? If yes, for what purposes?	☐ No ☐ Yes .....

Part 2: Strategies for coping with speaking problems during communicative tasks

Read the statements below and tick (√) the most appropriate option for you.

1 Never or almost never true of me
2 Generally not true of me
3 Somewhat true of me
4 Generally true of me
5 Always or almost always true of me

	#	Item	1	2	3	4	5
A	1	I try to relax when I feel anxious.					
	2	I try to enjoy the conversation.					

1

		Item	1	2	3	4	5
	3	I try to give a good impression to the listener.					
	4	I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.					
	5	I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes.					
	6	I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say.					
B	7	I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation.					
	8	I pay attention to my pronunciation.					
	9	I pay attention to the conversation flow.					
	10	I change my way of saying things according to the context in order to continue conversations.					
	11	I take my time to express what I want to say.					
	12	I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.					
C	13	I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say.					
	14	I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands.					
	15	While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech.					
	16	I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I am saying.					
D	17	I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation.					
	18	I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.					
	19	I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.					
	20	I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.					
	21	I try to talk like a native speaker.					
E	22	I reduce the message and use simple expressions.					
	23	I use words which are familiar to me.					
	24	I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent.					
F	25	I try to make eye contact when I am talking.					
	26	I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't communicate what I want to say.					

G	27	I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.					
	28	I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well.					
	29	I give up when I can't make myself understood.					
	30	I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I don't know how to express myself.					
H	31	I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation.					
	32	I try to think of what I want to say not in my native language but English.					

Part 3: Strategies for coping with listening problems during communicative tasks
Read the statements below and tick (√) the most appropriate option for you.

1 Never or almost never true of me
2 Generally not true of me
3 Somewhat true of me
4 Generally true of me
5 Always or almost always true of me

	#	Item	1	2	3	4	5
I	1	I ask for repetition when I can't understand what the speaker has said.					
	2	I make a clarification request when I am not sure what the speaker has said.					
	3	I ask the speaker to use easy words when I have difficulties in comprehension.					
	4	I ask the speaker to slow down when I can't understand what the speaker has said.					
	5	I make clear to the speaker what I haven't been able to understand.					
J	6	I pay attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation.					
	7	I send continuation signals to show my understanding in order to avoid conversation gaps.					
	8	I use circumlocution to react to the speaker's utterance when I don't understand his/her intention well.					
	9	I ask the speaker to give an example when I am not sure what he/she has said.					
	10	I pay attention to the speaker's pronunciation.					
K	11	I pay attention to the subject and verb of the					

		sentence when I listen.					
	12	I especially pay attention to the interrogative when I listen to WH- questions.					
	13	I pay attention to the first part of the sentence and guess the speaker's intention.					
	14	I try to catch the speaker's main point.					
L	15	I don't mind if I can't understand every single detail.					
	16	I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context.					
	17	I guess the speaker's intention based on what he/she has said so far.					
	18	I try to respond to the speaker even when I don't understand him/her perfectly.					
M	19	I use gestures when I have difficulties in understanding.					
	20	I pay attention to the speaker's eye-contact, facial expression and gestures.					
N	21	I try to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said.					
	22	I only focus on familiar expressions.					
O	23	I pay attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes.					
	24	I guess the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words.					
	25	I try to catch every word that the speaker uses.					
	26	I pay attention to the first word to judge whether it is an interrogative sentence or not.					

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Scenarios

Investigating the strategies used to overcome communication breakdown by Registrar's Office employees in Eastern Mediterranean University

Interview Questions

1. How often do you use English language at work (during working hours)?

2. Do you use English language out of school? If yes, for what purposes?

3. Do you find it easy or difficult to understand the English-speaking students (or their parents) at work? If difficult, what makes it difficult? In other words, what causes this difficulty? (Their accent? The words they use? Their speed? What else?)

4. Do you think some students' English is more challenging to understand? Arab students' English, for example? Or Nigerians? What is the nationality of the students whose English you understand better?

5. Is there a difference between the way males or females speak English? Whose English is easier for you to understand? Males or females? Why?

6. What do you do when some students do not understand what you say in English?

7. What do you do if you don't understand their English?

Scenarios

1. A student came to you and said: "I want to take a student certificate because my residency will expire, and I do need to renew it ASAP." You don't understand the word ASAP. What would you say in this case?

1

2. A student came to you and said: "I want a 'student declaration' please." You don't understand him/her. What would you say?

3. A student came to you and said: "Me have learner card". You don't understand him/her. What would you say?

4. A student came to you and said: "I want to take my original certificates" so, you started with the termination process, and then s/he said: "No, no I don't want to go to another university." What would you say?

5. A student came to you and started asking for a service. In the middle of his/her talk, your phone rang and you answered it fast. What would you say when you get back to the student?

Appendix C: Consent Form for Survey

Consent Form for Survey

Dear Registrar's Office Employee,

You are kindly invited to take part in the research titled **Investigating the strategies used to overcome communication breakdown by Registrar's Office employees in Eastern Mediterranean University**. The study aims to investigate the strategies used by the Registrar's Office (RO) employees in EMU to overcome oral communication breakdowns during their communication with English-speaking students.

Your participation is completely voluntary. No risks and no direct benefits are anticipated as a result of your participation in this study. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, if you do not wish to answer any particular question or questions, you are free to decline. Answering this survey will take between 10-15 minutes.

It is very important that you answer all the questions sincerely. You are not required to write down your name on the survey. Other identity-related details such as the institution will be used only for research purposes, and no one except the researcher and his supervisor will be allowed to access to the filled-in forms.

Further information can be obtained directly from me or my thesis supervisor.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation.

Hashem Al-Tahtamoni
MA Student
Department of Foreign Language Education
Faculty of Education
Eastern Mediterranean University
E-mail: hashimmst@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Ülker Vancı Osam
MA Thesis Supervisor
Department of Foreign Language Education
Faculty of Education
Eastern Mediterranean University
E-mail: ulker.osam@emu.edu.tr

✂.....

Consent Form

I confirm that I have read and understood the main purpose of this interview, and how my answers will be used. Thus, I agree to take part in this interview.

Name- Surname: ----------

Signature: ----------

Date: ----------

Appendix D: Consent Form for Interview

Consent Form for Interview

Dear Registrar's Office Employee,

You are kindly invited to take part in the research titled **Investigating the strategies used to overcome communication breakdown by Registrar's Office employees in Eastern Mediterranean University**. The study aims to investigate the strategies used by the Registrar's Office (RO) employees in EMU to overcome oral communication breakdowns during their communication with English-speaking students.

Your participation is completely voluntary. No risks and no direct benefits are anticipated as a result of your participation in this study. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, if you do not wish to answer any particular question or questions, you are free to decline.

It is very important that you answer all the questions sincerely. The interview will be recorded. The audio recording made for this interview will be analyzed only for research purposes. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and be used only for research purpose. Extracts from the interview from which you would not be personally identified may be used in any conference presentation, report or journal article developed as a result of the research. No other use will be made of the recording without your written permission. And that no one except the researcher and her supervisor will be allowed access to the original recording. Further information can be obtained directly from me or my thesis supervisor.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Hashem Al-Tahtamoni
MA Student
Department of Foreign Language Education
Faculty of Education
Eastern Mediterranean University
E-mail: hashimmst@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Ülker Vancı Osam
MA Thesis Supervisor
Department of Foreign Language Education
Faculty of Education
Eastern Mediterranean University
E-mail: ulker.osam@emu.edu.tr

✂.....

Consent Form

I confirm that I have read and understood the main purpose of this interview, and how my answers will be used. Thus, I agree to take part in this interview.

Name- Surname: ----------

Signature: ----------

Date: ----------

Appendix E: OCSI Permission Request

In:sent

17 of 3,979

OCSI permission request

Hashim Altahtamouni <hashimmst@gmail.com>
to ynakatani, Prof Dr Ulker

Oct 21, 2018, 12:36 AM

Dear Yasuo Nakatani,

I am an MA student from Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, North Cyprus, writing my thesis titled "Investigating the strategies used to overcome communication breakdown by Registrar's Office employees in Eastern Mediterranean University" under the direction of my supervisor Prof Dr. Ulker Vanci Osam, who can be reached at ulker.osam@emu.edu.tr

I would like your permission to use the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) instrument in my research study. If permit granted, I guarantee that I will use the survey only for my research study and cite the source each time I refer to it. If required, I can send a copy of my research study to your attention upon its completion.

I'll be grateful if you kindly indicate your approval by replying to this message at hashimmst@gmail.com at your earliest convenience. Thank you in advance.

Yours respectfully,

Hashem Al-Tahtamouni
MA student
Department of Foreign Language Education
Faculty of Education
Eastern Mediterranean University
Famagusta, North Cyprus

Appendix F: Approval to Use OSCI

12 of 9,730

Dear Hashem Al-Tabtamoni

Thank you for the inquiry.

If you promise to send me your research results to me, I will let you use.

I attach my papers on MLJ for your study purpose.
Also I have published a new book which includes more detailed information about my study.
Please see the following information.

Nakatani Y (2010) Improving Oral Proficiency Through Strategy Training. Lap Lambert Academic Publishing (See also the attached file.)

http://www.amazon.co.jp/Improving-Proficiency-Through-Strategy-Training/dp/3843377448/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=english-books&qid=1296054941&sr=8-1

Also we published a book from OPU which may be relevant for your research
Language Learner Strategies: Thirty Years of Research and Practice
(Oxford Applied Linguistics)
http://www.amazon.co.jp/Language-Learner-Strategies-Research-Linguistics/dp/0194422542

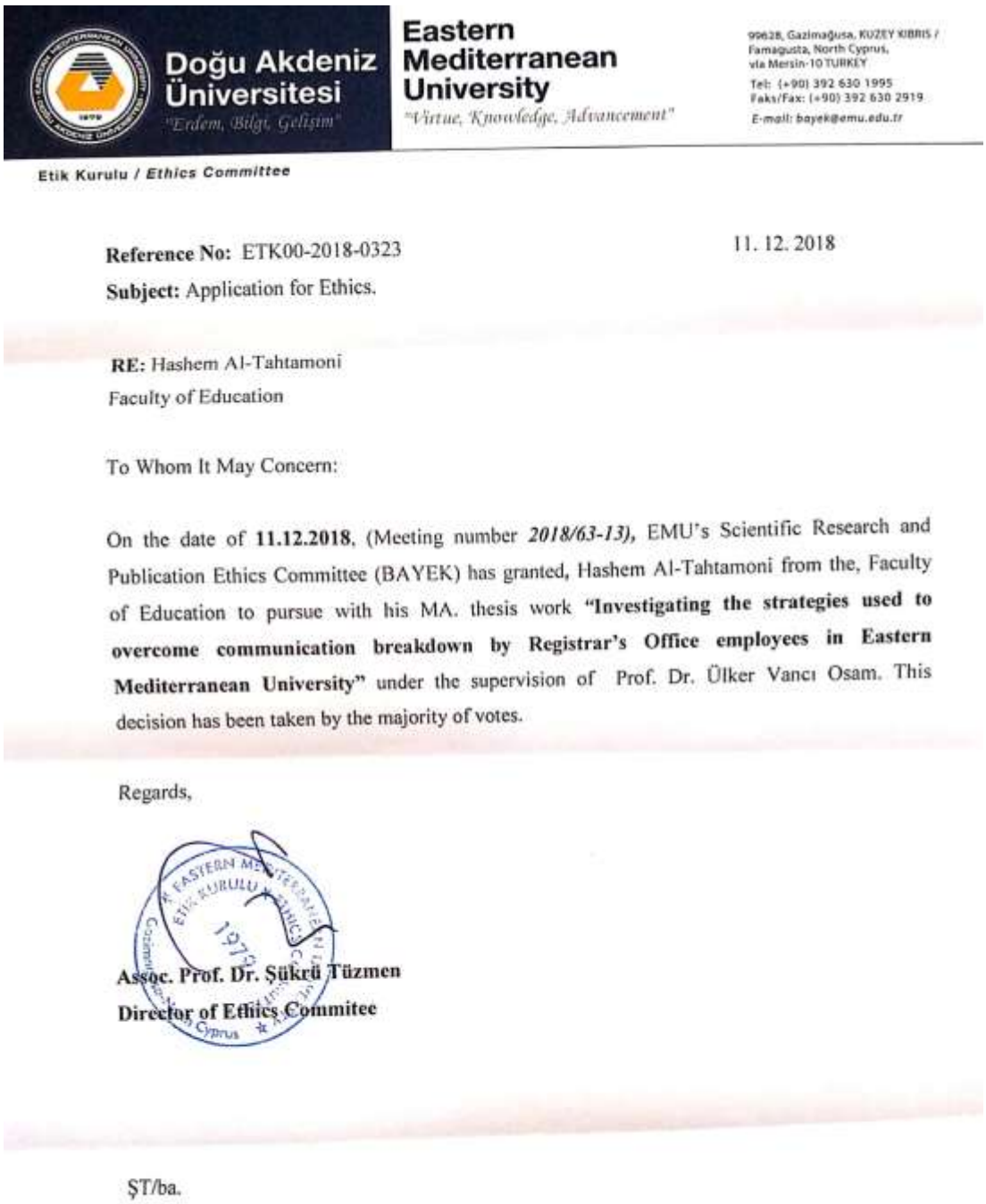
Best regards,

Yasuo Nakatani PhD

Professor of Faculty of Economics

Hosei University

Appendix G: Permission from Ethics Committee



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Etik Kurulu / *Ethics Committee*

Reference No: ETK00-2018-0323

11. 12. 2018

Subject: Application for Ethics.

RE: Hashem Al-Tahtamoni
Faculty of Education

To Whom It May Concern:

On the date of **11.12.2018**, (Meeting number ***2018/63-13)***, EMU's Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (BAYEK) has granted, Hashem Al-Tahtamoni from the, Faculty of Education to pursue with his MA. thesis work **"Investigating the strategies used to overcome communication breakdown by Registrar's Office employees in Eastern Mediterranean University"** under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ülker Vancı Osam. This decision has been taken by the majority of votes.

Regards,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şükrü Tüzmen
Director of Ethics Commitee

ŞT/ba.