

# Iraqi EFL University Students' Use of Communication Strategies in Written Performance

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**Abstract**—The aim of this study is to discover the kinds of communication strategies (CSs) used by high, intermediate, and low proficient Iraqi EFL students in written performance. For the purpose of this study, 47 Iraqi EFL students who are studying English at Al-Yarmouk University College and College of Basic Education/ University of Diyala. Those students have divided into three groups (high, intermediate, low) based on their language proficiency level. To collect the data from participants, they have been asked to write a 100-word argumentative essay. The essay topic is: *The influence of Facebook on Iraqi younger generation*. The data have been analyzed qualitatively using Rabab'ah's taxonomy of CSs (2001). The results of this study have revealed that the participants have used some of the CSs which have existed in the taxonomy of Rabab'ah. Additionally, they have used 3 other strategies which have not existed in this taxonomy. The results have showed that the language proficiency has direct effect on the use and choice of CSs in the written performance. Based on the results of this study and the researcher experience in the field of CSs, he has proposed taxonomy of written CSs to be used by learners and other researchers.

**Index Terms**—communication strategies (CSs), Iraqi English as foreign language (EFL) students, written communication strategies (WCSs)

## I. INTRODUCTION

There is concrete evidence that non-native speaker of English will never be able to master all structures or words of the target language. Uгла et al. (2013) say, "Non-native speakers cannot master all words, phrases, and terminologies of the English language." (p.44). And sine the language is a means of communication among all human beings, so how to communicate effectively in the target language is crucial importance. To reach is goal in the target language; foreign learners need to develop their communicative competence and especially the strategic competence to convey their messages or ideas via English safely and effectively. According to Canale and Swain (1980), strategic competence enables a speaker to communicate smoothly and fluently through second/ foreign language either verbally or nonverbally. Canale (1983) states that strategic competence is the mastering of verbal/ non-verbal communication strategies (CSs) which enable communication in the target language more effectively. The leaners use these kinds of strategies when they feel there is need to solve their problems in English or help them to avoid their breakdowns in the target language.

Previously and recently, most studies in the field of CSs have focused on CSs role in oral communication (see Paribakht, 1985; Willems, 1987; Yarmohammadi & Seif, 1992; Dornyei & Scott, 1995; Rabab'ah, 2001; Rababa'h, 2002; Nakatani, 2005; Farrahi, 2011; Al- AbuNawas, 2012; Uгла et al., 2013; and Al Alawi, 2015), but a few studies have focused on their role in written performance (see Chimbanga, 2000; Aliakbari & Karimi, 2009; Xhaferi, 2012; and Moattarian & Tahririan, 2013). Iraqi English as a foreign language (EFL) learners have difficulty to communicate either orally or literally in English.

According to Xhaferi (2012), the lack of vocabulary considers a difficulty that learners face in expressing their ideas in writing. For this reason, EFL learners need a means that enable them to compensate for their lack of vocabulary in the target language. Williams (2006) argues that CSs could improve the quality of communication. The researcher believes that the focus should not only limit to usage of CSs in the oral performance, but also in the written performance. Aliakbari and Karimi (2009), state that CSs can have many uses and repercussions in the written performance. Moattarian and Tahririan (2013) insist the great significant of studying CSs in written communication. For these reasons and since there is no evidence on studying CSs in written performance in Iraq, the researcher attempts to empirically investigate Iraqi EFL university students' use of CSs in the written performance and how language proficiency level (low, intermediate, high) affects the use of CSs in written performance. This study may shed some light on the role of CSs in EFL written performance in Iraq and in the field of CSs studies.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Selinker (1972) considers the first who introduces the term CSs. After then, most of studies have dealt with this term as a means which uses in oral communication (see Taron, 1977; Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Bialystok, 1983, 1990; Paribakht, 1985; Willems, 1987; Yarmohammadi & Seif, 1992; Dornyei & Scott, 1995; Rabab'ah, 2001; Rababa'h, 2002; Nakatani, 2005; AbuNawas, 2012; Ugla et al., 2013; and Al Alawi, 2015). There have been few or limited studies which have dealt with this term as a means of communication in the written performance (see Chimbganda, 2000; Aliakbari & Karimi, 2009; Xhaferi, 2012; and Moattarian & Tahririan, 2013).

A study of Chimbganda (2000) has investigated the CSs used by university students of Biology. This study has founded that most students use L2-based strategies (circumlocution, paraphrase, generalization) to achieve their communication goal. He insists the importance of paying more attention to those tasks and activities which improve learners' strategic competence. He also concludes that,

“students were prepared to take risk in their writing communication by restructuring their discourse to negotiate the intended meaning, to explain and redefine their ideas and to risk making grammatical and other generative errors, were able to do better” (p. 327).

Another study of Aliakbari and Karimi (2009) has conducted to empirically investigate the use of CSs in the written medium by Iranian L2 learners. It has tried to find out how language proficiency affects the types of CSs which imply by Iranian L2 learners in their written production. This study suggests that learners with high and low proficiency level have increased their use of reconceptualization strategies while the rate of substitution strategies has decreased. It reveals that there are significant differences between low and high proficient learners in terms of using reconceptualization, substitution strategies, and lexical communication strategies. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of teaching reconceptualization strategies to the L2 learners and it shows that they are more useful than substitution strategies.

Additionally, in her study to find out the kinds of CSs which have used by Albanian-speaking students majoring in English Language and Literature at SEEU, Xhaferi (2012) concludes that approximation, circumlocution, literal translation, appeal for help, and use of all-purpose words strategies are the most preferred CSs which have used by Albanian students in written production. Her study also shows that male and female students have used all twelve strategies namely: message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use of all-purpose words, use of nonlinguistic signals, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help, stalling, word-coinage, and foreignizing. It reveals that male students have used CSs less frequently than female students.

Finally, Moattarian and Tahririan (2013) have conducted a study to investigate the CSs which have used by Iranian EFL learners in oral and written performances. Those students have divided into high and low proficiency level. The results of this study reveal that some CSs are inapplicable in written performance such as non-linguistics strategies. On the other hand, some CSs are eliminated in the written performances due to manageability purposes such as appeal for help, appeal for approval, and time gaining strategies. Moreover, learners use CSs less frequently in their written performance. Finally, the use of CSs by learners significantly has varied based on their level of proficiency.

As it has noticed that there were very few studies on CSs used in written performance. These studies all show that L2/FL learners have used some CSs in their written performances. These CSs have varied among them based on their proficiency level, gender, and context of communication.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Research Questions

The present study investigates how Iraqi EFL students with low, intermediate, and high English language proficiency level use CSs in their written performance. It aims to answer the following three questions:

1. What kinds of CSs do high proficient students use in their written performance?
2. What kinds of CSs do intermediate proficient students use in their written performance?
3. What kinds of CSs do low proficient students use in their written performance?

#### B. Research Instrument and Procedure

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has introduced CSs and their importance in writing to the participants. After then, low, intermediate, and high proficient students have given 40 minutes to write a 100-word argumentative essay. The essay topic is: *The influence of Facebook on Iraqi younger generation*. The researcher has chosen this topic because of it is of a general and controversial nature in Iraq. First, the researcher has trained the participants on how to think about this topic and then he has asked them some questions such as ‘How do you write the introduction of your essay?’ ‘How do you feel about Facebook?’ and ‘What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook?’ He has also asked students to reflect on their thought processes in their writing mainly in terms of focus on lexical difficulties they may encounter and the ways they may use to compensate for their lack of vocabulary in the target language. This reflection helps the researcher to identify the CSs which have used by students during the written performance. All the 47 argumentative essays have analyzed and categorized into Rabab'ah's taxonomy of CSs (2001). This taxonomy could be explained as follows:

TABLE 1.  
RABAB'AH'S TAXONOMY OF CSS (SOURCE: RABABA'H, 2001)

Communication Strategies	Description
<b>A. L1-based strategies</b>	
<b>1. Literal translation</b>	
	Translating literally a lexical item. e. g. "It is electrical stairs" for " Escalator".
<b>2. Language switch:</b>	
	This refers to the use of a word or a phrase from LI to represent in the target language item. This category may be divided into sub-categories according to the reasons for switching.
a) L1 slips and immediate insertion	Learners insert a word unintentionally -a slip of the tongue. Learners also insert words to complete the intended meaning. e. g. Nasi (tr: I forgot)..... skin scan e: r (15 sec) qiyas (tr: measure) (6 sec) e: r ((unintel 3 sec)) em temperature degree?
b) L1 appeal for help	This refers to when learners use Arabic to appeal for help. The following example is taken from the story-telling task. e. g. e: r yesterday em ..., the guy? ghalat? (tr: wrong? ) drive er ..... er drive the [baisklet]
c) L1-optional meaning strategy	The learners use LI -intended meaning (exact Arabic word) to refer to the object as in the following example. The use of the word ascenseur which was originally French, but has become part of everyday language, is used by the learners. ascenseur (tr: lift) (( the researcher asked "In English? ") the subject insisted hia ascenseur (tr: it's a lift)
d) L1-retrieval strategies	Learners may realize at a certain time that the item they want to use is there, but they have to retrieve it in some way, so they wait for the term to appear. In the meantime, they use Arabic trying to recall what items they have. The following is a clear example of LI -retrieval strategy. Hathi bisamouha (tr: this is called) (20 sec) to light the room e: r to light the room.
e) L1ignorance acknowledgement	This is used when learners express their ignorance of the target language item required. e. g. er mush aaref hai (tr: I don't know this).
<b>B. L2-based strategies</b>	
<b>1. Avoidance strategies:</b>	
a) Message abandonment	This refers to leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty. e. g. The driver didn't do anything to em to prevent er em or to ... he didn't do anything.
b) Topic avoidance	This refers to reducing the message by avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic language-wise, or by leaving out some intended elements as a result of lacking the necessary linguistic resources.
<b>2. Word coinage</b>	
	This refers to the creation of a non-existent L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule. e. g. "unmove" in the following utterance. he found this the man who dr who hit them er find him his car is er is,... it's unmove
<b>3. Circumlocution</b>	
	This refers to exemplifying, illustrating, or describing the properties of the target object or action. e. g. "We use it to make the baby walking in the house easily" to refer to 'baby walker'
<b>4. -correction/ Restructuring</b>	
	This refers to attempts to correct oneself by trying to restructure the utterance to reach the optimal meaning. e. g. the car was broke. ....broken.
<b>5. Approximation</b>	
	Using an alternative lexical item that shares certain semantic features with the target item, or using a generalized TL item. e. g. The use of 'quicker' in the following example to mean 'faster' The boys em be becau: se they because he is er ..... very ..... er quicker ..... in spee er very speed in driving.
<b>6. Mumbling</b>	
	Swallowing or muttering inaudibly a word ( or part of a word ) whose correct form the speaker is uncertain about. e. g. he go er or er ((muttering)) on his bicycle.
<b>7. L2 appeal for help</b>	
	This refers to asking for help directly or indirectly. Though the author did not intend to give any help, some subjects appealed for help. e. g. e: r .....I don't know. Electric e: r (13 sec) electric ....., ladder? Electric ladder? Electric steps? Step? I don't know.
<b>8. Self-repetition</b>	
	The learner repeats a word or a string of words immediately after they have been said. e. g. he was very happy because he didn't ca(re) he didn't care for him when he fell.
<b>9. Use of similar-sounding words</b>	
	This strategy is used to replace a lexical item whose form the speaker is unsure of with an existing or non-existent word which sounds like the target item. e. g. "this is lekstenturel" for "fire extinguisher"
<b>10. Use of all-purpose words</b>	
	This refers to the use of words like "stuff", "thing", "things" "do" or "make". e. g. the man was trying to fix it (the car). he looked at it and he did the same thing
<b>11. Ignorance acknowledgement</b>	
	This refers to the learner's admission of his lack of the required knowledge when he says that he does not know. e. g. e: r ern I don't know, tell me.

### C. Participants

The participants of the current study consist of 47 (male and female) fourth year EFL students who are studying English in the department of English language at Al-Yarmouk University College/ Diyala and College of Basic Education/ University of Diyala. Those students are native speakers of Arabic. They have ranged in age from 22 to 24 years old. Each student had completed 8 years of English study prior to entering the college. Those participants have selected, because of their availability at particular times, which means that they have not randomly assigned. The researcher has divided them into three groups low, intermediate, and high proficient students. They have divided into three groups based on their achievements in the last academic year (2015-2016). The following table shows the backgrounds information of the participants.

TABLE 2.  
BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPANTS

College	N	LP		IP		HP	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Al-Yarmouk University College	22	3	7	2	5	5	0
College of Basic Education	25	4	4	3	7	0	7
Total	47	7	11	5	12	5	7

Note: HP=high proficient students, IP= intermediate proficient students, LP= low proficient students

## IV. RESULTS

### A. Results Related to Research Question 1: What Kinds of CSs Do High Proficient Students Use in Their Written Performance?

As shown in Table 3, high proficient students have used only 6 CSs which exist in Rabab'ah's taxonomy of CSs (2001). The most frequently employed strategy by the high proficient students is "approximation" (f=13) (e.g. Participant 7 has tried to write era, but she has used century instead). On the other hand, they have used 5 CSs namely: "literal translation" (f=2) (e.g. Participant 1 has translated "it does not mean" from her L1(Arabic) by saying "that not means"), "word coinage" (f=2) (e.g. Participant 9 has creation of a non-existent L2 word "famousest" by applying a supposed L2 rule), "language switch" (f=1) (e.g. Participant 2 has ask the researcher for help to know the meaning of an intended word "useful"), "circumlocution" (f=1) (e.g. Participant 3 has illustrated the word "negative"), and "use of similar-sounding words" (f=1) (e.g. Participant 5 has used "hagers" instead of "hackers") less frequently.

TABLE 3.  
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY HIGH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

PS	LT	LS	AV	WG	CI	SC	AP	MU	L2A	SR	US	UP	IA
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	0	2	1	0	13	0	0	0	1	0	0

Note: PS= Participants, LT= Literal translation, LS= Language switch, AV= Avoidance strategies, WG= Word coinage, CI= Circumlocution, SC= Self-correction/ Restructuring, AP= Approximation, MU=Mumbling, L2A= L2 appeal for help, SR= Self-repetition, US= Use of similar-sounding words, UP= Use of all-purpose words, IA= Ignorance acknowledgement.

### B. Results Related to Research Question 2: What Kinds of CSs Do Intermediate Proficient Students Use in Their Written Performance?

As shown in Table 4, intermediate proficient students also have used only 5 CSs which exist in Rabab'ah's taxonomy of CSs (2001). The most frequently employed strategy by the intermediate proficient students "use of similar-sounding words" (f=11) (e.g. Participant 16 has used "everythinks" instead of "everything"), while they have used "literal translation" (f=10) (e.g. Participant 11 has translated the words "nowadays" literally from her L1 by saying "In these days") and "approximation" (f=10) (e.g. Participant 4 has used "bad" instead of "disadvantage") equally. On the other hand, they have used 2 CSs namely "language switch" (f=5) (e.g. Participant 15 has used an Arabic word "mesli" which means "entertaining") and "circumlocution" (f=1) (e.g. Participant 10 has described the word "Facebook" in details") less frequently.

TABLE 4.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY INTERMEDIATE PROFICIENT STUDENTS													
PS	LT	LS	AV	WG	CI	SC	AP	MU	L2A	SR	US	UP	IA
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
6	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0
7	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
9	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
17	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	10	5	0	0	1	0	10	0	0	0	11	0	0

Note: PS= Participants, LT= Literal translation, LS= Language switch, AV= Avoidance strategies, WG= Word coinage, CI= Circumlocution, SC= Self-correction/ Restructuring, AP= Approximation, MU=Mumbling, L2A= L2 appeal for help, SR= Self-repetition, US= Use of similar-sounding words, UP= Use of all-purpose words, IA= Ignorance acknowledgement.

### C. Results Related to Research Question 3: What Kinds of CSs Do Low Proficient Students Use in Their Written Performance?

As shown in Table 5, low proficient students have used only 3 CSs which exist in Rabab'ah's taxonomy of CSs (2001). The most frequently employed strategy by the low proficient students is "word coinage" (f=8) (e.g. Participant 6 has used "Non-do not" instead of "do not"). On the other hand, they have used 2 CSs namely: "language switch" (f=1) (e.g. Participant 5 has used an Arabic word "Yufiduna" which means "useful for us") and "approximation" (f=1) (e.g. Participant 1 has used the word "combine" instead of "combine" instead of "gather") less frequently.

TABLE 5.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY LOW PROFICIENT STUDENTS													
PS	LT	LS	AV	WG	CI	SC	AP	MU	L2A	SR	US	UP	IA
1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: PS= Participants, LT= Literal translation, LS= Language switch, AV= Avoidance strategies, WG= Word coinage, CI= Circumlocution, SC= Self-correction/ Restructuring, AP= Approximation, MU=Mumbling, L2A= L2 appeal for help, SR= Self-repetition, US= Use of similar-sounding words, UP= Use of all-purpose words, IA= Ignorance acknowledgement.

### D. Other Communication Strategies Used by High, Intermediate, and Low Proficient Student

As shown in Table 6, the participants have used 3 CSs which do not exist in Rabab'ah's taxonomy of CSs (2001). These strategies are "use of abbreviation" (e.g. Participant A has used "app" instead of "application"), "replacement" (e.g. Participant B has used "is media" instead of "is a means"), and "using mobile dictionary" (e.g. Participants have used their mobile dictionary to find out the intended target words"). Intermediate proficient students have used these CSs more frequently (f=24) than low (f=17) and high proficient students (f=11).

High proficient students have used only 3 CSs namely: "using abbreviation" (f=6), "replacement" (f=3), and "using cell phone dictionary" (f=2). Intermediate proficient students were used 2 CSs namely: "using mobile dictionary" (f=21) and "replacement" (f=3). Low proficient student have only used one CS namely: "using mobile dictionary" (f=16).

TABLE 6.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY THE STUDENTS				
CSs	Description	HP	IP	LP
Using abbreviations	The students use abbreviations instead of mention the intended words, because they lack the target words. For example: "app" for application	6	0	0
Replacement	The students replace the intended word with another word which does not give the same meaning of the intended one.	3	3	0
Using mobile dictionary	The students use their mobile dictionary to find out the intended word.	4	21	16
Total	/	11	24	16

Note: CSs= Communication Strategies, HP=high proficient students, IP= intermediate proficient students, LP= low proficient students

## V. FINDINGS

Based on the results of this study, it is obvious evidence that the use of CSs in the written performance varies among the low, intermediate, and high proficient Iraqi EFL student. And this means that the students' proficiency level has direct effect on the kinds of CSs used by them. These results are in line with the findings of Moattarian and Tahririan (2013), Garcia (2011), Khamis (2010), Yarmohammadi and Seif (1992), and Zhao (2010).

The findings reveal that the high proficient students have used "approximation strategy" more frequently than "literal translation," "word coinage," "language switch," "circumlocution," and "use of similar-sounding words." This means that high proficient student have the ability to deal with their lack of vocabulary by returning to their linguistic knowledge to find out the suitable word which convey the intended message. This is in line with Aliakbari, and Allvar (2009) who have stated that the learners with high proficiency level depend more on their linguistic repertoire to reduce the gaps in their performance by using CSs.


On other hand, intermediate proficient students have used "use of similar-sounding words," "literal translation," and "approximation" more frequently to compensate for their lexical deficiencies. In contrast, they have used "language switch," "word coinage," and "circumlocution" less frequently. These results to some extent are similar to the studies of Wongsawang (2001), Xhaferi (2012), and Moattarian and Tahririan (2013) which have revealed that the participant have used CSs such as approximation, circumlocution, literal translation and, word coinage more frequently.

Although low proficient students have lacked the target vocabularies in the written performance, they have used very limited kinds of CSs. They have used "word coinage" "language switch," and "approximation." "Word coinage" has been used more frequently by them. This means that those students need to be aware of the importance of CSs to compensate for their lack of vocabulary in the target language. According Aliakbari, and Allvar (2009) teaching CSs to low proficient students may enhance their performance in writing.

Additionally, the three groups of students (high, intermediate, low) have used some strategies such as "replacement," "use of abbreviation," and "using cell phone dictionary," which did not exist in the Rabab'ah's taxonomy of CSs (2001). This means that Iraqi EFL students have the ability to deal with their lack of vocabulary or to solve their problems in conveying their message in the written performance. All three groups high, intermediate, and low proficient students have used cell phone dictionary to find out the intended target word. The intermediate proficient students have used this strategy more frequently than low and high proficient students. This strategy beings more useful and workable to find out the intended target word in written performance, especially for low proficient EFL students. High proficient students have used abbreviation strategy which means that those students may know the target words, but they have lacked spelling. On other hand, high and intermediate proficient student have used replacement strategy which means that they have the ability to use another target word to avoid their lack of the intended word.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher believes that there is need to suggest a new taxonomy of written communication strategies (WCSs) to be used by EFL learners in the written performance. The researchers may also use such taxonomy of WCSs as a base to conduct other studies with different subjects and situations since that this taxonomy considers the first in the field of written performance. The researcher includes this taxonomy most of the strategies which have used by Iraqi EFL students who have participated in this study. He believes that such WCSs may help the EFL student to compensate for their lack of vocabulary in the target language. This taxonomy divides into three main strategies namely: first language (L1) based written strategies, foreign language (FL) based written strategies, and use of non-linguistics strategies. The researcher also uses drawing strategy in this taxonomy based on his experience in this field not on the results of this study. He believes that this strategy is very important in a situation that the learner cannot find out the target word even when he/she uses all other strategies. On the other hand, he excludes "L1-optional meaning strategy", because it is unworkable in the target language. The strategies of this taxonomy could be identified as follows:

TABLE 7.  
RAED'S TAXONOMY OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES (2017)

Written communication strategies	Description
<b>1. L1-based WCSs</b>	The learners derive the information from their L1 language (Arabic) to compensate for their lack of vocabulary in English
a) Literal translation	The learners translate the intended word from the L1 language (Arabic) into English literally. For example: <b>"take another personality" instead of "Impersonate"</b>
b) Language switch	The learners use Arabic words instead of the intended target words to compensate for their lack of vocabulary in English
1) L1 appeal for help	The learner ask for help using their L1 language (Arabic) to find out the target word. For example: "كيف نكتب كلمة مفيد باللغة الانكليزية؟" "Keifa Naktub Kalimat Mufeed Bilughla Al-Engliziah?" <b>Translation: "How do we write the word,,,,,, in English language?"</b>
<b>2. FL-based WCSs</b>	The learners derive the information from their FL (English) to compensate for their lack of the intended target word.
a) Approximation	The learners use alternative lexical items that share certain semantic features with the target items, or using a generalized English word. For example: <b>"big application" instead of "great application"</b>
b) Use of similar-sounding words	The learners use words that have the same sound like the target words. For example: <b>"hagers" instead of "hackers"</b>
c) Circumlocution	The learners exemplifying or describing the target words instead of writing the exact one. For example: <b>"it is a social network site that people use to communicate...." instead of "Facebook"</b>
d) Use of abbreviation	The learners use abbreviations of the target words instead of writing the target words, because they do no sure of their spelling. For example: <b>"app." instead of "application"</b>
e) Replacement	The learners replace the target words with other words even when they do not give the same meanings of the target words. For example: <b>"social" instead of "friendly"</b>
<b>3. Non-linguistics WCSs</b>	The learners use objects such as cellphone which have nothing to do with linguistic elements to find out the intended target words.
a) Using mobile dictionary	The learners use their mobile dictionary to find out the intended target words.
b) Drawing	The learners draw the target words instead of writing them, because they lacked the target words. For example: <b>"drawing hammer (  )" instead of writing it.</b>

Note: L1=first language (Arabic), WCSs= written communication strategies, FL=foreign language (English).

## VI. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study lead one to conclude that high, intermediate, and low proficient students have varied in using CSs. They have used approximation, literal translation, word coinage, language switch, circumlocution, use of similar-sounding words, replacement, use of abbreviation, and using cell phone dictionary differently. The results also show that the students have not used all the CSs which have existed in the Rabab'ah's taxonomy of CSs (2001) such as avoidance strategies, self-correction/ restructuring, L2 appeal for help, self-repetition, use of all-purpose words, and ignorance acknowledgement. This means that not all CSs could be workable in oral and written communication.

Although this study has achieved its objectives, there have some limitations such as the number of the participants, time, CSs, and data collection procedures. So that further studies advice to choose a number of participants bigger than the one which has used in this study to make their findings more generalized. They also advise to use more than one instrument to collect their data and based their studies on CSs which consider workable in written communication rather than in oral. Finally, if there is opportunity to find out the effect of teaching these strategies on the students' written performance, it is advisable to do so.

The study has also some implications for EFL teachers. They may increase their students' awareness of the importance of CSs in writing performance by familiarizing them with the use of CSs especially in situations when they lack the target vocabulary.

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