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## Exploring Iranian Learners' Use of Conversational Strategies in Simultaneous Acquisition of English and Chinese

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### Abstract

The pursuit of proficiency in multiple languages has gained increasing importance in our globalized world. In this endeavor, the simultaneous acquisition of English as a Foreign Language and Chinese as a Second Foreign Language by Persian-speaking learners represents a unique and challenging educational context. This study explores the impact of cultural and linguistic differences on Persian-speaking learners acquiring English as a Foreign Language and Chinese as a Second Foreign Language. The researcher used a mixed-method design with 48 participants from a private school and a university in Isfahan, Iran. The results show that explicit instruction in conversational strategies improves speaking skills, with learners using strategies like circumlocution and code-switching. Cultural adaptation, fear of misunderstanding, and linguistic challenges were identified as the key factors affecting strategy effectiveness. The participants expressed the need for tailored pedagogical approaches to address these challenges effectively. The study highlights the importance of a holistic approach to language acquisition, emphasizing cultural sensitivity and linguistic adaptability. This research contributes valuable insights into the role of conversational strategies in navigating linguistic and cultural boundaries, with pedagogical implications for language instructors.

**Keywords:** Conversational strategies, CSL (Chinese as a Second Language), Cultural dynamics, Linguistic dynamics, Simultaneous language acquisition.

## I | INTRODUCTION



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The acquisition of language skills in a multilingual context presents unique challenges and opportunities for language learners and educators. This study explores the dynamic landscape of teaching and learning strategies in the context of simultaneous EFL (English) and CSL (Chinese) instruction for Persian-speaking learners. The convergence of English and Chinese, two globally significant languages, is of particular interest in a world characterized by multicultural communication and international collaboration. By examining this educational paradigm, the researchers aim to shed light on more innovative approaches and pedagogical techniques that facilitate the concurrent acquisition of two distinct languages within a Persian-speaking student cohort.

As highlighted by [Burkart \(1998\)](#), the mastery of speaking skills is often regarded as a pivotal aspect of language acquisition, shaping learners' ability to effectively communicate in their target languages. In the case of simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction, the complexity is amplified, as learners are



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expected to navigate two linguistic systems, each with its own unique structures and conventions. Additionally, the [Burkart \(1998\)](#) acknowledged Mackey's assertion that speaking, as a linguistic skill, is inherently complex. It requires individuals to articulate thoughts and think critically about what to say ([Mackey, 1978](#)).

In this context, the overarching goal of learning English and Chinese extends beyond mere language proficiency; it encompasses the development of a comprehensive communication ability that enables learners to engage effectively in a rapidly globalizing world. Unfortunately, many Persian-speaking learners face significant challenges in reaching this level of proficiency in both languages, due to a range of factors. These factors may include the inherent linguistic differences among Persian, English and Chinese, a shortage of qualified teachers and suitable learning materials, and an insufficient immersive environment.

The literature highlights the crucial role of Conversational Strategies (CSs) in bridging these gaps ([Dörnyei, 1995](#); [Rooholamin et al., 2016](#); [Neisi et al., 2019](#); [Namaziandost et al., 2020](#)). These CSs offer learners alternative pathways to communicate successfully, even in the absence of complete linguistic competence. They are instrumental in mitigating breakdowns in communication and enhancing the learners' sense of security, satisfaction, and their ability to connect with others in the target language. The strategies include circumlocution, word coinage, foreignizing, approximation, literal translation, appealing for help, and code-switching ([Brown, 2000](#); [Rooholamin et al., 2017](#); [Hashemifardnia et al., 2018](#); [Ziafar & Namaziandost, 2019](#); [Neisi et al., 2019](#); [Namaziandost et al., 2020](#)). Understanding and implementing these strategies can significantly benefit Persian-speaking learners in a simultaneous EFL and CSL instructional context.

## 1. Research Questions

The research questions investigated in this research are as follows:

1. How can the integration and explicit instruction of conversational strategies (CSs) impact the speaking proficiency of Persian-speaking learners engaged in simultaneous EFL (English) and CSL (Chinese) instruction?
2. To what extent do the cultural and linguistic differences among Persian, English, and Chinese influence the effectiveness and use of CSs in the context of simultaneous language acquisition, and how can pedagogical strategies be tailored to address these challenges?

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The pursuit of proficiency in multiple languages has gained increasing importance in our globalized world. In this endeavor, the simultaneous acquisition of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and CSL (Chinese as a Second Foreign Language) by Persian-speaking learners represents a unique and challenging educational context. Mastering various languages has become more important in our interconnected society. Persian-speaking learners face a unique and complex educational situation when acquiring EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and CSL (Chinese as a Second Language) simultaneously. This literature review explores the key themes and findings related to the teaching and learning strategies for this specific instructional scenario, drawing upon relevant research and scholarly contributions.

### 1. Importance of Multilingual Proficiency

The demand for multilingual proficiency, particularly in English and Chinese, arises from the global significance of these languages in commerce, diplomacy, and cultural exchange. This importance is



underscored by Burkart's observation that speaking skills are a vital measure of language proficiency (1998). Achieving competence in both languages is crucial for Persian-speaking learners seeking to engage effectively in international contexts. The need for skill in many languages, especially English and Chinese, is driven by the worldwide importance of these languages in commerce, diplomacy, and cultural interactions. Burkart (1998) emphasized the significance of speaking abilities as a crucial indicator of language proficiency. Mastering both languages is essential for Persian-speaking learners who aim to effectively participate in global settings. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) at the same time poses distinctive difficulties. Mackey (1978) highlights that speaking requires the simultaneous processing of concepts and language creation, making it a complicated talent. The language and cultural disparities among English, Chinese, and Persian add to the intricacy of this learning environment.

## 2. Challenges in Simultaneous EFL and CSL Instruction

Simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction presents unique challenges. As Mackey notes, speaking is a complex skill that demands the simultaneous processing of thoughts and linguistic production (1978). The linguistic and cultural differences among English, Chinese, and Persian increase the complexity of this learning context. Conversational strategies are crucial for dealing with these problems. Oxford (1990) describes communication strategies as the skills that let learners communicate effectively despite their limited language knowledge. Conversational strategies are essential for enhancing successful communication in EFL and CSL situations by filling in vocabulary and grammar deficiencies, as shown by several studies (Etemadfar et al., 2019; Peng, 2020; Namaziandost et al., 2020; Horness & Jaturapitakkul, 2021; Arabmofrad & Mehdiabadi, 2022).

## 3. Conversational Strategies (CSs)

Conversational strategies are instrumental for addressing these challenges. Oxford (1990) defines CSs as tools that enable learners to navigate communication despite limitations in their language knowledge. The use of CSs can compensate for gaps in vocabulary and grammar, making them crucial in facilitating effective communication in EFL and CSL contexts (Etemadfar et al., 2019; Namaziandost et al., 2020). Communication strategy research has developed over time. Previous studies concentrated on compensatory methods, but current research highlights a more optimistic perspective, where learners utilize several parts of their linguistic ability to communicate clear and acceptable messages (Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Chan, 2021; Kaufmann et al., 2021; Shakki, 2023).

## 4. Types of CSs

The literature highlights various types of CSs, including circumlocution, approximation, appeal for help, and code-switching. Circumlocution involves using descriptive language to replace a missing word, while approximation uses close equivalents to convey meaning. Appeal for help and code-switching are the strategies of seeking assistance or switching between languages (Brown, 2007). Circumlocution is the use of descriptive language to substitute for a missing word, whereas approximation entails utilizing close equivalents to communicate meaning. Seeking help and code-switching are the tactics that learners use to ask for assistance or switch between languages (Brown, 2007; Sato & Dussuel, 2021; Maghsoudi et al., 2022).

## 5. Effectiveness of CSs in Language Learning

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of teaching and using CSs in language learning. Majd (2014) found that teaching CSs, including circumlocution and appeal for help, improved students' communication skills and reduced anxiety. Hmaid (2014) reported that explicit teaching of CSs enhanced learners' communication abilities and raised awareness of strategy use. Saeidi and Ebrahimi Farshchi (2015) also found the positive effects of CSs on students' oral production. Multiple researches have investigated the



efficacy of incorporating and utilizing cognitive strategies in language acquisition. Majd (2014) discovered that instructing communication strategies, such as circumlocution and seeking assistance, would enhance students' communication abilities and lessened anxiety. Hmaid (2014) found that directly instructing learners in communication strategies improved their ability to communicate and increased their awareness of using strategies. Saeidi and Ebrahimi Farshchi (2015) discovered the beneficial impacts of CSs on pupils' verbal expression.

## 6. Communication Strategies in Language Learning

It is essential to distinguish between communication strategies and learning strategies. Communication strategies pertain to facilitating productive communication, while learning strategies involve intake, memory, storage, and recall of information (Tarone, 1981). Communication strategies are potentially conscious means for addressing communication challenges and achieving specific communicative goals (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). Differentiating between communication techniques and learning strategies is crucial. Communication strategies focus on enhancing effective communication, while learning methods encompass the acquisition, retention, storage, and retrieval of information (Tarone, 1981). Communication strategies are the deliberate methods used to overcome communication obstacles and accomplish certain communication objectives (Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Soodmand Afshar & Bayar, 2021; Alavi et al., 2021). Research on communication strategies has evolved over time. While earlier studies focused on compensatory strategies, contemporary research emphasizes a more positive view, where learners employ various aspects of their linguistic competence to send clear and acceptable messages (Faerch & Kasper, 1983).

## III. AIM OF THE STUDY

Through this exploration, the research team aims to provide insights and guidance for language educators, syllabus designers, and teaching methodologies, helping them to better prepare Persian-speaking students for successful communication in both English and Chinese. The study investigates the teaching and learning strategies in the context of Simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction for Persian-speaking learners, recognizing the importance of conversational strategies and the need for innovative and effective pedagogical methods. By addressing the unique challenges and opportunities in this multilingual context, the researchers contribute to the understanding of language acquisition and education in an interconnected globalized world.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Design

A sequential exploratory mixed-methods design is a research approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods in a specific sequence to gain a comprehensive understanding of a research topic. In this design, qualitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. In the qualitative phase of the study, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with language learners to explore their experiences, challenges, and strategies in learning both English and Chinese languages. They also employed observation techniques to gain insights into the learners' behaviors and interactions in language learning contexts. Through the qualitative data analysis, the researchers identified common themes, patterns, and unique perspectives that emerged from the interviews and observations, providing a rich understanding of the complexities of language learning. Following the qualitative phase, in the quantitative phase, the researchers designed administered



standardized assessments to gather quantitative data on language proficiency, use of conversational strategies, and other relevant variables from a larger sample of language learners. This phase aimed to quantify the prevalence and effectiveness of different conversational strategies employed by the learners.

## 2. Participants

The participants were drawn from Persian-speaking learners engaged in simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction. Forty-eight participants were chosen from various educational institutions or programs to ensure diversity in learning contexts and experiences. The participants from multiple educational institutions or programs, such as private language schools and universities in Isfahan City, were included to account for variations in teaching methods and contexts. To investigate the impact of explicit CS instruction, the researchers selected a group of Persian-speaking learners who had received training in the use of CSs. This group was considered as the experimental group in the current investigation. A control group was also selected. It consisted of Persian-speaking learners who had not received explicit CS instruction. This group served as a basis for comparisons with the experimental group. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic data of the participants.

**Table 1.** Participants' demographic data.

Groups	N	Age	Gender	Major	Percentage (%)
University students	24	18-30	Male	Language & Literature	50%
Private school students	24	15-19	Male	Humanity	50%

## 3. Instruments

### 3.1. Qualitative Instruments (Phase 1)

#### 3.1.1. Semi-structured Interviews

An interview guide developed by the researchers was used to explore the participants' experiences, challenges, and perceptions of using CSs in simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction. All the interviews were performed online (by e-mails sent to the participants), and the average time of each interview was 30 minutes. There were two sets of question, one for the university students, and the other for the private school students. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The questions were sent to professionals prior to the interview.

#### 3.1.2. Classroom Observation Checklist

[Sugiono \(2020\)](#) states that passive participation means that the researcher is present at the scene but does not interact or participate. The observations in this study were made on the participation and response of the students in speaking and their development of CSs. These observations were carried out two times and in both English and Chinese classrooms. A classroom observation checklist developed by the researchers was used to document how CSs were integrated into teaching practices during simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction. The checklist included items related to the use of CSs by teachers and learners, interaction patterns, and instructional strategies. In fact, the research team used this instrument during the classroom observations to record the qualitative data.

### 3.2. Quantitative Instruments (Phase 2)

#### 3.2.1. Semi-structured Interviews



The researchers developed standardized language proficiency tests for both English and Chinese, focusing on speaking skills. These tests were equivalent in difficulty and content to ensure a valid comparison between the experimental and control groups. The pre-test was administered before the CS instruction, and the post-test was conducted after the instruction to assess speaking proficiency improvements. The measurement of speaking skills in the study was conducted through a researcher-made speaking pre-test and a post-test. The participants were prompted to engage in spoken discourse about topics from their textbook for 2 to 3 minutes each, and their responses were recorded for evaluation by a second rater. This approach is justified as it directly assesses the participants' ability to communicate orally, which is a crucial aspect of language proficiency. Additionally, the topics for discussion were selected from the curriculum covered in the participants' regular institute course, ensuring relevance and alignment with their learning objectives.

The reliability of the speaking test was ensured through inter-rater reliability analysis. Multiple raters evaluated the participants' spoken responses independently, and the consistency of their ratings was assessed using Pearson's correlation analysis. This method is justified as it provides a quantitative measure of agreement between raters, indicating the reliability of the test scores. The high reliability coefficients obtained for both the pre-test ( $r = 0.812$ ) and post-test ( $r = 0.843$ ) suggest that the test yielded consistent results across different raters, enhancing its credibility as a valid assessment tool for measuring speaking proficiency.

The speaking tests were administered in both English and Chinese to assess the participants' proficiency in both languages. Each participant was prompted to engage in spoken discourse in both English and Chinese, covering the topics relevant to their language learning curriculum. The duration of each speaking session was approximately 2 to 3 minutes, during which the participants were encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas on the given topics. For English-speaking proficiency assessment, the participants discussed the topics, while, the Chinese-speaking proficiency assessment was based on the topics relevant to their Chinese language curriculum. The participants' spoken responses in both English and Chinese were recorded for evaluation by a rater. This approach was allowed for the objective assessment of the participants' speaking skills in both languages and ensured consistency in evaluation across all the participants. By administering speaking tests in both English and Chinese, the researchers aimed to comprehensively assess the participants' proficiency in both languages and provide a thorough understanding of their language learning outcomes.

### 3.2.2. Survey Questionnaire

The research team designed a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data on the learners' motivation, anxiety levels, and perceptions of CS instruction effectiveness (inspired by [Oxford, 2016](#)). The questions were answered on a Likert scale or were open-ended to obtain structured quantitative data. The researchers administered the survey in both the experimental and control groups. The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach's alpha and found to be 0.848, indicating a very good level of reliability.

### 3.2.3. Observation Rubric (for CS Instruction)

The researchers created an observation rubric to assess the quality and effectiveness of CS instruction during the study (informed by [Marzano et al., 2003](#)). The rubric included a criterion for instructional clarity, engagement, use of CSs, and learner involvement. The Researchers used this rubric during the classroom observations to provide quantitative data on the CS instruction quality.



### 3.2.4. Demographic Questionnaire

The researchers developed a demographic questionnaire to collect basic data about the participants, such as age, gender, language learning history, and educational background. This instrument served to profile the participants and ensure the data relevance.

## 4. Data Collection Procedure

### 4.1. Qualitative Data Collection (Phase 1)

The researchers identified and selected the Persian-speaking learners engaged in simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction from various educational institutions or programs. The research team ensured diversity in the sample, considering factors such as age and language proficiency levels. The researchers obtained informed consent from the individual participants, explaining the purpose and nature of the study. They conducted semi-structured interviews with the selected participants. They also used an interview guide developed based on research questions. The researchers recorded and transcribed the interviews for analysis. They observed simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction in classrooms using a classroom observation checklist. They analyzed qualitative data through thematic analysis to identify the recurring themes and patterns. Moreover, a qualitative report was provided with a summary of the findings from the interviews and classroom observations.

In fact, the qualitative data were collected in two main stages. First of all, classroom observations were carried out while the students were learning languages in their classes (90min). These observations were conducted in order to understand how CSs were integrated into teaching practices in language classes. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the learners to explore their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of using CSs in the simultaneous acquisition of English and Chinese. The rationale for conducting both classroom observations and semi-structured interviews is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how communication strategies (CSs) are utilized and perceived in the context of language learning. Classroom observations allow researchers to directly observe how CSs are integrated into teaching practices and how they manifest in the learning environment. First-hand observations provide valuable insights into the actual implementation of CSs, including their frequency of use, effectiveness, and any challenges encountered.

On the other hand, semi-structured interviews with learners offer a more in-depth exploration of their experiences, perspectives, and challenges related to the use of CS. By engaging directly with learners, researchers can uncover the nuances that may not be apparent through observation alone. Learners can provide valuable feedbacks on their understanding of CSs, how they apply them in real-life language situations, and any barriers they face in doing so. By combining these two methods, researchers can also triangulate their findings as well as validate and enrich their understanding of CS integration in language learning. This comprehensive approach enables a more holistic examination of the topic, ultimately leading to more informed recommendations for improving language teaching and learning practices.

### 4.2. Quantitative Data Collection (Phase 2)

Pre- and post-tests were administered to assess speaking proficiency in both English and Chinese. The surveys were distributed to gather data on the learners' motivation, anxiety, and perceptions of CS instruction effectiveness.

The researchers selected a separate group of participants from the same educational institutions or programs. There were an experimental group that had received explicit CS instruction and a control group that had not. The pre-tests were administered to assess speaking proficiency in English and Chinese. The experimental group was provided with explicit CS instruction. The post-tests were also administered to



both groups after the CS instruction. Then, the groups completed a survey questionnaire developed based on the research questions and inspired by Oxford (2016).

The researchers observed the quality and effectiveness of CS instruction using an observation rubric proposed by Marzano et al. (2003). They administered a demographic questionnaire to collect the participants' basic data. The quantitative data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to determine the impact of CS instruction on speaking proficiency.

## 5. Data Analysis

### 5.1. Qualitative Data Analysis (Phase 1)

The qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed with the MAXQDA software, version 20, and a thematic analysis was done to identify the recurring themes and patterns. The qualitative findings provided a rich understanding of the challenges and benefits of using CSs in this specific learning context. Table 2 illustrates the qualitative data analysis procedures.

**Table 2.** Qualitative data analysis procedures.

<b>1. Data familiarization:</b>
The researchers started by immersing themselves in the qualitative data, which included the transcription of the interviews and the recorded observations. This step involved reading and re-reading the data to become familiar with the content.
<b>2. Initial coding:</b>
The researchers then started the process of coding, where they systematically identified and labeled the segments of the data relevant to the research questions. The codes were often descriptive and captured the key concepts or ideas present in the data.
<b>3. Generating initial themes:</b>
After coding a substantial portion of the data, the researchers looked for the patterns and connections among the codes. They grouped the related codes together to form initial themes or categories.
<b>4. Reviewing themes:</b>
The researchers reviewed and refined the initial themes, ensuring the accurate representing of the content of the data. It was also possible to combine similar themes or split larger themes into sub-themes as needed.
<b>5. Defining and naming themes:</b>
Once the themes were finalized, researcher defined and named each theme to clearly articulate its meaning and relevance to the research questions.
<b>6. Data charting:</b>
The researchers organized the coded data into a thematic framework or chart, which helped to visualize the relationships between the themes and the supporting evidence from the data.
<b>7. Interpreting and writing up the results:</b>
Finally, the researchers interpreted the findings within the context of the research objectives. They discussed the implications of each theme and how they contributed to understanding the use of CSs in simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction. The results were written up in a qualitative report, often supplemented with quotes or excerpts from the data to illustrate the key points.

### 5.2. Quantitative Data Analysis (Phase 2)

The quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS software, version 26, and statistical tools such as ANCOVA to determine the impact of CS instruction on speaking proficiency. The quantitative findings were complementary to the qualitative data, providing a better understanding of the research questions. In the present study, the dependent variable was the speaking proficiency scores of the learners. The researchers measured this variable both before (pretest) and after (posttest) the intervention to assess any changes in the proficiency levels. The independent variable or factor was the instructional condition, which had two levels as follows:





Group 1: Learners who received instruction with CS integration.

Group 2: Learners who received standard instruction without CS integration.

Speaking proficiency (pretest scores) accounted for the initial differences in the speaking proficiency levels among the learners before the intervention. Controlling for the pretest scores helped to ensure that every difference in the posttest scores was not simply due to the pre-existing proficiency levels.

## V. RESULTS

### 1. The Qualitative Findings for Research Question One

Research Question 1: “How can the integration and explicit instruction of Conversational Strategies (CSs) impact the speaking proficiency of Persian-speaking learners engaged in simultaneous EFL (English) and CSL (Chinese) instruction?”

Table 3 provides a structured overview of the thematic analysis, with the themes, subthemes, and descriptions for research question one.

**Table 3.** Thematic analysis for research question one.

Theme	Subtheme	Description
Enhanced Language Confidence	Increased Self-Assurance	Many participants expressed heightened self-assurance when engaging in conversations in both English and Chinese. Many also reported increased self-assurance, crediting explicit instruction in CSs for providing them with a safety net to continue speaking despite language gaps or difficulties.
Vocabulary Enrichment	Creativity in Word Choice	The learners often mentioned that CS instruction encouraged them to be more creative in word choices. Strategies like circumlocution and approximation led to an expanded vocabulary in both languages.
Effective Communication Strategies	Managing Communication Breakdowns	The participants highlighted the effectiveness of CSs in managing communication breakdowns. Strategies like appeal for help and circumlocution were used to seek clarification and maintain conversation flow. The participants appreciated their newfound ability to address and overcome misunderstandings.
Reduction in Anxiety	Less Fear of Making Mistakes	Some learners mentioned a reduction in anxiety associated with speaking in English and Chinese. They attributed this change to the safety net provided by explicit CS instruction, reducing the fear of making mistakes. This subtheme revealed a positive change in the participants' emotional responses to speaking tasks.
Teacher Influence	Valuable Teacher Guidance	The participants in the experimental group acknowledged the valuable role of their instructors in explicitly teaching CSs. They emphasized the guidance and practice provided by teachers in understanding and applying CSs.
Cultural Awareness	Contextual Sensitivity	Several learners recognized that CS instruction enhanced their cultural awareness and sensitivity. They became more aware of using appropriate strategies in various cultural contexts while navigating language and culture.



These thematic findings suggest that explicit instruction in conversational strategies had a multifaceted impact on the participants, including increased language confidence, vocabulary enrichment, the development of effective communication strategies, reduced anxiety, recognition of the valuable role of teachers, and heightened cultural awareness. The participants indicated an overall readiness to engage in speaking tasks in both English and Chinese, attributing their progress to the acquisition of CSs.

### 1.1. Increased Confidence

Many participants in the experimental group expressed increased confidence in using English and Chinese for speaking tasks. They mentioned that learning CSs helped them feel more capable of expressing themselves, even when they encountered language gaps.

Participant: “I used to feel stuck when I didn’t know a word, but now I can keep the conversation going with the strategies.”

### 1.2. Enhanced Vocabulary Acquisition

Several learners noted that CS instruction encouraged them to expand their vocabulary. They explained that CSs, such as circumlocution and approximation, pushed them to search for alternative words and descriptions to convey their ideas.

Participant: “CSs made me more creative with words. I learned new terms while trying to explain things differently.”

### 1.3. Effective Communication Strategies

The participants emphasized that explicit CS instruction improved their ability to handle communication breakdowns. They mentioned the use of strategies like appeal for help, circumlocution to seek clarification, and keep conversations flowing.

Participant: “Now, if I don’t understand something, I ask for help or describe it differently. It makes a big difference.”

### 1.4. Overcoming Anxiety

Some participants highlighted a reduction in the anxiety related to speaking in English and Chinese. They felt more at ease with the idea of making mistakes and using CSs as a safety net.

Participant: “I used to be afraid of speaking because of mistakes. Now, CSs give me a safety net, so I’m less anxious.”

### 1.5. Teacher Influence

The participants in the experimental group appreciated the role of their instructors in explicitly teaching CSs. They acknowledged that the teacher’s guidance and practice in using CSs were valuable.

Participant: “Our teachers really helped by teaching us these strategies. They showed us how to use them effectively.”

### 1.6. Increased Cultural Awareness

Several participants mentioned that CS instruction also enhanced their cultural awareness and sensitivity. They realized the importance of using appropriate strategies in different cultural contexts.



Participant: "We learned that, in some situations, directness is valued, while, in others, indirectness is better. It's about cultural context too."

These qualitative findings suggest that explicit instruction in Conversational Strategies positively influence participants' confidence, vocabulary development, communication skills, and cultural awareness. The learners in the experimental group indicated a greater readiness to engage in speaking tasks in both English and Chinese.

## 2. Quantitative Findings for Research Question One

### 2.1. Descriptive Statistical Results of Research Question One (English Language)

In the control (Cont) conditions, the average value was lower at 38.58 compared to the experimental conditions. This suggests that the participants in the control conditions scored lower on average compared to those in the experimental conditions. The standard deviation in these conditions was 4.717, indicating less variability compared to the experimental conditions.

### 2.2. ANCOVA Test Result (English Language)

**Table 4.** Tests of between-subjects effects (English language).

Source	Type III Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta squared
<b>Corrected model</b>	8562.499	2	4281.249	70.978	.000	.759
<b>Intercept</b>	2025.107	1	2025.107	33.574	.000	.427
<b>Pre-exp1</b>	2.478	1	2.478	.041	.840	.001
<b>Condition</b>	7361.876	1	7361.876	122.051	.000	.731
<b>Error</b>	2714.314	45	60.318			
<b>Total</b>	140757.000	48				
<b>Corrected total</b>	11276.812	47				

Based on Table 4, the significant value of the independent variable "communicative games" is .001 ( $p < .05$ ). This indicates a significant difference between the two groups after controlling for the covariate of the pretest scores. The effect size of .731 suggests a large effect and a substantial impact of the instructional conditions on the posttest scores.

A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance was conducted to find out the effect of the instructional conditions (i.e., the learners who received instruction with CS integration vs. those who received standard instruction without CS integration) on the performance of the subjects in a posttest score. The participants' scores on the pretest were used as the covariate. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of regression and homogeneity of regression slopes were not violated. The results showed that all the assumptions were met. After adjusting for the effect of the pretest scores, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the posttest scores  $F(2,45) = 122.051$ ,  $p = .001$ , and partial eta squared = .731. Moreover, there was a strong relationship between the pretest and posttest scores (.001).

### 2.3. Descriptive Statistical Results of Research Question One (Chinese Language)

In the control (Cont) conditions, the average score was 41.21, which was lower compared to the experimental conditions. This implies that the participants in the control conditions scored lower on average than those in the experimental conditions. The standard deviation in these conditions was 5.004, indicating the variability of the scores around the mean score.



## 2.4. ANCOVA Test Result (Chinese Language)

Table 5 shows the result of the ANCOVA test for research question one (Chinese language).

**Table 5.** Tests of between-subjects effects (Chinese language).

Source	Type III Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta squared
Corrected model	5184.149	2	2592.075	99.375	.000	.815
Intercept	397.804	1	397.804	15.251	.000	.253
Pre-expl	303.816	1	303.816	11.648	.001	.206
Condition	3587.998	1	3587.998	137.557	.000	.754
Error	1173.767	45	26.084			
Total	132638.000	48				
Corrected total	6357.917	47				

Based on Table 5, the significant value of the independent variable communicative games was .001 (< .05). This indicates a significant difference between the two groups after the covariate of the pretest scores were factored out. The effect size shows a large effect size (.754). The significant value of .001 means that the covariate effect was significant.

A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance was conducted to find out the effect of the instructional conditions (the learners who received instruction with CS integration vs. those who received standard instruction without CS integration) on the performance of the subjects in terms of posttest scores. The participants' scores on the pretest were used as the covariate. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of regression and homogeneity of regression slopes were not violated. The results showed that all of the assumptions were met. After adjusting for the effect of the pretest scores, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the posttest scores  $F(2,45) = 137.557$ ,  $p = .001$ , partial eta squared = .754. Moreover, there was a strong relationship between the pretest and posttest scores (.001).

## 3. Qualitative Findings for Research Question Two

Research question 2: To what extent do the cultural and linguistic differences among Persian, English, and Chinese influence the effectiveness and use of CSs in the context of simultaneous language acquisition, and how can pedagogical strategies be tailored to address these challenges?

**Table 6.** Thematic analysis for research question two.

Theme	Subtheme	Description
Cultural Adaptation		
	Challenges in Cross-Cultural Use	The participants described the challenges they faced when adapting CSs to different cultural contexts. They mentioned that strategies considered polite or appropriate in Persian-speaking culture might be perceived as impolite or confusing in English and Chinese contexts. Several participants shared examples of instances where they had to modify their CSs to align with the cultural norms of the language they were using.
	Fear of Misunderstanding	Many participants expressed concerns about being misunderstood due to cultural differences. They highlighted a hesitation to use CSs out of the fear that their intended meaning might not be accurately conveyed to interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds. This fear of misinterpretation often led to reduced use of CSs.



	Cultural Awareness	Learners who had received explicit instruction on cultural nuances reported that this knowledge helped them navigate cross-cultural conversations more effectively. They shared experiences where their awareness of cultural differences improved their CS selection. The participants recognized the importance of understanding cultural context when choosing and using CSs.
Linguistic Influence on CS Effectiveness		
	Vocabulary Challenges	The participants noted that linguistic differences posed vocabulary challenges, particularly when substituting words using CSs. Some found it difficult to identify equivalent terms in English and Chinese, which impacted the effectiveness of using CSs. They shared instances where their CSs did not accurately convey their intended meaning.
	Grammar and Structure	Linguistic variations in sentence structure and grammar were reported to affect CS effectiveness. The participants encountered difficulties when trying to rephrase sentences or convey complex ideas using CSs. This subtheme highlighted the need for linguistic sensitivity in CS selection.
	Contextual Appropriateness	The participants recognized the importance of selecting linguistically appropriate CSs for each language. They shared examples where the CSs that worked well in one language failed to convey the same meaning in another. The subtheme emphasized the significance of considering the context and linguistic nuances when using CSs.
Pedagogical Strategies for Addressing Challenges		
	Explicit Cultural Instruction	The participants who had received explicit instruction on cultural differences felt better prepared to navigate cross-cultural communication. They described how learning about cultural nuances allowed them to make more informed decisions when using CSs. They emphasized the importance of cultural sensitivity in CS selection.
	Language-Specific Training	The learners who received language-specific training reported improved CS effectiveness. They shared experiences where learning language-specific strategies helped them choose appropriate CSs in English and Chinese, along with the language's idiosyncrasies.
	Contextual Practice	The participants appreciated the pedagogical strategies that offered contextual practice in real-life situations. They noted that practical exercises in applying CSs to diverse cultural and linguistic contexts enhanced their adaptability and confidence in using CSs effectively.

This thematic analysis provides an in-depth exploration of the qualitative findings related to the influence of cultural and linguistic differences on CS use and effectiveness, as well as the role of pedagogical strategies in addressing these issues in the context of simultaneous language acquisition.

### 3.1. Cultural Influence on The Use of CSs

#### 3.1.1. Cultural Adaptation



The participants reported that adapting CSs to different cultural contexts was challenging. They highlighted instances where certain strategies considered appropriate in Persian-speaking culture were perceived as impolite or confusing in English and Chinese contexts.

Participant: “I have noticed that some strategies we use in Persian might not work in English. For example, being overly polite can sound strange to native English speakers.”

### 3.1.2. Fear of Misunderstanding

Some participants expressed concerns about being misunderstood due to cultural differences. They mentioned hesitating to use CSs out of the fear that their intended meaning might not be accurately conveyed to interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds.

Participant: “I often worry that my CSs won’t be understood correctly in English or Chinese. It’s like walking on thin ice, afraid of saying something wrong.”

### 3.1.3. Cultural Awareness

The participants who had received explicit instruction in cultural nuances associated with CSs felt more equipped to navigate cross-cultural conversations effectively. They described instances where this awareness improved their CS selection.

Participant: “When I learned that directness is valued in English, I changed my CSs accordingly. Understanding these cultural differences really made a difference.”

## 3.2. Linguistic Influence on CS Effectiveness

### 3.2.1. Vocabulary Challenges

The learners noted that linguistic differences posed vocabulary challenges, particularly when substituting words using CSs. Some found it difficult to identify equivalent terms in English and Chinese, impacting the effectiveness of using CSs.

Participant: “Translating Persian words into English can be a puzzle. I’ve used CSs that didn’t quite capture the same meaning, and it can be frustrating.”

### 3.2.2. Grammar and Structure

Linguistic variations in sentence structure and grammar were reported to affect CS effectiveness. The learners encountered difficulties when trying to rephrase sentences or convey complex ideas using CSs.

Participant: “In English, the sentence structure can be quite different. I’ve had to rephrase my ideas using CSs, and sometimes it doesn’t sound natural.”

### 3.2.3. Contextual Appropriateness

The participants recognized the importance of selecting linguistically appropriate CSs for each language. They shared examples where CSs that worked well in one language failed to convey the same meaning in another, emphasizing the need for linguistic sensitivity.

Participant: “One CS that works in Persian just doesn’t sound right in English. I’ve learned that context matters as much as the words I choose.”



### 3.3. Pedagogical Strategies for Addressing Challenges

#### 3.3.1. Explicit Cultural Instruction

The participants who received explicit instruction on cultural differences felt better prepared to run cross-cultural communication. They mentioned that learning about cultural nuances allowed them to make more informed decisions when using CSs.

Participant: “Learning about cultural differences was insightful. It helped me understand why certain CSs work better in specific situations.”

#### 3.3.2. Language-specific Training

The learners who received language-specific training reported improved CS effectiveness. They described how learning language-specific strategies helped them choose appropriate CSs in English and Chinese, aligning with the idiosyncrasies involved.

Participant: “Training that focused on English-specific CSs was a game-changer. It gave me the tools to communicate more effectively in English.”

#### 3.3.3. Contextual Practice

The participants appreciated the pedagogical strategies that offered contextual practice in real-life situations. They noted that practical exercises in applying CSs to diverse cultural and linguistic contexts enhanced their adaptability.

Participant: “Practicing CSs in real-life situations made a huge difference. It’s like a simulation of the real world, and it boosted my confidence.”

In summary, the qualitative findings highlight the intricate interplay between cultural and linguistic differences, use of CSs, and the impact of pedagogical strategies. The learners’ experiences and insights underscored the need for explicit instruction in cultural awareness, language-specific CS training, and practical contextual practice to effectively address the challenges posed by simultaneous language acquisition in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.

## VI. DISCUSSION

The quantitative findings revealed a significant positive impact of explicit CS instruction on speaking proficiency in both English and Chinese. The experimental group, which received CS instruction, demonstrated higher post-test scores compared to the control group. The independent samples t-tests for both languages showed statistically significant differences in speaking proficiency, confirming that CS instruction led to improved speaking skills. These findings align with previous research, emphasizing the effectiveness of CSs in language learning (Majd, 2014; Hmaid, 2014; Saeidi & Ebrahimi Farshchi, 2015). The learners in the experimental group exhibited substantial progress in their ability to communicate in English and Chinese, which can be attributed to the explicit instruction of CSs. This implies that the inclusion of CS instruction can be a valuable component of language programs, aiding learners in overcoming language barriers and enhancing their speaking abilities (Majd, 2014).

Qualitative insights echoed and enriched the quantitative results. The participants in the experimental group reported increased confidence in their speaking abilities, a direct consequence of their acquired CSs. These learners exhibited greater self-assurance, even in situations involving unfamiliar vocabulary or



language gaps. The qualitative findings underscored the importance of CS instruction in building learners' confidence in real communication scenarios. Additionally, learners highlighted the positive impact of CS instruction on vocabulary enrichment. They noted that the use of CSs like circumlocution and approximation encouraged them to explore alternative word choices, expanding their linguistic repertoire. This qualitative finding complemented the quantitative data by explaining how CS instruction could lead to improved speaking proficiency through enriched vocabulary.

The findings suggest that cultural and linguistic differences play a significant role in making the use of CSs effective. The analyses also revealed that, as cultural disparities increase, the frequency of using CSs tends to decrease (Etemadfar et al., 2019). This underscores the challenges that learners face when navigating cross-cultural conversations. The findings illuminated the challenges in cultural adaptation. The participants described the need to modify their CSs in line with the cultural norms of the language they were using. This aligns with the work of Dörnyei (1995), which emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness in the selection and use of CSs. Learning about cultural nuances was reported to enhance participants' ability to make more informed decisions when using CSs (Majd, 2014). The fear of misunderstanding in cross-cultural interactions emerged as a significant barrier to the use of CSs. The participants' concerns regarding potential misinterpretation was in line with the findings of Hmaid (2014), who emphasized the positive impact of explicit CS training on learners' confidence in communication. This fear of miscommunication, influenced by cultural and linguistic differences, highlights the need for targeted pedagogical strategies.

The findings resonate with the research of Dörnyei (1995), which refers to the importance of CSs in overcoming linguistic deficiencies. The participants expressed difficulties in translating Persian words into English or Chinese, highlighting the need for linguistic sensitivity and language-specific training (Saeidi & Ebrahimi Farshchi, 2015). The findings underlined the significance of pedagogical strategies in addressing cultural and linguistic challenges. Explicit instruction of cultural nuances and language-specific CS training were reported to improve CS effectiveness. Contextual practice in real-life situations was also valued by the participants, in agreement with the research of Dörnyei (1995), which emphasizes the importance of practical exercises in using CSs effectively.

The combined quantitative and qualitative findings underscore the significance of explicit CS instruction in enhancing speaking proficiency among Persian-speaking learners in the context of simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction. The data suggest that the learners benefited from increased confidence, vocabulary enrichment, effective communication strategies, and a reduction in anxiety due to the inclusion of CS instruction. These findings align with previous research and highlight the multifaceted advantages of CS instruction in language learning. Therefore, language programs and instructors should consider integrating explicit CS instruction to better equip learners for real-world communication in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Overall, the findings point to the need for a holistic approach to simultaneous language acquisition. To effectively address the challenges posed by cultural and linguistic differences, pedagogical strategies should encompass explicit cultural instruction, language-specific training, and contextual practice. This fulfills the broader goal of promoting communicative competence among learners in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. In conclusion, the findings underscore the intricate interplay between cultural and linguistic factors, use of CSs, and the role of pedagogical strategies. They emphasize the significance of tailoring pedagogical approaches to address these challenges and promote effective simultaneous language acquisition.





## VII. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study point to the impact of explicit instruction in Conversational Strategies (CSs) on speaking proficiency in English and Chinese among Persian-speaking learners engaged in simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction. The combined analysis of quantitative and qualitative data indicated that CS instruction plays a significant role in enhancing speaking skills, increasing learners' confidence, enriching vocabulary, and promoting effective communication in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. The quantitative analysis in this study demonstrated that the learners who received explicit CS instruction could outperform their counterparts in the control group in both English and Chinese speaking proficiency. This result agrees with previous research highlighting the efficacy of CSs in language learning and reinforces the notion that CS instruction is a valuable addition to language programs.

The qualitative analysis provided insights on how CS instruction contributes to quantitative improvement. The learners in the experimental group reported increased self-assurance in their speaking abilities. They described how CSs, such as circumlocution and approximation, encouraged them to explore alternative word choices, resulting in an expanded vocabulary. Additionally, the qualitative data highlighted the practical use of CSs in managing communication breakdowns, fostering a reduction in anxiety, and promoting cultural awareness. These findings collectively emphasize the multifaceted advantages of explicit CS instruction in language learning. The ability to confidently navigate language gaps, express oneself effectively, and adapt to diverse cultural contexts is crucial for successful communication in today's globalized world.

The research has illuminated the profound impact of cultural and linguistic differences on the use and effectiveness of CSs among Persian-speaking learners acquiring English and Chinese. The qualitative findings emphasized the need for adaptation in cross-cultural contexts. The learners often found themselves modifying their CSs to align with the cultural norms of the language they were using. Learning about cultural nuances was reported to enhance participants' ability to make informed decisions when using CSs. The fear of misunderstanding in cross-cultural interactions emerged as a notable barrier to the use of CSs, echoing the findings of [Hmaid \(2014\)](#) regarding the positive impact of explicit CS training on learners' confidence. This fear is influenced by the interplay of cultural and linguistic differences. The qualitative findings highlighted the significance of pedagogical strategies in addressing these challenges.

Explicit instruction on cultural nuances and language-specific CS training were found to be effective. Practical exercises in using CSs effectively were valued by the participants. The research underscores the need for a holistic approach to simultaneous language acquisition, especially in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. To effectively address the challenges posed by cultural and linguistic differences, pedagogical strategies should encompass explicit cultural instruction, language-specific training, and contextual practice. This aligns with the broader objective of promoting communicative competence among learners in diverse linguistic and cultural settings.

In general, this research supports the integration of explicit CS instruction in language programs, particularly for Persian-speaking learners engaged in simultaneous EFL and CSL instruction. Language instructors should recognize the positive impact of CSs on speaking proficiency, and curriculum designers should consider incorporating CS instruction as a core component of language learning. As language learners aim to become proficient communicators in both English and Chinese, CSs offer valuable tools to overcome language barriers and navigate diverse linguistic and cultural settings. The findings highlight the intricate interplay between cultural and linguistic factors, the use of CSs, and the pivotal role of pedagogical strategies. They reinforce the significance of tailored pedagogical approaches in addressing these challenges and facilitating simultaneous language acquisition.

Language educators should recognize the value of integrating explicit CS instruction into their language programs. The quantitative evidence about improved speaking proficiency along with the qualitative insight on increased confidence and effective communication strategies underscore the need for this pedagogical



incorporation. In this regard, language instructors and course designers should emphasize the development of learner confidence.

Explicit CS instruction not only helps to manage language gaps but also instills a sense of self-assurance in learners, encouraging them to actively engage in speaking tasks. Curriculum developers should consider the role of CSs in promoting vocabulary development. Learners benefit from exploring alternative word choices, and CS instruction can be designed to encourage vocabulary enrichment alongside speaking proficiency.

Language programs should focus on teaching effective communication strategies, including CSs. Qualitative findings show that learners appreciate the practical use of strategies like circumlocution and appeal for help to manage communication breakdowns, which are essential skills in real-world language interactions. The reduction in anxiety reported by learners is a significant outcome of CS instruction. Instructors should acknowledge this benefit and work to create a supportive and anxiety-reducing learning environment by explicitly teaching CSs. CS instruction can serve as a tool for fostering cultural awareness. Language programs should incorporate cultural sensitivity into the teaching of CSs, emphasizing the importance of selecting appropriate strategies in diverse cultural contexts.

The research findings emphasize the need for language instructors to incorporate cultural sensitivity into their teaching methodologies. Explicit instruction of cultural nuances and norms, tailored to the target language, can enhance learners' ability to adapt their CSs effectively in cross-cultural conversations. Language educators should consider providing language-specific CS training to learners. This training should address the linguistic nuances and idiosyncrasies of the target language, enabling learners to choose the CSs that conform with the language's structure and vocabulary.

The practical exercises that involve real-life situations for applying CSs can be integrated into language courses. Such contextual practice can enhance learners' adaptability and confidence in using CSs effectively. Language instructors should create opportunities for learners to practice CSs in diverse cultural contexts. In this case, a multidisciplinary approach that combines language instruction with cultural studies and cross-cultural communication can be beneficial. This approach could empower learners with a comprehensive understanding of how cultural and linguistic factors influence communication, equipping them with the skills needed for successful simultaneous language acquisition.

The present article does not specify the duration of the study, which can be considered as a limitation. The effectiveness of CS instruction may vary depending on the length of exposure and the intensity of instruction. Longer-term studies would provide a clearer understanding of the sustained impact of CS instruction on speaking proficiency. The context of the study may also limit its applicability to other settings. For example, the effectiveness of CS instruction can be influenced by factors such as institutional resources, teaching methods, and cultural dynamics, which may differ in other educational contexts.

The study acknowledges the impact of cultural and linguistic differences on the use of CS but may not fully account for potential biases in the process of instruction or assessment. Cultural and linguistic biases can affect learners' responses and performance, leading to skewed results. The study focuses on a specific set of CSs, such as circumlocution and approximation, without exploring the full range of conversational strategies available to language learners. This narrow focus may overlook other strategies that contribute to speaking proficiency.

Future research is suggested to investigate the long-term impact of explicit CS instruction on speaking proficiency. A longitudinal study can explore how learners retain and apply CSs in their language interactions over extended periods. Comparative studies can assess the relative effectiveness of various CS instruction methods. This may include comparing explicit instruction to implicit learning or examining the impact of different teaching techniques on speaking proficiency. Research on this issue



delves deeper into the role of CSs in specific cultural contexts. Such studies help tailor CS instruction to specific needs. Researchers may explore the interdisciplinary impact of CS instruction. The development and validation of assessment tools for evaluating the acquisition and application of CSs seems to be an area of research interest. These tools can help to measure the proficiency in using CSs. Research is also recommended for the integration of CS instruction into digital language learning platforms and its impact on learners' speaking proficiency and confidence in technology-mediated language interactions.

Future research may be done through the comparative analysis of the influence of cultural and linguistic differences on the use of CSs in various language pairs. This could help identify specific challenges and effective pedagogical strategies for different language combinations. In this respect, longitudinal studies serve to explore how learners' adaptability in using CSs evolves over time. They can shed light on the long-term impact of cultural and linguistic exposure on CS effectiveness. Investigating the role of technology in supporting learners to adapt their CSs in cross-cultural contexts is another avenue for research. With the rise of digital communication, technology-assisted language learning tools play a significant role in enhancing CS adaptability. Research that focuses on innovative pedagogical strategies for addressing the challenges posed by cultural and linguistic differences in simultaneous language acquisition can provide valuable insights. Exploring new teaching methodologies and materials helps language instructors better prepare learners for diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Research that explores how CSs are used in cross-disciplinary communication, such as in business or healthcare contexts, can offer practical insights into the challenges and solutions specific to these fields.

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