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Communication strategies vs. lexical confusions in RFL (Romanian as foreign language)

Abstract: The didactics of foreign languages offers valuable theories for examining both written and oral productions of foreign speakers. It also provides essential tools to enhance the teaching-learning process. Our article begins with the premise of clearly delineating communicative strategies and lexical confusions, drawing on various scholarly articles to establish a theoretical framework, supplemented by examples from actual oral and written texts. The primary difference between communicative strategies and lexical confusions lies in their impact on message transmission. Communicative strategies serve to maintain the integrity of the message, ensuring that meaning is conveyed effectively. In contrast, lexical errors can significantly hinder communication, as they may lead to misunderstandings by the interlocutor regarding the intended message.

Keywords: *communication strategies in RLS, lexical errors, RLS didactics, oral communication, lexical competence, written communication*

Introduction

In recent years, language teaching has evolved to emphasize elements that introduce novelty into practical modern language courses. New studies are discussing the communication strategies that learners employ to convey their messages, whether in language classes or during assessments. Some of these strategies are often confused with lexico-grammatical errors. The aim of this paper is to delineate these two typologies using a relevant, though not exhaustive, theoretical framework, along with examples drawn from speakers of Romanian as a foreign language. The source corpus consists of 85 written and oral texts, which are also utilized in the study "Linguistic Biography." This includes a generic and cultural approach, as well as texts collected from students in which they describe their families.

The article will be divided into two parts, followed by conclusions. The first part will focus on communication strategies, while the second will be devoted to lexical confusions. Each section will contain a theoretical component followed by examples.

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1. Communication strategies

Communication strategies are the tools L2 speakers use to convey their messages. Jeannette Littlemore (2003) defines them as "steps taken by language learners to increase the effectiveness of their communication," distinguishing two main categories: "compensatory" and "interactional" strategies (Littlemore, 2003). Compensatory strategies are attempts by language learners to address gaps in their knowledge of the target language, while interactional strategies are employed to direct the conversation and facilitate shared meaning.

A few years before Littlemore, Theo Bongaerts and Nada Poulisse (1989) conducted a study focusing on the differences between L1 and L2 communication strategies. They posited that L2 learners often treated referential communication as an isolated phenomenon. Furthermore, while L1 researchers have focused on the cognitive processes underlying referential communication, L2 communicative strategies have generally been categorized based on taxonomies that primarily reflect the surface features of strategic utterances. The current literature on L2 communication strategies has not reached a consensus on what is or isn't L2-specific. However, the study's results indicate that when native and non-native speakers are confronted with the same problem, "L1 speakers and L2 learners solve their referential problems in the same way" (Bongaerts and Poulisse, 1989, 265). In other words, regardless of the language in which speakers formulate their speech and encounter a lexical problem, they tend to apply similar strategies to overcome it.

Soon after, Ellen Bialystok and Maria Frohlich identified five types of communicative strategies: avoidance, paraphrasing, transfer, asking for help, and mimicry. Avoidance involves ignoring or abandoning a topic or response when the speaker's lexical resources are insufficient to fulfill communicative functions. Paraphrasing occurs when a word or construction is reformulated "into an alternative construction acceptable in the target language in situations where the appropriate form or construction is not known or not yet stable" (Bialystok & Frohlich, 1990: 4). The third strategy, transfer, refers to adopting a lexical item from the mother tongue or another known language into the target language. Asking for help involves the learner or speaker requesting assistance from the interlocutor to overcome lexical limitations, while mimicry entails using gestures to convey the message instead of relying solely on verbal communication.

Later, Zoltan Dörnyei and Mary Lee Scott (1997) reviewed important theories on communication strategies, beginning with traditional theories. According to these theories, communication strategies (CS) are "verbal or nonverbal first-aid devices used to compensate for gaps in the speaker's L2 proficiency" (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997, 177). In this context, strategies are tools for managing difficulties that arise during L2 communication, distinct from other mechanisms such as asking for or providing clarification, which address problems that have already occurred during communication.

Dörnyei (1995) proposed an extension of the definition of CSs, arguing that "since a major source of L2 speakers' communication problems is insufficient processing time, timing strategies (e.g., the use of lexicalized pause fillers and hesitation gambits) that help speakers gain thinking time and keep the communication channel open are also problem-solving strategies" (1997, 178). To encompass a broader range of prior research, Scott and Dörnyei expanded the scope of CS to include any potentially intentional attempt to manage any language-related problem of which the speaker is aware during communication. For these authors, communication strategies represent "the key units in a general description of problem management in L2 communication" (1997, 179).

Another theory discussed by Scott and Dörnyei is Poulisse's model of oral communication realization, which extends Bialystok's and the Nijmegen group's approach of placing CS within a parsimonious cognitive framework. Poulisse's (1993) model conceptualizes communication strategies within a coherent framework of speech production. However, after further studies, Poulisse reconsidered his proposed model, complementing it with a process-oriented taxonomy.

As Scott and Dörnyei rightly point out, relevant authors offer two definitions of communication strategies from different perspectives. The first definition classifies them as problem-oriented mechanisms, indicating that these strategies are intended to repair communication difficulties caused by a lack of vocabulary necessary for fulfilling communicative functions. In this context, three types of problems are distinguished:

a. *Self-performance problems* that consist in noticing errors in speech, being associated with different types of rephrasing, paraphrasing and correction mechanisms.

b. *Interlocutor performance-related* problems "defined as something perceived as problematic in the interlocutor's discourse, either because it is considered incorrect (or highly unexpected) or because of a lack (or uncertainty) of fully understanding something; associated with various strategies of negotiating meaning" (Scott and Dörnyei 1997: 183).

c. *Processing time pressure* , specifically "the L2 speaker's frequent need for more time for processing and planning L2 discourse than would be naturally available in fluent communication; associated with strategies such as the use of fillers, hesitation devices, and selfrepetition" (Scott and Dörnyei 1997, 183). In other words, all the pauses that the speaker makes that can hinder communication become the strategies that the speaker uses in order to convey the message.

The second paradigm revolves around the concept of consciousness (Scott & Dörnyei, 1997, 183), defined as an intentional action taken by the speaker to address potential linguistic problems encountered during the communicative act. However, this term can be ambiguous, leading the literature to alternate it with terms such as intentionality, attention, awareness, and control (Schmidt, 1994). In our opinion, "attention" and "control" are the most appropriate terms, as even in spontaneous speech, L2 speakers tend to be more cautious in their phrasing. They often attempt to find equivalent expressions in their mother tongue or create new lexical items based on their linguistic system—a phenomenon we will explore later with examples from our corpus.

Starting from the idea of awareness, Scott and Dörnyei (1997) classify SC based on three aspects:

a. *Awareness as awareness of the problem,* which includes only instances of use that address language processing problems that the speaker consciously recognizes as such. (Scott, Dörnyei 1997)

b. *Awareness as intentionality (Scott, Dörnyei 1997, 185)* explained by the speaker's intentional recourse to SC separates these from certain verbal behaviors that are systematically related to difficulties of which the speaker is aware but which are not done intentionally. For example, in the case of unlexicalized full pauses or stuttering, repeating words, the speaker is usually aware of the difficulty he or she is facing, but uses these devices often without a conscious decision. (Scott, Dörnyei 1997)

c. *Consciousness as awareness of strategic language use (Scott, Dörnyei 1997: 185) explained by Scott, Dörnyei (1997)* the moment when the speaker realizes that he/she is resorting to a less perfect provisional device or avoiding a lexical problem in conveying the message. It should be noted that the two authors separate literal translation from the mother tongue into the target language, considering this as a mistake to be corrected rather than a communication strategy. We can, however, consider that, in the situation where the translated lexical item has been declined according to the L2 rules, the speaker has used a communicative strategy.

Scott and Dörnyei (1997) inventory over thirty communication strategies, offering explanations and relevant examples for each. Given the wealth of information, we have selected a few types for this article:

a. Message abandonment - leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties, which may result in expressions such as *I don't know*, or *I don't remember*;
b. Approximation - the use of another term from the same lexical sphere (e.g. cup instead of glass);
c. "Word-coinage" (Scott, Dörnyei 1997, 189) - linguistic creativity by inventing new L2 words based on already existing paradigms (e.g. pixe instead of pix);
d. Literal translation - taking over expressions and grammatical structures from the L1 without making sense or being correct in the L2 (alt instead of alto - it. alto)
e. Self-correction - when the L2 speaker manages to correct his/her own speech;
f. Paraphrase - rephrasing the sentence/sentence to convey the message;
g. Mimicry - the speaker may resort to nonverbal means in order for the interlocutor to understand the message.

To develop communicative competence, it is essential to practice the language in contexts that closely resemble real-life situations. This approach enables students to understand the different registers of the language and to develop their vocabulary appropriately, without forming incorrect automatism. In this context, pragmatic competence plays a crucial role by integrating communicative exercises with real-life scenarios in the classroom. While communication strategies are beneficial, it is important that as speakers become more experienced, they utilize a broader range of lexical items, thereby reducing their reliance on communication strategies. For instance, at the B2 level, these strategies should not fill gaps that were overlooked at the A1 level.

A similar aspect regarding communicative competence is addressed by Jose Maria Valverde Zambrana (2020), who states that communicative competence encompasses the attitudes, values, and motivations that speakers have about languages, their characteristics, and their uses, while also considering the interrelation of language with other forms of communicative behavior. For Zambrana, learning a foreign language involves not only acquiring grammatical and lexical knowledge but also understanding how to use this knowledge in real contexts. He adds that one of the main objectives of L2 teaching is to foster both components of linguistic and communicative competence. To achieve this, the development of lexical competence should be integrated with the development of communicative competence.

Later in his article, Zambrana discusses three types of strategies: affective, compensatory, and social (Zambrana, 2020, 87). He describes affective strategies as those related to the emotional aspects of language learning, focusing on how learners manage their anxiety, control their feelings, and maintain motivation. Zambrana believes that through these affective strategies, learners can address and modify factors that impact their learning, such as low self-esteem and anxiety.

On the other hand, compensatory strategies are related to speakers' vocabulary; they "help learners avoid knowledge gaps in order to maintain continuity in communication" (Zambrana, 2020, 87). These strategies enable learners to convey their messages despite gaps in their knowledge. In such situations, L2 speakers can fulfill communicative functions without possessing all the necessary lexical items.

The third typology, social strategies, becomes significant as it fosters increased interaction with the foreign language. These strategies facilitate communication with other learners in a discourse context, allowing learners to engage and learn through interaction (Zambrana, 2020). Social strategies can also be linked to pragmatic competence, where learning occurs through interaction.

Zambrana (2020) encompasses communication strategies under the broader category of elements that facilitate message transmission, communication, and vocabulary development in L2 learning. Thus, communication strategies become part of L2 learning strategies alongside affective and intercultural elements. His study emphasizes how students employ communicative strategies in conjunction with other types of strategies, rather than viewing communication strategies as isolated products.

Regarding Romanian as a foreign language, challenges arise due to various inconsistencies, particularly in plural formation. For example, we observed the use of "omi" instead of "oameni" (Eng. people), a linguistic creation based on the system's possibilities but outside the grammatical norm. Similarly, we find "fructuri" instead of "fructe" (Eng. fruits), "limbe" vs. "limbi" (Eng. languages), and "festiveluri" instead of "festivaluri" (Eng. festivals).

These types of grammatically incorrect forms arise from structural patterns that students memorize and to which they apply analogies when communicating. Such errors most frequently occur in spontaneous speech and, if uncorrected, can develop into noticeable automatisms at higher proficiency levels. As with other forms of confusion, repeated monitoring and practice are necessary to eliminate these errors and ensure proper language acquisition.

Conversely, we noted strategies involving the insertion of words or expressions from L1 or other foreign languages that are more familiar to the speaker. Examples include structures like "a la tele," a Spanish expression used in the sentence "am învățat limba română a la tele," and "mind-blowing" used to describe cases in Romanian. Another example is the word "appearance," which appeared in descriptions of people as in "fața și appearance."

Among the linguistic creations, we identified terms such as "phoneul," which is derived from the English word "phone" combined with the Romanian definite article "-ul." In the linguistic biography corpus (Simina-Suciu, 2024), we found creations like "limba arabică" (Eng. Arabic language) and "limba inglesă" (Eng. English language), formed based on the terms in the languages spoken by our respondents and the typical structure of Romanian, where the noun "limba" (Eng. language) is feminine.

2. Lexical confusions

Lexical confusion refers to the use of an incorrect term in place of the correct one to convey a message. The essential difference between confusions and strategies lies in their effectiveness for communication; as we will explore, lexical confusions can hinder, and in some cases even obstruct, the transmission of the intended message.

To delineate the concepts discussed in this article, we also draw on theoretical frameworks from integral linguistics, specifically Ferdinand de Saussure's definition of the linguistic sign. According to Saussure, the linguistic sign consists of a signified (the concept) and a signifier (the acoustic image or the sequence of letters and sounds we perceive). Therefore, lexical confusions represent mistakes that alter the intended meaning of the message conveyed.

In a 1986 contribution, Hana Y. Touchie addresses the issue of L2 errors, categorizing them into performance errors and proficiency errors. According to Touchie, performance errors occur when learners or speakers are tired or in a hurry, arising from inattention. These types of errors are generally minor and can be easily corrected by the learner. In contrast, proficiency errors are more serious, as they reflect inadequate learning and lexical gaps that need to be addressed. This distinction leads to a dichotomy between the term "error," which refers to lapses in performance, and "mistake," which indicates insufficient linguistic competence.

In her paper "Second Language Learning Error: Their Types, Causes, and Treatment," Touchie further differentiates errors into local and global categories. Local errors do not significantly impact communication or meaning, while global errors interfere with communication and disrupt the intended meaning of utterances. Local errors typically involve grammatical aspects, such as noun-article or noun-adjective agreements, verb conjugation, or plural formation. In contrast, global errors include lexical confusions that completely alter the meaning of a sentence or incorrect word order.

L2 speakers may encounter various types of errors, including phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic errors, largely caused by significant differences between their mother tongues and the foreign language they are studying. For example, common phonetic errors occur among Arabic speakers who confuse the sounds /p/ and /b/, French speakers who mispronounce the letter /h/ or pronounce /z/ instead of /s/ between two vowels, and Spanish speakers who pronounce /j/ as /h/.

Lexical errors often arise from incorrect direct translations from the learner's mother tongue or the use of inappropriate lexical items in the second language. Syntactic errors pertain to sentence structure in L2, heavily influenced by L1. For instance, Russian speakers tend to omit the verb "to be" when introducing themselves, saying "Eu Maria" (Eng. "I Maria") instead of "Eu sunt Maria" (Eng. "I am Maria"). This occurs because, in Russian, the verb "to be" is not necessary in such constructions.

There are many causes of errors, including the impact of L1 and interference in L2, where speakers may rely too heavily on translations between the two languages. This reliance can lead to the emergence of lexical and syntactic elements that make no sense in the target language, resulting in what are known as interlingual or interference errors.

In her article, Touchie (1986) discusses two contradictory views on interlingual errors. The first view posits that interference negatively affects L2 learning, primarily because it can compromise the meaning of the message. The second view suggests that linguistic transfer has become less detrimental and may even serve as a positive, important factor in L2 learning. In our opinion, linguistic interference can be both beneficial and harmful, depending on how it impacts effective communication. For instance, if a translation from L1 refers to a word with a different meaning in L2, this transfer is unhelpful. Conversely, if a speaker borrows a word from L1 and adapts it according to the rules of L2 without significantly altering the meaning of the utterance, we can view this as a positive action.

Another cause of errors is attributed to intralinguistic and developmental factors, which are generally less penalized than those arising from L1 to L2 transfer. These errors stem from the complexities of the target language itself. According to Touchie (1986), intralinguistic and developmental factors include the following:

a. *Simplification* - "Learners often choose simple forms and constructions over more complex ones" (Touchie 1986, 78)

b. *Overgeneralization* - "This is the use of a form or construction in one context and the extension of its application to other contexts in which it should not apply" (Touchie 1986, 78). In other words, L2 speakers tend to apply the same grammatical rule to more than one element. An example could be, for Romanian as a foreign language, the conjugation of group I verbs, where learners use cântează (în locul lui cântă = he/she sings), after mastering the form lucrează (=he/she works).
c. *Hypercorrectness* - "Sometimes the zealous efforts of teachers to correct students' errors cause students to make errors in otherwise correct forms" (Touchie 1986, 78). In support of his claim, the linguist gives as an example the case where the teacher's insistence on the pronunciation of the phoneme /p/, in the case of Arabic speakers, leads to its use even in the case of the words "bird" (Touchie 1986, 78) or "battle" *(Touchie 1986, 78),* „pird and pattle" (Touchie 1986: 78).
d. *Poor teaching* - factor related to hypercorrection or the materials the teacher uses.
e. *Fossilization* - refers to pronunciation errors that persist for a long time and become automatisms.
f. *Avoidance* - a factor caused by the difficulty of some L2 stucts, which leads speakers to avoid them, replacing them with simpler ones. Touchie (1986) explains this phenomenon by the examples of Japanese speakers of English as a foreign language who generally avoid relativization, while Arabic speakers avoid passive diatesis (Touchie, 1986, 79).
g. *Inadequate learning* - mainly caused by ignoring rule restrictions or subdifferentiation and incomplete learning.
h. *Falsely hypothesized concepts* - learner errors that can be attributed to wrong assumptions formed by these learners about the target language. For example, the linguist gives the example that "some learners believe that is is the marker of the present tense. Thus, they produce: *He is talk to the teacher*. Similarly, they believe was is the marker of the past. Therefore, they say: *It was happened last night"* (Touchie 1986, 79)

In addition to rigorously outlining the types of errors, Touchie (1986) offers valuable suggestions for L2 teachers regarding error correction. He asserts that teachers cannot and should not correct every error made by their students. Frequent correction of oral errors, he argues, can disrupt the language learning process and may discourage shy learners from communicating in the target language. In this context, the linguist provides some general guidelines for correcting errors in L2 (Touchie, 1986, 79-80):

a. Errors of high frequency and generality should be corrected more often than less frequent errors. For example, verb conjugations are an error of high frequency and generality.
b. Teachers should place more emphasis on correcting errors that affect a large percentage of their students. This factor is clearly related to the second factor above. Stigmatizing or irritating errors should be given more attention. This factor is related to the sociolinguistic aspect of language learning. Learners from lower socio-economic classes are aware of and very sensitive to ridicule of their informal variety of language by learners from higher socio-economic classes who speak a more formal and prestigious variety of language.
c. Finally, errors relevant to a pedagogical objective should take precedence over other types of errors. For example, if the lesson focuses on the use of the present perfect tense, the correction of errors involving prepositions, articles and demonstratives in this lesson should not be emphasized by the teacher, because if they were to do so, the students' attention would be distracted from the focus of the lesson which, in this case, is the use of the present perfect tense.

In his opinion, teachers should focus on correcting errors that affect intelligibility—specifically, errors that interfere with the overall meaning and comprehension of utterances. Accordingly, teachers should prioritize the correction of global errors over local ones.

In his article, Touchie provides essential tools for detecting and differentiating errors, along with suggestions for correcting them. We believe it is crucial that the L2 teaching and learning process unfolds optimally, without causing frustration for either the learner or the teacher. Therefore, the guidelines offered by Touchie, as reiterated above, serve as a relevant framework for practical RLS courses as well.

Subsequently, linguist Pilar Agustín-Llach revisits the issue of lexical errors in her 2017 article, "Vocabulary Teaching: Insights from Lexical Errors." She focuses primarily on a theoretical approach to vocabulary teaching, positing that lexical errors are a significant source of difficulties in acquiring English as a foreign language. Agustín-Llach's study emphasizes the didactic aspect, beginning with an inventory of error types based on previous research, supported by examples collected by the author, and concluding with vocabulary teaching strategies that can be effectively implemented in the classroom.

Among the errors discussed by Agustín-Llach are semantic confusions, which she defines as arising when learners confuse two semantically related words in L2 (Agustín-Llach, 2017, 65). One of the most frequent confusions noted in English as a Second Language (ESL) involves the verbs "to be" and "to have." While some instances of confusion can be attributed to L1 influence, others are less straightforward, making it challenging to find a plausible explanation for these errors. Agustín-Llach points out that both semantic and formal confusions reflect varying degrees of word knowledge—typically incomplete or imperfect knowledge.

This raises the question of whether the learner knows both the target word and the incorrect one, confusing them due to their similarity, or if they are unaware of the target word and resort to a close approximation that they do know.

Agustín-Llach also discusses linguistic calques, which occur when a learner resorts to literal translations due to the absence of a term in the target language. While these calques were regarded as communicative strategies in the first part of our article, they are viewed as errors by other linguists. Additionally, lexical borrowing—where an L1 word is inserted into an L2 utterance—falls within this category of mistakes.

Another error highlighted in Agustín-Llach's article, previously considered a communicative strategy, is lexical adaptation—specifically, the process of taking a term from L1 and adapting it to the grammatical rules of L2. In addition to this, the author notes writing errors and incorrect word order in sentences, based on examples collected during her study.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, Agustín-Llach proposes two teaching strategies to address these challenges:

a. *Vocabulary teaching approach* - a two-stage strategy for addressing lexical errors, beginning with specific errors previously made by learners. In the first stage, these errors are presented and explained to ensure that learners fully understand them. In the second stage, remedial activities are conducted based on the specifics of each error, allowing for targeted practice and reinforcement.
b. *Learning vocabulary from lexical errors* - in contrast to the first approach, this second strategy focuses on correcting errors as a whole rather than addressing specific cases, serving as a preventive measure against potential student slips. For example, lexical creations, borrowing, and mispronunciations often stem from L1 influence. While the impact of the mother tongue is prevalent throughout the L2 acquisition process, it is especially pronounced in the early stages. Counteracting the effects of L1 can be very challenging, if not impossible; therefore, leveraging it for L2 vocabulary training may be a more effective option. In this context, L1 can act as a scaffold

or support for independent lexical use. Additionally, the author suggests that translation exercises can be a valuable tool in preventing errors.

Although Agustín-Llach's study is pertinent and relevant, we believe that the second proposed activity may create more problems than it solves. In our view, the most effective strategy remains repeated exposure to the language and the correction of specific mistakes, accompanied by explanations, through lexical and communicative activities, without placing undue pressure on the learner.

One of the most common confusions identified in our corpus was between limbă and limbaj. In English, both words translate to "language," but in Romanian, they have different usages. We observed that many speakers mistakenly use limbaj to refer to the Romanian language and their learning difficulties. Additionally, we noted the frequent use of the word românie instead of română (i.e., “limba românie” instead of “limba română” = Romanian language).

This confusion extends to the use of the adjective maro (meaning "brown") instead of șaten when describing hair. For example, a learner wrote, “mama mea are pahar păr maro” (meaning “my mom has brown glass brown hair”), where maro is applicable only to color, while șaten specifically refers to hair color. This confusion arises because Romanian employs distinct terms to express the same color in different contexts.

Regarding the use of the term pahar (meaning "glass") instead of păr (meaning "hair"), we believe this is due to the phonetic similarity between the two nouns. In the same text, we also observed the use of mult instead of foarte (as in “mult înalt” for “very tall”). While both words can be translated to "very" in English, mult expresses a large quantity, whereas foarte denotes a superlative. This error appears to be influenced by the speaker's mother tongue.

In inventorying lexical confusions we also note the following:

- The verbs *a urmări* (to follow) vs. *a urma* (to pursue), influenced by other languages known to the speaker.
- The verbs *a practica* (to practice) vs. *a exersa* (to rehearse), as seen in statements like “nu am practicat limba română” (I haven’t practiced the Romanian language), which occurs among several speakers due to the influence of English, where only one verb is used: "to practice."
- The adverb *bine* (well) and the adjective *bun* (good), both translated as "good," as in “studiez bun” (I study good).

- The use of a dative pronoun instead of an accusative pronoun, exemplified in “mi-a ajutat” (he/she helped me), indicating grammatical confusion.
- The confusion between *românie* (Romania) and *română* (the country) or *română* (Romanian), as seen in examples like “românia este o limbă frumoasă” (Romania is a beautiful language) and “dacă aș fi trăit în românie” (if I had lived in Romania).
- The usage of *scurt* (short in length) instead of *scund* (short in height), both translated as "short" in English. This confusion arises not only from English but also from the distinction between length and height, as both are measurable dimensions.

All the examples above illustrate lexical errors encountered at the A1-B1 levels, reflecting the interlanguage stage where speakers have not yet fully mastered all concepts. During this phase, most system-based creations occur, albeit as deviations from standard norms. As learners advance in their L2 studies and acquire new knowledge, their understanding begins to shift, moving closer to natural language use.

To prevent the perpetuation of confusion at higher levels, consistent practice is essential. This should involve both structural exercises and opportunities for written and oral communication. Furthermore, it is advisable to expose speakers of Romanian as a foreign language (RLS) to a variety of authentic texts. This exposure will help them experience Romanian in diverse contexts, gradually reducing lexical confusion.

Conclusions

We would like to emphasize that our article, while primarily theoretical, aimed to explore aspects of communication in Romanian through two research perspectives: communication strategies and lexical confusions/errors. Although some of the students' slip-ups were initially classified as communication strategies and later redefined as lexical errors, we seek to delineate these two concepts concerning message transmission. Specifically, a communication strategy aids in understanding the message and fulfilling communicative functions, whereas an error, mistake, or confusion distorts the meaning and impairs comprehension for the interlocutor. In our view, lexical confusions and literal translations from other languages should not be categorized as communicative strategies. However, we would not equate them with linguistic creations, as the latter reflect a deeper knowledge of the language, enabling the speaker to integrate these creations into the grammatical framework of Romanian. Furthermore, we believe that communication strategies turn into mistakes as the language level increases. In other words, what is considered a communication strategy at level A2, for example, at level B1 should be recorded as a mistake. Code-switching errors are also part of the same framework, as they can also interfere with message transmission.

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