In this presentation data are presented on the use of compensatory strategies in the use of English in three groups: L2 learners, L1 attriters and bilingual aphasic patients. The main question is whether they use different strategies due to differences in the make up of their language systems. Examples of compensatory strategies are ‘smurfing’ (the use of general terms rather than specific ones, ‘you know this thing you use for writing’ for ‘pen’, and foreignizing ‘There were two stools in the room’ (from Dutch ‘stoel’ for English ‘chair’).

The data show that there are differences in relative use, but all strategies are used in the three groups. The main difference is that aphasia patients do not have access to a secure second language to fall back on.