

日本で英語教育を受けた 日本人大学生の英語学習ストラテジーの使用 Strategy Use of Japanese EFL College Students

2つのペア・ワークによる相互コミュニケーション・タスクにおける
英語学習ストラテジーとコミュニケーション能力の関係

The Relationship between Language
Learning Strategies and Oral Communication
Proficiency in Two Interactive Speaking Tasks by Pair Work

木村 みどり KIMURA, Midori

● 青山学院大学 Aoyama Gakuin University



英語学習ストラテジー, オーラルコミュニケーション能力,
相互コミュニケーションタスク, ペア・ワーク, メタコグニティブ・ストラテジー

Language learning strategy, Oral communication proficiency,
Interactive speaking tasks, Pair work, Metacognitive strategy

ABSTRACT

学習の熟達度に影響を与えるストラテジー使用について、多くの研究が最近行なわれている。しかし、本研究の目的である会話のタスクにおけるストラテジー使用に関する研究は未だ限られており、特にペア・ワークにおけるストラテジーの調査は稀である。そこで、英語を外国語として学ぶ日本人に関して、学習ストラテジーとオーラル・コミュニケーション能力間の関係を研究するため次の2つの仮説を検証した。

仮説1：高いオーラル・コミュニケーション能力のある外国人英語学習者は、能力の低い学習者よりも、より多くの数と種類の学習ストラテジーを使用する。

仮説2：高いオーラル・コミュニケーション能力のある学習者は、全てのストラテジーの中でメタコグニティブ・ストラテジーを数、種類ともに一番多く使う

学習ストラテジーの過去の研究には、多くの弱点（データの収集方法、統計処理の仕方）や、限界（母集団の数、タスクの少なさ）がみられた。本研究の価値は、過去の研究に欠けていた点を補う工夫を試み

たという点にある。結果、オーラル・コミュニケーション能力とストラテジー使用の高い関連性が証明され、また、メタコグニティブ・ストラテジーと他のストラテジーとの密接な関係も明らかになった。

- 1) 優秀な学習者は、そうでない学習者よりも多くの数と種類のストラテジーを使用する。
- 2) 学習者の能力差は、メタコグニティブとコグニティブ・ストラテジーの使用において特に、大きな違いが見られる。
- 3) メタコグニティブ・ストラテジーと他のストラテジーの間に密接な関係がある。
- 4) メタコグニティブとコグニティブ・ストラテジーは主要ストラテジーである。
- 5) あるストラテジーの欠如は、メタコグニティブ・ストラテジーの使用によって補われる。
- 6) 周到なストラテジー使用を盛り込んだ学習計画は、優秀な学習者になるためのカギである。
- 7) ストラテジーの使用はタスクの内容と要求度〔単純か、複雑か〕に大きく左右される。

1. Introduction

The investigation of learner strategies has a central place in Second Language Acquisition (Ellis 1985). Individual learner differences (ID) help us to understand why learners vary in how quickly they learn and why most learners fail to achieve native-speaker competence (Ellis 1994). There are a number of individual learner variables in ID, which researchers have identified as influencing learning outcomes, and learning strategies is one of the key factors. The number of the studies on learning strategies has been increasing recently, however, research on strategy use in communicative speaking tasks, which is the object of this research, is still limited and especially strategy investigation through pair work is rare. Main purpose of this research is to find out what kind of learning strategies successful Japanese EFL language learners use in the oral communication activities and examine the relationship between the learners' strategy use and their oral communication proficiency.

2. Method

The use of learning strategies has been considered to be one of the important factors for successful language learning, and many studies on them have been made recently. However, many weaknesses (data collection procedure, statistical procedure) and limitations (limited sample, limited tasks) in the past research were found. Considering these shortcomings of the past research, this research is focused on strategies in the speaking task, and the sample consists of sophomore female students of two different classes majoring in English at a junior college. The population is 75 for the first task and 64 for the second task, and they were divided into three groups by proficiency level to see the clear differences in the results.

2. 1. Tasks

Two pair-work interactive tasks were examined in this research.

Task 1: Conversation in the restaurant made by two learners

This task was taken as a style of test to see if students acquired conversation patterns and

formulaic expressions in various situations at the restaurant and they were told to prepare for this test the previous week.

Task 2: Interview a partner to find out her personality and report it in a short speech

This is a personal information exchange activity. Students were informed of this task the previous week and told to prepare for this interview.

2. 2. Data collection technique employed in this study

Objectivity and reliability are very important issues in this body of research on language learning strategies, therefore, several assessment methods or techniques were used, because a single assessment technique is not suitable for studying every type of language learning strategy, and no assessment technique is perfect. Therefore, mainly three methods were used: two types of questionnaires, think-aloud protocols (verbal report), and interviews.

2. 3. Hypotheses

A question of what kind of strategies good language learners use to improve their English oral proficiency and if any relationship exist between language learning strategy use and oral communication proficiency is a start of this research. Based on the literature review and previous empirical research, the following two hypotheses were set forth consequently focusing on strategies in the speaking tasks.

Hypothesis 1:

The EFL learners with higher oral communication proficiency use more strategies in number and variety than those with lower proficiency do.

Hypothesis 2:

The EFL learners with higher oral communication proficiency use Metacognitive most in number and variety of all strategies.

2. 4. Coding

2. 4 .1. First coding

This research went through two coding steps. The first coding was to identify learning strategies in the transcription of think-aloud protocols and students' self-reports in questionnaires. All tape-recorded reports were transcribed and self-reports by questionnaire were carefully read, and students' remarks that revealed cognitive processes were underlined and excerpted as strategies. Strategies collected at this stage were defined, labeled, numbered, and summarized as a Raw Strategies list, which are described in a variety of terms. The results were displayed as Raw Strategy Use.

Two researchers studied the Raw Strategies list in order to develop common criteria on strategies. The researchers actually compared 853 cases, and the results of two coders were compared, and instances where specific strategies were classified the same or differently were noted, tallied, and computed. The inter-rater reliability for the first coding was reasonably high ($P=0.853$).

2. 4. 2. Second coding

Raw strategies reported by the learners are expressed in a variety of terms, and it is impossible to compare exactly how strategies were used differently or similarly between the two different tasks. It is necessary to transform all Raw strategies into uniformed style, so that the researcher can compare and evaluate strategy usages of different tasks on the same criteria or standard. Therefore, all Raw strategies were coded by the Strategy Group List of Oxford's 'Strategies useful for Speaking' (Oxford 1990, pp.324-327). All strategies were classified into the strategy groups, such as Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social.

3. Results and Discussion

3. 1. Statistical Analysis for Hypotheses

For the statistical procedure, SPSS 8.01 for Windows was used and non-parametric tests were conducted throughout the whole analysis, because data collected in this research do not meet the assumption of

normal distribution.

3. 1. 1. Statistical tests for Hypothesis 1

The relationship between oral communication proficiency score and frequencies in strategy groups was tested. Correlation between oral communication proficiency and Strategy Group was computed. The test results (Table 1) confirmed a positive relationship (Total Strategies, $P=0.0001$; Total Strategy Types, $P=0.0001$) between oral communication proficiency and the number and variety of strategy use in task 1. It also confirmed a positive correlation with Memory, Cognitive, and Metacognitive Strategy Groups in the number of Strategy use and Strategy Type use. Social Strategies showed a correlation only in the number of Strategy use, and Affective Strategies only in Strategy Type use.

The statistical results of Table 2 show there was a positive relationship between proficiency and total number of Strategies ($P=0.0001$) and Strategy Types ($P=0.001$) in Task 2. It also confirmed a positive correlation with Cognitive, Compensation, Affective Strategies both in number and in variety. Metacognitive

Table 1. Correlation between proficiency, and Total Strategy and Strategy Type use in Task 1

N=75

		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Meta-Cognitive	Affective	Social	Total
Total Strategies	Speaman's rho	.504**	.658**	-.160	.556**	.037	.572**	.603**
	Asymptotic Sig. (2-tailed)	.0001	.0001	.171	.0001	.755	.0001	.0001
Strategy Types	Speaman's rho	.372**	.389**	-.166	.470**	.286*	.156	.416**
	Asymptotic Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.156	.0001	.013	.183	.0001

*: $P<0.05$ **: $P<0.01$

Table 2. Correlation between proficiency, and Total Strategies and Strategy Types in Task 2

N=64

		Cognitive	Compen -sation	Meta- Cognitive	Affective	Social	Total
Strategy Frequency	Speaman's rho	.615**	-.360**	.522**	.315**	-.005	.574**
	Asymptotic Sig. (2-tailed)	.0001	.004	.0001	.011	.969	.0001
Strategy Types	Speaman's rho	.566**	-.365**	.224	.276*	-.005	.422**
	Asymptotic Sig. (2-tailed)	.0001	.003	.076	.027	.969	.001

*:P<0.05 **P<0.01

Strategies showed a significant correlation only in number.

3. 1. 2. Statistical test for Hypothesis 2

Now it should be tested if there was a significant difference between the uses of the two strategy groups in the high proficiency group (Group 3). Wilcoxon W Test was tried to clarify the difference statistically for the two tasks.

Table 3. Wilcoxon W Test on the difference of strategy use between Metacognitive and Cognitive Groups by Proficiency Group 3 in Task 1

N=25

	Strategies		Strategy Types	
	Meta- cognitive	Cognitive	Meta- cognitive	Cognitive
Frequency	1,727	933	164	189
Z	-4.75		-3.070	
Asymptotic Sig.	.0001**		.002**	

*:P<0.05 **P<0.01

Table 4. Wilcoxon W Test on the difference of strategy use between Metacognitive and Cognitive Groups by Proficiency Group 3 in Task 2

N=21

	Strategies		Strategy Type	
	Meta- cognitive	Cognitive	Meta- cognitive	Cognitive
Frequency	1,220	779	136	181
Z	-3.982		-3.973	
Asymptotic Sig.	.0001**		.0001**	

*:P<0.05 **P<0.01

The test results of Table 3 showed the significant differences in strategy use between Metacognitive and Cognitive in Task 1 both in Strategies ($X^2=0.0001$) and in Strategy Type ($X^2=0.002$). Table 4 also shows the significant differences between the use of two strategy groups in task 2; Strategies ($X^2=0.0001$) and in Strategy Type ($X^2=0.0001$). These results confirm the previous findings in Analysis 2 statistically (see Table 14 and 15 in Task 1 and Table 16 and 17 in Task 2) that the Metacognitive Strategy was used most in number, however, the Cognitive strategy was used most in variety of all the Strategy groups, and their differences are significant. Therefore Hypothesis 2 (The EFL learners with higher oral communication proficiency use Metacognitive most in number and variety of all Strategies) was only partially supported.

4. Conclusion

Noteworthy elements of this research are as follows: This is one of the careful studies of learning strategy use of Japanese EFL students on oral interactive tasks. Second, in this

research, a paradigm of multiple data collection procedures was used, which is very difficult to try due to hard work on both researchers and learners in this field of study, in order to help the researcher overcome weaknesses and limitations of the past research data collection. Third, a close relationship between Metacognitive strategies and other strategy categories was clarified.

Findings of this research are detailed as follows:

- 1) The successful learners use far more strategies in number and in variety than the unsuccessful learners.
- 2) The difference between learners lies especially in Metacognitive and Cognitive strategy use.
- 3) A close interrelationship between Metacognitive and other strategy categories exists.
- 4) Metacognitive and Cognitive strategies were found to be main strategies to improve English proficiency.
- 5) Lack in some other strategy use is often covered by Metacognitive strategies.
- 6) Good planning in language learning (Metacognitive strategies) is a key to be a successful learner.
- 7) Strategy use is highly task-dependent and Strategy use depends on the task demand.

5. Implications

This research is especially timely in Japan, where there has been a big criticism and English education at college is also an object of revision to make students to become good speakers of English. There is a need for a

more effective English education, and these research results imply a way for language teachers to improve their teaching from two points of view:

1. To encourage using more strategies through communicative tasks.
2. To improve the language learning environment by paying attention to the learners' affective condition.

Since differences in strategy use could be due to task differences and the language environment, Japanese teachers should go beyond their traditional role of providing information and create circumstances in which students become more acquainted with oral interactive activities and apply strategies that are appropriate for the type of learning activities being presented. Positive emotions and attitudes developed by the good learning environment can make language learning far more effective and enjoyable.

References

- Ellis R. 1985a. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford:Oxford University Press.
- Ellis R. 1994. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford:Oxford University Press.
- Oxford R.L. 1990. *Language Learning Strategies: What every teacher should know*. pp.324-327. Heinle & Heinle Publishers.