Developing an Assessment Tool for the Strategic Competence of Japanese EFL Learners

Keiso Tatsukawa
Hiroshima University, Japan

The aims of this exploratory study are to explain the theoretical background to the design of a 'Strategic Competence Test' for EFL learners, the initial stages of the development of the test and an evaluation of its design and potential usefulness through a trial with Japanese high school students. Communicative competence consists of several major sub-competences. One of these, Strategic Competence, used to receive little attention in foreign language classrooms. However, the importance of nurturing this competence in learners has become increasingly recognized by many researchers and practitioners. This paper presents the brief theoretical background to the design of a 'Strategic Competence Test,' based on Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995). The test, conducted with 264 Japanese high school students, was designed so that the results would show which specific strategies were familiar to them and also what differences could be seen between higher and lower test score groups. The results of the study give an indication of how a more extensive test might be used in deciding how to promote the learners' knowledge of communication strategies that are important for getting involved in conversations more actively.

Key word(s): strategic competence, communication strategies, diagnostic test

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, many researchers have put forward their ideas on 'Communicative Competence.' They all agree 'Communicative Competence' consists of several major sub-components though they differ slightly from one another with regard to different fields of research (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale, 1983; Celce-Murcia, *et al.,* 1995; Savignon, 1983). One of the sub-components, 'Strategic Competence,' used to get little attention in foreign language classrooms, but the importance of developing this competence in learners has become increasingly recognized. Communication in our daily life does not always go as we expect, and in such cases some maintenance or repair strategies are necessary. In addition, more successful communicators often try to avoid such communication difficulties in advance.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Strategic Competence and Communication Strategies

The importance of nurturing the Strategic Competence of ESL/EFL learners in order to make them more proficient in the target language use has been widely recognized. Celce-Murcia, *et al.* (1995) visualize their idea of Communicative Competence diagrammatically (see Figure 1). They place a greater emphasis on discourse competence than other researchers and explain that it is where the bottom-up lexico-grammatical microlevel intersects with the top-down signals of the macrolevel of communicative intent and sociocultural context to express attitudes, messages, and to create text (ibid: 13). Therefore it is placed in the center of the figure to illustrate its interaction with the other three major competences (Actional competence is defined as competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent that carries illocutionary force: speech acts and speech act sets). We can also infer that Strategic Competence compensates for the insufficiency of any of

the other four competences when such insufficiency occurs. We activate our Strategic Competence by using different kinds of communication strategies (hereafter CS).
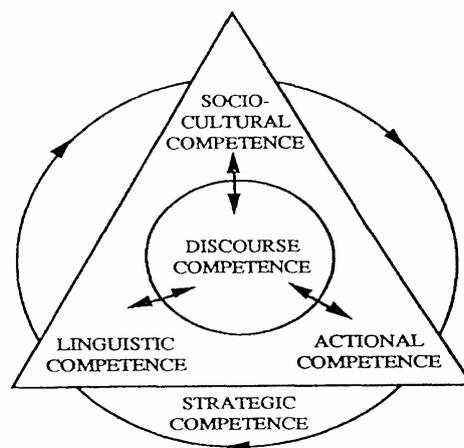

FIGURE 1
Schematic Representation of Communicative
Competence by Celce-Murcia, *et al.* (1995, p. 10)

A large number of studies have been published in the field of CS research, involving discussions on a number of issues related to CS use: the relations between learners' CS use and their language proficiency (Bialystok, 1983; Paribakht, 1985; Tarone, 1977); the differences and similarities of CS use between L1 and L2 (Iwai, 1995); the differences and similarities of CS use between language learners and native speakers (Paribakht, 1985); task effect or task influences on CS use (Poulisse & Schils, 1989); CS teachability, or usefulness of CS training (Paribakht, 1985). However, there are two major problems with some of the early studies which are noted by Dörnyei and Scott (1997), Nakatani (2006), Iwai (2000) and others:

(1) too much emphasis on a vocabulary perspective to overcome communication

problems,

(2) ignorance of the social context of utterances and the speakers' psychological situations.

Regarding the variety of communication strategies, the following researchers have suggested very informative lists for L2 learning: Tarone (1981), Bialystok (1990), Oxford (1990), van Ek and Trim (1991), Dörnyei and Scott (1997), etc. In relation to CS studies, there are two main approaches: an interactional approach (Tarone, 1980; Varonis & Gass, 1985) and a psycholinguistic approach (Færch & Kasper, 1983; Kellerman, 1991). Dörnyei and Scott (1997, p. 174) claim that there is no universally accepted definition of CSs and observe that it is surprising how little CS researchers agree about what exactly these devices are. However, the article by Celce-Murcia, *et al.* (1995) is very practical as well as informative, presenting a list of more than 30 strategy specifications and defining Strategic Competence as "knowledge of communication strategies and how to use them." In this study, I would like to define the term 'Strategic Competence' as 'the knowledge and the ability to use the target language (English) so as (1) to maintain communication and repair communication breakdown when it occurs, and (2) to avoid the possibility of communication breakdown in advance.' This definition aligns with Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) where strategic competence should be considered as a process for effective communication.

Strategic Competence in the Japanese *Courses of Study*

In relation to the Japanese context, an increased emphasis on strategic competence can be seen in the *Courses of Study for Junior and Senior High Schools*. These documents are issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and outline syllabus specifications for core courses. They are updated once every 10 years with the last revisions taking place in 1998/1999. In the current courses of study several references to strategic competence have been added:

(Junior High School, 1998, p. 89)

· Understanding correctly what is spoken by asking the speaker for repetition.

· Trying to continue talking by using various strategies (e.g. using connectives).

(Senior High School, 1999, p. 120)

· Making good use of basic expressions that are effective in asking others to repeat or in rephrasing what one wants to say.

These statements indicate that teachers should put more attention on nurturing students' strategic competence by helping them to acquire different CSs.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ASSESSED IN THE STUDY

The List of Celce-Murcia, *et al.* (1995) for Developing Test Items

In this study, I decided to use the ideas of Celce-Murcia, *et al.* (1995) mainly because their list of CSs (Table 1) is both practical and comprehensive, and therefore suitable for developing a diagnostic test for foreign language learners:

> Our construct is motivated by practical considerations reflecting our interests in language teaching, language analysis, and teacher training; our aim therefore has been to organize the knowledge available about language use in a way that is consumable for classroom practice. ... One obvious purpose of any model of this sort is to serve as an elaborated "checklist" that practitioners can refer to. (p. 29) (emphasis added)

TABLE 1
Suggested Components of Strategic Competence by Celce-Murcia, *et al*. (1995, p. 28)

AVOIDANCE or REDUCTION STRATEGIES
 − Message replacement
 − Topic avoidance
 − Message abandonment

ACHIEVEMENT or COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES
 − Circumlocution
 − Approximation
 − All-purpose words
 − Non-linguistic means
 − Restructuring
 − Word-coinage
 − Literal translation from L1
 − Foreignizing
 − Code-switching
 − Retrieval

STALLING or TIME-GAINING STRATEGIES
 − Fillers, hesitation devices and gambits
 − Self and other-repetition

SELF-MONITORING STRATEGIES
 − Self-initiated repair
 − Self-rephrasing

INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES
 − Appeals for help
  − direct
  − indirect
 − Meaning negotiation strategies
Indicators of non/mis-understanding
 − Requests
  − repetition requests
  − clarification requests
  − confirmation requests
 − Expressions of non-understanding
  − verbal
  − non-verbal
 − Interpretive summary
Responses
 − repetition, rephrasing, expansion, reduction, confirmation, rejection, repair
Comprehension checks
 − whether the interlocutor can follow you
 − whether you said was correct or grammatical
 − whether the interlocutor is listening
 − whether the interlocutor can hear you

(For the complete list of the 30 strategies selected for the assessment test, refer to Appendix, and to Tatsukawa, *et al.* (2006) for the test items)

Designing Test Items

In order to assess strategic competence, one course of action is to give an oral interview, in which learners can use their preferred strategies including non-linguistic means like gestures. However, with a written test, it is still possible to make some general comments about the learners' knowledge of CSs in different situations. Although knowledge demonstrated in a written test does not necessarily lead to the ability to use CSs in face-to-face interaction, I would argue that knowledge of the CSs is a prerequisite for their effective use. Also, in relation to oral interviews it is possible for test-takers to stick to some specific strategies in open-type tasks, which may cause the quality of a diagnostic test as a whole to deteriorate. In relation to designing a written test there were four major considerations:

1. selecting the strategies that can be evaluated in a written test (not in an oral interview), in this case avoiding nonverbal strategies or phonological strategies,
2. using a dialogue in which there is some interaction between speakers (not monologue),
3. using multiple-choice type test items (Without these there would be a huge number of acceptable answers given), and
4. making use of insights from the studies on discourse analysis and pragmatics, especially Grice (1975), Levinson (1983), Brown and Yule (1983), Coulthard (1985), McCarthy (1991), (e.g., Grice's "conversational maxims", Brown and Yule's "transactional/ interactional functions of language", etc.).

As an exploratory study investigating the possibilities and potentiality of the test and seeking to find appropriate items based on the list taken from Celce-Murcia, *et al.* (1995), as many CSs as possible were included.

Strategies that are Excluded in the Test

Several strategies were excluded from the test. Two strategies are related to kinetics and phonology and are consequently not suitable for a written test. Also, for the 'message replacement' strategy, it is extremely difficult to make possible answers for the test item, mainly because almost any choice of

utterance could be correct. It can confuse test-takers. Therefore, the following strategies from the list were excluded:

(1) non-linguistic (non-verbal) means,

(2) foreignizing L.1 word with L.2 pronunciation,

(3) message replacement (as an AVOIDANCE or REDUCTION strategy).

Other Information about the Test

One issue in relation to the effectiveness of the test is whether an inability to answer correctly relates to an overall lack of lexical and grammatical knowledge or a lack of knowledge of CSs. To control the linguistic difficulty of the test items, 93.0% of the words used in the items occur within Levels 1-3 (the first 3,000 most common words for Japanese learners) of the *JACET 8000* word list. The average number of WPS (words per sentence) is 5.7, and the Flesch Reading Ease is 88.1, which means that native English speaking fifth or sixth grade students would be able to understand the dialogues quite easily. As the test was to be given to high school students, the items were assumed to be at a level where participants would have reasonable comprehension of the dialogues and possible answers.

STUDY: ASSESSING THE STRATEGIC COMPETENCE OF JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The Purposes of the Study

There are two purposes for developing the diagnostic test:

(1) To get an overview of the strategic competence of Japanese high school students in English.

(2) To find some pedagogical implications by comparing the test performance features of higher and lower score groups.

While the development of the diagnostic test is in the early stages of development, the testing of students gives an insight into its potential and how it could be utilized in practice after further refinements. At this stage the results can only be considered tentative, but they illustrate the thought processes involved in evaluating gaps in students' Strategic Competence.

Subjects

In this study the trial of the test was used to evaluate students belonging to one grade in a particular school. In such a case, an English department might use the test to obtain information on students' knowledge of strategies in order to adjust the English syllabus for the coming year.

The participants of the study were 264 Japanese senior high school students. At the time of the test they were all in the eleventh grade (in the second year) of an average public high school. In Japan, the level of a high school can be judged on university entrance examination success. This high school is ranked just above the average.

Procedure

The students worked on the 'Strategic Competence Test' (30 questions) for 30 minutes, and filled in the answers on a printed 'mark-card.' The test was conducted in February 2006. Each question was allocated one point, giving a possible maximum test score of 30 (In this article, only seven of the 30 test items are shown in Section 5 due to the limitation of space. Please refer to Tatsukawa, *et al.* (2006) for the complete test).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While the test used in this study is in its developmental stage, the following results and discussion illustrate how data could be used to assess students'

knowledge of CSs, and how, using mark cards and computer software, teachers and researchers could rapidly analyze results.

Overall Results

The results of the study are shown in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2
Test Score of the Strategic Competence Test by Japanese High School Students

	n.	Max.	Min.	Mean	S.D.
High S.	264	25	4	12.3	3.4

(maximum score: 30)

The mean score of 12.3 indicates that the test was a little difficult for the high school students in the study. As the results approximate to a normal curve (see Figure 2), the divergent validity is assumed to be fairly high. Figure 2 is a graph of the information on the test performance of those 264 students:
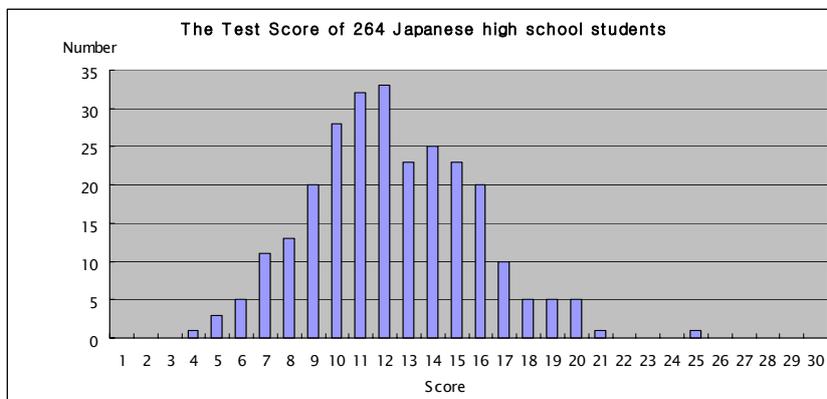

FIGURE 2
The Test Scores of 264 Japanese High School Students

The next graph, showing the percentage of the students choosing the correct answer for each test item is very important as it shows the gaps in

knowledge of CSs for the students in the high school. In a fully developed test each CS would be allocated several test items:
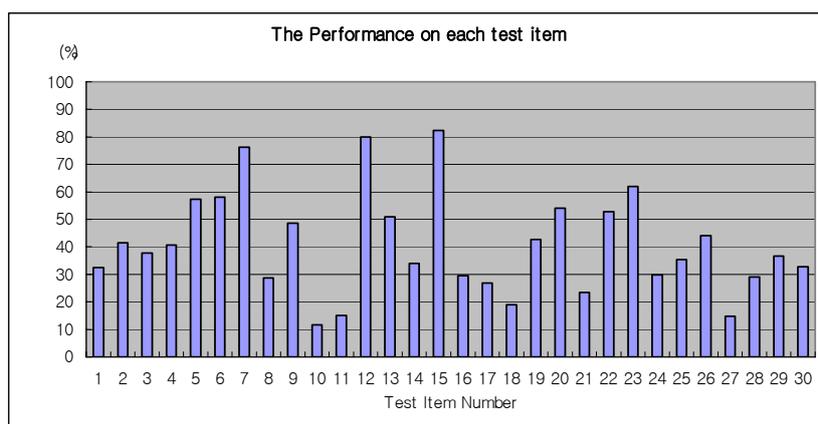
FIGURE 3
The Ratio of Choosing Correctly for each Test Item

Discussion 1: Familiar and Unfamiliar Strategies

Table 3 shows the performance data in different sub-category strategies for high school students. In terms of analyzing the data, an area of interest to teachers would be low scores, where teachers could collectively plan classes to raise awareness of a particular strategy. The underlined figures are the two lowest scores, which are analyzed in 5.2.1.

TABLE 3
The Performance Data in Sub-category Strategy groups

Sub-category Strategy groups (Test item numbers)	Correct	Answer Ratio
Avoidance or Reduction strategies	(1- 2)	36.9 %
Achievement or Compensatory strategies	(3- 7)	54.2 %
Stalling or Time-gaining strategies	(8 - 9)	38.8 %
Self-monitoring strategies	(10-11)	13.4 %
Interactional strategies	(12-30)	41.0 %
Appeals for help	(12-14)	55.2 %
Meaning negotiation strategies	(15-30)	38.6 %

Indicators of non/mis-understanding	(15-19)	40.2 %
Responses	(20-26)	43.2 %
Comprehension checks	(27-30)	<u>28.4</u> %
	Average	41.1%

(The underlined figures are the two lowest scores and the shaded figures are better than average scores.)

Similarly teachers might also be interested in high scores, establishing which strategies students generally know. In this study the shaded figures are better than average scores. The average percentage score for the students was 41.1%. This figure indicates that the test was a little difficult for the 264 high school students, as mentioned above.

Unfamiliar Strategies for High School Students

In this test the Japanese high school students participating in the study did not appear to be good at recognizing the following strategies:

Self-monitoring strategies	13.4%	
Self-initiated repair	11.7%	(I mean ...)
Self-rephrasing	15.1%	(In other words, ...)
Comprehension checks	28.3%	

They should know the literal meanings of the phrases 'I mean ...' and 'In other words ...' because they are very common expressions which can be found in almost all authorized high school textbooks in Japan. Therefore, the results were surprising. The students may not be sure of their function to clarify one's own utterance actively, as can be seen in the test score.

(10) Self-initiated repair

    A: So, you seem to have successfully survived for a long time in a foreign culture. What's the key to doing it?

    B: Hmm, I'd say that, to easily get used to a new culture, age is important.

        (　　　　) if you go when you are young, you can easily accept new ideas.

A: Yeah, maybe that's right.

(the percentage choosing each answer)

(a) However,   51.9%

(b) In addition,   19.7%

*(c) I mean,   11.7%

(d) On the contrary,   16.7%

(11) Self-rephrasing

A: I need to lose weight, so I've started to go to the gym.

B: How often?

A: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In other words, (   )

(the percentage choosing each answer)

(a) every three days.   53.4%

(b) the gym is open every day.   20.1%

(c) the gym is closed on Mondays. 11.4%

*(d) every other day.   15.2%

(The total percentage of some test items is not exactly 100 because of rounding to one decimal place.)

The students in the sample were also unsure of items relating to comprehension checking. For instance, only 14.8% of the students chose the answer correctly in test item (27).

(27) Comprehension checks: whether the interlocutor can follow you

A: Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Unless you take risks, you'll get nothing.

(   )

B: Yes. I think I'm following what you're saying.

(the percentage choosing each answer)

*(a) Are you with me so far?   14.8%

(b) Are you for or against taking risks? 34.1%

(c) Do you like love romance?   14.4%

(d) Are you following somebody?   29.5%

No answer / Others   7.2%

Regarding these two unfamiliar strategies, teachers at the school in question might wish to allocate time and develop materials to improve students' knowledge in these areas.

Familiar Strategies for High School Students

Given the results, the students seem to know different strategies for achievement or compensation such as circumlocution, approximation, restructuring, translation from L1, and code-switching (54.2%):

	(the percentage choosing each answer)
Achievement or Compensatory strategies	54.2%
Interactional strategies	41.0%
Appeals for help	55.2%
Responses	43.2%

Also, they have knowledge of asking for help when they do not know the correct expression in the target language:

(12) Appeals for help: direct
    A: What's this, Satoshi?
    B: It's 'Omochi', Susan. It's made of rice. (   )
    A: 'Rice cake.'

	(the percentage choosing each answer)
(a) When do you eat it?	3.0%
(b) What's the Japanese word for it?	7.2%
(c) How do you make it?	9.5%
*(d) How do you say it in English?	80.3%

Discussion 2: Comparison Between Higher and Lower test Score Groups

Table 4 shows the statistical data of the test performance of higher and

lower test score groups, whereas Table 5 is the ratio difference of giving correct answers between the two groups.

TABLE 4
Comparison of Test Score between Higher and Lower Groups

	n	Max.	Min.	Mean	S.D.
Lower Score G.	53	9	4	7.7	1.3.
Higher Score G.	47	25	16	17.5	1.9

$t(98)=30.4, p<.05$

TABLE 5
Ratio Difference of Correct Answers between Higher and Lower Score Groups

Sub-category Strategy groups (Test item numbers)		Ratio Difference
Avoidance or Reduction strategies	(1- 2)	<u>15.4</u> %
Achievement or Compensatory strategies	(3- 7)	44.4 %
Stalling or Time-gaining strategies	(8 - 9)	28.8 %
Self-monitoring strategies	(10-11)	<u>5.9</u> %
Interactional strategies	(12-30)	34.3 %
Appeals for help	(12-14)	42.2 %
Meaning negotiation strategies	(15-30)	32.8 %
Indicators of non/mis-understanding	(15-19)	31.0 %
Responses	(20-26)	47.0 %
Comprehension checks	(27-30)	<u>15.8</u> %
	Average	32.4 %

(The underlined figures are the three smallest differences and the shaded figures are the three biggest differences.)

The figures in Table 5 tell us that there is not a big difference with test performance in the strategies for 'self-monitoring, stalling or time-gaining,' 'avoidance and reduction,' and 'comprehension checks.' These strategies happen to be the same ones as those that the high school students as a whole are not familiar with (see Table 3). On the other hand, bigger differences are found with strategies for 'responses for interaction,' 'achievement and compensation,' and 'appeals for help.' These are the same strategies that the high school students are more familiar with on average (also see Table 3). These findings indicate that the strategies which higher test score group students know about should be acquired by less proficient learners as soon as

possible. In other words, less proficient high school students of English should be taught how to respond in various communication breakdown situations through the use of different CSs, for example,

	(the ratio difference)
Achievement or Compensatory strategies	44.4%
Test item (5): restructuring	53.0%
Test item (7): code-switching	51.9%
Responses	47.0%
Test item (26): repair	65.5%
Test item (25): rejection	60.5%
Test item (20): repetition	53.3%
Test item (22): expansion	52.8%

Here are two test items as examples for these strategies:

(5) Restructuring

    A: Why were you late this morning?

    B: The road was very (   )

	(the percentage choosing each answer)
(a) There were many trees on both sides of the road.	12.9%
(b) There were few cars on the road.	25.0%
*(c) There were an enormous numbers of cars on the road.	57.6%
(d) There was no noise on the road.	4.5%

(26) Responses: repair

    A: This ring was a really good buy. This is for you, Sayuri.

    B: 'A good bye'?　Is this the end of us?

    A: (   )

	(the percentage choosing each answer)
(a) No. We shouldn't meet any more.	14.0%
(b) No, but we can buy it anytime.	14.0%
(c) No. I can buy you more any time.	21.6%
*(d) No, no, Sayuri. 'A good buy' means a real bargain.	44.3%
No answer / Others	6.2%

Other Comments

Test item (18) is the fourth most difficult question for the high school students and is also problematic because each answer was chosen by about a quarter of the students, and only 18.9% chose the correct answer (d). It seems that many students could not guess what was going on in the conversation and did not know the function of the phrase 'That's OK.', which means 'Don't worry.' or 'Never mind.' in this case. Some students may have interpreted it as 'Good.' or 'Fine.' because one quarter chose the answer (b). However, there may have been a design weakness in this item: the distractors (a) and (b) might be attractive enough to be right answers in some discourse contexts. Therefore, more care should have been taken in designing the multiple-choice test item.

(18) Expressions of non-understanding: verbal

    A: Now that's all you have to do if you want to change the ringing mode to the silent mode.

    B: (   )

    A: That's OK. Then, this time you could try it by yourself. I will read you the directions again.

    B: Thanks.

		(the percentage choosing each answer)
(a) I don't like the ringing sounds of mobile phones in the trains.		5.4%
(b) It's quite easy. I'm sure I can do it by myself.		25.4%
(c) I have tried many times and finally could change the mode.		29.5%
*(d) I'm not sure I understand exactly.		18.9%
No answer / Others		0.8%

A similar result was found with 245 Japanese college students in a different study using the same test (Tatsukawa, 2007).

CONCLUSION

This study has described the early stages of the development of an assessment test to evaluate students' strategic competence, giving the theoretical background, the development of the test items and illustrating how the fully-developed test could be used by giving an example involving a test group drawn from one grade in a senior high school. There have been very few studies in the field of Strategic Competence which deal with a comprehensive diagnostic test. Such a test, when fully-developed, could be used as an effective tool in helping teachers assess the level of their students' knowledge in an area that is important for communication in English. This is particularly important in the Japanese context where historically there has been a greater focus on written texts than oral communication.

As noted in the introduction this is an exploratory study, and the test as it stands has some limitations. In fully developing the test the following improvements need to be made:

(1) The test should have an oral component to examine the students' use of CSs.
(2) More than one test item should be allocated for each strategy.
(3) The relative importance of different strategies should be examined.

While the diagnostic test described in this study is designed to examine knowledge of CSs, this still leaves open the question of students' preferences in relation to CS use. Cultural factors both inside and outside the classroom may have a strong influence in this area and would form an interesting future research topic, but this is beyond the scope of this study.

In this article I have described the test as comprehensive in relation to strategies, and as an assessment tool that could be used by teachers in relation to the particular situations of their own students. Teachers are responsible for setting the conditions of learning in their own schools and making important judgments on how to teach particular groups of students within the framework of a language curriculum. The data presented here give an indication of how a

diagnostic test can be used to aid EFL teachers in this process. In this respect, the paper is written in the hope that it will promote productive discussion concerning L2 learners and the development of their strategic competence.

THE AUTHOR

Keiso Tatsukawa is a professor at the Institute for Foreign Language Research and Education in Hiroshima University, Japan. His specialties are material development and teacher education. His recent publications include *Assessing the Strategic Competence of EFL Learners: A Comparison Between Japanese High School and College Students* (2007) and *Strategies for Communication in English* with M. Tanaka and J. Lauer (1999, Eihosha).
Email: tatsukawa@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful tests.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Bialystok, E. (1990). Some factors in the selection and implementation of communication strategies. In C. Færch & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Strategies in interlanguage communication* (pp. 100-118). London: Longman.
Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Teaching the spoken language.* Cambridge, MA.: Cambridge University Press:

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language Pedagogy. In J. C. Richards and R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 2-27). London: Longman.

Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1995). Communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications. *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 6*(2), 5-35.

Coulthard, M. (1985). *An introduction to discourse analysis* (Second Edition). London: Longman.

Dörnyei, Z., & Scott, M. L. (1997). Communication strategies in a second language: Definitions and taxonomies. *Language Learning, 47*(1), 173-210.

Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1991). Strategic competence and how to teach it. *ELT Journal, 45*(1), 16-23.

Ellis, R. (1984). Communication strategies and the evaluation of communicative Competence. *ELT Journal, 38*(1), 39-44.

Farch, C., & Kasper, G. (Eds.) (1983). *Strategies in interlanguage communication.* London: Longman.

Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J.L. Morgan (Eds.), *Speech acts, syntax and semantics*(pp. 41-58). New York: Academic Press.

Iwai, C. (1995). Second language proficiency and communication strategies in L1 and L2. *NIDABA* (Linguistic Society of West Japan) *24,* 11-20.

Iwai, C. (2000). *Communication strategies in the use of second languages.* Hiroshima: Keisuisha.

Lam, W. (2005). Is strategic competence teachable? *The Journal of ASIA TEFL, 2* (4), 87-112.

Lam, W., & Wong, J. (2000). The effects of strategy training on developing discussion skills in an ESL classroom. *ELT Journal, 54*(3), 245-255.

Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kellerman, E. (1991). Communication strategies in second language research: A critique, a revision, and some (non-)implications for the classroom. In R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selingker, M. Sharwood-Smith and M. Swain (Eds.) Foreign and second language pedagogy research. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selingker, M. Sharwood-Smith and M. Swain (Eds.) (1991). Foreign and second language pedagogy research*: A communiative volume for Claus Farch* (pp. 142-161). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

McCarthy, M. (1991). *Discourse analysis for language teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nakatani, Y. (2006). Developing an oral communication strategy inventory. *Modern*

Language Journal, 90(2), 151–168.

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know.* Newbury House.

Paribakht, T. (1985). Strategic competence and language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics, 6*(2), 132-146.

Poulisse, N., & Schils, E. (1989). The influence of task- and proficiency related factors on the use of compensatory strategies: A quantitative analysis. *Language Learning, 35*(1), 15-48.

Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice.* Reading, MA: Addison -Wesley.

Tarone, E. (1981). Some thoughts on the notion of communication strategy. *TESOL Quarterly*, *15,* 285-295.

Tatsukawa, K. (2007). Assessing the strategic competence of EFL learners: A comparison between Japanese high school and college students. *ARELE* (Annual Review of English Language Education in Japan), *18,* 181-190.

Tatsukawa, K., Tanaka, M., & Lauer, J. (2006) Developing a strategic competence test for English learners. *Hiroshima Studies in Language and Language Education, 9,* 1-17. Hiroshima: Hiroshima University.

van Ek, J. A., & Trim, J. L. M. (1991). *Threshold level 1990.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Varonis, E. M., & Gass, S. M. (1985). Non-native/non-native conversations: A model for negotiation of meaning. *Applied Linguistics, 6*, 71-90.

APPENDIX

The Diagnostic Strategy List and the Percentage of Answering Correct

	Test Item	High S. (%)	R.D. (%)
AVOIDANCE or REDUCTION STRATEGIES		**36.9**	**15.4**
Topic avoidance	1	32.2	0.6
Message abandonment	2	41.7	30.3
ACHIEVEMENT or COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES		**54.2**	**44.4**
Circumlocution	3	37.9	24.2
Approximation	4	40.9	47.6
Restructuring	5	57.6	53.0
Literal translation from L1	6	58.3	45.5
Code-switching	7	76.5	51.9
STALLING or TIME-GAINING STRATEGIES		**38.8**	**28.8**
Fillers, hesitation devices and gambits	8	28.8	19.7
Self and other-repetition	9	48.9	37.9
SELF-MONITORING STRATEGIES		**13.4**	**5.9**
Self-initiated repair	10	11.7	8.1
Self-rephrasing	11	15.2	3.8
INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES		**41.0**	**34.3**
Appeals for help		*55.2*	*42.2*
direct	12	80.3	45.3
indirect	13	51.1	30.1
	14	34.1	51.1
Meaning negotiation strategies		*38.6*	*32.8*
Indicators of non/mis-understanding		*40.2*	*31.0*
Requests		46.3	47.0
repetition requests	15	82.6	39.6
clarification requests	16	29.5	40.0
confirmation requests	17	26.9	13.3
Expressions of non-understanding		18.9	6.4
verbal	18	18.9	6.4
Interpretive summary	19	42.8	33.2
Responses		*43.2*	*47.0*
repetition	20	54.2	53.3
rephrasing	21	23.5	18.9
expansion	22	53.0	52.8
reduction	23	62.1	49.5
confirmation	24	29.9	28.2
rejection	25	35.6	60.5
repair	26	44.3	65.5
Comprehension checks		*28.4*	*15.8*
whether the interlocutor can follow you	27	14.8	-10.4
whether what you said was correct or grammatical	28	29.2	9.0
whether the interlocutor is listening	29	36.7	34.6
whether the interlocutor can hear you	30	33.0	29.8
Average		**41.1%**	**32.4%**

*R.D. = Ratio difference of correct answers between higher and lower test score groups