Developing an Oral Communication Strategy Inventory

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This study focuses on how valid information about learner perception of strategy use during communicative tasks can be gathered systematically from English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. First, the study attempted to develop a questionnaire for statistical analysis, named the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI). The research project consisted of 3 stages: an open-ended questionnaire to identify learners' general perceptions of strategies for oral interaction ($N = 80$); a pilot factor analysis for selecting test items ($N = 400$); and a final factor analysis to obtain a stable self-reported instrument ($N = 400$). The resulting OCSI includes 8 categories of strategies for coping with speaking problems and 7 categories for coping with listening problems during communication.

The applicability of the survey instrument was subsequently examined in a simulated communicative test for EFL students ($N = 62$). To validate the use of the instrument, participant reports on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) were compared with the result of the OCSI. When combined with the oral test scores, it was revealed that students with high oral proficiency tended to use specific strategies, such as social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, and negotiation of meaning.

DURING THE PAST TWO DECADES, NUMERous second language acquisition (SLA) researchers (e.g., Bialystok, 1990; Cohen, 1998; McDonough, 1995) have argued for the effectiveness of learner strategies for learning and using a language. It is also believed that learners can improve communicative proficiency by developing an ability to use specific communication strategies that enable them to compensate for their target language deficiency (e.g., Bialystok, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995). Communication strategies have been generally categorized into two types: *achievement or compensatory strategies* and *reduction or avoidance strategies* (see Bialystok, 1990; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Nakatani, 2005; Tarone, 1981). Using the former type of strategies, learners work on an

alternative plan for reaching their original goal by means of whatever resources are available. These strategies are regarded as "good learner" behaviors. Using the latter types of strategies, learners avoid solving a communication problem and give up on conveying their message. These behaviors affect interaction negatively and are common among low-proficiency learners.

However, as Clennel (1995) pointed out, opinions diverge on what constitutes a communication strategy, and researchers in this field have used several competing taxonomies for communication strategies. In particular, two different types of definitions have evolved. Focusing on the interaction between interlocutors and negotiation of meaning has come to be recognized as the *interactional view* (e.g., Rost & Ross, 1991; Williams, Inscoe, & Tasker, 1997). Focusing on the range of problem-solving activities open to individuals has come to be regarded as the *psycholinguistic view* (e.g., Kitajima, 1997; Poulisse, 1990). This difference might be rooted in the methodologies of

research. There seems as yet to be no fully established set of assessment procedures.

Furthermore, there has been little attention paid to examining accurately how learners use strategies when interacting with their communication peers in actual English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms. In particular, although many researchers (e.g., Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Oxford, 1996; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) have discussed the validity and reliability of using established strategy surveys, there is no study that deals with a reliable and valid strategy inventory for communication tasks.

In this article, in order to avoid terms that might exacerbate the above confusion regarding taxonomies, the term *oral communication strategy* (OCS) is used instead of *communication strategy*. Oral communication strategies specifically focus on strategic behaviors that learners use when facing communication problems during interactional tasks.

How can we assess learner-reported OCS use accurately? This study demonstrates an initial attempt to explore how EFL learners recognize their use of OCSs. The first phase of the study aims at developing a reliable and valid written questionnaire specifically designed for investigating the use of OCSs by carrying out factor analysis. This questionnaire is named the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI), Appendix A. The second phase of the study examines the validity of using the OCSI in an actual communicative task. A comparison is made between the strategies used by learners in high and low oral proficiency groups in order to identify variables that differentiate between their communicative task performances.

PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIVE STUDIES

Oxford and her colleagues have contributed a great deal to establishing questionnaire research methods for learning strategy identification (e.g., Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). As Oxford (1996) argued, it is important to pay attention to the psychometric properties of reliability and validity in order to obtain credible research findings. Oxford claimed that "Questionnaires are among the most efficient and comprehensive ways to assess the frequency of language learning strategy use" (p. 25).

In the studies carried out by Oxford and her colleagues, factor analysis was used to place a whole range of learning strategies into six categories: *memory*, *cognitive*, *compensation*, *metacognitive*, *affective*, and *social*. Using this classification, Oxford

developed the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as an instrument for assessing the frequency of good strategy use by learners. The SILL is regarded as an effective tool for diagnostic purposes to find the weaknesses and strengths of an individual learner's strategy use.

Although the SILL is a useful instrument, it mainly deals with general statements and includes many strategies for initial learning and retrieval of vocabulary, and fewer language use strategies. Some students might forget or be unaware of the language learning processes they use and so fail to report their use of strategies in actual learning events (e.g., Cohen, Weaver, & Li, 1998; LoCastro, 1994). An indirect general statement does not automatically present a direct use of strategies in a real classroom setting. Indeed Oxford (1996) admitted that the SILL may not be relevant for identifying task-specific strategies.

Politzer (1983) focused more closely on strategies for communication. He developed a 5-point scale, self-report questionnaire consisting of three parts: general behaviors, classroom behaviors, and interaction behaviors. The reliability of the behavior scales was estimated by Cronbach's alpha (.77, .75, and .72 for each respective part). Possibly unreliable data, such as student grades in a foreign language program and instructor evaluation of their progress, were compared with student learning behaviors as measured by the questionnaire. However, there seems to be a lack of information regarding the procedures for developing the items on the questionnaire and the validity of its contents. Further, the study was somewhat indirect because it dealt with general perceptions among learners about their own learning behaviors and did not focus on actual strategy use in a real learning task.

Politzer and McGroarty (1985) used explicit oral communication strategy items for another self-reported questionnaire. Their *yes–no* questionnaire consisted of three parts: classroom behaviors, individual study, and oral communication strategy use outside the classroom. They tried to determine which individual learning behaviors were significantly related to student language test score gains. However, their questionnaire items did not appear to correspond to any unified psychological construct, being based either on the authors' intuitions or on suggestions from other research. No reliability and validity measures were discussed.

By using a questionnaire, Huang and Van Naerssen (1987) investigated the learning strategies of Chinese EFL students in oral communication. Their questionnaire consisted of three parts:

student perceptions of useful strategies for improving their listening and speaking abilities, frequency of strategy use for oral communication, and student selection of techniques for language learning tasks. They found that in oral communication successful EFL learners employed certain strategies that less successful learners did not employ. Although some items on the questionnaire seem to be useful, Huang and Van Naerssen assessed student strategies for oral communication by correlating them with other learning strategies unrelated to oral communication. It could be argued that they should have focused only on speaking and listening skills in order to evaluate the significance of strategy use for communication on learner progress.

More recently, Cohen et al. (1998) designed strategy checklists specifically to understand learners' strategy use for speaking tasks. They used a 5-point scale to evaluate a three-stage process for strategy use: preparation before the tasks, self-monitoring during the tasks, and self-reflection after the tasks. In the study, the researchers tried to find links between an increase in the use of certain strategies and an improvement in student performance on the tasks. Their checklists seem to be well designed to investigate real strategy use. However, their main concern was to focus on speakers' metacognitive strategy usage. They did not pay attention to the interactional aspects of communication. Unfortunately, no information was given on the reliability and validity of the checklists.

Each of the above studies has advanced our understanding in some way, but these studies are not good enough for investigating interaction in communicative tasks. In sum, although the SILL is a useful self-report questionnaire, it may not cover a sufficient number of communication strategy items specific to classroom tasks. Some studies (Cohen et al., 1998; Huang & Van Naerssen, 1987; Politzer, 1983; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985) have focused on strategies for communication, but they did not pay enough attention to the validity and reliability of questionnaire items for interaction. Viewed in this light, there has been little research using reliable data elicitation techniques, such as an established questionnaire, in order to investigate learners' strategy use during communicative tasks.

THE STUDY

Phase 1: Developing the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI)

Both speaking and listening skills for interaction are essential for oral communication, and they involve strategies of a different nature. Therefore, the OCSI, which aims at assessing learners' use of OCSs, is divided into two parts. The first part examines strategies for coping with speaking problems related to strategic behavior during communicative tasks. The second part examines strategies for coping with listening problems related to strategic behavior at comprehension during interaction.

To improve the content validity of the analysis based on learners' self-reports, the pilot study had two stages. First, the researcher used an open-ended questionnaire to elicit a variety of strategy items. Then, based on this data, the researcher used an initial exploratory factor analysis to select the most reliable items in the survey. For a final exploratory factor analysis, the researcher used data from 400 participants, an appropriate number to develop a reliable survey instrument. Factor analysis has been widely used in SLA research to validate and examine the internal consistency of questionnaire methods (e.g., Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). Factor analysis is a statistical technique based on analysis of correlation coefficients. It is usually used to reduce a large number of variables to a small number of values that will still represent the information found in the original variables. In particular, exploratory factor analysis is widely used to generate hypotheses by identifying characteristics that test items have in common, which do not exist on the surface of the observed data (see Child, 1990; Kim & Mueller, 1978a).

Method

Selecting Questionnaire Items. The OCSI was developed over a period of 4 months at three universities in Japan. During the first stage of the pilot study, an open-ended questionnaire was administered to a total of 80 students in first-semester EFL lessons. Students were asked to complete statements such as "When I am speaking English, I pay attention to . . . ," "When I am listening to other people speaking English, I try to . . . ," and "What helps me most when I communicate with others is . . . ." They wrote answers in Japanese. These items were designed to elicit a variety of strategies for oral communication.

The summary of responses to this open-ended questionnaire served as the basis for 70 testing items for the second phase of the pilot study. This pilot test questionnaire consisted of 40 items for strategies for coping with speaking problems and 30 items for strategies for coping with listening problems experienced during communicative

tasks. All items in the questionnaire were written in Japanese. These items were developed into a Likert-type questionnaire that asked students to report the frequency with which they used certain strategies in oral communication. Participants were expected to respond on the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never or almost never true of me*) to 5 (*always or almost always true of me*).

The second stage of the pilot study, using the 70 items, was conducted with 400 university students, who were different from the 80 students in the first part of the pilot study. In order to determine the number of strategic variables, the researcher performed an initial exploratory factor analysis for strategies for coping with speaking and listening problems. Items that had a low loading on all factors (less than 0.4) were removed to facilitate interpretation of each factor. On the basis of reliability analyses, items were removed from scales when their corrected item-scale total correlation was so low that elimination of the item made the Cronbach's alpha rise. As a result, eight items from the speaking part and four items from the listening part were omitted.

Therefore, the final version of the questionnaire for the current study consisted of 32 items for coping with speaking problems and 26 items for coping with listening problems during communicative tasks (see Appendix A). The content of these items was reviewed by three Japanese instructors of English and one native-speaker English instructor. In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher administered a background survey that covered gender, academic major, and experience studying English abroad.

Participants and Procedures for the Final Factor Analysis.   A total of 400 Japanese university students (45% men and 55% women) participated in the study. None of them had any experience studying abroad. A breakdown of the participants by major as well as by gender is shown in Table 1. The full range of majors was covered. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 21 years old.

The questionnaire was administered during the last 2 weeks of the first semester at one national and two private universities. Students completed the questionnaire in Japanese during set lecture periods, within 15 minutes. General instructions were announced, including how to answer the question items. All questionnaires were given out and collected by the instructors responsible for the courses. The students answered the questionnaire anonymously because it was felt that their responses might be affected if they were asked to write their names. They were instructed to provide answers to all the questions.

Results and Discussion

Strategies for Coping With Speaking Problems During Communicative Tasks.   The reliability of the 32 items addressing strategies for coping with speaking problems was examined by Cronbach's alpha. Alpha for these 32 items was .86, which indicates a highly acceptable internal consistency. The mean of the 32 items was 3.22, and the standard deviation was 0.97.

In order to determine the number of factors in strategies for coping with speaking problems, the researcher performed a factor analysis for all participants. By means of a minimum-eigenvalue criterion of 1.0 (Kaiser's criterion), principal factor analysis, followed by varimax rotation, extracted eight orthogonal factors. Kaiser's criterion was used because this method is the most commonly used procedure for determining the number of initial factors and is particularly suitable for principal components design (Kim & Mueller, 1978a; Kline, 1994). Varimax rotation was employed because it is a widely used method of orthogonal rotation that makes it simpler to understand and interpret factors (Child, 1990; Kim & Mueller, 1978b). The total percentage of variance accounted for by these eight factors was 58.0%. Appendix B presents the factor matrices produced by the varimax rotation, the communality of each variable, and the content of each item. Only the variables with loadings greater than 0.4 were included to facilitate interpretation of each factor. All factors were labeled according to the variables included therein. It can be assumed that

TABLE 1
Students in the Study According to Major and Gender

	Home Economics	Engineering	Literature	Law	Economics	Total Number
Male	0	111	13	22	35	181
Female	144	19	45	1	10	219
Total	144	130	58	23	45	400

these factors are particularly salient to EFL learners in Japanese university settings. These factors, the mean of each factor, and the standard deviation appear in Table 2.

All variables in Factor 1 appeared to be concerned with learners' affective factors in social contexts. In order to communicate smoothly, these learners try to control their own anxiety and enjoy the process of oral communication (Items 28, 27). They are willing to encourage themselves to use English and to risk making mistakes (Items 29, 26). They also behave socially in such a way as to give a good impression and avoid silence during interaction (Items 25, 23). Therefore, this factor can be labeled *social affective strategies*. The taxonomy is consistent with O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) identification of social/affective strategies in their interview study. Because EFL learners tend to have little experience speaking English in authentic interactional contexts, managing their feelings during oral communication is an important issue.

Items in Factor 2 were related to fluency of communication. These students pay attention to the rhythm, intonation, pronunciation, and clarity of their speech to improve the listener's comprehension (Items 13, 11, 14, 12). They also consider their speaking context and take their time in order not to send inappropriate messages to their interlocutors (Items 9, 10). Hence, Factor 2 can be called *fluency-oriented strategies*.

Items in Factor 3 related to the participants' attempts to negotiate with their interlocutors. In order to maintain their interaction and avoid a communication breakdown, interlocutors are expected to conduct modified interaction. These speakers need to check listeners' understanding of their intentions (Item 22). They sometimes

repeat their speech and give examples of terms until the listener is able to figure out their intended meaning (Item 21). They also pay attention to the reaction of their interlocutor to see whether they can understand each other (Item 19). Accordingly, this factor can be referred to as *negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies*. These are active strategies for negotiation of meaning, which are regarded as important skills to improve foreign language ability according to SLA research (e.g., Nakahama, Tyler, & Lier, 2001; Pica, 1996).

The variables in Factor 4 were concerned with a desire to speak English accurately. These learners pay attention to forms of their speech and seek grammatical accuracy by self-correcting when they notice their mistakes (Items 7, 18, 17). They want to speak appropriately like a native English speaker even though this is not an easy goal (Item 30). In Politzer's (1983) questionnaire study, his students reported using strategies similar to those found in the current study. Being conscious of accuracy in speech seems to be another essential strategy for developing communication ability in a foreign language. This factor can be named *accuracy-oriented strategies*.

Factor 5 represented strategies that these learners use to avoid a communication breakdown by reducing an original message, simplifying their utterances, or using similar expressions that they can use confidently (Items 4, 3, 5). As Bialystok (1990) reported, foreign language learners tend to use familiar words and avoid taking risks by using new or unfamiliar words, even though they sometimes realize that the utterance is far from their communication goal. This factor can be labeled *message reduction and alteration strategies*.

Factor 6 received loadings from two variables concerned with nonverbal strategies to achieve communication goals. When speaking English, these learners can use eye contact in order to attract the attention of their listener (Item 15). They use gestures or facial expressions to give hints and help the listener guess what they want to say (Item 16). These strategies can be termed *nonverbal strategies while speaking*.

Items in Factor 7 were associated with message abandonment by learners in communication. When these EFL learners face difficulties executing their original verbal plan, they tend to give up their attempt to communicate, leave the message unfinished, or seek help from others to continue the conversation (Items 24, 31, 32, 6). These strategies are common among low-proficiency-level speakers of a foreign language. Such learners lack strategic competence and have no choice but

TABLE 2
Factors for Speaking Strategies

Factor Name	*M*	*SD*
Factor 1 Social Affective	3.30	1.06
Factor 2 Fluency-Oriented	2.77	0.99
Factor 3 Negotiation for Meaning While Speaking	3.16	1.04
Factor 4 Accuracy-Oriented	2.93	1.00
Factor 5 Message Reduction and Alteration	4.11	0.94
Factor 6 Nonverbal Strategies While Speaking	3.39	1.08
Factor 7 Message Abandonment	3.44	1.10
Factor 8 Attempt to Think in English	3.14	1.22

to end the interaction. As researchers (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Faerch & Kasper, 1983) claimed, these are negative strategies for mutual understanding and can be labeled *message abandonment strategies.*

Finally, Factor 8 received loadings from Items 2 and 1. It is useful for learners to think as much as possible in the foreign language during actual communication. Oral communication usually requires a quick response to interlocutors. In Item 2, these learners showed a tendency to think in English, and they showed a negative attitude toward thinking in their native language and then constructing the English sentence (Item 1, Factor loading: −0.712). It therefore seems reasonable to label Factor 8 *attempt to think in English strategies.* Huang and Van Naerssen (1987) also found that high oral proficiency EFL learners tended to employ such strategies.

Strategies for Coping With Listening Problems During Communicative Tasks.   The reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, of the listening part of the questionnaire was .85, which indicates a highly acceptable internal consistency. The mean of the 26 items was 3.59, and the standard deviation was 0.96. In order to determine the number of factors in strategies for coping with listening problems, the researcher performed a factor analysis for all participants. By means of a minimum-eigenvalue criterion of 1.0, principal factor analysis, followed by varimax rotation, extracted seven orthogonal factors. The total percentage of variance accounting for seven factors was 58.3%. Appendix C presents the factor matrices produced by varimax rotation and the content of each item. Only the variables with appreciable loading (greater than 0.4) were included in order to facilitate the interpretation of each factor. Then all the factors were labeled according to the variables included therein. These factors, the mean of each factor, and the standard deviation appear in Table 3.

Factor 1 was described as *negotiation for meaning while listening strategies,* which was clearly characterized by negotiating behavior while listening. When these learners have listening problems in interaction, they use modified interaction to maintain their conversational goal with speakers. They repeat what the speaker said or make clarification requests in order to understand the speaker's intentions (Items 22, 21). They dare to show their difficulties in comprehension and imply a need for the speaker's help in order to prevent misunderstandings (Items 20, 19, 23). It is argued that the use of these strategies could enhance students' opportunities to learn the foreign

TABLE 3
Factors for Listening Strategies

Factor Name	M	SD
Factor 1 Negotiation for Meaning While Listening	4.10	0.89
Factor 2 Fluency-Maintaining	2.68	0.97
Factor 3 Scanning	3.60	0.97
Factor 4 Getting the Gist	3.55	0.93
Factor 5 Nonverbal Strategies While Listening	4.11	0.94
Factor 6 Less Active Listener	3.75	1.00
Factor 7 Word-Oriented	4.05	0.67

language through interaction (e.g., Pica, 1996; Williams, Inscoe, & Tasker, 1997).

Items in Factor 2 were broadly designated as *fluency-maintaining strategies.* These learners tend to pay attention to the fluency of conversational flow. They focus on the speaker's rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation to capture his or her intentions (Items 13, 16). They send continuation signals to show their understanding in order to avoid conversational gaps (Item 14). When they have listening problems, they ask the speaker to give examples in order to facilitate understanding and avoid communication breakdowns (Item 10). They might use circumlocution to show how well they understand in order to continue smooth interaction (Item 15). As Rost and Ross (1991) stated, such strategies enable EFL learners to keep interactions going in order to achieve mutual communication goals successfully.

Factor 3 can be named *scanning strategies.* In order to get some hints about a speaker's intentions, these listeners use strategies to focus on specific points of speech, such as subject and verb, the interrogative, and the first part of the speaker's utterance, in which important information is usually contained (Items 26, 25, 5). In particular, it is almost impossible for EFL learners to understand every part of target language speech. They need to use skills to capture the meaning of the utterance somehow. At least, once they have identified the main point of the speech (Item 12), they could in theory be ready to react to their interlocutor.

Factor 4 was evidenced in the use of strategies for getting the gist of a speaker's utterance. These learners pay attention to general information contained in speech rather than to specific utterances (Items 8, 6). They take into consideration the context and the speaker's previous sentences to guess overall meaning (Items 9, 7). Because it is difficult for EFL learners to follow every single detail, these strategies could be useful for understanding

what their interlocutor is saying by activating their schemata of background information. This factor, accordingly, can be referred to as *getting the gist strategies*.

Factor 5 can be termed *nonverbal strategies while listening*. When listening to English, these learners tend to make use of nonverbal information, such as speaker's eye contact, facial expression, and gestures, in order to enhance their comprehension (Items 17, 18).

Factor 6 can be termed as *less active listener strategies*. These strategies are diametrically opposed to Factors 1 and 2 in terms of their contribution to developing interaction. The use of these strategies represents negative attitudes towards using active listening strategies for interaction. Huang and Van Naerssen (1987) reported that less successful EFL learners tended to employ such strategies when facing communicative difficulties. These students try to translate into their native language little by little and depend heavily on familiar words (Items 11, 24). They do not think in English or take risks by guessing meaning from context. The more they use these strategies, the less likely they are to improve their listening comprehension ability during authentic interaction. Factor 6 therefore consists of negative rather than positive strategies.

Last of all, Factor 7 had four variables associated with a heavy dependence on words to comprehend the speaker's intention; these strategies are *word-oriented strategies*. The use of these strategies reflects a learner's tendency to capture the meaning of speech by paying attention to individual words. Memorizing words is one of the most emphasized EFL learning methods in Japanese secondary schools (Brown & Yamashita, 1995). These students appear to have formed the habit of using words to get the meaning of speech. Of the four items, items 3 and 4 describe specific techniques for guessing the meaning of utterances by picking up individual words. Item 1 presents an interesting strategy used by these EFL students. They feel the need to pay attention to interrogative sentences because they have to understand the speaker's intentions clearly in order to respond to the question. In general, if students pay too much attention to a specific word, it could undermine their overall comprehension of an utterance, which might negatively affect their understanding.

In short, to measure traits of students' OCS use through reliable and valid data, the OCSI was developed by factor analysis, using 400 participants. The OCSI consists of two different parts: strategies for coping with speaking problems with 32 items, and strategies for coping with listening problems with 26 items (see Appendix A). The OCSI showed highly acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha .86 for the former part and .85 for the latter part). Each part was divided into several factor dimensions based on the factor analysis, with the intention that each factor would have an adequate number of items to facilitate more in-depth understanding of OCS use by Japanese students learning English. The speaking part includes the following eight factors: social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, message reduction and alteration strategies, nonverbal strategies while speaking, message abandonment strategies, and attempt to think in English strategies. The listening part includes seven factors as follows: negotiation for meaning while listening strategies, fluency-maintaining strategies, scanning strategies, getting the gist strategies, nonverbal strategies while listening, less active listener strategies, and word-oriented strategies.

Yet it should be noted that Kim and Mueller (1978b), citing Thurstone (1947), suggested that in order to have a good interpretation, there should be at least three variables for each factor generated by exploratory factor analysis. In the OCSI, speaking Factors 6 and 8 and listening Factors 5 and 6 comprise two items each. It is possible to argue that the interpretation of these factors might be less appropriate than other factors. Therefore, any conclusions drawn from these factors should be viewed with the utmost care. The validity of the analysis could be improved by comparing the results of other data analyses such as retrospective protocol reports or interviews. Nevertheless, Kim and Mueller (1978a) also point out that the use of factor analysis is likely to create a dilemma between inclusion of unrelated variables and deletion of variables for relevant identification. They stated: "In general, researchers seem to agree that one should have at least twice as many variables as factors" (p. 77). Therefore it can be said that the OCSI has enough items for factors as a whole (speaking part: 32 variables for 8 factors; listening part: 26 variables for 7 factors).

We are now ready to examine whether data elicited by the strategy survey was relevant to assess frequent strategy use by learners in a communicative task.

Phase 2: Learners' Strategy Use Elicited by the OCSI

Participants. The participants for Phase 2 of the study were 62 female students enrolled in

mixed-level EFL classes at a private university in Japan. Their ages ranged from 18 to 19. Each student had completed 6 years of English study prior to entering the university. Their English proficiency, especially listening comprehension, was relatively low, with scores ranging from 230 to 435 on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) test (0–990 score range) administered by the English Testing Service. Given that only female Japanese student groups were chosen, the results of the current study might be generalized to only that population.

Conversation Task. All students were asked to complete a simulated conversation test. This task was similar to daily classroom activities. In this task, the students imagined they were travelling alone in a foreign country and were prompted by a hypothetical situation involving arranging a trip at a travel agency. Test takers were given the role of a customer (Role A) and an interviewer, who was a class teacher, became a conversation partner as the travel agent (Role B). The students were given 5 minutes to prepare the task and then they engaged in a simulated conversation derived from the situation described in English on the card. The simulated conversation was individually administered. No assessment was carried out during their conversation; instead, the interaction was recorded on videotape. Immediately following the completion of the task, the students reported their task behaviors on the OCSI.

In addition to the OCSI, the students completed the Japanese version of the SILL (Version 7.0, Oxford, 1990). The SILL represents a set of general good language learning strategies across four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), so this questionnaire is not intended to assess strategies for oral communication for any specific tasks. However, it has been administered to large populations and established as a reliable and valid survey to evaluate strategic behaviors among learners (e.g., Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). Therefore, in the current study the SILL was used to examine the validity of the OCSI.

The Oral Test Assessment Procedures. The current research used the Oral Communication Assessment Scale for Japanese EFL, which had been established by an action research project at the university (Nakatani, 2002, 2005). This scale consists of seven different levels and focuses on a learner's fluency, ability to interact with an interlocutor, and flexibility for developing dialogue. Two independent native speakers of English were assigned to score this scale. Neither of them was

an interviewer in the tests. Each rater was asked to watch the video of the task and to score each student's conversational performance. The raters were not given any information about the English proficiency of the participants, so there was no halo effect. The interrater reliability of the test was estimated by Cronbach's alpha. The result was .89, a high degree of consistency. Individual points from the two raters were averaged over all the speech samples ($M = 3.1$; $SD = 1.53$). As an additional check on the validity of the results, the students' scores on the oral communication test were compared with their general proficiency as measured by the established TOEIC tests. The results of these two tests had a correlation of $r = .721$. Therefore, it is meaningful to use the results of the oral tests in this study.

Analysis

First, Pearson correlation statistics were used to find the relationship between the results of the SILL and the OCSI in order to examine the validity of these two scales. After that, the task performance of higher scoring students was compared with the performance of lower scoring students in terms of their awareness of strategy use on the OCSI. All participants ($N = 62$) in the current research were divided into three groups according to their results on the oral test scores averaged between the two judges. Group 1, the best performing group, consisted of 18 participants whose scores ranged from 4 to 7. These participants can be categorized as minimally hesitant, flexible speakers who contribute to the conversation. Group 2, the middle group, comprised 18 other participants whose scores ranged from 2.5 to 3.5. Although these speakers can communicate in English to achieve task goals, they are somewhat hesitant and less flexible than the students in Group 1. Finally, Group 3 comprised 26 participants with scores of 1 to 2. These students are very hesitant speakers and face significant difficulties communicating in English.

Group 1 was used as the high oral proficiency group and Group 3 was used as the low oral proficiency group. Group 2 was not included in the study because the purpose of this study was to compare high and low oral proficiency groups of Japanese students of EFL.

Results and Discussion

Correlation Between the SILL and the OCSI. Using Pearson correlation statistics participant reports on the OCSI were compared with their

reports on the SILL. Table 4 shows that significant correlations were found between the total use of the strategies on the SILL and the total use of strategies for coping with speaking problems (r = .62) and listening problems (r = .57) on the OCSI. Students who reported frequent use of the SILL items also tended to report frequent use of the OCSI items. Therefore, the concurrent validity of the OCSI was generally recognized because the SILL has been regarded as an established scale for strategy use.

An examination of correlations between each category on the OCSI and the SILL total reveals significant positive correlations in the speaking part for the following categories: *social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, message reduction and alteration strategies, nonverbal strategies while speaking*, and *attempt to think in English strategies*. For the listening part, positive correlations were found in *negotiation for meaning while listening strategies, fluency-maintaining strategies, scanning strategies, getting the gist strategies, nonverbal strategies while listening*, and *word-oriented strategies*. These results indicate

that a student who reports frequent use of these strategies could be regarded as an effective learning strategy user.

On the one hand, as already mentioned the SILL consists mainly of so-called good language learner strategies. On the other hand, the OCSI aims to measure all kinds of strategies for oral communication tasks. Because these two scales were developed for slightly different purposes, it is reasonable to find a little discrepancy between self-reported strategy use on these two scales. For instance, *message abandonment strategies* in the *strategies for coping with speaking problems* of the OCSI did not correlate with categories on the SILL. These strategies represent a learner's negative strategies. A similar situation was found in the *strategies for coping with listening problems*. The *less active listener strategies* did not significantly correlate with strategies on the SILL. These strategies also represent learners' negative behaviors for coping with listening problems.

By looking at the comparison with the SILL, it can be argued that these two categories of negative strategies on the OCSI could be less effective strategies for oral communication than the other

TABLE 4
Correlation Between the SILL and the OCSI

	SILL Strategies						
OCSI Strategies	Memory r	Cognitive r	Compensation r	Metacognitive r	Affective r	Social r	Total r
Speaking							
Social Affective	.35	.42	.50	.46	.34	.43	.49
Fluency-Oriented	.44	.53	.43	.50	.39	.49	.56
Negotiation for Meaning While Speaking	.38	.45	.41	.51	.42	.60	.54
Accuracy-Oriented	.40	.52	.38	.52	.48	.51	.56
Message Reduction and Alteration	.46	.37	.42	.38	.37	.39	.47
Nonverbal Strategies While Speaking	.49	.45	.45	.40	.26	.31	.48
Message Abandonment	−.02	−.07	−.09	−.09	.08	.11	−.03
Attempt to Think in English	.32	.30	.22	.31	.29	.25	.34
Total	.51	.54	.49	.54	.47	.56	.62
Listening							
Negotiation for Meaning While Listening	.33	.27	.18	.32	.33	.37	.35
Fluency-Maintaining	.43	.46	.29	.48	.38	.41	.49
Scanning	.33	.43	.31	.45	.36	.30	.45
Getting the Gist	.34	.36	.37	.37	.35	.26	.41
Nonverbal Strategies While Listening	.40	.40	.42	.32	.25	.16	.41
Less Active Listener	.21	.17	.14	.23	.27	.13	.22
Word-Oriented	.43	.49	.42	.43	.39	.31	.51
Total	.50	.52	.42	.52	.47	.42	.57

strategies. Accordingly, when using the OCSI to diagnose oral communication strategy use among students, it is possible to judge their attitudes by examining the use of specific strategy categories. For instance, students who report frequently using these negative strategies could be regarded as ineffective strategy users in oral communication.

Relationship Between Oral Communication Strategy Use and Oral Proficiency Level in a Communicative Task. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed using the 15 factors as the dependent variables and the group assignment as the independent variable. Descriptive statistics for both groups can be seen in Table 5. An overall significant difference was found at $p = .05$.

Univariate F tests indicated that there were three significant differences in the speaking part and one significant difference in the listening part (see Table 6).

Regarding the speaking part, the high oral proficiency group reported more use of the following three categories than the low oral proficiency group: social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, and negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies. The results indicate that students who recognized their use of these three types of strategies were judged as higher level speakers of English. They were aware of using

strategies for controlling affective factors. They used strategies for keeping the conversation flowing. They also acknowledged the use of strategies for maintaining their interaction through negotiation.

With regard to strategies for coping with listening problems during communicative tasks, only one significant difference was found. One reason for this result could be that the task focused mainly on speaking ability. However, the high oral proficiency group reported significantly more use of fluency-maintaining strategies than the low oral proficiency group ($p < .01$). Hence, the higher level students consciously made efforts to maintain the conversational flow by reacting smoothly when listening to their interlocutors. In short, the high oral proficiency learners used social affective, fluency-oriented, and negotiation for meaning strategies frequently while speaking in order to develop their conversation. When they were listening, they took care to react smoothly in order to contribute to the interaction.

Although the low-proficiency group reported more use of *message abandonment strategies* ($M = 0.20$) and *less active listener strategies* ($M = 0.19$) than the high-proficiency group, no significant difference was found between the two groups. These categories were suggested as less effective strategies in the previous section. It may be that the low-proficiency students were

TABLE 5
Descriptive Statistics of the Low- and High-Proficiency Groups on OCSI Categories

Categories	High Proficiency $n = 18$		Low Proficiency $n = 26$	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Strategies for Coping With Speaking Problems				
Social Affective	4.26	0.56	3.71	0.65
Fluency-Oriented	3.70	0.70	3.11	0.43
Negotiation for Meaning While Speaking	3.40	0.95	2.76	0.74
Accuracy-Oriented	3.33	0.87	2.95	0.77
Message Reduction and Alteration	4.31	0.58	4.09	0.66
Nonverbal Strategies While Speaking	4.31	0.64	3.83	0.94
Message Abandonment	3.33	0.80	3.53	0.72
Attempt to Think in English	3.39	0.76	3.44	0.92
Total Strategy Use	3.76	0.49	3.43	0.51
Strategies for Coping With Listening Problems				
Negotiation for Meaning While Listening	4.01	0.98	3.90	0.79
Fluency-Maintaining	3.46	0.73	2.83	0.75
Scanning	4.28	0.63	4.04	0.58
Getting the Gist	3.85	0.70	3.69	0.81
Nonverbal Strategies While Listening	4.06	1.10	3.42	1.11
Less Active Listener	3.81	0.75	4.00	0.75
Word-Oriented	4.25	0.60	4.16	0.57
Total Strategy Use	3.94	0.57	3.70	0.55

TABLE 6
Results of Univariate *F* Tests

Factors	df	MSE	F	p
Strategies for Coping While Speaking				
Social Affective	1	3.263	8.676	.005**
Fluency-Oriented	1	3.778	12.160	.001**
Negotiation for Meaning While Speaking	1	4.400	6.410	.015*
Accuracy-Oriented	1	1.594	2.429	.127
Message Reduction and Alteration	1	0.538	1.371	.248
Nonverbal Strategies While Speaking	1	2.437	3.524	.067
Message Abandonment	1	0.407	0.718	.402
Attempt to Think in English	1	0.030	0.041	.840
Strategies for Coping While Listening				
Negotiation for Meaning While Listening	1	0.131	0.172	.680
Fluency-Maintaining	1	4.152	7.504	.009**
Scanning	1	0.609	1.697	.200
Getting the Gist	1	0.255	0.432	.515
Nonverbal Strategies While Listening	1	4.255	3.451	.070
Less Active Listener	1	0.402	0.717	.402
Word-Oriented	1	0.080	0.235	.630

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

not clearly aware of using them. As claimed by researchers (e.g., Cohen, 1998; Vermetten, Vermunt, & Lodewijks, 1999), participants might underestimate on a questionnaire their use of negative behaviors. We have only limited information to explain this issue in the context of this study. Therefore, in future research, it is essential to compare the results of the OCSI with other valid data. For example, students' strategy use on actual discourse data and interview data could be helpful information for validating their self-reported strategy use.

CONCLUSION

Given that EFL learners frequently face language difficulties during their communication in English, they have no choice but to use strategies to compensate for their lack of proficiency in order to facilitate their interaction. The nature of these strategies and the frequency of their use depend to some degree both on specific classroom contexts and on student proficiency levels. Therefore, it is important to assess carefully their strategy use in actual learning events and then to choose appropriate strategies for pedagogical purposes.

Because of the lack of reliable and valid investigation schemes to assess learners' strategy use for oral communication tasks, it has, to date, been difficult to examine accurately which strategies affect interactional ability. To ameliorate this situation, the present study attempted to develop a reliable inventory for this purpose. Factor analysis

was used to identify eight factors in strategies for coping with speaking problems and seven factors in strategies for coping with listening problems during communicative tasks. Based on the results of the analysis, the OCSI (Appendix A) was developed. The reliability of the scale was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha (speaking part: .86; listening part: .85). The concurrent validity of the OCSI was demonstrated through the correlation analysis with the SILL.

The survey instrument was used to investigate female Japanese EFL learners' strategy use in a simulated communicative task. The results indicate that a significant difference was found in students' awareness of strategy use according to their oral proficiency level.

In particular, it is interesting to note that there was a significant difference in the use of negotiation of meaning strategies between the two proficiency groups. The high oral proficiency group reported frequently using such strategies. This behavior indicates that there could be a positive relationship between the incidence of negotiated interaction and an increase in language proficiency. However, as Foster (1998) claimed, despite the substantial theoretical arguments for the effectiveness of negotiated interaction, there has been to date little research demonstrating clear links with second language acquisition. Accordingly, the current findings suggest that researchers should continue to look closely at the impact of learners' negotiation of meaning in communicative tasks on their target language development.

The higher level learners also reported using strategies for maintaining conversational flow and controlling affective factors. The lower level learners, however, used these positive strategies infrequently. Therefore, we can conclude that it is important to introduce for future curriculum development specific strategy training that focuses on raising learners' awareness of such positive strategies.

Students of EFL will be able to make use of the OCSI for diagnostic purposes. They will be able to recognize their strong and weak points concerning the use of OCSs to achieve their communication goals. By checking their performance, they will be able to raise their awareness of efficient strategies, which could lead to improvements in their target language proficiency. It would be interesting to see whether this kind of instrument could be used for students learning a foreign language other than English.

Although the OCSI is applicable in actual communicative events in order to elicit reported strategy use from EFL learners, further in-depth investigations are needed to assess the precise nature of OCS use. For example, in this study there is no discussion of how the gender of the participants might have affected their use of OCSs in interactional tasks. Given that the gender of participants plays an important role in their use of strategies (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), this limitation must be borne in mind. It is also important to investigate the effect of other types of communicative tasks on self-reported learner OCS use. Furthermore, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) argued, the available data on strategies depends on the collection method. In addition, Cohen (1998) claimed that each previous investigation method has a unique set of advantages and disadvantages. Hence, it is necessary to combine several assessment methods in order to compensate for problems inherent in the questionnaire method. For instance, findings from the OCSI should be examined alongside other collected data, such as actual discourse data, retrospective verbal reports, interview data, and videotaped performances. Finally, it is essential to see whether the methods of the current study can be carried out across different foreign language contexts and different languages before any generalizations can be made.

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APPENDIX A
Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI)

Please read the following items,[a] choose a response, and write it in the space after each item.

1. *Never or almost never true of me*
2. *Generally not true of me*
3. *Somewhat true of me*
4. *Generally true of me*
5. *Always or almost always true of me*

Strategies for Coping With Speaking Problems[b]

1. I think first of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence.
2. I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation.
3. I use words which are familiar to me.
4. I reduce the message and use simple expressions.
5. I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent.
6. I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I don't know what to say.
7. I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation.
8. I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.
9. I change my way of saying things according to the context.
10. I take my time to express what I want to say.
11. I pay attention to my pronunciation.

(Continued)

12. I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.
13. I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation.
14. I pay attention to the conversation flow.
15. I try to make eye-contact when I am talking.
16. I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't communicate how to express myself.
17. I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.
18. I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.
19. While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech.
20. I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I am saying.
21. I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands.
22. I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say.
23. I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say.
24. I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.
25. I try to give a good impression to the listener.
26. I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes.
27. I try to enjoy the conversation.
28. I try to relax when I feel anxious.
29. I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.
30. I try to talk like a native speaker.
31. I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well.
32. I give up when I can't make myself understood.

Strategies for Coping With Listening Problems[b]
 1. I pay attention to the first word to judge whether it is an interrogative sentence or not.
 2. I try to catch every word that the speaker uses.
 3. I guess the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words.
 4. I pay attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes.
 5. I pay attention to the first part of the sentence and guess the speaker's intention.
 6. I try to respond to the speaker even when I don't understand him/her perfectly.
 7. I guess the speaker's intention based on what he/she has said so far.
 8. I don't mind if I can't understand every single detail.
 9. I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context.
10. I ask the speaker to give an example when I am not sure what he/she said.
11. I try to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said.
12. I try to catch the speaker's main point.
13. I pay attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation.
14. I send continuation signals to show my understanding in order to avoid communication gaps.
15. I use circumlocution to react the speaker's utterance when I don't understand his/her intention well.
16. I pay attention to the speaker's pronunciation.
17. I use gestures when I have difficulties in understanding.
18. I pay attention to the speaker's eye contact, facial expression and gestures.
19. I ask the speaker to slow down when I can't understand what the speaker has said.
20. I ask the speaker to use easy words when I have difficulties in comprehension.
21. I make a clarification request when I am not sure what the speaker has said.
22. I ask for repetition when I can't understand what the speaker has said.
23. I make clear to the speaker what I haven't been able to understand.
24. I only focus on familiar expressions.
25. I especially pay attention to the interrogative when I listen to WH-questions.
26. I pay attention to the subject and verb of the sentence when I listen.

Note. [a]For this study, the items were presented in Japanese. [b]This categorization line was not included in the administration of the OCSI to students.

APPENDIX B
Factor Matrix for the 32 Strategies for Coping With Speaking Problems and Total Variance Explaining
(h^2 = communality)

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	h^2
Factor 1: Social Affective Strategies									
28 I try to relax when I feel anxious.	**0.82**	0.17			0.1				0.60
27 I try to enjoy the conversation.	**0.74**	0.19	0.16			0.25		0.12	0.64
25 I try to give a good impression to the listener.	**0.61**	0.11	0.22			0.37	0.28		0.61
29 I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say.	**0.58**		0.24	0.28	0.21	0.19			0.71
26 I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes.	**0.49**	0.22		−0.16	0.19	0.22		0.12	0.52
23 I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say.	**0.41**	0.32	0.38			−0.1		0.24	0.63
Factor 2: Fluency-Oriented Strategies									
13 I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation.	0.13	**0.77**		0.1		0.15			0.48
11 I pay attention to my pronunciation.	0.11	**0.71**		0.18	−0.21	0.13			0.53
14 I pay attention to the conversational flow.	0.25	**0.64**	0.14	0.15					0.36
9 I change my way of saying things according to the context.		**0.59**	0.33					0.25	0.62
10 I take my time to express what I want to say.	0.17	**0.48**	0.14		0.19	0.21			0.55
12 I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.	0.39	**0.41**	0.17		0.16	0.38	−0.17		0.65
Factor 3: Negotiation for Meaning While Speaking									
22 I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say.	0.19	0.11	**0.76**			0.15			0.54
21 I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands.	0.30		**0.74**			0.15		−0.17	0.65
19 While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech.	0.16		**0.52**	0.224		0.413			0.63
20 I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I'm saying.		0.34	**0.49**		0.12	0.38	−0.16		0.47
Factor 4: Accuracy-Oriented Strategies									
7 I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation.	−0.14	0.17		**0.74**			−0.2		0.56
18 I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned.	0.11	0.13	0.12	**0.65**			0.15	0.26	0.54
17 I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.	0.11	0.18	0.18	**0.61**				0.11	0.55
8 I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.				**0.56**	0.18	0.32		−0.14	0.70
30 I try to talk like a native speaker.	0.4	0.36	0.22	**0.41**		−0.2			0.66
Factor 5: Message Reduction and Alteration Strategies									
4 I reduce the message and use simple expressions.	0.15				**0.80**		0.17		0.50
3 I use words which are familiar to me.				0.14	**0.73**	0.11	0.16	−0.12	0.63

(Continued)

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	h^2
5 I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent.		0.25	0.26		**0.52**	0.14	−0.21	0.25	0.66
Factor 6: Nonverbal Strategies While Speaking									
15 I try to make eye contact when I am talking.	0.20	0.19	0.16	0.1		**0.73**			0.41
16 I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't communicate how to express myself.	0.31		0.24		0.12	**0.66**			0.69
Factor 7: Message Abandonment Strategies									
24 I leave a message unfinished because of some language difficulty.		−0.14		−0.16			**0.75**	0.12	0.73
31 I ask other people to help when I can't communicate well.					0.17		**0.66**	−0.17	0.61
32 I give up when I can't make myself understood.	−0.37		−0.1				**0.59**	−0.17	0.54
6 I abandon the execution of a verbal plan and just say some words when I don't know what to say.		−0.23	0.15	−0.25	0.4		**0.43**		0.50
Factor 8: Attempt to Think in English Strategies									
2 I think first of a sentence I already know in English and then try to change it to fit the situation.	0.14	0.18		0.22	0.15			**0.72**	0.53
1 I think of what I want to say in my native language and then construct the English sentence.					0.26			**−0.71**	0.54
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	3.3	3.04	2.39	2.27	2.04	2.03	1.93	1.56	
Total % of variance	10.3	9.5	7.5	7.1	6.4	6.4	6.0	4.9	
Cumulative %	10.3	19.8	27.3	34.4	40.7	47.1	53.1	58.0	

APPENDIX C
Factor Matrix for the 26 Strategies for Coping With Listening Problems and Total Variance Explained
(h^2 = communality)

Factors and Variables	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	h^2
Factor 1: Negotiation for Meaning While Listening								
22 I ask for repetition when I can't understand what the speaker has said.	**0.77**	0.1	0.2		0.11			0.47
21 I make a clarification request when I am not sure what the speaker has said.	**0.74**		0.22				0.1	0.50
20 I ask the speaker to use easy words when I have difficulties in comprehension.	**0.68**			0.31	0.19	0.28		0.60
19 I ask the speaker to slow down when I can't understand what the speaker has said.	**0.66**			0.22	0.23	0.21		0.69

(Continued)

Factors and Variables	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	h^2
23 I make clear to the speaker what I haven't been able to understand.	**0.63**	0.11			0.14	−0.2	0.19	0.51
Factor 2: Fluency-Maintaining Strategies								
13 I pay attention to the speaker's rhythm and intonation.		**0.72**	0.26	0.19				0.40
14 I send continuation signals to show my understanding in order to avoid communication gaps.		**0.71**	0.16	0.19		−0.11		0.56
15 I use circumlocution to react to the speaker's utterance when I don't understand his/her intention well.	0.11	**0.66**				0.25		0.68
10 I ask the speaker to give an example when I am not sure what he/she has said.	0.17	**0.56**			0.26			0.57
16 I pay attention to the speaker's pronunciation.		**0.55**	0.20		0.32		0.13	0.43
Factor 3: Scanning Strategies								
26 I pay attention to the subject and verb of the sentence when I listen.		0.12	**0.73**			0.13		0.69
25 I especially pay attention to the interrogative when I listen to WH-questions.	0.19		**0.70**				0.1	0.57
5 I pay attention to the first part of the sentence and guess the speaker's intention.	0.11	0.17	**0.65**	0.15			0.13	0.64
12 I try to catch the speaker's main point.	0.24	0.38	**0.53**	0.27				0.59
Factor 4: Getting the Gist Strategies								
8 I don't mind if I can't understand every single detail.	0.12			**0.78**	−0.13	−0.11	−0.14	0.51
9 I anticipate what the speaker is going to say based on the context.		0.13	0.18	**0.65**	0.16	0.23	0.15	0.47
7 I guess the speaker's intention based on what he/she has said so far.		0.21	0.25	**0.51**	0.29	0.13	0.31	0.76
6 I try to respond to the speaker even when I don't understand him/her perfectly.	0.13		0.25	**0.45**	0.23	−0.2	0.13	0.78
Factor 5: Nonverbal Strategies While Listening								
17 I use gestures when I have difficulties in understanding.	0.32	0.13			**0.79**			0.60
18 I pay attention to the speaker's eye-contact, facial expression and gestures.	0.25	0.23	0.12	0.14	**0.79**			0.67
Factor 6: Less Active Listener Strategies								
11 I try to translate into native language little by little to understand what the speaker has said.						**0.83**		0.62
24 I only focus on familiar expressions.	0.31		0.21	0.4		**0.45**	0.14	0.67

(Continued)

Factors and Variables	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	h^2
Factor 7: Word-Oriented Strategies								
4 I pay attention to the words which the speaker slows down or emphasizes.	0.15	0.24			−0.19		**0.75**	0.54
3 I guess the speaker's intention by picking up familiar words.	0.11	−0.1	0.16	0.36	0.22	0.31	**0.52**	0.53
2 I try to catch every word that the speaker uses.		−0.1	0.31		0.16	0.36	**0.46**	0.57
1 I pay attention to the first word to judge whether it is an interrogative sentence or not.	0.32		0.4		0.12		**0.44**	0.57
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	3.03	2.55	2.48	2.17	1.87	1.54	1.52	
Total % of variance	11.7	9.8	9.6	8.4	7.2	5.9	5.9	
Cumulative %	11.7	21.4	31	39.3	46.6	52.5	58.3	

First *MLJ* Focus Volume Announced for 2007

The *MLJ* Focus Volumes consist of articles on a topic chosen by the *Modern Language Journal* editorial board. Once the topic for a volume is decided, the Board solicits papers from scholars in the field with expertise on the issues treated in that volume. For each Focus Volume topic, the Board strives to achieve a balance of points of views and opinions from scholars around the world.

The first Focus Volume (to appear in 2007) will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the appearance of the Firth and Wagner article, "On Discourse, Communication, and (Some) Fundamental Concepts in SLA Research" (*MLJ* 81,3, 1997, pp. 285–300), on the need to reconceptualize second language acquisition research in order to acknowledge both social and cognitive factors in SLA.

In this volume, the original article will be reprinted and invited scholars will respond to the impact of the ideas in Firth and Wagner (1997) on the profession over the last 10 years. Also included in this Focus Volume will be a reflective commentary on the debate in the pages of the *MLJ* following the publication of Firth and Wagner (1997) and contributions addressing the effect that ideas raised by those authors have had on the construction and refinement of SLA theories and constructs, empirical research, and foreign language praxis. The volume will include a reflection on these issues from non-Western perspectives.